

# Texas Study of the Comprehensive School Reform Grant Program

## Interim Report

### September 2006

*Prepared for the Texas Education Agency*

**Resources for Learning, LLC**

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**TEXAS STUDY OF THE  
COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM (CSR) GRANT PROGRAM**



**Interim Report**

September 2006

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### *Resources for Learning, LLC*

Resources for Learning (RFL) specializes in the development, implementation, and evaluation of standards-based reforms in education. RFL works with state and regional education agencies; universities, districts, and campuses; and other entities engaged in the education of young people.

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## INTRODUCTION

THE TOPIC OF SCHOOL REFORM HAS ATTRACTED CONSIDERABLE attention and funding from a range of stakeholders including the federal government, state governments, philanthropists, local schools, and the general public (Quint, 2006), yet the process for implementing successful reform largely remains a mystery. The purpose of this evaluation is to provide a case study and cross-case analysis of Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) implementation in 10 of the 170 school sites in Texas during the second year of three-year CSR grants awarded by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). TEA operates two CSR programs, the Improving Teaching and Learning/CSR (ITL/CSR) Grant and the CSR—Texas High School Initiative (CSR—THSI). The programs emphasize school-wide improvements through curricular change, sustained professional development, and increased involvement of parents. Both programs also promote school-wide reform aimed at coherently integrating the 11 CSR components to enable all students to meet challenging academic standards. Research indicates that key factors to consider regarding the evaluation of CSR implementation are local context, model selection and adoption processes, school capacity, external support, internal focus, pedagogical change, and restructuring outcomes.

The evaluation was guided by the following research objectives:

- Define where schools started and schools' capacities to implement reform in terms of materials, staff, planning time, and resources
- Measure the external support provided by an external Technical Assistance Provider or the school district
- Measure internal focus defined as teacher buy-in, integration of model strategies with existing programs, and progress monitoring
- Assess pedagogical change, including how closely instructional strategies align with model specifications and how widely these changes in teaching are being made
- Assess the extent to which schools restructured outcomes to consider intermediate outcomes for students (such as positive affective impacts) and the broader school community, including teachers and staff and parents
- Assess the level of implementation at this interim stage of the grant program and implementation fidelity

This interim evaluation report provides a preliminary assessment of promising practices, barriers and catalysts to successful implementation, changes in school climate, and the sustainability of reform efforts at case study sites. A final round of data collection and reporting will occur in spring 2007.

## METHODS

Case studies were developed for 10 of the 170 grantee schools. The case study sites were randomly selected to be reflective of participating schools in terms of grant type, school size, location, CSR model, and implementation level. Two-member evaluation teams conducted two-day site visits to each site during spring 2006. Instruments used for the evaluation and development of case studies included the following:

- Principal interview
- CSR Coordinator interview
- Teacher interviews
- Teacher focus group
- Parent focus group
- Student focus group
- School Observation Measure (SOM) (CREP, 1998)
- Document review
- Technical Assistance Provider survey
- A survey of all professional staff administered to all 170 grantee schools as part of the full evaluation<sup>1</sup>

Data collected through site visits to the 10 campuses were organized into case studies and member-checked by schools. The 10 schools were then categorized into three implementation-level groups through analysis of site-visit data, survey data,<sup>2</sup> and the overall implementation scale.

The three implementation levels used to categorize schools in this report include the following:

- High-Level Implementation category schools in the “Implementing” phase
- Middle-Level Implementation category schools in the “Piloting” stage
- Low-Level Implementation category schools in the “Planning” stage and the “Not Implementing” stage

At the time of data collection for this interim report, no schools were judged to be in the “Fulfilling” stage in which the CSR model has been institutionalized.

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<sup>1</sup> The survey combined the Comprehensive School Reform Teacher Questionnaire (CSRTQ) (Ross & Alberg, 1999) and the School Climate Inventory (SCI) (Butler & Alberg, 1989). Survey responses on the CSRTQ from the Low-Level Implementation group tended to be similar or higher than responses from the other two groups. This pattern may be a result of how staff at low-implementing schools may agree with items as a consequence of lacking a thorough understanding of CSR.

<sup>2</sup> The survey data for one school (School 10) were not included in the calculation of any low-level implementation averages aligned with the evaluation questions because the staff had yet to be trained on model strategies and demonstrated a severely limited understanding of the 11 CSR components. However, their responses to the survey were the highest of any schools, which conflicted with data collected during the site visit. Together, this information indicated that School 10 was an outlier.

## PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Because this is an interim assessment of progress, drawing conclusions and providing recommendations for future implementation efforts may be premature. However, based on the data collected, common points emerged as relevant across schools and may be useful to similar schools engaging in complex school reform efforts. It should be noted that some approaches and components associated with the facilitators to CSR implementation at the high-implementation category schools are definable, tangible, and replicable while others are nuanced, specific to the site, and difficult to replicate. Specific discussion of relevant data at the schools is provided in the individual case studies and cross-case analysis.

This section identifies the main factors that facilitated or stalled CSR implementation at the sites and provides a summary of the evidence followed by recommendations associated with each specific factor.

### *Application Process*

- ***Across implementation levels, staff played a minimal role in the model selection and adoption process. This limitation restricted initial staff buy-in at most schools.***

Across the schools, the grant application process unintentionally hindered full staff participation in model selection and adoption. The turnaround time was short, applicants were not required to obtain a full faculty vote, and signed support was only required from the site-based decision-making committee. While a faculty vote does not ensure strong implementation, it does raise awareness about CSR efforts and represents an important step towards the shared leadership that CSR promotes.

- **Include sufficient time and support to meet CSR expectations concerning model selection.** At the grant award and administration level, future application processes should be guided by considerations such as allowing sufficient time for needs assessment and encouraging applicants to include the majority of staff in research and selection of reform models as well as model adoption.

### *Leadership*

- ***A person or group of people was responsible for leading CSR efforts at high-implementation schools.***

At each of the three high-implementation schools, there was either leadership at the district level or a committed cadre of teachers or strong principal at the school level to support integration of CSR into existing school improvement efforts. These schools benefited from having a strong CSR advocate who provided a defined and widespread message or vision to guide CSR



implementation. At the other sites, schools lacked a clear understanding of the goals of their CSR efforts and staff buy-in appeared delayed or stymied.

- **Establish a dedicated CSR advocate to lead reform efforts.** The advocate can be an individual or a group at the district level or at the campus level. The charge to this person or group is to promote and support CSR efforts by disseminating the goals of comprehensive school reform.

### ***Model Choice and Context***

- ***Implementation success did not depend on CSR model choice if schools selected a model appropriate to the local context and provided leadership for sustainable school-wide reforms.***

Choosing a model aligned with the 11 CSR components was not enough to ensure high implementation. In fact, only one of the high-implementation schools chose a CSR-aligned model while all three low-implementation schools chose models traditionally aligned with the 11 CSR components. The high-implementation schools, however, created locally appropriate models that addressed reform school wide. Some of the lower implementing schools confined their efforts to limited models not designed for comprehensive school-wide reform (e.g., AVID, Princeton Review), impacting small numbers of staff and students. If the model is not aligned, meeting the requirements of CSR takes more resources and a much more concerted effort at coordination with other school activities. At low-resource schools already overwhelmed by issues such as safety and security, this level of focused programming may create a barrier to fuller implementation.

- **Choose a model that can be tailored to campus-specific needs while addressing all CSR components.** Matching model choice to the context of the school limits obstacles to implementation. Models that do not meet at least most of the 11 CSR components may be successfully implemented but may take more resources and time than are available.

### ***Clear Goals***

- ***High-implementation schools provided staff with a clear plan for CSR.***

Internal focus and the creation of a program that was “on message,” especially in terms of CSR integration with existing school programs, were critical for high-implementation schools. Teachers in these schools demonstrated a consistent understanding of the goals of their school’s CSR model. These schools were also very clear and careful about not bringing in extraneous, unrelated programs or treating CSR as an add-on program.

- **Define and disseminate clearly articulated goals for the CSR program.** Staff members need to understand what is asked of them and how CSR supports existing school efforts. Taking time to define this message will help integrate CSR with other programs and eliminate confusion.

## Capacity

- *High-implementation schools viewed the CSR grant as a vehicle for building infrastructure and capacity that could be sustained beyond the grant funding period.*

High-implementation schools used funds to deliver well-defined and focused training school wide. Just providing training to large numbers of teachers is not enough, as demonstrated by some low-implementation schools that received over 1,000 hours of intensive external support. High-implementation schools also created internal capacity for redelivery. Additionally, the training was not added on to other professional development but was the foundation for other programming. This approach to training enabled school culture to be built around model philosophies. Schools with lower implementation levels tended to treat capacity either as fragmented, by purchasing materials and supporting personnel not directly related to CSR efforts, or in a narrow sense, by only providing a limited number of staff and students with expensive support.

- **Build school capacity through focused campus-wide training.** Using resources to provide a focused campus-wide professional development effort ensures all teachers are trained, builds CSR understanding, and promotes collaboration around CSR efforts. Mechanisms for providing local redelivery of training also help to build capacity in the long term and ensure sustainability.

## Pedagogy and Collaboration

- *Through extensive training and support, teachers in high-implementation schools were able to use CSR-related teaching strategies in classrooms.*

Teachers at high-implementation schools were applying CSR-related teaching strategies in classrooms. In one school, in accordance with the model approach, all teachers implemented several project-based learning units each year. This level of implementation and coordination indicates that teachers were provided with effective training, were given time to understand the training, and were able to transfer this new learning to their classrooms. This process also involved ongoing support in terms of formal and informal collaboration between teachers and external assistance providers and proved to be time intensive. Dedicated planning time was oriented around staff collaboration on key pedagogical approaches. Subject-area cadres and peer observation processes are a few other examples of successful collaborative activities at high-implementation schools.

- **Support classroom application.** Achieving instructional change requires ongoing support, collaboration, and time. This commitment must occur if CSR efforts are ultimately to impact student achievement. Teachers implementing CSR model-promoted strategies in their daily practice need intensive support either from external assistance providers or the district, and, most importantly, dedicated time to collaborate with their colleagues.

## ***Identifying Intermediate Outcomes and Monitoring Progress***

- ***High-implementation schools instituted formative monitoring across a variety of intermediate outcomes.***

The success of identifying intermediate outcomes and monitoring progress towards them varied across schools. At high-implementation schools, staff comments about model impacts demonstrated an understanding of progress and were evidence that the schools had provided tools and time for analysis and reflection around intermediate outcomes. At middle- and low-implementation schools, grant leaders often failed to define intermediate outcomes and provide a systematic process for monitoring them. Without intermediate goals, such as improvements in student motivation, student attendance, staff buy-in, or teacher collaboration, staff were unsure about the success of their efforts and felt overwhelmed because student achievement had yet to be impacted. Schools that monitored program implementation formatively indicated seeing progress with their CSR efforts.

- **Monitor progress through both intermediate and summative outcomes.** Defining intermediate outcomes demonstrates an understanding of the cycle of CSR and the time needed to achieve summative outcomes such as student achievement. A systematic process for monitoring progress around intermediate outcomes provides clarity, guidance, and focus and communicates the school's commitment to accomplishing the goals of CSR. This process also encourages optimism about growth.

## ***Sustainability***

- ***High-implementation schools developed plans for continuing programs and activities initiated with CSR grant funds.***

High-implementation schools had clear plans for continuing CSR programming. Either district support had already been committed or a strong infrastructure had been created through staff training. In either scenario, the continuation of school efforts was not dependent on grant funding. Building a strong school culture around reform efforts was also instrumental to ensuring sustainability. At one high-implementation campus, the school's identity was built around its CSR model and teachers were hired to teach there based on their interest in participating in the school's program.

- **Plan for sustaining CSR efforts beyond grant funding.** Finding and securing resources for the continuation of CSR programming is essential and indicates to staff that the school is committed to school reform—that CSR is not just a passing fad. Sustaining CSR efforts also relates to building capacity and school culture around CSR goals and strategies.

Most of the case study sites faced obstacles common to low-resource schools serving high-poverty student populations. These include a history of failure and low expectations, entrenched dysfunctional culture, safety and security issues, staff resistance to change, high teacher turnover, or multiple uncoordinated programs. At one school, these barriers seriously threaten the investment made in CSR efforts. For example, staff resistance to change has stalled CSR efforts. For other schools, these barriers may have caused a delay in implementation, but most have been able to pilot their CSR programs successfully and have viable plans for expanding from the piloting stage to the implementing stage. It is of note that some of these campuses are large urban high schools in large urban districts, which traditionally face significant challenges. Finally, the sites implementing CSR at a higher level have capitalized on local contexts and have been able to provide a firm foundation for school-wide reform. These schools are already seeing impacts for students and the culture of the school. The next round of data collection will document the continued progress of implementation efforts across these campuses.







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## INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

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### BACKGROUND

THE TOPIC OF SCHOOL REFORM HAS attracted considerable attention and funding from a range of stakeholders that include the federal government, state governments, philanthropists, local schools, and the general public (Quint, 2006), yet the process for implementing successful reform largely remains a mystery. Since the 1960s, school reform efforts have evolved from remedial pullout programs aimed at at-risk students (Borman, Wong, Hedges, & D'Agostino, 2001) to systemic approaches to school change (Smith & O'Day, 1991). This systemic approach led to a new focus for the reform movement, specifically represented by the New American Schools (NAS) Corporation. Funded in 1991, NAS created an environment for designing innovative whole-school reform models through "design-based assistance organizations" (DBAO) (Bodilly, 2001).

Results from these efforts guided the establishment of the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program (CSR) in the Fiscal Year 1998 Appropriations Act for the U. S. Department of Education, Public Law 105-78. The legislation endorsed school improvement through a school-wide

approach. In establishing the CSR Program, the government recognized the potential for the use of proven, research-based models for comprehensive school change. Building upon and leveraging ongoing efforts to connect higher standards with school improvement at the state and local level through Title I and other major reform initiatives, this program served to expand the quality and breadth of school-wide reform efforts.

The CSR Program, operating from 1998–2001, emphasized nine required components or strategies for reform and stressed the goal of whole-school change. The reauthorization of Title I as Part F of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) continued the use of federal funds to support low-performing, high-poverty schools in the implementation of scientifically based programs and strategies aimed at helping students meet state content and academic achievement standards through the Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) Program.<sup>1</sup>

The federal endorsement of the CSR approach is due to the empirical evidence that indicates the overall effect of adopting CSR models on student achievement is significant. Research

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that as of fiscal year 2007, the CSR program is considered duplicative of Title I Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. This program supports comprehensive school reform, which is also the purpose of Title I school-wide programs (Title I school-wide project statutory provisions Sec. 1114 of NCLB), and helps improve low-performing schools, which is the purpose of the State school improvement set-aside in Title I (Sec. 1003 of NCLB). Current efforts are being made to redirect CSR program funding to the Title I Grants for Local Educational Agencies program to reduce program duplication and administrative burden. Redirecting the CSR funds to Title I will allow troubled schools to carry out comprehensive reform without the extra administrative burden of applying to a separate grant program. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/expectmore/detail.10000184.2005.html>

shows that the average student attending a school implementing CSR performed better than 55% of the students attending comparable schools not implementing CSR (Borman, Hewes, Overman, & Brown, 2003). Through this and other empirical work, two additional required components (support for school staff and use of scientifically based research) were

added to the strategies framework of essential and common components shared by effective CSR models. NCLB defines CSR models as those with the following 11 components that (see Table 1.1), if fully integrated and implemented, represent a comprehensive and scientifically based approach to school reform.

**Table 1.1. Comprehensive School Reform Components**

<p>1. Effective, research-based methods and strategies: The CSR program will employ innovative strategies and proven methods for student learning, teaching, and school management that are based on reliable research and effective practices, and have been replicated successfully in schools with diverse characteristics.</p> <p>2. Comprehensive design with aligned components: The CSR program will integrate a comprehensive design for effective school functioning, including instruction, assessment, classroom management, professional development, parental involvement, and school management, that: (1) aligns the school’s curriculum, technology, and professional development into a school-wide reform plan designed to enable all students—including children from low-income families, children with limited English proficiency, and children with disabilities—to meet challenging state content and performance standards; and (2) addresses needs identified through a school needs assessment. Programs should address all core subject areas, instruction, school organization, use of time, staff, and available resources, and must include all grade levels at the campus.</p> <p>3. Professional development: The CSR program will provide high-quality continuous professional development and training for teachers and staff. Program-based professional development should be implemented with high-quality assistance and concrete tools, strategies, and materials related to the central focus of the campus reform program. Professional development activities must be directly tied to improving teaching and learning and student achievement.</p> <p>4. Measurable goals and benchmarks: The CSR program will have measurable goals for student performance tied to the state’s challenging content standards (TEKS) and student performance standards (TAKS), as well as benchmarks for meeting these goals. Comprehensive school reform gives a campus and its community a shared vision and a common focus on goals. Goals form the framework for the campus reform efforts, so it is imperative that faculty, students, parents, and the community are focused on a set of defined goals developed by the whole group.</p>
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5. Support within the school: The CSR program will be supported by school faculty, administrators, and staff. Campuses must receive the support and approval of the faculty and staff, site-based decision-making committee, campus and district administration, the district board of trustees, parents, and the community. The higher the level of support and approval, the more likely that the reform efforts will be effective and lasting.

6. Support for teachers and principals: A CSR program provides support for teachers, principals, administrators, and other school staff by creating shared leadership and a broad base of responsibility for reform efforts. The program encourages teamwork and the celebration of accomplishments. These and other means of support are part of the school's comprehensive design.

7. Parental and community involvement: The CSR program will provide for the meaningful involvement of parents and the local community in planning and implementing school improvement activities. Parents and community members are to be involved in all aspects of the planning, application, and implementation of the comprehensive reform program.

8. External technical support and assistance: The CSR program will utilize high-quality external support and assistance from a comprehensive school reform entity (which may be a university) with experience or expertise in school-wide reform and improvement.

9. Evaluation strategies: The CSR program will include a plan for the evaluation of the implementation of school reforms and student results achieved.

10. Coordination of resources: The CSR program will identify how other resources (federal, state, local, and private) available to the school will be utilized to coordinate services to support and sustain school reform.

11. Strategies that improve academic achievement: The program must meet one of the following requirements: (1) the program has been found, through scientifically-based research, to significantly improve the academic achievement of participating students; or (2) the program shows strong evidence that it will significantly improve the academic achievement of participating children.

Source. TEA RFP 701-06-001

Whereas previous educational reforms allowed segmented activities directed at a variety of targets—which resulted in a piecemeal approach to improving student performance—CSR has resulted in the development of a variety of comprehensive change models designed to promote whole-school reform. Through state-administered CSR supplemental grants, local schools received a minimum of \$50,000 per year for three years to implement comprehensive reforms that impacted the whole school. Funding to local education agencies was intended as seed money for whole-school reforms, which were to be sustained after the three-year grant with school resources. The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) maintains a list of models and their program descriptions that meet the CSR standard of scientifically

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***Research conducted by the U.S. Department of Education (2003) concludes that due to the complexity of school reform, it could take five to six years for strategies to impact student performance.***

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based reform in “The Catalog of School Reform Models.”<sup>2</sup> The American Institutes for Research (AIR) also conducted a review of the most commonly implemented models providing a rating of model quality and effectiveness (2005). Ultimately, it is the responsibility of local education entities to determine which model will work best in their unique contexts. Additionally, schools often must design local programs that are more comprehensive than a prescribed model in order to meet the requirements of CSR, as some models are only geared towards one subject area or a particular type of instruction rather than incorporating

all aspects of the curriculum, school operation, and instruction (U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

## **STATE CONTEXT**

Within this larger national context, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) operates two CSR programs, the Improving Teaching and Learning (ITL)/Texas Title I CSR Grant Program and the CSR—Texas High School Initiative (THSI) Grant Program. Both programs include the requirement to implement all 11 components of the CSR program. These programs emphasize school-wide improvements through curricular change, sustained professional development, and increased involvement of parents. Both promote school-wide reform aimed at coherently integrating the 11 CSR components at high school campuses to enable all students to meet challenging academic standards. In 2004, Texas received \$11,818,764 in CSR-designated federal dollars that were distributed to 85 schools, averaging \$139,044 per award. The state distributed an additional \$11,965,695 in 2005 to 83 new schools, averaging \$144,165 per award (CSR Southwest Educational Development Laboratory database). A total of 170 schools are currently participating in ITL (Cycle 3) and THSI. In the 2005–06 school year, the ITL elementary and secondary schools are completing the second of three years of grant funding. The THSI program schools completed their first year of funded activities in December 2005.

## **REPORT ORGANIZATION**

This interim case study report represents one component of a larger program evaluation effort conducted by TEA that examines the impact of comprehensive school reform on student achievement. The goal of this report is to apply a research-based framework to

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/catalog/index.shtml>

describe the implementation process, including facilitators and barriers experienced, for ten sites introducing comprehensive school reform under the ITL and THSI grant programs. The first chapter provides the research background and methodology. The next ten chapters detail each site's implementation process. The final chapter of the report provides a cross-case analysis that groups schools by implementation level and then compares them across evaluation objectives. This interim report is based on a first round of data collection conducted in spring 2006. A final report will be developed following a second round of data collection in spring 2007.

## CASE STUDY

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A meta-analysis conducted by Borman et al. (2003) examined the association between CSR and student achievement. The study did not conclusively identify which CSR components explain the effectiveness of CSR. The researchers conclude that the impact of CSR may be due to context-specific differences in implementation. It may not be related to the CSR model itself and/or whether the model requires specific components, such as parental involvement and ongoing staff development. Implementation issues that may contribute to differences in the effectiveness of CSR involve specific obstacles at individual sites, such as turnover in leadership or minimal staff buy-in, as well as the stage and length of implementation. Schools may be successful with CSR due to factors beyond the scope of CSR, such as having a unified staff or a school culture accepting of CSR changes.

A case study approach to the evaluation provides insight into program- and school-specific differences in implementation. Some of the issues for investigation addressed in this report focus on specific unmeasured factors, such as assessment of local context and history,

that contribute to local decisions about model selection and implementation.

Research conducted by the U.S. Department of Education (2003) concludes that due to the complexity of school reform, it could take five to six years for strategies to impact student performance. These findings point to a need for evaluations to study intermediate points and the process of whole-school reform. A broad base of research using diverse methodologies indicates that successful comprehensive school reforms include change in areas that can be collapsed into a theoretical model of five constructs: school capacity, external support, internal focus, pedagogical change, and restructuring outcomes (Nunnery, Ross, Bol, & Sterbinsky, 2005). The evaluation objectives are built around this model.

### *School Capacity*

School capacity refers to the infrastructure needed by schools to implement and maintain a restructuring effort. Infrastructure implies access to appropriate materials; sufficient staffing and planning time; and adequate fiscal resources to support staff, materials, and technical assistance (Datnow & Stringfield, 2000).

### *External Support*

External support indicates the quality and amount of assistance provided by agents outside of the school, including support provided through design-based assistance organizations (DBAO) as well as support provided by the district. Research on DBAO support focuses mainly on the importance of professional development for helping teachers understand and implement the instructional practices promoted by reform models (Bodilly, 2001). Additionally, recent research suggests that integrating district support in reform efforts is imperative to successful implementation and sustainability of a CSR

model at the school level (Borman, Carter, Aladjem, & LeFloch, 2004).

### ***Internal Focus***

Internal focus refers to the degree to which the essence of reform efforts has become embedded in the daily practices of school staff. The research identifies several factors that are essential to focus, including teacher buy-in and support for reform efforts, alignment of reform with existing mandates, integration of reform with existing school programs or efforts, and formal attention to monitoring the progress of reform efforts (Rowan, Camburn, & Barnes, 2004).

### ***Pedagogical Change***

Pedagogical change refers to the degree to which instructional practices align with the goals of the chosen reform strategy. While different reform models advocate a variety of instructional approaches, some CSR models tend to share a reduced emphasis on workbooks, worksheets, and individual work and an increased focus on technology, cooperative learning, and project-based work (Stringfield, Ross, & Smith, 1996).

### ***Restructuring Outcomes***

Restructuring outcomes goes beyond just student achievement. This construct includes other areas CSR efforts are intended to impact, such as teacher support and parental involvement (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). Particularly beneficial in early implementation is a focus on intermediate outcomes so that schools can measure progress prior to impacting student achievement since this process may take years.

### ***Evaluation Objectives***

The evaluation design has two purposes: to enhance and provide corroborating evidence for TEA's quantitative evaluation and to assess

CSR implementation. The work by the Center for Research in Educational Policy (CREP) and the Field-Focused Study of the CSR Program conducted by COSMOS Corporation or the U.S. Department of Education (2003) guide the evaluation design. The design is based on the following questions:

1. What was the local context and starting point of schools?
2. What is the capacity for supporting comprehensive school reform, as measured by:
  - a. materials?
  - b. staffing?
  - c. planning time?
  - d. fiscal resources?
3. What is the level of external support provided, as measured by:
  - a. external assistance?
  - b. district assistance?
4. What is the level of internal focus on reform efforts, as measured by:
  - a. staff buy-in?
  - b. alignment and integration of strategies?
  - c. progress monitoring?
5. What is the level of pedagogical change, as measured by:
  - a. instruction aligned with model specifications?
6. Have outcomes been restructured, as measured by:
  - a. student achievement?
  - b. parental involvement?
  - c. staff involvement?
7. Have reform strategies been implemented following model intentions, as measured by:
  - a. site understanding of model?
  - b. fidelity rating from technical assistance provider?

Through investigation of these questions at the interim and the final stage of funded activities, the evaluation can inform how comprehensive school reform impacts schools, including promising practices, barriers, catalysts, school climate, and the sustainability of reform efforts.

The next section details the evaluation tasks. The primary tasks of the evaluation are to conduct surveys of participants and technical assistance providers and to produce in-depth case studies at a selection of sites. The discussion of each task includes a description of participants, instruments, analysis approaches, and potential problems and solutions.

## METHODS

Data collection for this interim stage of the evaluation required two major components, surveys and site visits. These activities occurred during spring 2006. The surveys were distributed to all CSR campuses in the state. Site visits were conducted at 10 campuses selected to reflect both the ITL and THSI grant programs, geographic and demographic diversity, model type, and implementation stage.

### *Survey*

The purpose of the survey was to collect information aligned with the five constructs of successful CSR implementation, specifically addressing TEA concerns, in order to enhance the quantitative analysis. These constructs were school climate, barriers to implementation, staff buy-in, sustainability, and early indicators of success. The survey instrument was a combination of existing reliable and valid instruments created by CREP and designed specifically for evaluating CSR implementation. These instruments have been used in hundreds of CSR evaluations across the nation (Ross, McDonald, & Bol, 2005).

### *SURVEY SAMPLE*

All administrators and professional staff at all grantee sites, as well as the external technical assistance providers identified by grantee schools, were surveyed during spring 2006.<sup>3</sup> Online questionnaires were used.

### *SURVEY INSTRUMENTS*

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#### *Staff Surveys*

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Staff perceptions of the comprehensive school reform process are one of the key sources of data in assessing CSR programs (Ross & Alberg, 1999). However, instruments used to measure staff perceptions are often inconsistent and not specific to comprehensive school reform (Nunnery, Ross, & Sterbinsky, 2003). Thus, this evaluation used instruments designed specifically for evaluating perceptions of comprehensive school reform with tested reliability and validity.

The first instrument used was the Comprehensive School Reform Teacher Questionnaire (CSRTQ) (Ross & Alberg, 1999). (See Appendix A for protocol.) It is designed and reported to measure the five constructs underlying comprehensive school reform (external support, school capacity, internal focus, pedagogical change, and outcomes) through 28 items. Respondents use a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. TEA requested an additional response category “Don’t Know.” Construct validation and scale reliability coefficients can be found in Nunnery et al. (2003). (See Appendix B for scale description.)

The second instrument measures school climate using the School Climate Inventory (SCI) (Butler & Alberg, 1989). (See Appendix A for protocol.) The SCI consists of seven dimensions, or scales, logically and empirically linked with the five constructs associated

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<sup>3</sup>Technical assistance providers work with the schools to implement CSR models and should have a solid understanding of the model and implementation processes.



with successful comprehensive school reform efforts. The seven dimensions of the instrument are order, leadership, environment, involvement, instruction, expectations, and collaboration. Each scale contains seven items, with 49 statements comprising the inventory. Participants respond using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Each scale yields a mean ranging from 1 to 5 with higher scores being more positive. TEA requested an additional response category "Don't Know." School-level results are compared to national norms for both elementary and secondary schools (Ross et al., 2005). Scale descriptions and current internal reliability coefficients can be accessed at <http://crep.memphis.edu/web/instruments/sci.php>. (See Appendix B for scale description.)

Additional questions were added to the survey to solicit demographic information as well as program-specific information, such as facilitators and barriers to implementation. These questions were then used to create a principal survey and professional staff survey.

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#### *Technical Assistance Provider Survey*

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The purpose of this survey was to assess stages of implementation, implementation fidelity, and barriers to implementation at grantee schools. To judge the level of implementation, providers were asked to rate schools on a scale ranging from 0 to 4, representing levels from not implementing to fulfilling. (See Appendix A for protocol.) The scale was adapted from Bodilly (1998). Implementation fidelity was assessed based on the provider's evaluation of compliance with strategy components at the schools implementing the model as well as judgments about the schools' understanding of the model. Finally, providers were asked to assess observed barriers to the schools' efforts to implement reform strategies.

#### *SURVEY ADMINISTRATION*

Once approved by TEA, surveys were programmed for online administration. The evaluators compiled a list of grantee schools and providers. Each school designated a local survey contact who worked with the evaluators in the administration of school staff surveys. The evaluators communicated with each survey contact about data collection schedules. With the assistance of the local survey contacts, the evaluators distributed information about the surveys, the URLs (electronic addresses) for accessing the online questionnaires, and step-by-step instructions to all identified respondents. The evaluators provided an e-mail address for technical assistance for respondents who might need help in accessing and submitting the questionnaire. The evaluators also monitored on a weekly basis the response rates and worked with the local survey contacts to remind staff to complete the surveys. The principal survey was online from March 1 to April 24, 2006. The professional staff survey was online from March 7 to April 24, 2006.

For the technical assistance provider surveys, the evaluators worked directly with the school-identified technical assistance providers in the administration of surveys. The survey was online from April 3 to May 15, 2006.

#### *Case Study*

The purpose of the interim case studies was to collect information aligned with the five constructs of successful CSR implementation, specifically addressing TEA concerns, such as promising practices, school climate, barriers to implementation, and early indicators of success. To achieve these ends, evaluators used a combination of conceptually linked instruments to provide an in-depth, coherent, and comprehensive profile of the implementation process.

### SITE SELECTION PROCESS

Case study sites were selected using a stratified proportional selection process. The goal was to select ten campuses that would be reflective of CSR campuses across the state in terms of representing both ITL and THSI grant programs (see Table 1.2), geographic diversity, demographic diversity, CSR models, and implementation levels (see Table 1.3).

The first selection stage divided campuses by grant type, either ITL or THSI. The next stages considered school grade level and region of the state based on Regional Education Service Center affiliation. Campuses were then categorized based on the economically disadvantaged status of the region as calculated by the regional average percentage of students participating in the free-and-reduced-price-lunch program. Finally, progress reports indicating model choice and implementation level were included to select schools with a range of models and implementation levels.

Based on these characteristics, three schools from each regional area were randomly selected for a preliminary selection list. In consultation with TEA staff, 10 sites were chosen for case studies. It should be noted that a charter campus was included at TEA's recommendation. Overview information on the sites selected for visits is included in Table 1.4.

**Table 1.2. Grant and School Type**

Classification	Categories	Percent
Grant type	THSI	50
	ITL	50
School type	Public	89
	Charter	11

Source. RFL and SEDL databases

**Table 1.3. Percent of Schools From Each Grant Type Across Various Categories**

Classification	Categories	Percent of schools from ITL grant in each category	Percent of schools from THSI grant in each category
School level	Elementary	43	0
	Middle/Junior high	35	0
	High	18	100
Geographic location (Public schools only)	South (Regions 1, 2, 3, 10)	28	29
	Central (Regions 6, 12, 13)	13	24
	North (Regions 9, 10, 11, 14, 16, 17)	20	13
	East (Regions 4, 5, 7, 8)	34	27
	West (Regions 15, 18, 19)*	5	8
Economically disadvantaged (Public schools only)	South (Regions 1, 2, 3, 10)	91	78
	Central (Regions 6, 12, 13)	56	54
	North (Regions 9, 10, 11, 14, 16, 17)	69	51
	East (Regions 4, 5, 7, 8)	76	60

Source. RFL and SEDL databases

\* In consultation with TEA, the West region was dropped because comparatively so few grantee schools were located in that area.



**Table 1.4. Campus Background Information, 2004–05**

School*	Grant Type**	CSR Model	Total Students	African American	Hispanic	White	Other	Economically Disadvantaged	Mobility (2003–04)	Campus Rating***	TAKS Met Standard All Grades Tested		
											All Tests	Reading	Math
School 1	ITL	AVID	1,367	0%	98%	2%	0%	87%	18%	AA	53%	75%	56%
School 2	ITL	Co-nect	510	5%	91%	4%	0%	97%	20%	AA	42%	70%	61%
School 3	ITL	Accelerated Learning	817	5%	67%	27%	1%	54%	24%	AA	68%	83%	79%
School 4	ITL	Accelerated Schools	375	48%	43%	9%	1%	72%	78%	AA	15%	55%	11%
School 5	ITL	AVID	1,280	27%	71%.	2%	1%	90%	25%	AU	30%	67%	34%
School 6	THSI	Princeton Review	2,161	62%	37%	1%	1%	83%	22%	AA	33%	70%	45%
School 7	THSI	International Center for Leadership in Education	1,389	18%	67%	13%	2%	66%	24%	AA	27%	62%	42%
School 8	ITL	High Schools That Work	1,833	2%	96%	1%	2%	94%	27%	AA	47%	72%	66%
School 9	THSI	Accelerated Schools	458	9%	52%	39%	1%	54%	16%	AA	38%	80%	45%
School 10	THSI	Co-nect	657	1%	84%	15%	0%	85%	15%	AA	55%	85%	63%

Source: RFL and SEDL databases and Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS)

\*ES=Elementary School; MS=Middle School; HS=High School

\*\*ITL=Improving Teaching and Learning; THSI=Texas High School Initiative

\*\*\*A=Academically Acceptable; AU=Academically Unacceptable

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## SITE VISIT PROTOCOLS

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### *Interviews and Focus Groups*

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The interview and focus group instruments were adapted from instruments developed by CREP and used for evaluating CSR implementation across the nation. The protocols were aligned with the evaluation objectives designed to measure a school's capacity, external support, internal focus, pedagogical change, and restructuring of outcomes associated with CSR efforts. Additional questions were added regarding implementation level as well as barriers and facilitators to the process.

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### *Classroom Observations*

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Observations were included because school reform models target instructional practices for change, and it is necessary for evaluators to be able to measure if change is occurring in this context, especially since instruction directly links to student achievement (Sterbinsky & Ross, 2003). The *School Observation Measure* (SOM) (CREP, 1998) validly and reliably measures pedagogical alignment with CSR models and corroborates teacher self-reports of instructional change (Nunnery et al., 2005).

The SOM measures the extent to which a variety of CSR-aligned classroom practices are used at the *whole-school* level rather than only at the classroom level. It consists of 24 target practices and two summary items. The factors are organized into six categories: instructional orientation, classroom organization, instructional strategies, student activities, technology use, and assessment. The summary items measure academically focused class time and student attention/interest/focus. Instrument reliability and validity may be found in Sterbinsky and Ross (2003).

### *CONDUCTING SITE VISITS*

The evaluation field staff consisted of a total of eight evaluators. Two-member evaluation

teams, including a lead educational specialist and a methods specialist, conducted two-day visits to each school. School visits occurred during March and April of 2006. Site visit activities included interviews, focus groups, document collection, and classroom observations designed to inform the research questions. The lead educational specialist conducted the interviews and teacher focus group, and the methods specialist conducted all observations and the student and parent/community focus groups. Surveys were also conducted outside of the site visits as part of the larger evaluation (see Table 1.5).

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### *Interviews and Focus Groups*

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Interviews were conducted with principals and CSR coordinators. Additionally, evaluators randomly selected four teachers for interviews at each site. A teacher focus group was conducted with a randomly selected group of six teachers. Random selection of teachers was necessary to capture how embedded the CSR strategies were across the campus. Two additional focus groups included parents/community members and students. Evaluators relied on campus staff to help select participants in these focus groups. Evaluators requested that students be selected from high, average, and low student performance ranges so as to provide a variety of perspectives on services the schools offered. Additionally in elementary schools, evaluators requested students in upper grades. Evaluators requested that selected parent and community members reflect a variety of levels of school involvement. It should be noted that these requirements were not always met. Typically, students who participated in focus groups over-represented high-performing students, and parents typically over-represented strongly involved parents.

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### *Observations*

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Based on the SOM protocol, 16 to 20 observations were conducted over a two-day

**Table 1.5. Data Collection: Number of Participants or Events**

School	Interview	Focus Group			Observation	Survey	
		Teacher	Parent/ Community	Student		Professional staff (response rate)	Technical assistance provider
School 1	6	6	6	6	16	64 (52%)	1
School 2	6	6	10	9	16	25 (66%)	1
School 3	5	5	9	6	20	57 (72%)	1
School 4	6	6	7	11	16	20 (87%)	1
School 5	6	6	7	8	16	45 (43%)	0
School 6	7	6	4	5	16	41 (27%)	1
School 7	6	6	7	7	20	32 (30%)	1
School 8	5	2	5	6	17	64 (47%)	0
School 9	5	5	3	6	20	36 (69%)	1
School 10	6	6	3	6	16	19 (30%)	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>8</b>

period. The observer examined classroom events and recorded activities descriptively. At the end of observations, the evaluator summarized the frequency with which each strategy (see Appendix A for protocol) was observed both within and across classrooms using a 5-point rubric ranging from not observed to extensively observed. Evaluators also used the 5-point rubric to rate the observed levels of the two summary items measuring focus and engagement.

To ensure inter-rater reliability and data integrity, site visit team members were trained in instrument use and scoring by CREP staff and the RFL evaluation project manager.

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#### *Document Collection*

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Evaluators collected documentation from schools to assess the intended outcomes of reform strategies in their local contexts, with

special attention to compliance with the CSR component emphasizing sustainability. Documents included a campus improvement plan and/or a comprehensive school reform plan. These were reviewed for a needs assessment; benchmarks of student performance indicators; reference to financial resources to support and sustain reform efforts; reference to strategic use of financial resources; and discussion of specific curricula, assessment tools, and professional development. The breadth of the plan in terms of covering all school operations and CSR components was reviewed. Other documentation included grant applications and progress reports to TEA.

#### ***Survey Data Analysis***

Following the completion of data collection, the survey database was cleaned, quality assured, and provided to TEA for inclusion in the evaluation of the impacts of CSR on student achievement. Survey data for the 10 case study

sites were analyzed to supplement site visit findings. Response rates from the schools were generally quite low and highly variable from school to school. This is a significant limitation. Follow-up to detect non-random differences between respondents and non-respondents was beyond the scope of this evaluation.

For the *Comprehensive School Reform Teacher Questionnaire* (CSRTQ), missing data ranged from 0% to 3%. Those responding “Don’t Know” ranged from 4% per question to 19% per question. Missing data and those responding “Don’t Know” were recoded to be included in the same category for the purposes of reporting the responses to each question. This approach was chosen because it allows the reader to see what percentage of respondents recorded a “Don’t Know” response across the questions. This information is relevant because in measuring CSR implementation, responses indicating no knowledge of certain aspects of CSR implementation matter (Babbie, 1997). Including the “Don’t Know” and missing responses in the frequency distribution tables is one option. An alternative option would have been to eliminate the “Don’t Know” and missing responses from these calculations and only report percentages for those choosing a response linked to a value on the Likert scale. This approach would represent a proportion of the total number of survey respondents but be reflective of all responses providing an actual Likert-scale rating. Eliminating “Don’t Know” and missing data from calculations provides an adjusted frequency that minimizes any potential distortion in interpretations caused by including missing data (Rea & Parker, 1997). The first approach was chosen to reflect the importance of understanding how little knowledge some respondents may have about specific aspects of CSR implementation.

To create summary statistics for the survey scales, missing and “Don’t Know” responses

were assigned the school mode on individual questions. Imputations were used to create a complete data set for the construction of scales. This approach meant that questions across the scales had the same number of usable responses. Single imputations were a reasonable choice in this case because the rate of missing information was below 20% (Schenker et al., 2004). Additionally, the number of respondents at the school level was judged too low to use multiple imputation (Rubin & Schenker 1986) based on predicting “Don’t Know” responses from prior responses. Descriptive statistics were also calculated without missing and “Don’t Know” responses. There were no significant or practical differences between the two approaches.

For the *School Climate Inventory* (SCI) missing data ranged from 0% to 3% per question. Those responding “Don’t Know” ranged from 1% to 12% per question. The same procedures used for constructing and reporting the CSRTQ were used for the SCI.

Summary statistics of survey data were then included in the individual case studies. Inferential statistics were beyond the scope of this portion of the evaluation.

### **Site Visit Data Analysis**

The case study analysis involved multiple steps beginning prior to site entry. Once case study sites were identified, sites were screened. The screening protocol provided preliminary information and data confirmation to be used in the case study profile, such as choice of model, award amount, and award date. After completion of each site visit activity, team members wrote an analytic memo for the event, completing as much information as possible and supporting each item with evidence in the form of descriptions or quotes to support preliminary findings. (See Appendix A for protocol.) Teams debriefed each evening of

the site visit to corroborate information from analytic memos and identify areas needing further investigation.

After the site visit, analytic memos of interviews and focus groups and results from observation data were combined by one member of the site visit team to produce a conceptual memo. Evaluators then used the memos to analyze the data from the interviews, focus groups, and observations using ATLAS software for coding aligned with evaluation objectives and emerging themes.

Evaluators then used site visit information to assess the strength of CSR implementation with an overall strength of implementation scale (U.S. Department of Education, 2003b). (See Appendix A for protocol.) The scale taps all 11 CSR components by breaking each component into sections that focus on measurable standards. For example, the professional development component is broken into four sections: strong content focus; evidence of collective participation of groups of teachers; evidence of some training taking place in teacher’s classroom; and explicit guidance to align training with standards, curriculum, or assessment tools. Where appropriate, each of these sections is then marked yes or no and given one point for “yes” and zero points for “no.” So if a school provides CSR-related professional development with a strong content

focus, it would receive a score of “1” for item 3.1. An excerpt from the scale is shown.

Summing the scores across the components produced an overall implementation score for each school that corresponds with one of five CSR implementation levels (Bodilly, 1998):

- 1) **Not Implementing.** No evidence of the strategy.
- 2) **Planning.** The school is planning to or preparing to implement.
- 3) **Piloting.** The strategy is being partially implemented with only a small group of teachers or students involved.
- 4) **Implementing.** The majority of teachers are implementing the strategy, and the strategy is more fully developed in accordance with descriptions by the team.
- 5) **Fulfilling.** The strategy is evident across the school and is fully developed in accordance with the design team’s descriptions and signs of “institutionalization” are evident.

At the time of data collection for this interim report, no schools were at the Fulfilling stage. Additionally, SOM scores were summarized. Results from these various data points were combined to produce the case study organized according to evaluation objectives.

<i>Component</i>	<i>Measure</i>		<i>Score</i>
<b>3. Professional Development:</b>			
3.1 Strong content focus	<u>yes</u>	no	1
3.2 Evidence of collective participation of groups of teachers from the same school	<u>yes</u>	no	1
3.3 Evidence of some PD taking place in the teacher’s classroom, e.g., mentoring	yes	<u>no</u>	0
3.4 Explicit guidance to align PD with standards, curriculum, or assessment tools	<u>yes</u>	no	1

Source. U.S. Department of Education, 2003b

## REPORT ORGANIZATION

This interim report consists of 10 case study chapters and a final cross-case analysis chapter. Case-study chapters are organized by implementation level from highest to lowest. Each case study is organized into three sections:

- Local context
- Model adoption and implementation
- Implementation summary

### *Local Context*

Successful school reform depends on a multitude of factors, including existing circumstances at the campus. Thus, the local context section is designed to provide an overview of starting points for CSR implementation at each case study site. This section opens with basic descriptions of size and location of the campus and community, student demographics, accountability ratings and TAKS performance history, and other characteristics of the school and school population. Existing challenges as well as local responses already initiated before award of the CSR grants are also addressed due to their likely influence on reform efforts.

Data for this section were collected from site visits; school documents such as CSR applications, progress reports, and campus improvement plans; and data from the Texas Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS).

### *Model Adoption and Implementation*

Site visit protocols were designed to capture the process used by campuses to identify and select CSR models and the initial steps of reform implementation. This information is important to determine the level of staff involvement at the earliest stages of implementation as this will likely influence teacher buy-in and support in implementing reform strategies. This section includes a description of the selection and early

implementation process and a brief overview of the key components and strategies of the site's selected CSR model.

Factors impacting CSR implementation are another focus of this section. Site visit and survey data and information from site documents are described in terms of school capacity, external support, internal focus, pedagogical approach, and restructuring outcomes.

Data for this section included site visit and survey data, campus improvement plans and other site documents, and model information from the websites of organizations offering CSR technical assistance.

### *Implementation Summary*

The implementation summary provides an overview of factors influencing CSR implementation at the site and an assessment of the current level of CSR implementation at the campus using a variety of instruments.

After a brief discussion of key factors influencing CSR implementation, the school climate is assessed in a summary of the results of the *School Climate Inventory* (SCI), which was administered to staff as part of the survey. The SCI is composed of seven dimensions logically and empirically associated with effective school climates. (See Appendix B for scale description.) Second, an instrument designed to measure CSR implementation in terms of the 11 CSR components was used. Third, this information was corroborated with survey data from the technical assistance providers for each site who assessed site implementation fidelity and implementation level. (See Appendix B for scale description.)

Finally, a summary of facilitators and barriers to local implementation are described. These data are a combination of staff perceptions of



facilitators and barriers provided at site visits and through surveys, as well as the evaluator's assessment of facilitators and barriers as a product of a review of all of the site data.

## CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

The concluding chapter is a cross-case analysis that combines data across all 10 sites. After data collected through site visits were organized into case studies and member-checked by schools, the 10 schools were then categorized into three implementation-level groups through analysis of site-visit data, survey data,<sup>4</sup> and the overall implementation scale that assesses the school based on the 11 CSR components. Schools were grouped by implementation level, sorted alphabetically, and then numbered. Number order does not reflect implementation level within groups. The three implementation levels used to categorize schools in the cross-case section of the report include the following:

- High-Level Implementation category schools in the “Implementing” phase
- Middle-Level Implementation category schools in the “Piloting” stage
- Low-Level Implementation category schools in the “Planning” stage and the “Not Implementing” stage

Again, at the time of data collection, no school was in the “Fulfilling” stage of implementation.

After grouping schools by implementation level, each research objective was addressed using examples from each implementation level. Finally, this interim report provides preliminary conclusions and preliminary recommendations based on the presented data.



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<sup>4</sup> The survey data for one school (School 10) were not included in the calculation of any low-level implementation averages aligned with the evaluation questions because the staff had yet to be trained on model strategies and demonstrated a severely limited understanding of the 11 CSR components. However, their responses to the survey were the highest of any schools, which conflicted with data collected during the site visit. Together, this information indicated that School 10 was an outlier.





## SCHOOL 1

## HIGH-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION

**GRADE LEVEL: MIDDLE SCHOOL**

**CSR MODEL: ACHIEVEMENT VIA INDIVIDUAL DETERMINATION (AVID)**

**GRANT TYPE: IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING (ITL)**

**AWARD DATE: AUGUST 2004**

## I. LOCAL CONTEXT

SCHOOL 1 IS A LARGE CAMPUS SERVING OVER 1,300 students in grades 6–8. The school is located near the Mexican border in the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas. Almost all of the school’s students are Hispanic, and most are economically disadvantaged. (See Table 2.1 for more demographic information.)

All grades and classrooms are housed in one school building. Classrooms are spacious and well-equipped with computers, lab equipment, and extra textbooks. Students wear uniforms in compliance with a mandatory dress code intended to deter distracting behavior. The uniform policy was implemented in 2004–05, and parents believe that students are now happier at school and that the school atmosphere has changed for the better.

### Starting Points

School community members reported that because the student population generally comes from low-income households or “barrios,”

academic achievement and college attendance were not a high priority for some families. Many of the students’ parents had not attended college, and therefore the parents did not see college as the end goal for their children. Teachers reported that the school had not fostered high expectations of the students. One teacher stated that “students did not believe they could go to college ... [the students] don’t believe they are college material.”

For the last two years, School 1 received an Academically Acceptable rating in the Accountability Rating System for Texas Public Schools and Districts. (See Table 2.2 for more accountability information.) However, the school did not meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirements in 2005 due to performance in reading and mathematics for Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. In reading, 52% of LEP students met the standard in 2005, which was an improvement over the 40% of students who met the standard in 2003–04. In both 2003–04 and 2004–05, 31% of LEP students met the standard for mathematics.

**Table 2.1. Demographic Profile, 2004–05**

Total Students	African American	Hispanic	White	Other	Economically Disadvantaged	Mobility (2003–04)	Limited English Proficient
1,367	0%	98%	2%	0%	87%	18%	21%

Source. Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS)

**Table 2.2. Accountability and TAKS Performance History**

Year	Campus Rating	Student Group	TAKS Met Standard All Grades Tested (All Tests)	Reading	Math	Writing (Grade 7)	Social Studies
2003-04	Academically Acceptable	All students	38%	67%	43%	88%	84%
		LEP	9%	17%	22%	35%	50%
2004-05	Academically Acceptable	All students	53%	75%	56%	87%	87%
		LEP	12%	31%	19%	54%	67%

Source. Texas Education Agency, AEIS

School 1 has identified better preparation in order for students to succeed in high school and in college as a primary goal for school improvement. This goal was reiterated in its CSR grant application: “The overall school culture will be transformed into one that nurtures aspiration for a college education and fosters academic skills for a successful entrance to a college-bound pathway” (p. 17b).

The school is currently part of a federal Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) grant through the University of Texas-Pan American. The purpose of the GEAR UP program is to foster early college awareness among students and parents.

## II. MODEL ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

### *Selection Process*

School 1 was awarded an Improving Teaching and Learning/Texas Title I Comprehensive School Reform grant (ITL/CSR) in August of 2004. Many of the staff interviewed were not involved in the model selection process.

Generally, though, staff understood the school’s criteria for selecting Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) as the CSR model. (See Table 2.3 for more information about AVID.)

According to the campus grant application, in choosing the model, the school set up a site team of five staff members who visited other schools in the district with similar demographics that were using AVID. The team conducted classroom observations and talked to the AVID coordinators, administrators, district personnel, and students in AVID classes who, according to one teacher, “had rave reviews regarding the implementation of AVID.” Then the team returned to “sell the rest of the faculty and staff on the program as our model for school reform to address the underserved students” (p. 17c).

### *Initial Implementation*

The school established an AVID site team of academic department heads to serve as liaisons between the Technical Assistance Provider and campus staff. Members of the site team are responsible for, according to one teacher,

**Table 2.3. AVID Model Design**

<p><b>Background</b> Since 1980, the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program has been implemented in more than 2,200 middle schools and high schools in 36 states and 15 countries worldwide serving an estimated 30,000 students. AVID is aimed at those students who attend school regularly but get “C” grades in courses that are not rigorous.</p> <p><b>Key Strategies and Features</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rigorous and relevant curriculum</li><li>• Socratic method</li><li>• Note-taking skills</li><li>• Subject-specific study groups</li><li>• Writing to learn</li><li>• Test-taking skills</li></ul> <p><b>Key Components</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• AVID academic elective class is offered for one period per day.</li><li>• AVID teacher or “coach” helps students organize their time in school, provides tutoring for in-class assignments, and monitors student progress and school activity.</li><li>• AVID site team is composed of teachers in academic departments, counselors, and administrators. The team visits “demonstration schools” to see programs in operation and extend the model throughout the school.</li><li>• Extracurricular activities, such as cultural and career events, are available.</li><li>• College awareness and orientation with financial planning activities are offered to parents and students.</li></ul>
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Source. AVID website, <http://www.avidonline.org/>

“informing the department [and] obtaining information from the department so that concerns can be addressed.” The site team and principal attended the AVID Summer Institute in 2004 and redelivered the training to the entire staff at the school. Teachers described the professional development as “two-hour trainings” and “mini-sessions” at which they learned about various AVID strategies. In January 2005, the school hired a CSR AVID coordinator.

Staff members were adequately oriented and aware of the program’s potential benefits to the school’s student population. In interviews, many staff members were aware of the research on AVID: “As a teacher, what impressed me

was the percentage of students in the AVID program that [sic] went to college—it was some 90%.”

All staff members interviewed were also aware of the process for orienting new teachers: “The committee [site team] helps new faculty catch up. The AVID coordinator gets a package together and answers the questions they may have. Our veteran teachers serve as mentors.” One new teacher reported that the AVID orientation support was “very effective.” The school’s AVID coordinator added, “The faculty has been brought into the program by staff development, disbursement of materials, the principal helping us to introduce the program, and communication.”

The school has initially targeted a group of 70–80 at-risk students in grades 7–8 for participation in an AVID elective course. As stated in the CSR grant application, School 1 plans to expand the number of students served to 125 at-risk students per grade level. The gradual expansion also includes moving away from AVID as an elective course to a core course. Many in the school community even mentioned the prospect of implementing the model for all students in all grades.

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***The school has initially targeted a group of 70–80 at-risk students in grades 7–8 for participation in an AVID elective course.***

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Student selection was one area of initial confusion for staff in the CSR process at School 1. Some teachers indicated that there were no selection criteria: “Last year with the selection process, I was not pleased because there was not a matrix that specified what we were looking for in a student.” Another said, “Because of the selection process, there may not be any [special education] students in the program.” Teachers and the AVID coordinator suggested that the school had improved the process in the second year of the grant: “This year we had a check list, and this year we were more selective.” Another teacher noted, “This year a matrix has been developed to select students in a more effective manner.”

The consensus among staff was that the school was closely following the AVID model. AVID at School 1 includes the following components:

- A rigorous curriculum that allows students to develop organizational skills in order to be successful in the upper grades and college.
- The use of motivational tools to increase student interest in college attendance. The school, with CSR funds and also district

funds, has hosted field trips to colleges and universities and speakers for students.

- Professional development in AVID strategies, such as Cornell note taking, the Socratic method, Writing Inquiry Collaboration Reading (WICR), and cooperative learning, for all staff members.
- High expectations and a focus on middle-achieving students in order to, according to one teacher, “help them get prepared for college because a lot of them fall through the cracks.”
- A comprehensive monitoring system that ranges from student self-assessment to item analysis from achievement tests (TAKS and benchmarks) to an external evaluation from the Center for Applied Research in Education.

## ***Factors Impacting CSR Implementation***

### *SCHOOL CAPACITY*

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#### *Materials*

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School 1 has purchased a variety of AVID support materials for students and teachers and software for computers. The school supplied all AVID students with AVID binders (and intends to provide AVID binders for all students as the program reach extends). AVID binders are designed to help students stay organized, keep track of achievement and class work, and know what they are missing. One teacher said of the binders: “Those materials help them get organized and stay focused.” In addition, an AVID library was purchased for the professional staff. The books provide tools for teachers that can be utilized in the classroom. Also in the library are AVID manuals and Cornell note-taking samples for the students. The principal also discussed the laptop computers purchased with CSR funds: “We

purchased the laptops with the money, and that gives the students something that they can't get at home—a tool they can use in their different classes—and teachers have been able to check out the laptops so they can use technology in their instruction.” One teacher also mentioned that students check out laptops for home use.

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### *Staffing and Planning Time*

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Building staff capacity for CSR has consisted of training teachers, putting tutors in the classrooms, and hiring the AVID coordinator who is also the AVID course teacher. School 1 teachers reported receiving ongoing professional development on AVID techniques.

In addition to training teachers, the school used the grant funds to hire four tutors (college students) who are in classrooms three times each week. Many teachers reported that the tutors were an asset. The tutors have built a rapport with the students and serve as role models: “The tutors have helped a lot ... because some of the students are apprehensive about taking [advanced] classes, but the tutors encourage them to take the advanced classes.”

The AVID coordinator was also hired with CSR funds. She describes her role as organizing the program with the help of the site team members with responsibilities “to hire tutors, to organize staff development meetings to educate the teachers, to make sure the students visit the campus universities here in the Valley, and to motivate them. To make the program succeed.” The principal and teachers credit much of AVID’s success at the school to the coordinator: “The coordinator is very close to the students ... [and] provides assistance to any teachers who have problems or concerns and has shared with the entire faculty to improve the program.”

Some staff mentioned a shortage in capacity specific to the implementation of AVID. One teacher wanted to hire another AVID

teacher: “We would need another teacher; it would help if we had another person there.” The coordinator wanted to have some extra assistance with grant implementation: “The first two years there should be an assistant to help. There is a lot of paperwork; there is too much work, and it would help a lot ...” Teachers felt that the coordinator’s administrative responsibilities sometimes took away from her ability to help teachers and students.

Teachers, with the exception of elective teachers, have a 90-minute planning period each day. Half of the time is a 45-minute coordinating period, during which teachers can work with their team, and the other half is a 45-minute conference period, during which teachers meet as a team with students’ parents. Teachers felt that AVID required them to plan more collaboratively in order to cover the AVID standards and connect instruction across disciplines.

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### *Fiscal Resources to Support Staff, Materials, and Technical Assistance*

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Staff mentioned that the main things the CSR grant funds covered were AVID training, AVID materials (e.g., binders for students, instructional library for teachers), laptops, the CSR coordinator’s position, and the four tutors. The grant application also indicated funds would go towards incentives for participating students, such as field trips to local colleges and motivational speakers.

Staff at School 1 expressed an interest in expanding AVID and continuing the program beyond the grant period. The AVID coordinator indicated that the school “will need to look for more funds.” The principal acknowledged that, due to the decreasing CSR funds, the district will cover the coordinator’s salary next year. Also according to the principal, the school has also been able to shift funds into their AVID program: “We did not have enough money to

take the kids to a trip to the university, and we reallocated some of the money into that area.” Based on this evidence—the school’s willingness to reallocate funds and the district’s willingness to supplement the CSR budget—School 1 is taking steps to sustain AVID.

Sixty-four of 122 professional staff at School 1 completed surveys for a response rate of 52%. In terms of school capacity issues related to CSR implementation, 61% said they were given sufficient planning time, and 53% strongly agreed or agreed that they had the necessary materials for implementing CSR. Two thirds of the School 1 staff (67%) strongly agreed or agreed that they had sufficient staffing, and 66% judged technology resources to have become more available because of CSR. (See Figure 2.1 for more information on the Capacity construct.)

Overall for this construct, staff rated Capacity to be a 3.78 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all four questions of the construct, 42% of staff rated school capacity as high. Combining respondents who answered strongly

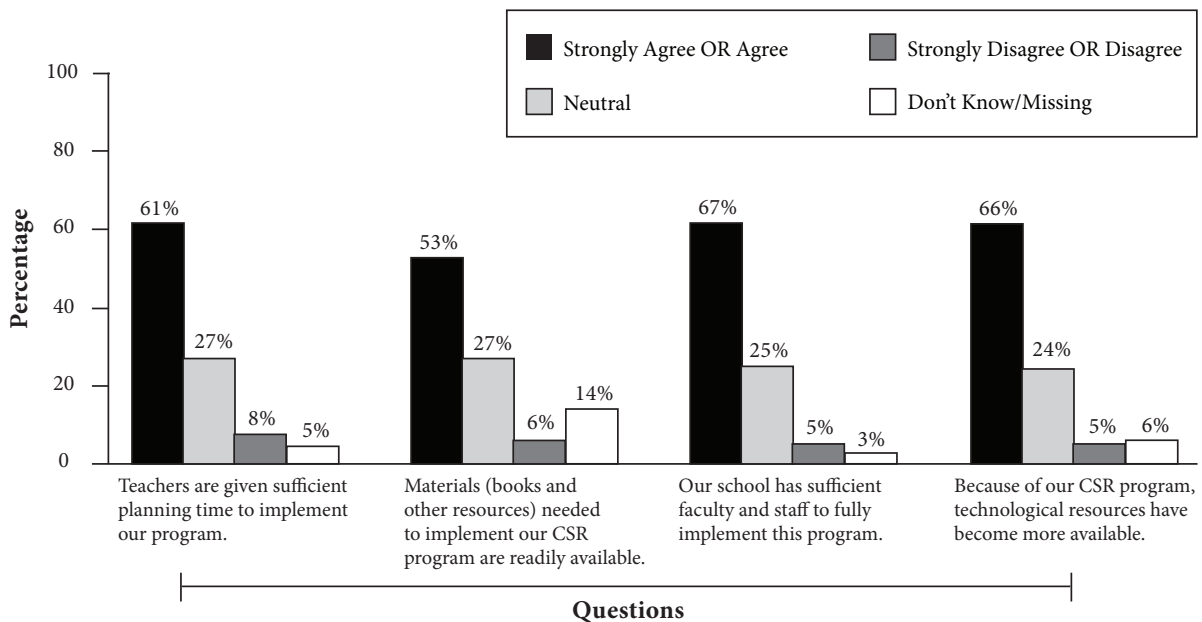
disagree or disagree across all four questions of the construct, none rated Capacity as low. (See Appendix B for scale description.) Additionally, results from the Technical Assistance Provider survey suggest that the provider judged the school’s capacity to be adequate in terms of materials, staffing, planning time, and fiscal resources.

### EXTERNAL SUPPORT

#### External Professional Development

According to the principal, “The site team is the one that does the training, providing [staff] with the information and the resources, letting them know that we do have a library as a resource, helping them with the strategies that the AVID program is requiring.” Site data indicate that School 1 does not have a well-defined relationship with the AVID Technical Assistance Provider. When asked to describe the school’s interaction with the program developers, teachers replied, “I don’t know how that works,” and, “Since I am in the classroom, I have not seen that.” The coordinator at School 1 agreed, “We have had to work on many things alone.”

**Figure 2.1. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Capacity (N = 64)**



Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.



The Technical Assistance Provider survey data corroborated little contact with teachers at the site, reporting 35 hours of technical assistance over the first two years of grant implementation. The Technical Assistance Provider indicated providing assistance to School 1 on 7 of the 11 CSR components. Components not addressed were comprehensive design, generating staff support, shared leadership and teamwork, and parental and community involvement.

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### *Integrated District Assistance*

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School 1 staff indicated that the district is a strong source of support for AVID implementation at the school. One teacher mentioned the district's role in the initial AVID training: "They [the district] have provided the training—they sent a group of teachers [the site team] for a week-long training, and they became the trainers for the entire faculty. It has been effective for the academic teams." Another teacher also acknowledged the district's willingness to stand behind AVID at the school: "The district provides support through the professional development sessions, providing the time to attend sessions and the funding to bring in speakers."

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***"They [the district] have provided the training—they sent a group of teachers [the site team] for a week-long training, and they became the trainers for the entire faculty. It has been effective for the academic teams."***

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The district has a consistent record of supporting AVID at multiple schools. The district encouraged School 1 to visit an AVID school in the district and implement the model to create a vertical continuum of AVID at district elementary, middle, and high schools. The principal articulated this support: "The district is very supportive of this program. They think it is one of the ways that we are

going to make some of our AVID students high achievers. We have it now in three more schools, plus the two we originally had. They are supportive and encourage it very much."

Staff members were asked about the level of external support the school receives for its CSR efforts. Overall, the school scored highly on the Support construct. Of the respondents, 72% agreed that the professional development had been valuable, and 69% had received adequate initial and ongoing professional development. Fifty-nine percent expressed that the school received effective assistance from external partners, and 64% of respondents agreed that they had a thorough understanding of the school's CSR program. (See Table 2.4 for more information on the Support construct.)

The mean scale score for the Support construct for School 1 was 3.86 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all five questions of the construct, 47% of staff rated support provided as high. Combining respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all five questions of the construct, none rated capacity as low. (See Appendix B for scale description.)

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### *INTERNAL FOCUS*

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#### *Staff Buy-In and Support*

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Interview data suggest that during the initial implementation there were some misunderstandings about and reluctance to use AVID strategies. The CSR coordinator noted, "I think at the beginning they [the teachers] were kind of backed off, not as enthusiastic, reluctant about the program." The principal added that "there are some teachers too comfortable in the box to take a look out of the box." Teachers generally corroborated this sense of initial reluctance: "Last year there was no support because we were not aware of what it [AVID] was."



**Table 2.4. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Support (N = 64)**

Support	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don't Know/ Missing
I have a thorough understanding of this school's CSR program.	64%	27%	5%	5%
I have received adequate initial and ongoing professional development/training for CSR program implementation.	69%	19%	11%	2%
Professional development provided by external trainers, model developers, and/or designers has been valuable.	72%	22%	3%	3%
Guidance and support provided by our school's external facilitator, support team, or other state-identified resource personnel have helped our school implement its program.	70%	14%	6%	9%
My school receives effective assistance from external partners (e.g., university, businesses, agencies).	59%	19%	3%	19%

Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

In the second year of the reform, teachers became more supportive of AVID implementation. All teachers interviewed described staff support as increasing. The principal believed that “the majority of the teachers like the AVID model.” Multiple teachers indicated that increased staff support is due to the fact that they can see the effectiveness of using AVID strategies with their students. The principal thought that the AVID strategies were helping teachers themselves become more organized.

Another key to the increased teacher buy-in is the high level of support from the administration. One teacher said administrators “are very supportive, they provide everything, and they answer every question.” The CSR coordinator added, “The support of the principals has been of great help.”

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*Alignment and Integration  
 With Existing Programs*

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School 1 has several additional programs geared towards increasing test scores and preparing students for success in high school and college.

These include an after-school tutoring program called NUESTRO, Title I programs, and planned computer-assisted instructional labs. Most closely aligned with the AVID program is the GEAR UP grant administered through the University of Texas-Pan American. When asked about the alignment of the two programs, most teachers spoke of the common goal of “trying to get students prepared for college and giving them the education they need.” In addition, some aspects of the GEAR UP and AVID programs have been integrated. According to the CSR coordinator, GEAR UP funds have covered some of the AVID training. Program staff have also cooperated to organize CSR parent awareness workshops through the GEAR UP parent liaison.

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*Monitoring*

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School 1 uses multiple approaches to monitor CSR implementation and progress, including regular review of progress on goals, objectives, and activities in its CSR grant application; use of an AVID-specific evaluation tool; the examination of data; and student self-monitoring.

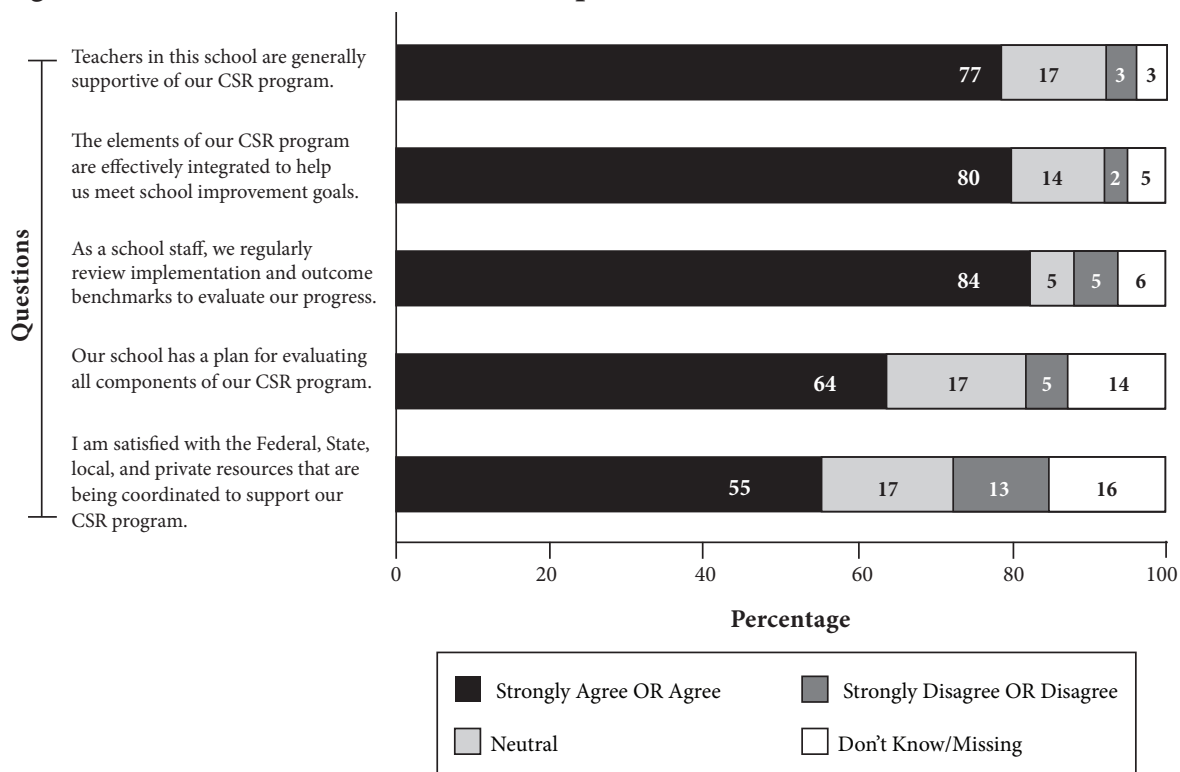
The principal stated that the staff looks closely at CSR grant requirements: “We monitor ourselves by using the grant as our map to ensure we are doing exactly what we are supposed to do.” The principal added, “We do exactly what we said we would do; we comply with CSR.” In addition, the AVID model, according to the CSR coordinator, has a system that helps the coordinator evaluate the progress of implementation and that also shows where improvement is needed. This system provides a total score for the implementation process. The CSR coordinator also said that the collection of data, such as TAKS and benchmark results, is used “to improve the program.”

Teachers stated that the model implementation is monitored through progress reports, communication with one another, and students’ tracking of their own progress. Another teacher stated that the progress of the program is monitored through the TAKS scores and benchmarks. Benchmarks are implemented

every six weeks, and an item analysis helps determine where the weaknesses are. Many staff members discussed the emphasis of staff communication and tracking of individual students at School 1. One teacher commented that monitoring enables “each teacher [to] see if students are falling behind.” Another teacher noted, “Now they [the students] know immediately what they need to improve on.”

Survey responses at School 1 indicate a strong internal focus on CSR efforts. Over three fourths of the 64 respondents (77%) believed that teachers were generally supportive of the CSR program, and 80% felt that the CSR program helped the school meet improvement goals. When asked if the school staff regularly reviewed implementation and outcome benchmarks, 84% agreed. However, only 55% of respondents were satisfied with the fiscal resources that were supporting CSR. (See Figure 2.2 for more information on the Focus construct.)

**Figure 2.2. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Focus (N = 64)**



Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

The mean scale score for the Focus construct at School 1 was 3.96 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all five questions of the construct, 59% of staff rated the level of CSR focus as high. Combining respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all five questions of the construct, 2% rated focus as low.

### *PEDAGOGICAL CHANGE*

Teachers reported a high level of pedagogical change due to the implementation of AVID strategies, such as Cornell note taking, AVID binders, and WICR (Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, and Reading): “We have all received professional development and are utilizing the strategies in the classroom.” These teachers also thought that the strategies were “simple and fun to use” and were helping the students. One teacher described what an AVID-

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***“Teachers used to just rely on handouts, but now they have a wider array of strategies.”***

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based classroom might look like: “You would see organization; you would see Cornell notes, writing, student products that reflect new strategies ... A couple of years ago it was hard to pick great achievements, but now we have become more proud of our students and their work.” Teachers in the focus group commented on new lessons being more rigorous and effective, as well as an increased amount of interdisciplinary instruction. The Technical Assistance Provider reported that 50% of teachers had made pedagogical changes, and all staff members had begun to cooperate and team teach more often.

The principal has also noticed the instructional changes: “Teachers used to just rely on handouts, but now they have a wider array of strategies.” Also according to the principal, the

school conducts “different types of assessments,” and the teachers “use manipulatives, visual pictures and ... create more authentic tests.” For teachers who do not feel completely comfortable with the strategies, the principal has provided more time for staff development so that teachers can talk about what works for them.

Classroom observation data indicate that students were attentive, well-behaved, and engaged in their work. Teachers in all classrooms maintained an academic focus throughout the lesson. In their lectures, teachers took the time to explain concepts and did not move on until the students understood the material. Most teachers provided information and answers relative to the students’ learning; these teachers went beyond a simple correct or yes response. For instance, in a math class, the teacher provided a step-by-step explanation to a student’s question about integers. In general, the teachers were observed trying to make abstract concepts more practical and easier for students to grasp. Teachers also used higher-level questioning strategies throughout the evaluator’s site visit. Student participation was high, and individual seatwork was rarely observed.

Staff survey data on pedagogical issues indicate a moderate level of pedagogical change. Of the 64 respondents, 49% felt that the CSR program had changed classroom learning activities a great deal, and 41% reported that they used less textbooks or worksheets. Thirty-four percent used interdisciplinary or project-based learning two hours per day; however, it should be noted that 20% responded that they did not know or did not respond to this item indicating that there may not be a clear understanding of what project-based work means. Comparisons with this question should be interpreted with caution. Almost two thirds (63%) allowed students to work more in cooperative learning

teams. Over half (55%) thought that students used technology more effectively because of CSR. (See Table 2.5 for more information on the Pedagogy construct.)

The mean scale score for the Pedagogy construct was 3.57 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all five questions of the construct, 24% of staff rated pedagogical change as high. Combining respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all five questions of the construct, none rated pedagogical change as low. (See Appendix B for scale description.)

### RESTRUCTURING OUTCOMES

#### Student Impacts

*Achievement.* Many teachers were not aware of changes in TAKS scores due to AVID. One teacher said, “Since this is the first year, we are going to be collecting TAKS scores. We have the scores from last year, and we will compare the scores from this year to last year’s to determine the growth.” Another teacher remarked that the benchmark scores were the same as last year

but that they hoped to see an improvement in TAKS scores. Teachers, the CSR coordinator, and the principal commented on improved

***“.. A couple of years ago it was hard to pick great achievements, but now we have become more proud of our students and their work.”***

classroom grades: “Students will not accept a failing grade.” The CSR coordinator noted, “I think there has been a big improvement with the majority of the students.” All who discussed the improvement in grades indicated that it was due to AVID implementation.

*Academic engagement.* Staff reported numerous student impacts due to the AVID program. Specifically the AVID strategies like Cornell note taking seem to be helping students with organization and academic engagement. According to one teacher, “the introduction of the Cornell notes has helped a lot in the classroom, has helped the students make sense of their notes and review effectively. It has

**Table 2.5. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Pedagogy (N = 64)**

Pedagogy	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don't Know/ Missing
Because of our CSR program, I use textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets less than I used to for basic skills or content area instruction.	41%	41%	9%	9%
Our CSR program has changed classroom learning activities a great deal.	49%	39%	5%	8%
Students in my class spend at least two hours per school day in interdisciplinary or project-based work.	34%	36%	9%	20%
Students in my class spend much of their time working in cooperative learning teams.	63%	20%	11%	6%
Students are using technology more effectively because of our CSR program.	55%	30%	6%	9%

Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

gotten the students to take more responsibility over their learning.” Teachers in the focus group felt that “the strategies utilized in the classroom allow students to become more motivated and interested. Their organizational skills have improved.”

Staff also saw more opportunities to involve diverse types of learners. The AVID classes, for instance, include LEP and G/T students. One teacher said that the AVID program “has helped the LEP students immensely.” Though no special education students are in the AVID classes, the principal reported that these students had more opportunities to work with the technology purchased with CSR funds, which made instruction “more rigorous for them.”

AVID has also helped the school develop high expectations for students. One teacher said, “I would say that it [AVID] is more challenging to the students. Having them perform at a level that they are not used to performing ... has had a positive effect on the student overall.” The CSR coordinator also described the school’s culture of high academic expectations: “The teacher expects a lot from the AVID student; they have high expectations.” Further, staff reported that this change had impacted all students, not just those in the AVID class. Parents also noted academic progress in their children.

Results from the Technical Assistance Provider survey indicate that for the students who participate in the program, the CSR program at School 1 has had a moderate impact including but not limited to motivation, quality of work, attendance, and performance on tests.

*Affective impacts.* In addition to improvements in student motivation, staff believed that there were more opportunities for students to work together, which resulted

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***“[AVID] has given them a sense of belonging and the confidence to approach teachers with questions that they once would have not been able to have asked because of shyness.”***

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in a spirit of camaraderie among the students. The CSR coordinator also recognized this change: “They [AVID students] feel they belong to a group, they meet during advisory, they eat together, and they become close friends.” Other teachers saw a difference in the students’ self-esteem and confidence: “It has given them a sense of belonging and the confidence to approach teachers with questions that they once would have not been able to have asked because of shyness.”

*Future orientation.* The impetus behind selecting the AVID model was that the school wanted to improve academic success in the upper grades, including increasing college awareness among students and parents. Teachers in the focus group discussed incentives offered to students in order to encourage them to think about future opportunities: “They visit the university, they are becoming interested and enthusiastic, and they have motivational speakers.” One teacher noted, “I think students are more enthusiastic about the prospect of going to college. They already know. They already have a goal in mind.” A college awareness outreach effort was also extended to parents. One teacher reported, “AVID parents have been informed about possibilities, tuition, and opportunities.”

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### *Staff Impacts*

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The most commonly cited impact on staff was the development of true teams of teachers who work together around the common goal of student success. The principal commented



on this notion of a team: “They [the teachers] don’t have to compete; they seek out a way to better themselves and the products of the students.” The teachers also saw themselves as a more collaborative community: “We have always planned together ... but now we really have to plan more effectively to make sure we all do the same thing. We are all covering the objectives. We are connecting with each other.” Teachers talked about the need to communicate in order to focus on students and their needs. The CSR coordinator said, “They talk amongst themselves on how to improve, and, instead of removing a child, they talk about it and see how they can improve.”

Teachers were also able to use the AVID strategies and professional development opportunities to meet the needs of all their students. According to one teacher, AVID “has given teachers more options, shown teachers different ways to reach students.” Another teacher noted, “It has helped professionally, has provided more current methods to utilize in the classroom, and has resulted in more effective teachers because of the AVID trainings that we have received.” Multiple teachers saw an increase in staff holding positive attitudes about students.

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### *Parental Involvement*

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The school’s community support comes from the AVID tutors as well as the parents who allow their children to stay after school for extra help. Parents were invited to a parent night to provide them with information about AVID. Awareness sessions have been provided for the parents, and there is a lot of support from the parents for the AVID program. The principal stated that the parents who know about the reform model are very positive about the program because they feel that their children are receiving help. The parents feel it is something beneficial for the students. Most

of the involvement comes from the parents of students in the AVID program; other parents are not becoming involved.

Overall, staff responses to survey questions related to CSR outcomes supported the site visit data. Over half of respondents (59%) felt that student achievement had been positively impacted by CSR, and another 63% attributed more positive interactions between teachers and students to CSR. However, only 30% of respondents thought that parents were more involved because of CSR, and 34% felt that community support had increased. It should be noted that the items pertaining to parental and community involvement had over 20% of the respondents either mark “Don’t Know” or skip these questions. Therefore, comparisons with these questions should be interpreted with caution. (See Table 2.6 for more information on the Outcomes construct.)

The mean scale score for the Outcomes construct was 3.66 on a 5-point scale.

Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all nine questions of the construct, 22% of staff saw strong evidence of CSR-related outcomes. Combining respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all nine questions of the construct, 2% rated evidence of CSR-related outcomes as low. (See Appendix B for scale description.)

## **III. IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY**

### ***Key Points***

School 1 is following the AVID model according to specifications, and the school is also meeting CSR grant requirements. Though the school faculty did not have a formal vote on model selection, the site team did visit campuses that served similar populations to learn more about the AVID process before choosing the model. There was some confusion

**Table 2.6. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Outcomes (N = 64)**

Outcomes	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don't Know/ Missing
Student achievement has been positively impacted by CSR.	59%	28%	3%	9%
Students in this school are more enthusiastic about learning than they were before we became a CSR school.	49%	36%	5%	11%
Because of CSR, parents are more involved in the educational program of this school.	30%	39%	8%	24%
Community support for our school has increased since CSR has been implemented.	34%	34%	5%	27%
Students have higher standards for their own work because of our school's program.	59%	25%	8%	8%
Teachers are more involved in decision making at this school than they were before we implemented CSR.	55%	28%	9%	8%
Our program adequately addresses the requirements of students with special needs.	67%	13%	9%	11%
Because of our school's program, teachers in this school spend more time working together to develop curriculum and plan instruction.	66%	22%	6%	6%
Because of CSR, interactions between teachers and students are more positive.	63%	30%	2%	6%

*Note.* Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

during the first implementation phase about what student population AVID would initially serve. The process has now been clarified, and the teachers seem to be satisfied with the student selection matrix.

All teachers have been trained in AVID strategies, and the principal has arranged for ongoing professional development opportunities. Specifically the principal wants teachers who feel uncomfortable with the strategies to be able to talk with other teachers about how they use the strategies successfully in their classrooms.

The number of students who are actually enrolled in AVID is a small portion of the school's population because School 1 is piloting

AVID as an elective course in grades 7–8. However, since teacher and administrative support is high, there are plans to expand AVID across all grade levels, first for all at-risk students, and then for all students at School 1. Staff explained, “I know that next year the campus is going to be AVIDized. I think we are making strides.” Many teachers mentioned using the AVID strategies with students who are not in the AVID courses.

### **School Climate Inventory**

One way to tap success of CSR implementation indirectly is to measure school climate. The School Climate Inventory (SCI) is global measure of school climate composed of seven dimensions logically and empirically associated with effective school climates. (See



Appendix B for scale description.) The SCI was administered as part of the staff survey. The overall mean SCI rating for School 1 was a 3.92 on a 5-point scale. Results from the SCI indicate an overall school climate that is higher than the national average for secondary schools of 3.73. The highest mean rating was given for the Expectations dimension of 4.07 (compared to a national norm of 3.82), and the lowest mean rating was obtained for the Order dimension of 3.46 (compared to a national norm of 3.26). (See Figure 2.3 and Table 2.7 for more information on SCI data.)

Professional staff consistently agreed that the school embodies a culture of high expectations and multiple opportunities for students. The exceptions include students sharing responsibility for keeping the school environment attractive and clean (55% of staff agreed), and students being held responsible for

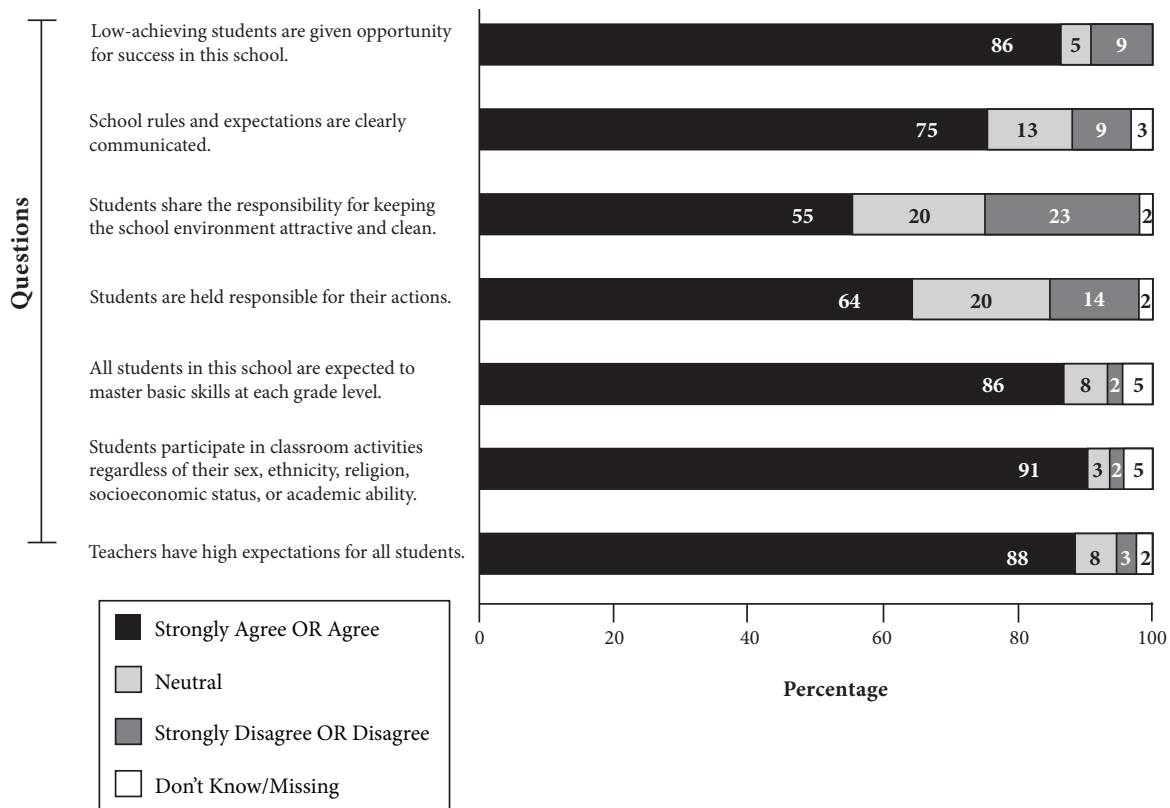
their actions (64% of staff agreed). For all other items, 75% or more staff agreed. (See Figure 2.3 for more information on the Expectations dimension.)

Even though professional staff rated Order as the lowest dimension, School 1 was still higher than the national norm. Tardiness and absenteeism were perceived to be a problem at the school by 64% of respondents. When asked if the school was a safe place to work, 86% of staff agreed. (See Table 2.7 for more information on the Order dimension.)

### Assessment of Implementation Level

With an instrument designed to assess the strength of CSR implementation based on the 11 CSR components, School 1 received a score of 39 out of a possible 51 points, reflecting a

**Figure 2.3. School Climate Inventory Responses About Expectations (N = 64)**



Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

**Table 2.7. School Climate Inventory Responses About Order (N = 64)**

Order	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don't Know/ Missing
Rules for student behavior are consistently enforced.	72%	8%	19%	2%
Student discipline is administered fairly and appropriately.	64%	20%	14%	2%
Student misbehavior in this school does not interfere with the teaching process.	41%	11%	47%	2%
Student tardiness or absence from school is not a major problem.	22%	11%	64%	3%
This school is a safe place in which to work.	86%	9%	3%	2%
Teachers, administrators, and parents assume joint responsibility for student discipline.	60%	16%	20%	5%
Student behavior is generally positive in this school.	58%	22%	19%	2%

*Note.* Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

high level of implementation. School 1 received all possible points for areas 6–Support for Teachers and Principals, 10–Coordination of Resources, and 11–Strategies That Improve Academic Achievement. These areas are reflected in the strong district support for AVID at this school and the evidence that teachers have seen of improved student work after the implementation of AVID strategies. School 1 also scored highly in these areas: 1–Research-Based Method or Strategy, 2–Comprehensive Design, and 3–Professional Development.

Assessment of the implementation level by the Technical Assistance Provider indicated a 3.91 on 5-point scale suggesting the school is fulfilling implementation requirements and close to institutionalization of the program.

### **Facilitators**

Staff commitment to the goals of the program is facilitating implementation of AVID at School 1. The principal noted that program goals were to address AYP requirements,

increase academic scores, and help prepare students for more rigorous high school and college curricula. Teachers were supportive of these goals: “Something needed to be done because our scores were low. They brought in a program like AVID ... we needed something to pick up the scores so we would not miss AYP.” Another teacher reported, “I would think that we are going to try anything to make these children succeed.” Another facilitator is that understanding of the model is consistent: “The school is implementing the AVID model with goals to prepare students that come from a low socio-economic background to go to college. The program is geared to those students that need the extra push, that have the capacity, but need the skills to become prepared to attend college.”

The staffing for AVID at School 1 is also particularly strong. The school’s use of four college students as AVID tutors seemed to be a positive way for the grades 7–8 students to connect with older students who had already

made it to college. Teachers were particularly happy with the broad availability of the tutors. Hiring the CSR coordinator was another positive staffing move for School 1. Though the CSR coordinator sometimes mentioned being overwhelmed with administrative duties related to AVID and the CSR grant, the staff felt that she was highly effective. The CSR coordinator and the teachers also praised the support from the principal for AVID activities.

Data from staff surveys indicate support from school administration and support from teachers, as well as training/professional development as the most important facilitators.

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***...since teacher and administrative support is high, there are plans to expand AVID across all grade levels, first for all at-risk students, and then for all students at School 1***

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The AVID model itself is another facilitator. The AVID strategies are seen as improving the instructional process for teachers and for students. Providing the AVID binders for the students and teaching them to become more organized is also facilitating the students' path to success. Teachers repeatedly mentioned a number of ways they had seen students become more successful, including higher self-esteem, better organizational skills, a sense of camaraderie with peers, and improved classroom grades. The information that students keep in their binders allows teachers to see where and when students are falling behind, thus permitting teachers to help students and to communicate with other teachers who have the students in their classes. The strategies utilized in the classrooms have been very effective for the students as well as for the teachers. In particular, the teachers mention the use of

Cornell note taking, and the evaluator observed this process during the classroom visits.

Another important facilitator at School 1 is its plans to expand and sustain the AVID program beyond the CSR grant period. Building on the high support for the program during the piloting phase, School 1 is going to expand the model school wide to include many more students than the model design indicates. These plans also are aided by the high level of district support for AVID at the school. Next year, when the CSR grant funds are reduced, the district has committed to paying the CSR coordinator's salary. The district has also helped the school with administrative duties like developing a budget, helping with purchase orders, facilitating field trips, and hiring AVID tutors. The district also provides support through professional development and training.

Another important aspect for sustainability is the signs of integration of the AVID and GEAR UP programs. GEAR UP funds have supplemented AVID-related activities, such as training and parent awareness workshops. The CSR coordinator is also actively looking for funding opportunities that would help keep AVID going at the school.

### ***Barriers***

Many potential barriers have been avoided due to the strong staffing of the AVID program at School 1. The CSR coordinator has been particularly helpful in solving problem situations, especially during the initial implementation phase. For instance, teachers were unhappy with the process for selecting students—mostly because there were no criteria for selection. Now there is a selection matrix in place, and teachers seem to be pleased with the process.

The CSR coordinator has also helped to alleviate some of the effects of the cut in grant

*Chapter 2*  
*School 1*  
*High-Level*  
*Implementation*

funds. The district will be more involved in providing financial support, and the CSR coordinator is identifying grants that could help with the cost of making AVID available to all students. The cut in funds is still difficult for the school, as the principal noted, “Cutting off the funds for the grant ... keeps us from really doing things that we had planned to do.” Despite the school’s efforts to sidestep these barriers, teachers indicated that the three largest barriers to implementation at the school included lack of financial resources, lack of time, and poor parent/community involvement.





## SCHOOL 2

### HIGH-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION

**GRADE LEVEL:** ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

**CSR MODEL:** CO-NECT

**GRANT TYPE:** IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING (ITL)

**AWARD DATE:** AUGUST 2004

#### I. LOCAL CONTEXT

SCHOOL 2 IS LOCATED IN THE NORTHWEST corner of a large urban city. It serves approximately 500 students in grades PK–5. The majority of students are Hispanic, English language learners, and economically disadvantaged. (See Table 3.1 for more demographic information.) The facility is enclosed within a chain-link fence on a large lot with a number of outbuildings serving as classrooms. The building and grounds are well maintained and clean.

#### *Starting Points*

Two years ago, students from another elementary school in the district were transferred to School 2, along with some teachers, due to declining enrollment at both schools. Enrollment continued to decline at School 2 in 2005–06, and some teachers have two grade levels in combined classrooms. In 2004–05, the principal was promoted and served as both an executive principal (over

several elementary schools) and principal of School 2. A new principal was appointed to School 2 in 2005–06. He has experience as a teacher and as an administrator in both middle and high school settings. The principal said that, because of the merging of the schools, it has taken some time for all the teachers to see themselves as part of School 2.

Student achievement on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) at School 2 in 2004–05, though slightly improved from the previous year, remains below the district and state average performances for all tests and reading. Mathematics scores at School 2 were one percentage point higher than the district average mathematics score for 2005 for all grades tested.

The principal described School 2 as a small elementary school with a low enough enrollment for the school to provide a feeling of community: “All of the teachers care about the students. This is a small campus, and everyone matters.” Parents confirmed that the school

**Table 3.1. Demographic Profile, 2004–05**

Total Students	African American	Hispanic	White	Other	Economically Disadvantaged	Mobility (2003–04)	Limited English Proficient
510	5%	91%	4%	0%	97%	20%	53%

Source. Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS)

**Table 3.2. Accountability and TAKS Performance History**

Year	Campus Rating	TAKS Met Standard All Grades Tested (All Tests)	Reading	Mathematics	Writing	Science
2003-04	Academically Acceptable	40%	70%	64%	56%	38%
2004-05	Academically Acceptable	42%	70%	61%	75%	32%

Source. Texas Education Agency, AEIS

provided a good environment and had been stable and strong due to prior leadership that was “very good.” Parents also credited previous administrators with seeking grants to help improve the school.

In 2003, School 2 was chosen as a National Visitation School for its successful implementation of the Co-nect program through a Title VII (Bilingual Education) grant awarded in September 2000. The school purchased a Co-nect Solutions package focused on project-based learning and technology, with an emphasis on oral language proficiency for English language learners. This process occurred under a different principal from the one who is currently at the school. Under the Title VII grant, School 2 did not implement a full comprehensive school reform plan. Rather, the school was part of a larger group of schools that had a professional development contract with Co-nect from 2000 to 2005. As a group, all of the schools focused on using project-based learning to increase oral English language development. Additionally, individual schools selected particular professional development

focus areas dependent upon the needs of their campuses.

In addition to Co-nect, the school currently operates several other programs. Summary descriptions of these programs adapted from their websites are provided.

- **Reading First.** Reading First is a nationwide effort to enable all students to become successful early readers. Funds are dedicated to help states and local school districts eliminate the reading deficit by establishing high-quality, comprehensive reading instruction in grades K–3. The program is designed to select, implement, and provide professional development for teachers using scientifically based reading programs. Another goal of the program is to ensure accountability through ongoing and reliable screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based assessment.
- **Success for All.** Success for All is a comprehensive reading approach for grades PK–6 designed to ensure that every child will read at or above grade level. The program emphasizes prevention and early intervention to respond to learning problems. Success for All is an approved CSR model in accordance with the No Child Left Behind Act. Success for All provides schools with curriculum

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*The principal described School 2 as a small elementary school with a low enough enrollment for the school to provide a feeling of community*

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materials, professional development, assessment and data-monitoring tools, classroom management techniques, one-to-one student tutoring, and family involvement and community support strategies.

- **Project GRAD/Move with Math.** Project GRAD/Move with Math is a mathematics system for teaching and learning that promotes a balance between students' understanding of mathematics concepts and students' computational fluency in grades K–8. Project GRAD focuses on student discovery, reasoning, and communication so that students understand and can articulate mathematical concepts. Students also develop a fluency in the facts and procedures of mathematics and are prepared to move through the curriculum with a foundation based upon understanding rather than memorization.

Parental involvement at School 2 was described as “about the same as at other elementary schools.” Staff indicated that parental involvement was limited.

## II. MODEL ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

### *Selection Process*

School 2's Co-nect program received additional funding in February 2005 under the Improving Teaching and Learning/Comprehensive School Reform grant program (ITL/CSR). Through this grant, School 2 added comprehensive school reform components to the existing professional development support, focusing on project-based learning and technology. Only one person interviewed, a teacher with 11 years of experience at the school, was conversant with how the program was selected for School 2. She said she was part of the site-based

decision-making committee and the Co-nect Design Team and that “we all sort of voted for it.” The principal confirmed that the decision to use Co-nect involved the site-based decision-making committee: “It was not a unilateral decision; the teachers were involved.” The principal also understood that this was a larger district initiative based on the feeder patterns of the district and a district-level decision to use project-based learning across schools in the district. (See Table 3.3 for more information about Co-nect).

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***The principal confirmed that the decision to use Co-nect involved the site-based decision-making committee: “It was not a unilateral decision; the teachers were involved.”***

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### *Initial Implementation*

Because the program has been in the school for so long, much of the information about the early implementation is limited. Additionally, the school's progress report to TEA indicated that funding for the 2004–05 school year was scheduled for August 1, 2004, but was not received until February 2005. This delay stalled initial program activities.

The principal attended an academy sponsored by Co-nect, and an overview and training for the staff were provided by the CSR program coordinator and the Co-nect Technical Assistance Provider, a former School 2 teacher. The Technical Assistance Provider then met with teachers in groups to target instruction to teacher needs. She also met with new teachers at the beginning of the year to introduce them to the program and its features.

A full-time CSR coordinator position was hired in February 2005. The coordinator was trained as a Co-nect facilitator eight years ago. He has been at School 2 for two years. Due



**Table 3.3. Co-nect Model Design**

***Background***

Founded by the Educational Technologies Group at BBN Corporation and recently acquired by Pearson Publishing Corporation, the Co-nect model began in 1992. Co-nect is a K–12, school-wide program in over 175 schools. Of the students at these schools, 75% are of color and 62% qualify for free/reduced lunch. The focus of Co-nect is to improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools through the collection and analysis of data. Teams of teachers work with Co-nect facilitators to design instruction that is rigorous, project-based, and aligned with state and local standards.

***Key Strategies and Features***

- Individual support for teachers and administrators to develop a course of action that is specific to each school
- Local identification of the causes of and a plan to address achievement gaps
- Specialized instruction for struggling students
- Customized online and on-site training and support that includes diagnostic tools to help schools meet Adequate Yearly Progress
- Online learning modules
- A database of curriculum projects that are tied to state standards
- A library of effective, sustainable instructional techniques
- Implementation monitoring and regular progress reviews

***Key Components***

- Participating schools should be organized into small learning communities called clusters.
- A full-time facilitator is recommended, though not required.
- Awareness sessions to create staff buy-in are provided.
- Support for Co-nect adoption by at least 75% of faculty members is recommended.
- Principals receive an initial two-day training.
- All faculty members receive at least three days of training each year.

Source. Co-nect website, <http://www.co-nect.net/>

to a decrease in funding for the second year of the grant, the coordinator was assigned a combined grades 4–5 classroom and shared project coordination with a staff member who served as the technology resource person. This change, according to the coordinator, was positive in that having both a teaching role and a coordinating role gave him “credibility with other teachers when they express doubt about project learning [being] done effectively.”

***Factors Impacting  
CSR Implementation***

***SCHOOL CAPACITY***

***Materials***

The Co-nect program has several key instruments that are used to implement the program. These include the Evidence

of Quality Teaching classroom observation tool, Instructional Practices Survey of teacher perceptions, and Evidence of Quality Work student-work analysis tool. Additionally, the program offers a project development guide to direct teacher development of understanding and implementation of project-based learning activities in the classroom.

Staff repeatedly described the Technical Assistance Provider as “very responsive and helpful” concerning materials. One commented that “[previously] I had to dig up my own [materials].” Teachers also indicated that the school librarian was helpful and proactive in preparing materials for upcoming projects.

Technology was also an issue teachers commented on when asked about materials. Grant funds were used to purchase a new technology lab. Staff reported that “the new computer lab [was] helpful, especially to the upper grades.” Training on the use of applications and research using the Internet was being provided to teachers on an “as-needed” basis. Technology upgrades were also provided to individual classrooms, though some teachers indicated needing operational technology in the classrooms: “I have four computers in my room, and none are online. It is a huge challenge.”

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### *Staffing and Planning Time*

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The full-time coordinator position was reduced to a part-time shared position in the second year of the grant, but there was no indication that this impacted implementation. Teachers did not mention any staffing needs. Planning was described as “a big element” of the program that was “time intensive.” During the fall semester of the school year, teachers met each Friday afternoon for curriculum mapping and project development. Teachers found this time useful, but it also “took away from individual planning.” During the spring

semester, focus turned to TAKS preparation. The principal noted, “The curriculum mapping is time intensive and has suffered due to time constraints.”

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### ***During the fall semester of the school year, teachers met each Friday afternoon for curriculum mapping and project development.***

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### *Fiscal Resources to Support Staff, Materials, and Technical Assistance*

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Fiscal resources to support the program were a point of concern for staff. Funding for the grant was not in place until midyear of the 2004–05 school year. The amount of funding was cut in the second year and will be decreased again in the third year. This reduction has affected the ability of the school to fund the CSR coordinator position.

Staff also commented that they “needed funds for field trips to support project-based learning.” The coordinator observed, “It would be great to provide teachers with money to come in and develop their projects in the summer [because] it is much harder to implement project-based learning once school has started.” He said, “If you look at the school budget, more money is being spent on worksheets for the TAKS than on project-based learning.”

Of the 38 professional staff at School 2, 25 completed surveys for a response rate of 66%. In terms of school capacity issues related to CSR implementation, 44% of respondents said they were given sufficient planning time, and 52% of the School 2 staff strongly agreed or agreed that they had the necessary materials for implementing CSR. Another 52% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that

they had sufficient staffing. A majority (84%) judged technology resources to have become more available because of CSR. It should be noted, however, across the first three questions in this construct, 48% to 56% of respondents selected “Neutral” or “Disagree” to these items indicating mixed perceptions about the adequacy of school capacity to support CSR. (See Figure 3.1 for more information on the Capacity construct.)

Overall, staff rated the Capacity construct at School 2 to be a 3.23 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all four questions related to capacity, 28% of staff rated school capacity as high, compared to 12% of the respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all four questions. (See Appendix B for scale description.)

Additionally, results from the Technical Assistance Provider survey indicate the provider judged the school’s capacity to be adequate in terms of materials, staffing, and planning time. The provider did not judge the

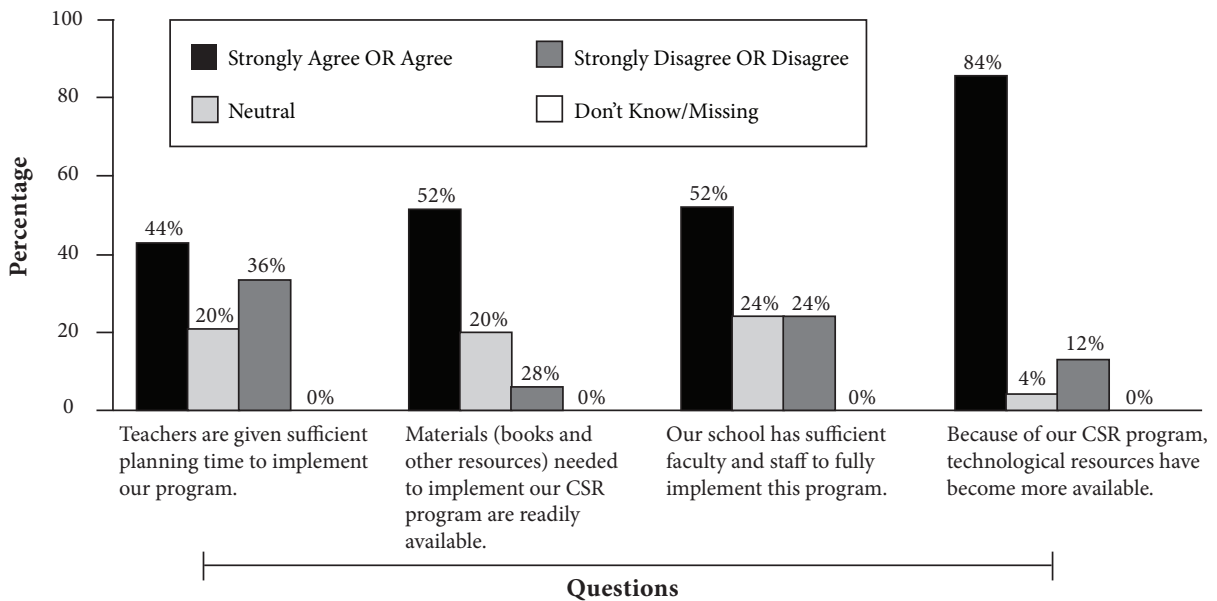
school’s capacity in terms of fiscal resources to be sufficient.

*EXTERNAL SUPPORT*

*External Professional Development*

Site data indicate the Co-nect external Technical Assistance Provider provided School 2 staff with intensive and ongoing professional development. In addition to a whole-school overview of the program at the beginning of the school year and smaller content-focused sessions, teachers met with the Technical Assistance Provider on a regular basis during the first semester of the school year and were given specific deadlines and feedback on project-based learning planning using Co-nect Project Planning Worksheets. The teachers used the scheduled planning period every Friday afternoon to analyze data, engage in curriculum mapping, and plan for specific projects. The Technical Assistance Provider survey results corroborate this information, indicating that Co-nect provided whole-school trainings, workshops, coaching and mentoring, and study groups. The survey also stated that the school

**Figure 3.1. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Capacity (N = 25)**



Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

received approximately 320 hours of support across all 11 components of CSR over the first two years of the grant.

All school participants felt that the fall semester was very focused on project development, curriculum mapping, and data analysis. The number of projects teachers were required to implement increased from two to three in 2005–06, and the Technical Assistance Provider was instrumental in ensuring that projects were aligned with the curriculum (TEKS). Deadlines for developing and accomplishing the projects were put in place and met. All of the teachers mentioned that the process for developing projects was time intensive. For example, a 4th-grade teacher reported that their grade level developed two projects: “Tracking weather during hurricane season and how land formations affect the people living there. We met every day on that.” Most, but not all, said the effort was worthwhile because of how well project-based learning went in the classroom and the positive changes they saw in their students’ motivation as a result.

The curriculum mapping exercise facilitated by the Technical Assistance Provider was uniformly perceived to be very helpful. This process identified TEKS objectives that are taught at each grade and those that are taught in an earlier grade and tested in a later grade. The coordinator said they discovered “holes between grade levels” in instruction. For example, 3rd-grade classes are all bilingual at School 2 and are mostly taught in Spanish. However, students are expected to take the 4th-grade writing test in English. The review revealed an area, said the teacher, where the “transition from Spanish to English is not in place yet.”

The principal felt the assistance was successful for project development, especially during the

first semester. The project coordinator stated that “there was no time to debrief after the first projects were completed—to do lessons learned.” He felt there was also not enough focus on differentiated instruction, either for the teachers or for the students.

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***The survey also stated that the school received approximately 320 hours of support across all 11 components of CSR over the first two years of the grant.***

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#### *Integrated District Assistance*

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The staff, with the exception of the principal, was consistent in indicating that the school district did not provide direct support for the program during the current school year. The principal indicated that staff development efforts are supported with both the grant and campus budgets and include attendance at conferences and training, classroom management training for new teachers, training on teaching gifted and talented students, and early learning in science. He also said that the district grant department helps with the grant application process and coordinates the submission of required progress reports.

Consistent with the information reported from interviews and focus groups, School 2 staff rated external support, in terms of receiving effective external professional development and assistance to implement its CSR program, the highest of the five constructs measured by the survey. Eighty percent indicated a thorough understanding of the school’s CSR program and that training associated with CSR was valuable. Over three quarters (76%) responded that they had had adequate initial and ongoing training, as well as external support for school implementation its CSR program. Only 56%

stated that the school received help from a university or business. (See Table 3.4 for more information on the Support construct.)

The mean scale score for the Support construct was 3.63 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all five questions of the Support construct, 40% of staff rated support provided as high. Combining respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all five questions of the construct, 4% rated external support as low. (See Appendix B for scale description.)

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### *INTERNAL FOCUS*

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#### *Staff Buy-In and Support*

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Because Co-nect has been in operation on the campus for over six years, there was little recollection about initial support. Teachers understood the model well even though the school operated several other school-wide programs.

Current support for the program appeared mixed. Teachers in the lower grades stated that the program was “wonderful at the early grades.” Support, they said, “has increased. We are a whole lot more aligned. We share ideas. It is very positive on our wing,” but more help was needed to integrate the program campus wide. The teachers at the upper grades “worry[ied] about testing. It is hard to let students progress at their own pace and work on projects when the test is looming.” Overall, staff indicated that it was “a big success but that it hasn’t happened for everyone.”

Both the principal and the coordinator indicated that a majority of teachers support the program. The principal estimated that approximately “75% of teachers support the program—the remaining are veteran teachers

who are more resistant to changing the way they teach. One hundred percent are involved in doing projects and in the data analysis.” The coordinator said, “There are probably three groups. About a third of core teachers who believe in the program; these are mostly site-based decision-making committee members. A little over a third do it and don’t mind it but don’t quite ‘get it’ yet. And then there is a small minority who think there are too many projects and don’t like it. They don’t like to give up their planning time to developing projects.”

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#### *Alignment and Integration With Existing Programs*

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Alignment among programs at the campus was minimal. Teachers were aware of the other programs but found that they were too rigid to integrate: “Teachers try to integrate all programs, but some do not have the flexibility.” They viewed Reading First and Success for All as separate programs and Project GRAD as another program emphasizing project-based learning. Of Reading First, the coordinator commented that “it is not directly aligned but provides resources for one of our objectives.” He noted that it also provided more data on reading at the lower grades where there was less data: “There is a lot of accountability built into that program.” The school staff did not indicate having or needing an intentional process for aligning the different programs they implemented. They also did not express confusion or frustration about having multiple programs operating at one time.

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#### *Monitoring*

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Staff monitored the progress of the grant in several ways: student performance through data analysis, pedagogy through the Evidence of Quality Teaching, and other student skills through a variety of tools. The principal described the data review process as “very

**Table 3.4. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Support (N = 25)**

Support	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don't Know/ Missing
I have a thorough understanding of this school's CSR program.	80%	12%	8%	0%
I have received adequate initial and ongoing professional development/training for CSR program implementation.	76%	16%	8%	0%
Professional development provided by external trainers, model developers, and/or designers has been valuable.	80%	16%	4%	0%
Guidance and support provided by our school's external facilitator, support team, or other state-identified resource personnel have helped our school implement its program.	76%	12%	12%	0%
My school receives effective assistance from external partners (e.g., university, businesses, agencies).	56%	20%	24%	0%

*Note.* Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

helpful and [leading] to a productive dialogue.” This process focused on examination of student performance on a released version of the TAKS for individual strengths and weaknesses by objective. This made the information directly relevant to the teachers and made it clear what areas need focus for the students to be successful on the TAKS in the spring. The released tests were given in August and January, and the results were compiled in Excel spreadsheets. The principal stated that he was very supportive: “Even if scores are low in August, that is to be expected. I want to see improvement from August to January to [the end of the year]. I don’t want this effort to be perceived as a negative. We want to be focused on the objectives.”

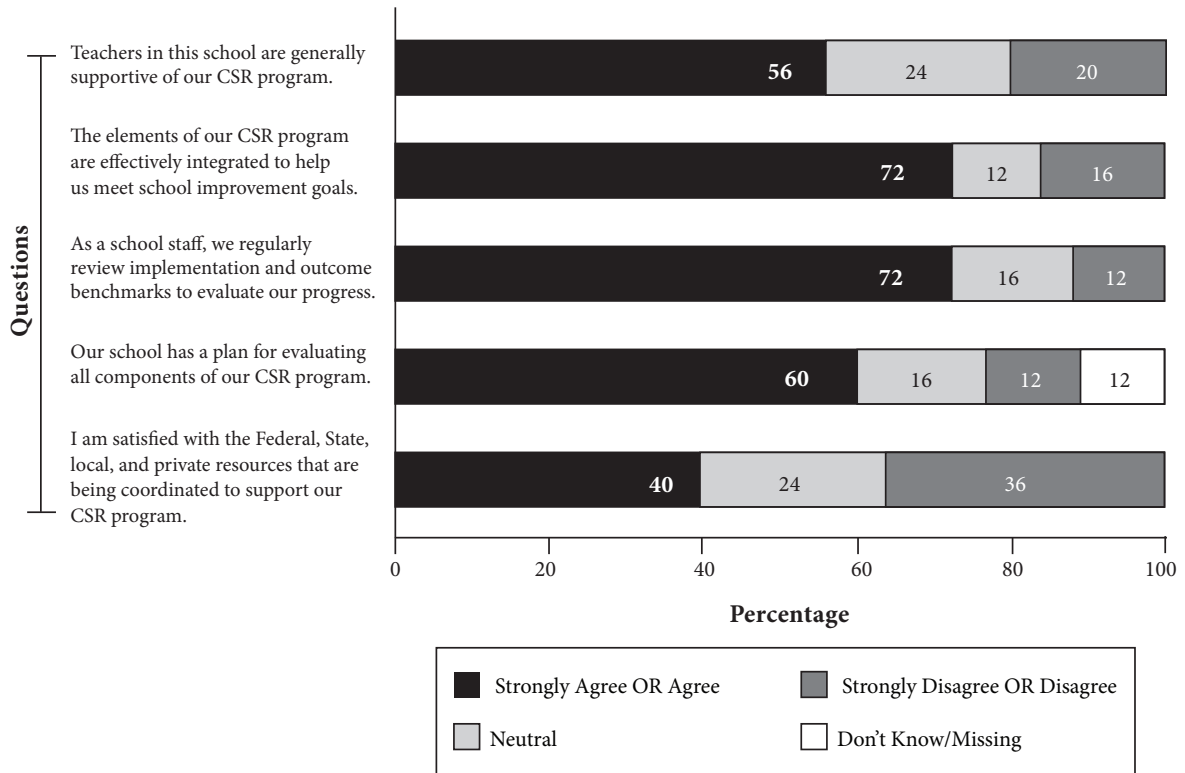
Additionally, the Evidence of Quality Teaching, a standard Co-nect tool for peer teaching observations and self-reflection, was used at

the first of the year and will be used again at the end across grade levels to target areas of weaknesses. Finally, staff mentioned using rubrics, checklists, and projects to assess student skills such as teamwork, language development, and following directions.

Staff survey data on the level of internal focus on CSR at the school were consistent with site visit data. Over half the staff (56%) agreed that teachers were generally supportive of the CSR program, while 24% responded “neutral” and 20% disagreed with the statement. However, 72% stated that the elements of CSR were effectively integrated and that the staff regularly reviewed implementation and outcome benchmarks to evaluate progress. Only 40% were satisfied with the coordination of resources to support CSR efforts. (See Figure 3.2 for more information on the Focus construct.)



Figure 3.2. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Focus (N = 25)



Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

The mean scale score for the Focus construct at School 2 was 3.38 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all five questions of the construct, 36% of staff rated the level of CSR focus as high. Combining respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all five questions of the construct, 8% rated Focus as low. (See Appendix B for scale description.)

#### PEDAGOGICAL CHANGE

School 2 made a focused effort to align teaching strategies with the Co-nect model specifications. The school increased the required number of projects this year and provided teachers with the assistance and time to develop them. Teachers know that “project-based learning is what it is all about” at this school.

The principal said he sees “less rows of students ... I see teachers up and moving around, using a variety of strategies. I see more collaboration with other teachers.” He also stated that teachers have increased cooperative approaches within grade levels, use of rubrics, and peer evaluations. He did note that there is variation in program implementation due to teacher experience and comfort with project-based learning. Some teachers are doing projects throughout the year, he said, while others are doing it “more just as compliance.”

The coordinator said he has seen a teacher “give up control of her classroom, step out of her comfort zone, and let the students work together.” The teachers said that this year there is more team teaching and collaboration within grades, more project-driven instruction, more student groups working together in the



classrooms, and more peer tutoring. Staff also noted, “We are moving away from the concrete to more abstract, authentic learning. The fun component has increased.”

Additionally, there has been a great effort placed on aligning projects with state standards as well as reducing redundancy in the curriculum by not re-teaching the same objectives at each grade level: “The curriculum mapping showed us how not to teach objectives over and over and to focus on those taught only in a specific grade.”

The reported emphasis on project-based learning was not as evident during classroom observations. This could be due to the fact that site visits were conducted in spring at a time when teachers reported shifting focus to TAKS preparation. Desks in all observed classrooms were arranged with students sitting face-to-face in groups of two or four. In general, students worked independently doing seatwork during the observation periods. In one class, students were working in groups to create a puzzle by making individual puzzle pieces. One class was involved in preparation for the TAKS. In almost all classes, the teachers worked alone while delivering direct instruction. No parental or community involvement was evident during the observations. Use of technology was limited to one class in which students were using computers to do independent research. The level of academically focused time was high overall, and students were mostly quiet and engaged.

Overall, staff perceptions of pedagogical change related to CSR implementation at School 2 were somewhat conflicting. Of the 25 respondents, 56% indicated using textbooks or worksheets less frequently. Over half (52%) of the staff responded that the CSR program had changed classroom learning activities a great deal, and 76% said students worked in cooperative learning teams much of the time. Since the

instructional focus of School 2’s CSR efforts was based on project-based learning, however, staff responses to a survey question about project-based learning were interesting: 40% agreed students spent two hours per school day in interdisciplinary or project-based work, and 40% disagreed with this statement. (See Table 3.5 for more information on the Pedagogy construct.)

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***The teachers said that this year there is more team teaching and collaboration within grades, more project-driven instruction, more student groups working together in the classrooms, and more peer tutoring.***

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The mean scale score for the Pedagogy construct was 3.26 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all five questions of the construct, 12% of staff rated pedagogical change as high. Combining respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all five questions of the construct, 8% rated pedagogical change as low. (See Appendix B for scale description.)

Results from the Technical Assistance Provider survey suggest that while teachers were engaging students in more project-based learning and using fewer worksheets, they still needed more focus in integrated technology and developing and using more authentic assessments.

## ***RESTRUCTURING OUTCOMES***

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### ***Student Impacts***

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***Achievement.*** School 2 used project-based learning strategies to focus on the academic achievement of students. The staff spent extensive time systematically reviewing data, identifying areas of need, targeting objectives,

**Table 3.5. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Pedagogy (N = 25)**

Pedagogy	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don't Know/ Missing
Because of our CSR program, I use textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets less than I used to for basic skills or content area instruction.	56%	16%	28%	0%
Our CSR program has changed classroom learning activities a great deal.	52%	24%	24%	0%
Students in my class spend at least two hours per school day in interdisciplinary or project-based work.	40%	20%	40%	0%
Students in my class spend much of their time working in cooperative learning teams.	76%	8%	12%	4%
Students are using technology more effectively because of our CSR program.	40%	32%	28%	0%

*Note.* Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

and monitoring student progress. Through this process, the principal and staff hoped to see improvement. The coordinator said looking at the previous year's results early in the year was very helpful as teachers were not defensive about any poor results or low performance from the prior year. The teachers also stated that this process was very helpful in obtaining clarity on which objectives needed attention, both for the whole class and to meet individual needs of students. Teachers described these activities as "very time intensive but worth the effort."

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***Teachers confirmed Co-nect has "created shared leadership and responsibility among teachers."***

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The principal provided information on the spring 2006 TAKS results, stating that 94% of students passed the 3rd-grade TAKS in English and that 95% passed the Spanish version: "With the mobility adjustment used in the

accountability system, the passing rate will be 100%." In 5th-grade reading, 51% of the students passed. According to the principal, "this was the same group that struggled in 4th grade. Although the passing rate is not where we want it to be, the students actually did better because the standard went up." However, the principal did not necessarily attribute improvement in scores to Co-nect.

*Academic engagement.* Teachers cited a great deal of anecdotal evidence of increased student focus, enthusiasm, motivation, retention of information, and desire not to miss school as a result of project-based learning. Teachers almost unanimously described improved engagement and interest in learning: "Participation in projects drives their motivation up and increases their drive to learn. They hate to miss any parts of the projects, so attendance is up." One staff member commented that "when the students have something fantastic to show, their motivation is through the roof." Another reported, "We

see big differences in student behavior. They are engaged in learning. There is no down time.” Staff also anecdotally reported increased learning: “The students learn a lot more because we connect the lessons to real life ... I’m surprised how much they remember ... Months after the project on the solar system [ended], my students still remember how long it takes for the earth to go around the moon.” One teacher summarized, “I see more awareness with Co-nect than with book learning. The students remember so much more.” While the staff felt project-based learning positively impacted student engagement, they did not note a correlation with improved achievement but did suspect this outcome would follow.

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***Teachers almost unanimously described improved engagement and interest in learning: “Participation in projects drives their motivation up and increases their drive to learn. They hate to miss any parts of the projects, so attendance is up.”***

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*Affective impacts.* A number of affective outcomes were achieved through the school’s reform efforts, including improving student relationships, learning to compromise, and providing positive peer pressure. Teachers indicated that project-based learning through Co-nect promoted positive relationships among the students: “The project has been huge in fostering relationships among students. They understand teamwork and the need to help each other along.” Another teacher described students learning how to “compromise and attach themselves to a project and know their roles in getting it accomplished.” Additionally, by participating in projects, students “get involved with each other, critique each other, and provide good peer pressure.” The coordinator reiterated the positive affective

impact of Co-nect: “I have heard a student say ‘I was going to play sick today but didn’t want to leave the project to the rest of the team today.’ This has been important in 5th grade. The students are working well together in groups even though they don’t always get along otherwise. These are good life skills.”

Results from the Technical Assistance Provider survey also indicate that the CSR program at School 2 contributed to increasing student interest in learning and motivation.

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#### *STAFF IMPACTS*

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Due to the merging of the two elementary schools last year, School 2 has been in transition. The principal commented that new staff members were still “getting used to PBL [project-based learning].” However, he thought that the team planning and project-development activities had reduced teacher isolation. He also explained that since the previous principal was promoted and was essentially doing two jobs, the teachers on the site-based decision-making committee had assumed a lot of responsibility. For example, the staff development plan was developed by the teachers and the Co-nect Technical Assistance Provider. Teachers confirmed Co-nect has “created shared leadership and responsibility among teachers.” The coordinator explained that “we decide as a staff where we are going.” Staff in the lower grades in particular have become more collegial and collaborative through project-based learning and shared planning. While the same process was used in upper grades, the impacts have not been as extensive due to the emphasis on testing. Additionally, these teachers have expressed frustration with the demands of balancing project-based learning and test preparation.

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### *Parental Involvement*

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Parents indicated minimal awareness and understanding of Co-nect. Several were aware of the grant because of the use of funds to create the new computer lab. The coordinator and principal agreed that parents were “probably not aware [of Co-nect].” The coordinator commented that the parents were “aware only in that they have been told about it. Do they know what it means and how their children are affected by it? No.”

Generally, the school did not make any special efforts to increase parental involvement beyond “special events.” School involvement with Co-nect did not seem to impact this area. Parents attended well at both special events associated with Co-nect as well as those not associated with the reform. However, parents did note that they felt they were “part of the decision making” and that their “ideas counted.” As evidence of this, one parent explained that, based on their recommendation, the volunteer community liaison was now a paid position.

Overall, staff interviews and survey data on restructuring outcomes were mixed and to some extent conflicted with interview and focus group data. For example, much of the anecdotal data suggests that student motivation and engagement improved because of CSR efforts. However, survey results show about an equal number of respondents (44%) reported that students were more enthusiastic about learning as the number of respondents who were “Neutral” (40%) about this question. Additionally, the site visit data suggested that teachers had yet to see an impact on student achievement associated with CSR, while survey responses indicated 60% agreed that student achievement had been positively impacted by CSR. In terms of other types of outcomes, 64% indicated that teachers spent more

time developing curriculum and planning instruction and that interactions between teachers and students were more positive as a result of CSR efforts. An equal number of teachers (48%) agreed they had more decision-making opportunities as marked neutral or disagreed. (See Table 3.6 for more information on the Outcomes construct.)

The mean scale score for the Outcomes construct was 3.29 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all nine questions of the construct, 20% of staff saw strong evidence of CSR-related outcomes. Combining respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all nine questions of the construct, 8% rated evidence of CSR-related outcomes as low. (See Appendix B for scale description.)

## **III. IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY**

### ***Key Points***

School 2 staff’s understanding of Co-nect, given the number of other programs running concurrently at the school, was evidence of a well-embedded program. During the 2005 fall semester, program activities were focused and frequent and included curriculum mapping, data analysis, and regular meetings with the Co-nect Technical Assistance Provider to plan projects and ensure alignment of the project goals with the state curriculum. Additionally, the staff spent considerable time reviewing student performance data to monitor student learning. This information contributed to project development.

For the most part, staff supported the project-based learning approach, which was central to its CSR efforts. A recurring theme, however,

**Table 3.6. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Outcomes (N = 25)**

Outcomes	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don't Know/ Missing
Student achievement has been positively impacted by CSR.	60%	20%	16%	4%
Students in this school are more enthusiastic about learning than they were before we became a CSR school.	44%	40%	16%	0%
Because of CSR, parents are more involved in the educational program of this school.	36%	40%	24%	0%
Community support for our school has increased since CSR has been implemented.	28%	48%	24%	0%
Students have higher standards for their own work because of our school's program.	44%	40%	16%	0%
Teachers are more involved in decision making at this school than they were before we implemented CSR.	48%	20%	28%	4%
Our program adequately addresses the requirements of students with special needs.	56%	20%	16%	8%
Because of our school's program, teachers in this school spend more time working together to develop curriculum and plan instruction.	64%	24%	12%	0%
Because of CSR, interactions between teachers and students are more positive.	64%	28%	8%	0%

Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

especially in the upper grades, was the tension of balancing the time involved with this instructional strategy and the pressure of TAKS preparation. While all teachers participated in project-based learning activities, the CSR coordinator estimated that one third were fully on board with the program, another third participated but still did not completely understand it, and a final third participated to comply. Still, staff reported impacts on pedagogy and a movement away from more traditional approaches. Teachers learned to guide more student-centered group learning. The teachers stated that that they were using

more rubrics and that their students gave more oral presentations and demonstrations.

While impacting student achievement is the primary goal of CSR, staff members were hesitant to attribute improved student learning to project-based learning. However, they did voice strong support that Co-nect positively impacted intermediate outcomes such as student engagement. Additionally, staff reported that through projects students learned to work well together and accommodate one another, especially those who have been in the same school and working in teams for two

to three years. Participation in Co-nect also increased staff collegiality on the campus: “There is common planning within grade levels as a result of the program, especially in the primary grades.” Parent participation was not effected by the CSR program; nor was it mentioned as a goal of the school’s reform efforts.

Although parents and teachers described the new computer lab as an important change, the use of technology did not emerge as a strong element in the program this year.

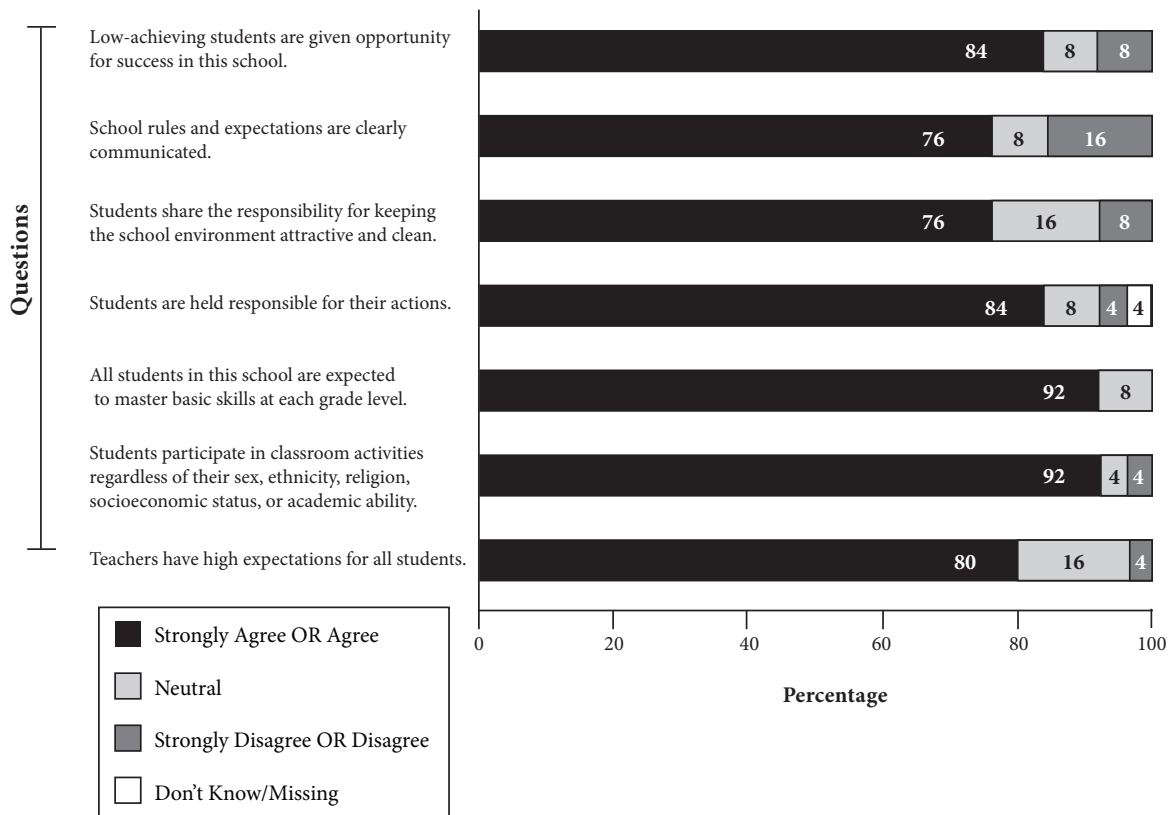
### School Climate Inventory

One way to tap the success of CSR implementation indirectly is to measure school climate. The School Climate Inventory (SCI), which was administered as part of the staff survey, measures school climate across seven dimensions. SCI data from School 2

indicated an overall mean rating of 3.69 on a 5-point scale, which is comparable to the national average for elementary schools of 3.93. The highest mean rating was given for the Expectation dimension of 3.85 (compared to a national norm of 4.04), and the lowest mean rating was obtained for the Involvement dimension of 3.42 (compared to a national norm of 3.91), indicating scores across the seven dimensions of school climate were rated similarly by school staff. (See Figure 3.3 and Table 3.7 for more information on SCI data.)

Staff consistently agreed that the school maintained high expectations for all students to succeed academically. Over three quarters (76%) of staff indicated that rules and expectations were clearly communicated and that students shared responsibility for keeping the school environment attractive and clean. Eighty percent of respondents noted that teachers have high expectations for all students.

Figure 3.3. School Climate Inventory Responses About Expectations (N = 25)



Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.



**Table 3.7. School Climate Inventory Responses About Involvement (N = 25)**

Involvement	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don't Know/ Missing
Community businesses are active in this school.	28%	24%	40%	8%
Parents actively support school activities.	52%	32%	16%	0%
Parents are treated courteously when they call or visit the school.	72%	16%	12%	0%
Parents are invited to serve on school advisory committees.	64%	28%	8%	0%
Parent volunteers are used whenever possible.	64%	28%	8%	0%
Information about school activities is communicated to parents on a consistent basis.	80%	8%	8%	4%
Parents are often invited to visit classrooms.	52%	16%	28%	4%

*Note.* Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Staff also overwhelmingly (84%) agreed that low-achieving students were given an opportunity for success and that students were held accountable for their actions. Finally, 92% agreed that students were expected to master basic skills and that all students participated in classroom activities. (See Figure 3.3 for more information on the Expectations dimension.)

Considering individual items in the Involvement dimension suggests that survey data corroborate site visit data in this area. Forty percent of staff indicated that community businesses were not active in the school. Eighty percent agreed that school information was consistently communicated to parents; however, only 52% stated that parents actively supported school activities. Over one quarter (28%) of the staff did not think parents were often invited to visit classrooms. (See Table 3.7 for more information on the Involvement dimension.)

### **Assessment of Implementation Level**

Measuring implementation of the Co-nect program at School 2 with an instrument designed to assess the strength of CSR implementation based on the 11 CSR components produced a score of 41 out of a possible 51 points. School 2 received full credit in several areas, including 1–Research-Based Method or Strategy, 2–Comprehensive Design, 5–Support Within the School, and 8–External Technical Support and Assistance. This score indicates that the school chose a model formally aligned with the 11 CSR components and then provided the necessary support to ensure model implementation.

Assessment of the implementation level provided by the Technical Assistance Provider indicated a 3.91 on a 5-point scale, suggesting a high level of implementation and that

the school is nearing “institutionalization.” This score is comparable to the evaluator’s implementation score based on site visit data. Thus, data suggest that School 2 exemplifies a school with a clear understanding of the goals of CSR, a plan for achieving these goals, and a staff committed to reaching the goals.

### **Facilitators**

Staff stated the basic framework of Co-nect facilitated a thorough and systematic process for improving student learning. The framework promoted in-depth data analysis, which targeted instruction to students’ needs based on test objectives. Curriculum mapping allowed the identification of “holes” in instruction across grade levels. Intensive team planning resulted in integration of all subjects through projects. The Technical Assistance Provider’s frequent and extensive involvement early in the year provided staff with support, materials, and focused feedback on the project objectives. Overall, the program focus redirected teaching from “book learning” to project-based, “real-life,” collaborative teaching and learning. Although teachers were not unanimous in seeing project-based learning as beneficial, the majority was very positive about it and felt that support was growing.

Survey results indicated that staff identified whole-school focus as a key facilitator for CSR implementation, followed by support from the school administration. Professional development and technology were also included as important elements in implementing CSR.

### **Barriers**

Testing pressures in spring made it difficult to maintain commitment to project-based learning, especially at the upper grades where teachers felt compelled to prepare for TAKS. Even though many of the participants felt that the elements of the program could prepare students to take the TAKS, instruction moved away from project-based learning to TAKS

worksheets. The emphasis on test preparation created a concomitant loss in program focus. Additionally, the amount of time required for project planning and ensuring project objectives were aligned with the TEKS was reported to be cumbersome. It was also noted, however, that this process was easier once a few good projects were developed and implemented. The school also lacked the ability to integrate technology into instruction adequately due to lack of training and access to current equipment and software, despite the purchase of a new computer lab. Finally, reduced funding and no indication of future support jeopardize the longevity of CSR at School 2.

Survey results indicated that staff viewed time, financial resources, and technology as barriers to full implementation of the program. These observations corroborate site visit data, suggesting that the project-based learning approach is time intensive and that teachers want more support for integrating technology.

Staff felt that the program could be very successful if it could be sustained as a school-wide focus for a number of years without interruption. This level of commitment, however, will require “strong principal support to stand up to district pressures to spend time on other activities and keep the focus on the program.” It will also require buy-in from all staff: “We need to stay focused and not lose the vision. If this is what the school is about, then be about that. Then teachers can ask themselves ‘Do I want to be a part of this?’ Staff can be hired based on that model and their belief in it.” Much progress has been made in implementing the program, but the school has “a ways to go—the structure is there and the mindset has been modeled but we need to ask daily, ‘Where does this activity fit? Where are our resources going?’”





## SCHOOL 3

## HIGH-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION

**GRADE LEVEL: ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**CSR MODEL: ACCELERATED LEARNING (AL)**

**GRANT TYPE: IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING (ITL)**

**AWARD DATE: AUGUST 2004**

## I. LOCAL CONTEXT

SCHOOL 3, LOCATED IN A SMALL TOWN in central Texas, is part of a consolidated district. The school is in its third year of operation, opening in the fall of 2003, and includes grades K–5. (See Table 4.1 for more demographic information.) School 3 offers a dual-language immersion program and attracts many bilingual children in the district. Campus administrators characterize the district as a “fast growth/low wealth” district. According to the school’s CSR grant application, the School 3 attendance zone includes “many unincorporated tracts of mobile homes in areas that are much like the ‘colonias’ near the border. Often these homes have no running water, electricity, or sewer services ...” (p. 15).

### Starting Points

As a new school, School 3 was not burdened with some of the common CSR implementation challenges, such as a history of low expectations

and/or performance, staff resistance to change, and run-down or inadequate facilities. Rather, School 3 faced a different set of challenges—establishing an educational focus and strategic plan, building a school identity and community, amassing resources, and serving large numbers of transfer students. Specific key issues at School 3 included a fragmented academic program, a new staff, and a high-needs student population, including a large number of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students.<sup>1</sup>

In its CSR application, a lack of instructional focus was highlighted as a serious need at School 3: “There is not a common language and skill set that is used by the campus. Teachers use a wide range of materials and instructional delivery methods. Much of the instruction is not at best-practice level and may even be detrimental” (p. 15). Further the application described the large number of teachers who were new to the profession or the district: “Since many of the staff are early in the profession, they need extensive amounts of

**Table 4.1. Demographic Profile, 2004–05**

Total Students	African American	Hispanic	White	Other	Economically Disadvantaged	Mobility (2003–04)	Limited English Proficient
817	5%	67%	27%	1%	54%	24%	29%

Source. Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS)

<sup>1</sup> Statewide, 16% of students in Texas public schools are LEP. In the district, only 10% of students are LEP, while 29% of students at School 3 are LEP (Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2004–05).

**Table 4.2. Accountability and TAKS Performance History**

Subgroup	TAKS Met Standard All Grades Tested (All Tests)		Reading		Math		Writing		Science	
	2003–04	2004–05	2003–04	2004–05	2003–04	2004–05	2003–04	2004–05	2003–04	2004–05
African American	40%	43%	87%	71%	67%	64%	*	99%	*	17%
Hispanic	43%	62%	63%	79%	68%	73%	77%	96%	30%	59%
White	69%	84%	89%	94%	92%	95%	71%	97%	67%	84%
LEP	34%	57%	44%	74%	62%	65%	64%	92%	8%	25%

Source. Texas Education Agency, AEIS

\*Indicates results are masked due to small numbers to protect student confidentiality.

supported training to effectively work with the large number of high-needs students on their campus ...” (p. 16).

Of the 50 teachers at School 3, over a quarter were in their first years of teaching (AEIS 2004–05 data), and other teachers were new to the campus. Further, because of the recent opening of the school, many students have transferred from other schools, highlighting the need for a unified educational vision in order to address the needs of all students.

Another challenge for School 3 relates to teaching-and-learning issues associated with the large number of LEP students who are, according to the CSR grant application, new to the district, have moved extensively during their school years, and “have significant deficits in pre-reading skills and content knowledge and skills” (p. 15). While TAKS scores at School 3 have been relatively high and are trending upward, performance of LEP students is an area

of need. (See Table 4.2 for more information on TAKS scores disaggregated by student group.) The application also states that “many [parents] lack literacy skills” (p. 15).

Many teachers attribute low parental involvement at the school to issues related to language and low-income status. Parents in the focus group identified several barriers to parental involvement:

- Work schedules that prevent parents from volunteering
- Limited access to the Parent Information Center because of the hours it is open
- Limited transportation options for parents without cars
- Parents feeling intimidated by the school setting
- Teachers failing to attend and/or support PTA meetings

Finally, because of the rapid growth of the district, School 3 opened its doors at capacity with new students arriving throughout the year, creating a need to hire new teachers midyear during the first year of operation. Further, new teachers continue to be hired regularly to accommodate growing enrollment, often well after the school year has begun. Portables have already been added behind the building.<sup>2</sup>

According to its grant application, School 3 had a clear plan to put into place a comprehensive, non-fragmented instructional program in 2004–05, implementing or piloting programs in each of the four core content areas in addition to other supplementary programs. Descriptions of these programs are provided.

- **School wide.** Tribes is a program that fosters warm, welcoming learning communities. Key strategies include group problem solving, goal setting, progress monitoring and assessment, celebration of achievements, and other community-building activities for teachers and students.
- **English/Language Arts.** Guided Reading is a way to help students become independent readers with strong comprehension skills through the use of leveled books. Key strategies include teacher-guided instruction and assessment, reading in small groups of same-ability readers, and independent practice.
- **Science.** Focus on Science Systems (FOSS) is a program used to increase scientific literacy for students, the instructional effectiveness of teachers, and systemic reform in the school. Key strategies include collaborative learning, student discourse, embedded assessment, and hands-on experiments.
- **Social Studies.** Social Studies Alive is a program that becomes more challenging as students master content. It is focused on multiple intelligences and cooperative interaction among students. Key strategies include visual discovery, experimental exercises, writing for understanding, and group work.
- **Mathematics.** Math Investigations is a way for teachers to make math concepts concrete for students. Key strategies include hands-on experiments, use of manipulatives, and development of critical-thinking skills.

Parental involvement was low during the school's inaugural year, so the principal hired a bilingual parent liaison to manage a Parent Information Center located in the administrative wing of the building. The liaison has been a very positive addition to the campus according to staff and parents. School 3 also has implemented a system for recruiting parent volunteers, including bilingual volunteers. The parent liaison also works with parents so that they are better able to help their children with homework.

In order to promote community involvement, the principal said that School 3 tried to provide two academic field trips each year. Each grade level is also expected to make a contribution to the community. For example, kindergarten students raised money for the PAWS animal shelter located near the campus, and 3rd-grade students conducted book drives for a local children's hospital. While business involvement has been limited, local police officers have served as mentors to students, and the Parks and Recreation Department has provided full-day scholarships to economically disadvantaged students for summer programs.

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<sup>2</sup>To alleviate the overcrowding problem in the district, two new elementary schools and a middle school are scheduled to open in 2006–07.

## II. MODEL ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

### *Selection Process*

School 3 was awarded an Improving Teaching and Learning/Comprehensive School Reform grant (ITL/CSR) in August 2004. The faculty did not have the opportunity to participate in the assessment, research, or acceptance phase of the CSR model adoption process. The district's bilingual coordinator informed the principal about an Accelerated Learning (AL) training for dual-language campuses that was offered by Maximum Capacity Learning, a team of teacher-consultants. (See Table 4.3 for more information about AL.) The principal said she selected AL for School 3 for the CSR grant for two main reasons. First, AL involved everyone in the creation of a proper learning environment, which was important at the new school. Second, the program allowed her to lay

the groundwork for creating a school climate that promoted the development of “teacher leaders.”

According to its CSR grant application, School 3 intended to use AL as “a conceptual framework” for teaching and learning around which the school integrated components for a comprehensive program addressing most of the 11 CSR components.

### *Initial Implementation*

The principal, who is the CSR coordinator, and a 2nd-grade teacher attended a two-week training on AL for dual-language campuses provided by a team of consultants. The principal also attended an Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development conference on developing learning communities. The principal then redelivered an introductory training to staff at School 3 at the beginning of the 2004–05 school year. This one-day training included an

**Table 4.3. Accelerated Learning Model Design**

Accelerated Learning is not listed in the Catalogue of School Reform Models as an official CSR model (North West Regional Educational Laboratory).<sup>3</sup> According to the national CSR database operated by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, only one other school in the country listed AL as its official CSR model.

Though the term “accelerated learning” is used widely and loosely in K–12 education, as well as in the adult education and corporate training fields, accelerated learning is most often associated with a process derived from the work of Dr. Georgi Lozanov, a Bulgarian psychiatrist. AL emphasizes literacy and language acquisition through brain-based learning and attention to the “whole child” and is associated with an assortment of student-centered, language-learning, and memory-enhancement techniques.

Unlike traditional CSR models, there is not one specific organization that provides AL technical assistance, and, in fact, a wide variety of organizations offer training based in “accelerated learning.” AL does not address the 11 components of CSR.

Source. Resources for Learning independent research

<sup>3</sup><http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/catalog/modellist.asp>



overview of the CSR grant and the principles of AL. According to the principal, AL and brain-based training continues as part of regular staff development and is provided at the faculty meetings once a month.

## ***Factors Impacting CSR Implementation***

### *SCHOOL CAPACITY*

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#### *Materials*

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School 3 used CSR funds to purchase materials to support English as a Second Language/ Limited English Proficient instruction, parental involvement programs, and subject-area instruction. Some fluency related materials for ESL/LEP students were also purchased. Parent materials included items such as books and tapes for the Parent Involvement Center and parent resources associated with math and reading literacy events designed to help parents assist their children with homework. After starting from “nothing” three years ago, the school also has amassed one of the best Guided Reading collections in the district, according to the principal. The collection was first housed in a small closet and now fills multiple shelving units in a dedicated classroom. Many of the books are in Spanish. Books for the Tribes program were also purchased. Math manipulatives and teaching books for the Math Investigations program and two science kits per lesson for each grade level for the FOSS program were purchased. No materials to support the Social Studies Alive program for grades 4–5 were mentioned.

Almost every interviewee described Guided Reading collection as a rich resource for the school. Several teachers mentioned the increased availability of student materials in Spanish. Previously, teachers had worried about having to supply books and materials on their

own. One teacher remembered purchasing a lot of materials out of pocket when she was at another school, but this year she had not bought anything because “if I don’t have it, I can borrow it.”

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#### *Staffing and Planning Time*

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CSR funds were used to support a teacher’s salary at the school. The teacher splits time between the Newcomer Center for recent immigrants and science and mathematics enrichment for all students. Recent immigrants identified for assistance in grades 2–5 received daily additional English literacy instruction. Partial salary support for two instructional strategists assigned to the campus to align instructional programs with district initiatives has been supplemented with CSR funding. The strategists meet with grade-level teachers and help them to review data, create work centers in their classrooms, and encourage student use of the centers. The strategists are at School 3 every other day because they are shared with two other elementary schools in the district. Grade 1 teachers described meeting with a strategist before starting a new book in the reading program. These staff members also provide professional development for teachers and classroom coaching and day-to-day assistance to teachers.

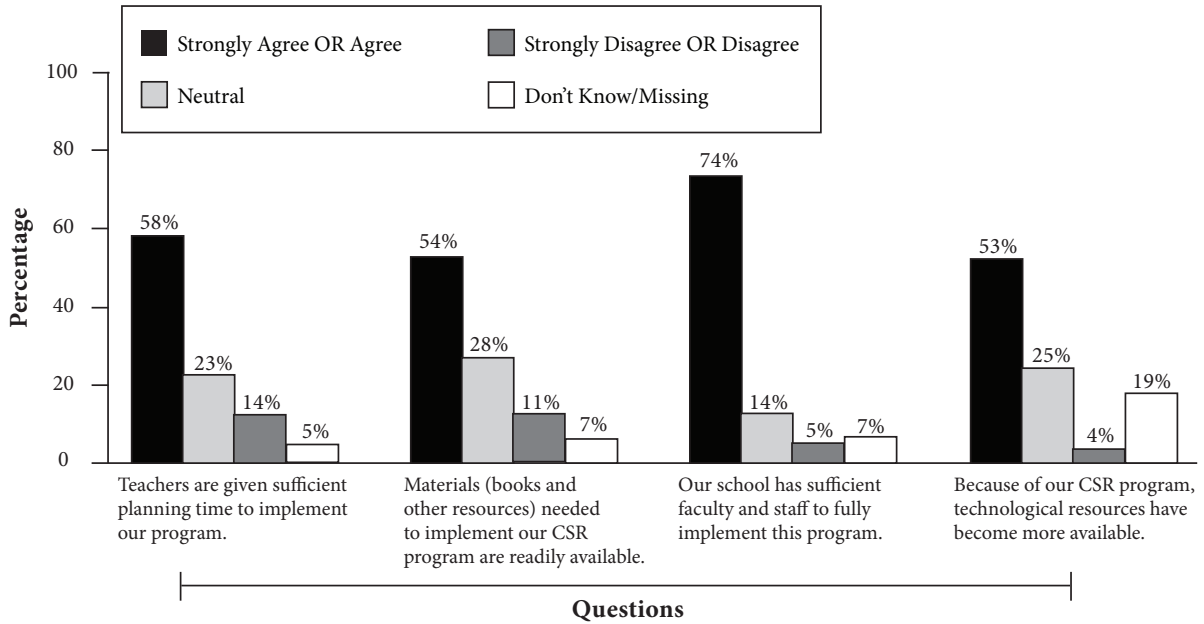
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#### ***School 3 has set up a peer coaching system that teachers felt was very helpful.***

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Teachers throughout the campus are grouped into different AL subject-area cadres, depending on their particular interests: mathematics, science, reading, or social studies. Because teachers at each grade level are represented on each cadre, the cadres allowed teachers to learn the continuum of TEKS and what is expected of students as they exit each grade level. The principal has used the cadre approach

**Figure 4.1. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Capacity (N = 57)**



Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

to encourage teachers to work together across grade levels. Cadres meet formally once a month to work on implementing school-wide strategies (e.g., regular review of campus improvement plan objectives, peer coaching). They also discuss substantive, subject-specific instructional issues, such as coaching strategies for teachers who are uncomfortable with the new instructional programs, examination of student work, and school-wide academic events.

School 3 has set up a peer coaching system that teachers felt was very helpful. Teachers observe their colleagues and give advice for improving instruction. Following their observations, teachers are required to complete surveys noting the strengths and weaknesses they observed. Teachers said they did not feel as intimidated as they would have if the principal were doing the observations: “It’s not judgmental ... we just give each other feedback.” One teacher recalled that peer coaching was particularly helpful when she

was learning Math Investigations. New teachers were brought into reform efforts through an orientation from the principal, the efforts of grade-level teams, and participation in subject-area cadres.

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*Fiscal Resources to Support Staff, Materials, and Technical Assistance*

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Title I, Title III, and state and local funds supplemented CSR activities. Primarily, fiscal resources were used to supplement positions and to provide professional development to support LEP students in reading, mathematics, and language acquisition. Considerable district support is part of an integrated implementation plan.

Fifty-seven of 79 professional staff at School 3 completed surveys for a response rate of 72%. In terms of school capacity issues related to CSR implementation, almost three quarters (74%) of staff indicated that the school had sufficient staff to implement their CSR

program. Over half the staff responded that technology resources (53%), materials (54%), and planning time (58%) were adequate for implementing CSR. (See Figure 4.1 for more information on the Capacity construct.)

Overall for the Capacity construct, staff rated it 3.71 on a 5-point scale. (See Appendix B for scale description.) Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all four questions of the construct, 35% of staff rated school capacity as high, compared to none of the respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all four questions of the construct.

#### EXTERNAL SUPPORT

##### *External Professional Development*

Unlike traditional CSR models, there is not one specific organization that provides AL technical assistance, and, in fact, numerous organizations offer “accelerated-learning” training. Education Service Center Region XIII (Region XIII) is identified in progress reports as the “external assistance provider,” but data indicate that Region XIII was only intended to be involved in the development of benchmarks and the collection of program evaluation data. Interview and follow-up questions show that Region XIII was involved in some of ESL-related training for staff as well. Region XIII reported that they provided 20 hours of technical assistance over the first two years of the grant.

School 3 is to some extent self-sufficient in implementing its program plan. The principal mentioned some additional contact with the facilitators of the original AL training she attended, but she and the instructional strategists appear to be providing staff development related to Tribes and brain-based learning. In other cases, the principal has identified local sources for delivery. For

example, English as a second language training and Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) training have been provided by Region XIII and individual consultants. All teachers have had training in the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA), and teams of teachers participate annually in events of the National Association of Bilingual Education and its state affiliate. It appears that for some of the curricular programs, external professional development was provided.

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##### *Integrated District Assistance*

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A high level of district support is indicated and is related to district-wide adoption of some of the instructional programs being implemented at the school. In the grantee progress report, the principal said, “The district has chosen many of the components of the AL model to implement district wide. This has allowed for additional resources to our campus ... They provide the campus with excellent training, additional support staff, as well as a district assessment coordinator to assist in data disaggregation” (p. 9). She also indicated that School 3 piloted the Social Studies Alive instructional program, which the district funded. The principal also cited extensive support from the bilingual coordinator for the district. Region XIII confirmed a high level of district support in the Technical Assistance Provider survey.

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***A high level of district support is indicated and is related to district-wide adoption of some of the instructional programs being implemented at the school.***

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Overall, School 3 staff indicated receiving a high level of external support. Of the 57 respondents, 77% noted having a thorough understanding of their CSR program, receiving

**Table 4.4. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Support (N = 57)**

Support	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don't Know/ Missing
I have a thorough understanding of this school's CSR program.	77%	14%	4%	5%
I have received adequate initial and ongoing professional development/training for CSR program implementation.	77%	12%	4%	7%
Professional development provided by external trainers, model developers, and/or designers has been valuable.	83%	14%	0%	4%
Guidance and support provided by our school's external facilitator, support team, or other state-identified resource personnel have helped our school implement its program.	77%	14%	0%	9%
My school receives effective assistance from external partners (e.g., university, businesses, agencies).	63%	11%	7%	19%

*Note.* Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

adequate professional development related to CSR, and getting helpful support from external facilitators for implementing the program. Most of the staff (83%) at this school found the support from external trainers to be valuable. Almost two thirds (63%) responded that they were aware of assistance from external partners such as businesses. (See Table 4.4 for more information on the Support construct.)

The mean score for the Support construct was 4.00 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all five questions of the Support construct, 60% of staff rated the support provided as high. Combining respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all five questions of the construct, none rated Support as low. (See Appendix B for scale description.) In interpreting this survey data, it is important to remember that respondents were basing

their responses on interaction with a variety of professional development providers associated with various specific curricular programs and ESL strategies, as well as district-delivered and locally developed and delivered training.

#### *INTERNAL FOCUS*

##### *Staff Buy-In and Support*

The principal and teachers all agreed that “Accelerated Learning is a way of life around here.” The principal observed, “It may take people awhile to understand, but once they get on board, they are sold on the program.” Support for the program has steadily increased for two reasons: 1) Teachers saw direct evidence of its success, particularly in reading scores; and 2) teachers appreciated the wide variety of resources that had been made available through the program. According to the principal,

kindergarten teachers were the most difficult teachers to get to support the program because they did not think that kindergarten students could “write,” and writing continues to be an important element of the reform.

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*Alignment and Integration  
With Existing Programs*

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Because of the newness of the school, School 3 was able to implement an integrated and aligned school-wide plan rather than having to make model strategies work with other already imbedded programs. When asked to describe other programs that School 3 was implementing and how these were aligned with AL, the principal said that there were no other programs at this time.

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*Monitoring*

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Some progress monitoring has been developed in specific subject areas with assistance from Region XIII. For example, a Guided Reading matrix that is completed at the beginning and end of each school year has been developed. The same process is being implemented for the Math Investigations program this year and for the FOSS program next year. According to the progress report to TEA, “The principals monitor the implementation of the reform through walkthroughs, meetings, and lesson plans” (p. 12). CSR activities and progress are also reported monthly to the Campus Leadership Team. The principal also noted that Region XIII developed a tracking program for the school “to keep all of our bilingual/ESL data together.”

Staff members at School 3 were asked about the level of internal focus on CSR at the school. A majority of staff (81%) indicated they regularly reviewed implementation and outcome benchmarks to evaluate progress. Many stated that the CSR program was effectively

integrated (79%) and that the school had a plan for evaluating their CSR program (70%). Most of the 57 respondents (77%) judged that teachers were generally supportive of the CSR program. However, only 47% of respondents were satisfied with the fiscal resources that were supporting CSR. It should be noted that 21% responded that they did not know or did not respond to this item indicating that staff may have limited knowledge about the financial resources supporting CSR efforts. Comparisons with this item should be made with caution. (See Figure 4.2 for more information on the Focus construct.)

The mean scale score for the Focus construct was 3.97 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all five questions of the construct, 53% of the staff rated the level of CSR focus as high. Combining respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all five questions of the construct, none rated Focus as low. (See Appendix B for scale description.)

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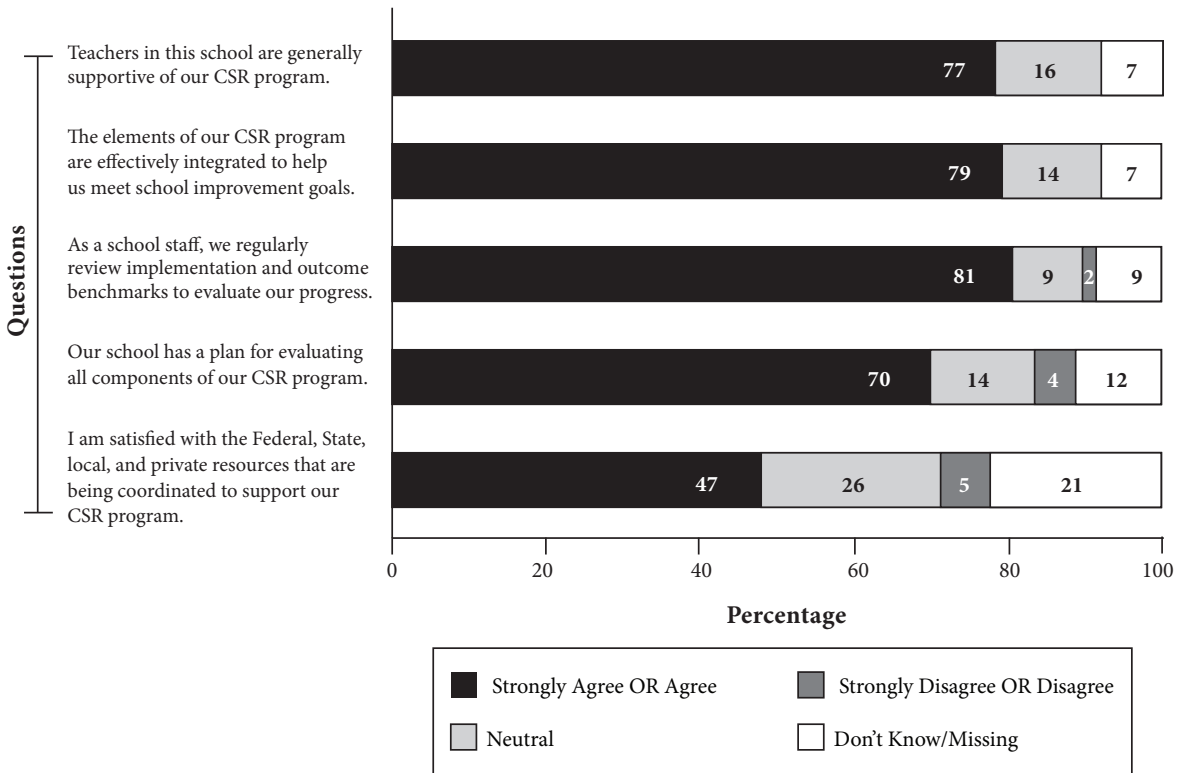
***Evaluators extensively to frequently observed a high academic focus in classroom teaching and a high level of student engagement in classrooms at the school.***

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*PEDAGOGICAL CHANGE*

The various instructional and community-building programs implemented at School 3 appear to be a good fit with the philosophy of AL. A recurring theme in staff comments was the focus on creating an engaging and accepting academic environment. When the principal was asked to describe changes at the classroom level, she said that classrooms reflect a “family-like environment” as set forth in the Tribes program and that students are set up in “learning communities.” Focusing

**Figure 4.2. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Focus (N = 57)**



Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

on the emotional side of brain-based learning has helped to get students “really engaged,” she said. Addressing different learning styles and individualized instruction appears to be another central focus at the school.

Evaluators extensively to frequently observed a high academic focus in classroom teaching and a high level of student engagement in classrooms at the school. Observation data indicated frequent use of direct instruction; cooperative/collaborative learning; and hands-on, experiential learning techniques. Instructional strategies like collaborative and hands-on learning are part of the curricular programs implemented in the four core subject areas. Classroom organization by ability group also occurred often. Sustained reading and writing instruction were in evidence. While higher-level instructional feedback was

rarely observed, teacher use of higher-level questioning strategies and teachers acting as coaches/facilitators were more often observed in classrooms. Student discussion, technology use, and assessment were not observed.

Professional staff members at School 3 were asked about pedagogical issues related to the school’s CSR efforts. Of the 57 respondents, 79% indicated that students spend much of their time working in cooperative learning teams, and 58% agreed students spent two hours per day on interdisciplinary or project-based learning. Over half of the respondents (56%) denoted that they used textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets less due to CSR. Two thirds (67%) of the staff indicated that CSR had changed classroom learning activities a great deal. About half of the staff (53%) suggested that students used technology more



effectively because of CSR. (See Table 4.5 for more information on the Pedagogy construct.)

The mean scale score for the Pedagogy construct was 3.83 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all five questions of the construct, 40% of staff rated pedagogical change as high. Combining respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all five questions of the construct, none rated pedagogical change as low. (See Appendix B for scale description.)

Technical Assistance Provider survey data completed by Region XIII indicated that the school had made changes at the classroom level as a result of the CSR program. Those survey data suggested teachers were teaching to standards and were aligning their instructional practices with the program goals. The Technical Assistance Provider also reported that teachers at School 3 were not integrating technology into instruction, though they were using

workbooks/worksheets to a lesser extent, incorporating interdisciplinary and project-based teaching, cooperating and team teaching more often, and using authentic assessments. However, Region XIII staff had limited and very specific contact with the school and did not conduct classroom observations.

### RESTRUCTURING OUTCOMES

#### Student Impacts

*Achievement.* While it would be difficult to attribute improvement to CSR efforts so early in implementation, School 3 saw significant gains in TAKS scores in most subject areas with the greatest gains in reading, writing, and science for Hispanic students and LEP students. (See Table 4.2 in the Starting Points section for more information on LEP students and TAKS scores.) For all students, the most significant gains in student achievement have been in reading with limited improvements in mathematics and science. The principal and staff enthusiastically described a significant improvement in

**Table 4.5. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Pedagogy (N = 57)**

Pedagogy	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don't Know/ Missing
Because of our CSR program, I use textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets less than I used to for basic skills or content area instruction.	56%	26%	9%	9%
Our CSR program has changed classroom learning activities a great deal.	67%	25%	0%	9%
Students in my class spend at least two hours per school day in interdisciplinary or project-based work.	58%	19%	9%	14%
Students in my class spend much of their time working in cooperative learning teams.	79%	9%	2%	11%
Students are using technology more effectively because of our CSR program.	53%	23%	5%	19%

Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

reading scores in the 2004–05 school year as a difference in student achievement since AL strategies had been introduced. Teachers reported that they had conducted diagnostic reading assessments in the fall and spring this year in grades K–5 and achieved the school goal of having 80% of the students reading when they exited kindergarten.

One teacher reported that 2nd-grade students entering her class were better prepared for TAKS than they had been previously. She said that in the past, half of her students had not been reading on grade level, compared to only four or five students this year. A 3rd-grade teacher mentioned that half of students were reading below grade level when they came into her class, but only one student failed the reading portion of TAKS. She attributed the positive outcomes to Guided Reading.

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***Staff members attributed improved student-teacher and student-student relationships at the school to the implementation of the Tribes program.***

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*Academic engagement.* Overall, staff and students reported enhanced student academic engagement and motivation associated with the individual subject-area programs implemented through CSR. The principal reported that students appeared to be more motivated, and she attributed this to their emphasis on writing: “Writing is the students’ favorite part of the day now.”

Reports on improved attendance and conduct were mixed. Teachers thought that attendance had improved because “the kids love school.” In parent-teacher conferences, the parents had told them how excited their children were about going to School 3. However, when asked to describe how the program had impacted

students in terms of attendance and conduct, the principal said that attendance might have improved slightly, but the change for the better could not necessarily be attributed to AL. Students were still being sent to the office for discipline problems, although teachers tried to handle discipline issues in their classrooms.

*Affective impacts.* Staff members attributed improved student-teacher and student-student relationships at the school to the implementation of the Tribes program. According to teachers, students appeared to be relating to each other and to the teachers more positively. Through Tribes, students had learned the importance of “mutual respect” in relationships, which also led to improved discipline. When asked to characterize how the relationships among students had changed, the principal said that there were very few students that she would describe as the “lonely onlies.” Data indicated that students are assigned “bilingual buddies” in their dual-language classes, which could have also helped to build relationships with other students.

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*Staff Impacts*

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The principal described staff impacts as improved teacher motivation and enthusiasm. Teachers also reported a variety of factors positively impacting staff. Of particular significance was the creation of a positive learning environment and dynamic professional community.

According to interviews with the principal and teachers and observations throughout the building, teachers were passionate about their jobs and really cared about the students at School 3. Teachers attributed their positive attitudes to a number of factors:

- Good working relationships with the principal

- Adequate resources provided for their classrooms
- Funding to pay for substitute teachers
- More opportunities to plan together through the cadres
- Fewer student discipline problems

Teachers felt that the program created shared leadership and a broad sense of responsibility for instructional change. Teachers said they talked more with each other about vertical alignment of the curriculum. The cadres, said teachers, “help teach us what students need to know when they exit each grade level.” Peer coaching has also proven helpful according to teachers.

A consistent theme of mutual commitment to instructional change and trust echoed throughout the teacher interviews: “You hear so many bad things about teachers—and I have seen some really bad stuff—but here, there is a different vibe, a different feeling.” Another teacher said, “It is as if the campus is a family.” Teachers are “doing what is best for our kids” and “providing the encouragement to get kids to love to learn.” Specifically, the implementation of the Tribes program appears to have impacted the school climate in a very positive way. One teacher described the program as “learning to listen with your eyes, ears, and hearts.” Students and teachers now relate to each other in a more positive manner. Students comment to one another when they do not see “mutual respect.” Although the program has not been fully implemented in all of the classrooms, the spirit of the program was pervasive. Evidence of Tribes was posted in the hallways as well as in many of the classrooms.

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### *Parental Involvement*

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The following parental involvement projects are partially funded by CSR at School 3.

- **Project Families as Readers (Project FAR).** Project FAR is a student- and parent-focused program to improve literacy in English. The principal reported improved English reading and writing skills of participating parents and also an increased number of parent volunteers, especially from parents who had not previously volunteered at the school.
- **Parent Involvement Center.** Parents check out computers, books, books on tape, and other learning activities that they can use at home with their children.
- **Math Night.** Math Night was designed to introduce parents to the Math Investigations program and show them how they can assist their children with school work.
- **Read With Me Night.** This event provided parents with different ways in which they can read with their children and other activities they can do at home to assist in literacy development.
- **Noche de Familia.** School 3 also hosted a Noche de Familia potluck dinner, an annual event in the district for Hispanic families.

Professional staff members at School 3 were asked about issues related to the school’s CSR outcomes. Over two thirds of respondents (68%) felt that student achievement had been positively impacted by CSR. Staff were split with regards to whether students were more enthusiastic about learning since becoming a CSR school. Almost half (49%) stated that parents were more involved and that teachers were more involved in decision making (51%). Over two thirds (67%) of the respondents indicated that the CSR program adequately addressed students with special

**Table 4.6. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Outcomes (N = 57)**

Outcomes	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don't Know/ Missing
Student achievement has been positively impacted by CSR.	68%	16%	0%	16%
Students in this school are more enthusiastic about learning than they were before we became a CSR school.	39%	32%	0%	30%
Because of CSR, parents are more involved in the educational program of this school.	49%	16%	14%	21%
Community support for our school has increased since CSR has been implemented.	40%	32%	7%	21%
Students have higher standards for their own work because of our school's program.	70%	11%	2%	18%
Teachers are more involved in decision making at this school than they were before we implemented CSR.	51%	26%	5%	18%
Our program adequately addresses the requirements of students with special needs.	67%	11%	14%	9%
Because of our school's program, teachers in this school spend more time working together to develop curriculum and plan instruction.	74%	16%	7%	4%
Because of CSR, interactions between teachers and students are more positive.	68%	23%	0%	9%

*Note.* Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

needs. Strikingly, 70% indicated that students have higher standards for their own work due to CSR, and 74% stated that because of CSR teachers spend more time working collaboratively on curricular issues. It should be noted that more than 20% of respondents reported “Don’t Know” or skipped several items across this construct; therefore, comparisons with these items should be made with caution. Additionally, this high non-response rate indicates that staff may have limited knowledge about how CSR efforts have impacted student enthusiasm, parental involvement, and

community support. (See Table 4.6 for more information on the Outcomes construct.)

The mean scale score for the Outcomes construct was 3.79 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all nine questions of the construct, 33% of staff saw strong evidence of CSR-related outcomes. Combining respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all nine questions of the construct, none rated evidence of CSR-related outcomes as low. (See Appendix B for scale description.)

### III. IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

#### *Key Points*

CSR at School 3 has not technically comprised a “reform” effort because of the newness of the school. Starting almost with a blank slate, staff at School 3 embraced the basic philosophy associated with AL techniques. While AL does not provide a clear model for addressing the 11 components of CSR and there is no external Technical Assistance Provider as with traditional CSR models, the school is implementing a strong academic program for English language learners, creating a caring and positive school culture, and building an inclusive school community through its outreach activities for parents. The organizing philosophy and principles of AL appear to have helped the school community come together and achieve these goals. Widespread support for the program is obvious from the enthusiasm of teachers, parents, and students interviewed.

A variety of factors could contribute to the significant gains in reading and writing overall for the student population and especially for LEP students on the campus, including the fact that School 3 is a dual-language immersion campus, AL’s emphasis on language acquisition and student starting points, the strong reading program focused on individual student needs, and the enrichment teacher for new immigrants.

While those interviewed often mentioned the programs in each of the core subject areas, few at the campus specifically emphasized a focus on English language learners and the ESL/LEP population. For example, the Newcomer Center, which was partially supported with CSR funds, and other activities focused on the high-needs students were only mentioned in passing by some respondents. Perhaps the strong

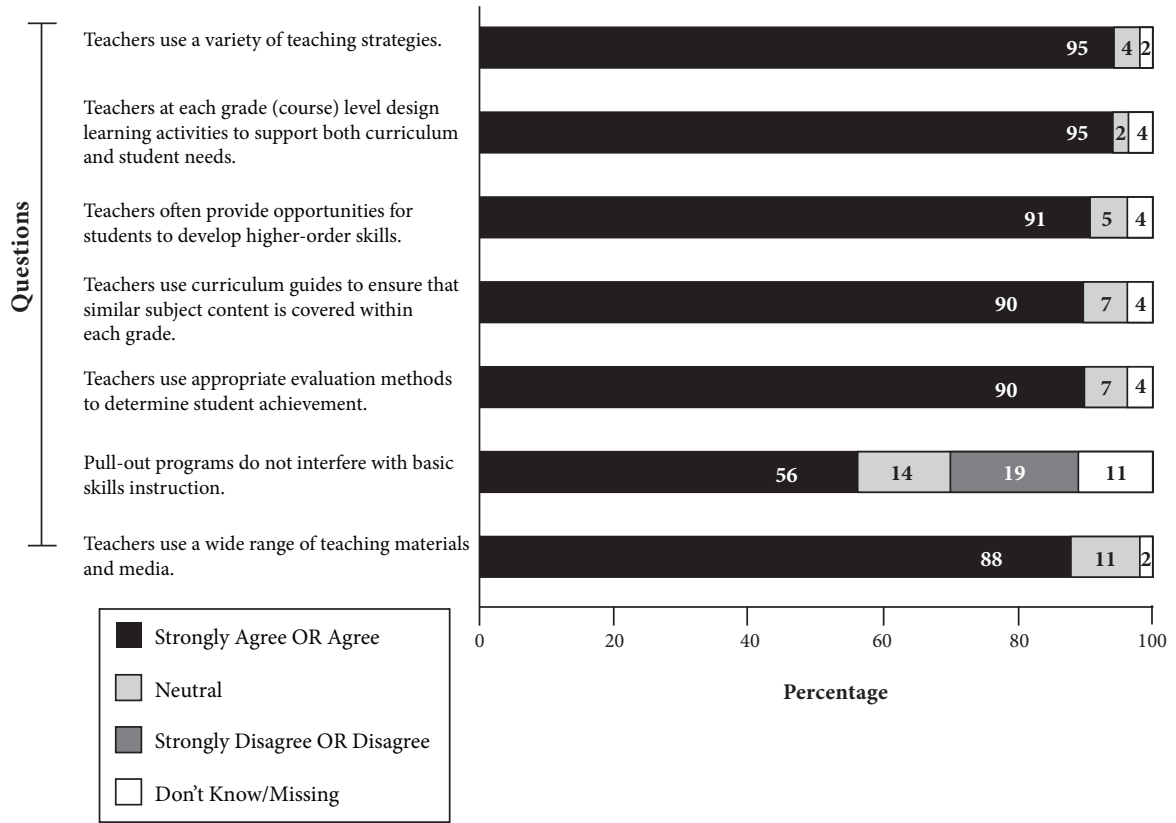
orientation to serve LEP students is so integral to the campus identity that no one felt the need to state it.

According to the grant application and campus improvement plans for the first two years of the grant, CSR funds have been used to support significant capacity building at School 3. Funds have been used to initiate several academic support programs and activities for LEP and new immigrant students and to enhance parental involvement. Funds have also been used to supplement the implementation of the Tribes program and curricular programs in the core subject areas through materials for teachers and students and support for professional development. The school also used CSR funds for partial salary support for two instructional strategists to coordinate the work across the school.

The level of internal focus is high at School 3. It appears that the philosophical framework of AL, the Tribes program, and the instructional programs implemented at the school in each of the four core subject areas have created a unified educational vision. The reform efforts are widely supported and accepted at the school.

Again, due to the newness of the school, outcomes specifically attributable to CSR are difficult to pinpoint due to the limited previous data available. Staff and students reported positive outcomes in terms of student achievement in reading, higher levels of academic engagement, and improved student-teacher and student-student relationships due to the Tribes program. Significant staff impacts were reported in terms of improved professional relationships among staff and enhanced motivation and morale due to the training and resources made available through the CSR grant. There has also been some improvement in parent participation.

**Figure 4.3. School Climate Inventory Responses About Instruction (N = 57)**



Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

### School Climate Inventory

One way to tap success of CSR implementation indirectly is to measure school climate. The School Climate Inventory (SCI), which was administered as part of the staff survey, measures school climate across seven dimensions. The overall mean for the SCI rating for School 3 was 3.95 on a 5-point scale. Results from the SCI indicate an overall school climate that is comparable to the national average for elementary schools (3.93). The highest mean rating (4.10) was given for Instruction (compared to a national norm of 4.06) and the lowest (3.53) for Order (compared to a national norm of 3.26), but all the dimensions were rated very highly. (See Figure 4.3 and Table 4.7 for more information on SCI data.)

Staff consistently strongly agreed or agreed that teachers used a variety of effective teaching practices. Respondents overwhelmingly strongly agreed or agreed that teachers use a variety of teaching strategies (95%), design learning activities to support curriculum and student needs (95%), provide opportunities for students to develop higher-order skills (91%), use curriculum guides and appropriate evaluation methods (90%), and use a wide range of teaching materials and media (88%). (See Figure 4.3 for more information on the Instruction dimension.)

While staff rated Order the lowest dimension of school climate, 83% agreed that student behavior was generally positive at the



school. While the majority of staff indicated that behavior, rules and discipline, and responsibility for discipline were consistent, fair, and jointly shared, almost half the respondents (49%) indicated that misbehavior interfered with learning. (See Table 4.7 for more information on the Order dimension.)

### Assessment of Implementation Level

With an instrument designed to assess the strength of CSR implementation based on the 11 CSR components, implementation of CSR efforts at School 3 produced a score of 40 out of a possible 51 points. This score is at the high end of the implementation scale—the majority of teachers are implementing the strategy, and the strategy is more fully developed than at most schools. The school is, however, still in process of piloting some programs.

In measuring implementation, School 3 received the most credit in areas of: 2–Comprehensive Design, 3–Professional Development, 4–Measurable Goals and Benchmarks, 5–Support Within the School, 6–Support for Teachers and Principals, 7–Parent and Community Involvement, 10–Coordination of Resources, and 11–Strategies That Improve Academic Achievement. The school received low or no points associated with 1–Research-Based Method or Strategy and 8–External Technical Support and Assistance.

School 3 did not have a Technical Assistance Provider in the traditional sense. However, Region XIII provides technical assistance for some of the site’s activities and has provided data requested from the Technical Assistance Provider in TEA progress reports and in this evaluation. Though not involved in the overall CSR project design and all school-wide activities, Region XIII rated the school’s level of

**Table 4.7. School Climate Inventory Responses About Order (N = 57)**

Order	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don't Know/ Missing
Rules for student behavior are consistently enforced.	61%	12%	25%	2%
Student discipline is administered fairly and appropriately.	54%	18%	26%	2%
Student misbehavior in this school does not interfere with the teaching process.	32%	19%	49%	0%
Student tardiness or absence from school is not a major problem.	44%	19%	26%	11%
This school is a safe place in which to work.	93%	7%	0%	0%
Teachers, administrators, and parents assume joint responsibility for student discipline.	60%	14%	19%	7%
Student behavior is generally positive in this school.	83%	11%	5%	2%

Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

implementation as fulfilling/institutionalized with a 4 rating on a 5-point scale. While this is slightly higher than the evaluator's assessment, most data indicate the school is close to institutionalizing many of its programs and activities. The extent to which some of the activities that are specifically funded by CSR will be institutionalized, such as the Newcomer Center and the enrichment specialist for new immigrants, is still unclear.

### ***Facilitators***

A strong principal who encouraged staff support of the school philosophy and instructional program and hired new staff accordingly, in addition to a well-designed instructional program, guided the CSR efforts at School 3. Data indicate that effective district support, guidance, and/or mandates about which instructional programs to adopt have contributed to the high level of implementation at School 3.

The principal's focus and commitment to the AL philosophy allowed her to build a cohesive staff community with a shared educational mission and a culture of shared values. The principal has been extremely involved in all campus training and has hired all of the school employees since it opened three years ago. According to the principal, teacher applicants are made aware of potential leadership responsibilities before hiring. While most of the teachers at School 3 are novices, and all are new to the school, the principal has established a hiring policy and a training and mentoring structure to orient and involve new teachers.

The principal instantly identified the high teacher buy-in as the key to the success of the program with support increasing because of positive results in student performance. Some specific strategies seemed to facilitate the high level of implementation and staff support.

Teachers mentioned specifically the following facilitators:

- Piloting programs before they are implemented throughout the campus
- Providing a wide range of resources that teachers did not have to pay for out of pocket
- Establishing the teacher cadres so that each teacher had a sense of ownership
- Implementing the Guided Reading program

The AL framework seems to have created alignment and coherence in the school's instructional programs and school climate. While the number and scope of new programs could be overwhelming, teachers feel the program was well conceived: "Everything feeds off of every other thing ... It all ties in together."

Teachers attributed the increased resources available for curricular programs as key to the success of the program. Teachers felt that because there are so many different types of learners "what works one day, doesn't work the next, so it is good to have a lot of resources."

Overall, site visit and survey data are conclusive that support from the school administration, teacher buy-in, and the curriculum focus of CSR efforts have facilitated implementation.

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***The principal's focus and commitment to the AL philosophy allowed her to build a cohesive staff community with a shared educational mission and a culture of shared values.***

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## **Barriers**

Given these facilitators and the newness of the school, School 3 faced minimal barriers in the implementation of CSR. Bringing new teachers up to speed and overwhelming them with the scope of the school's instructional program were identified as possible barriers in progress reports and in some teacher comments. However, it appears the school has implemented a process for minimizing this obstacle.

Another barrier mentioned in the progress report by the identified "external assistance provider," Region XIII, is the need for qualified technical assistance associated with each of the instructional programs implemented. While School 3's CSR program includes components in a range of subject areas, Region XIII is only identified to provide training in literacy-related components and evaluation. Region XIII recommended that School 3 acquire a provider for each component. However, it appears at this point that School 3 is fairly self-sufficient in terms of implementing the instructional programs.

Parents acknowledged that there was a relatively small core group of parents who are involved in school programs and that they would like to see parental involvement increase. They noted that parental involvement has increased over the last two years but is still quite limited.

Staff indicated that the most immediate barrier was the future sustainability of some of the activities with the decrease in funding in year three of the grant. At the time of the site visit, the principal was trying to decide whether to submit an application for the next year because she felt the school was going to be held to the same standards that applied with the higher levels of funding. All staff worried about the decrease in funding, but they felt the district

would support them in maintaining the level of success that they had achieved with CSR funding.

Overall, staff survey data highlighted lack of financial resources and poor parent involvement as presenting key barriers to implementation. Staff also indicated that lack of sufficient time was a barrier. In the case of School 3, this observation, which is a common one among school staff, probably reflects staff perceptions of a lack of time relative to the broad scope of building a cohesive academic program and school community from the ground up. No data indicate at this point that the program goals are unattainable or that time provided to plan and participate in CSR efforts is inadequate.







SCHOOL 4

MIDDLE-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION

GRADE LEVEL: HIGH SCHOOL

CSR MODEL: ACCELERATED SCHOOLS

GRANT TYPE: IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING (ITL)

AWARD DATE: AUGUST 2004

I. LOCAL CONTEXT

SCHOOL 4 IS A CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL that targets at-risk “troubled youth and their families, particularly those youth facing special concerns” (Taking Stock,<sup>1</sup> p. 1). Student enrollment in grades 9–12 was 275 in 2004–05. (See Table 5.1 for more demographic information.) The student body consists mostly of African American and Hispanic students, the majority of whom are economically disadvantaged. The school also has an extremely high student mobility rate. One teacher characterized some of School 4’s student population as those who “may be returning from a pregnancy, boot camp, or reentering school after having dropped out for one to two years.”

School 4 is in its 10th year of operation and, according to the principal, was one of the first 20 charter schools in Texas. Prior to becoming a charter school, School 4 existed as a non-profit.

School 4 also runs a pre-kindergarten program that serves 100 students. In August 2005, the TEA Division of Charter Schools granted the school’s request to increase the maximum enrollment from 400 to 600 students and to add K–8 grade levels. Subsequently, grades 1–2 were added in 2005–06. The school includes a main campus for the PK–2 and high school classes, a technology center that houses a computer lab for students completing self-paced course work, another computer lab for variable use, and a cosmetology classroom.

School 4 offers a core curriculum in mathematics, science, English language arts, social studies, fine arts, and physical education. It also offers a cosmetology program, a technology course, remedial courses in reading and mathematics, and TAKS tutoring. Two TAKS preparation/credit-recovery options are available: an after-school, teacher-guided program called FLEX and a self-paced, computer-based program called A+. In

Table 5.1. Demographic Profile, 2004–05<sup>2</sup>

Total Students	African American	Hispanic	White	Other	Economically Disadvantaged	Mobility (2003–04)	Limited English Proficient
375	48%	43%	9%	1%	72%	78%	0%

Source. Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS)

<sup>1</sup> The Taking Stock report was generated by School 4 staff as part of the Accelerated School model requirements.

<sup>2</sup> Demographic data include 100 pre-kindergarten students.

Taking Stock, the school identified “student intervention” as one of its strongest programs, noting the availability of after-school tutoring, Saturday school services, and one-on-one instruction. According to the principal, most of these services are supported with Title I funds. A youth center associated with School 4 offers a Comprehensive Youth Development Program (CYDP) that provides academic and workforce training and opportunities for at-risk and economically disadvantaged youth.

### **Starting Points**

School 4 is classified as an alternative education school by TEA and therefore was not rated in the AEIS accountability system in 2004. (See Table 5.2 for more accountability information.) School 4’s 2005 Alternative Education Accountability rating was Academically Acceptable. However, because the school did not meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirements for two consecutive years, it was identified for mandatory participation in the School Improvement Resource Center (SIRC) program.<sup>3</sup> In 2005, School 4 missed AYP in mathematics performance and graduation rate. Science is also an area of critical need.

Staffing issues such as high teacher turnover, novice educators, and broad teaching assignments are a challenge at School 4. Interview and focus group participants, including parents, repeatedly referred to high teacher turnover and described regular efforts to bring new teachers on board with the reform effort. According to campus-reported data, the teaching staff at School 4 includes approximately 20 teachers who teach multiple grades and subject areas with about

half preparing for three or more subjects per day. AEIS data indicate that teachers at the school have an average of 1.4 years of experience. Some of the staff, including the school’s administrators, come from different professional backgrounds (e.g., business, military) and are new to the education field. Taking Stock also states that only 56% of School 4 teachers are certified and teaching in their field of certification. One School 4 mathematics teacher reported that she has not been able to pass the mathematics certification test.<sup>4</sup>

School 4’s CSR grant application referred to a significant need to align curriculum with the TAKS. The need to offer advanced courses was also highlighted. Previously, no Advanced Placement, dual-credit, or college-preparatory courses had been offered.

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***One teacher characterized some of School 4’s student population as those who “may be returning from a pregnancy, boot camp, or reentering school after having dropped out for one to two years.”***

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Taking Stock data indicated that discipline is a major issue at School 4. Campus records show 130 discipline referrals, 22 minor offenses, and 108 serious offenses for Fall 2004. Additionally, over 100 students were sent to a newly implemented in-school suspension program for three or more days in Fall 2004. The report also stated that parent contact usually had to do with behavioral or academic failure issues. Parents did indicate that the school recently appeared to be enforcing disciplinary policy.

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<sup>3</sup> SIRC provides services such as conducting an on-site needs assessment, identifying effective strategies for improvement, and assisting in the selection of a technical assistant provider to meet the school’s needs.

<sup>4</sup> According to the Texas Education Agency website, “state law does not require a teacher employed by an open-enrollment charter school to be certified unless the teacher is assigned to teach special education or bilingual education, in which case the appropriate state certification is required.” (See <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/charter/faqs/faqemployees.html> for more information.)



**Table 5.2. Alternative Education Accountability and TAKS Performance History**

Year	Campus Rating	TAKS Met Standard All Grades Tested (All Tests)	Reading	Math	Science	Social Studies
2003–04	Not rated	21%	54%	9%	21%	57%
2004–05	Academically Acceptable	15%	55%	11%	34%	74%

Source. Texas Education Agency, AEIS

Families that had been at School 4 prior to this school year felt that the school was stricter and more structured this year than in the past years: “They started kicking the bad kids out.”

Students saw discipline problems as interfering with learning. One student related a story about a teacher who was unable to handle the class and got upset; consequently the class was “still stuck on parabolas.” While no students said that safety was a concern, student comments referred to several fights. For instance, one student related how he got into a fight that was broken up by a substitute teacher, but the police did not get involved. Another student related a story about a student who got into a fight that no one saw, and the other student “was turning purple.”

Many staff and students mentioned a lack of parental involvement in the school, especially this year (2005–06) as compared to previous years. A contributing factor to the perception of low parental involvement may be that the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), though active in the past, has not been meeting. Data indicated the school is reestablishing the PTO and recently had a school meeting to begin the process. Parents said that when the PTO was active, they participated in school decisions such as textbook selection.

The principal characterized parent engagement as a “struggle” because many of the parents “work and are young themselves and do not understand their vital role.” Teachers and students described many parent-teacher interactions as having to do with discipline-related issues. Most of the students in the focus group could not think of a time when their parents were involved in school activities. Parents in the focus group, on the other hand, seemed to be satisfied with the level of school-family interaction. They said that school staff made it a point to let parents know that it is important for them to come to the school. Parents said that staff members call them in a timely manner about good and bad things that happen at school.

Finally, like many charter schools, School 4 must address a range of capacity issues. Taking Stock indicated that the school lacks a sufficient library—several boxes of books are in storage, and there is no library system—although there are computers with Internet connectivity. The physical education teacher related the need for a gymnasium.

Despite these challenges, positive student and family perceptions of the school can help School 4 in its reform efforts. Additionally, the small size of the school and staff lends itself to

the development of more personal relationships and enhanced ability to offer non-traditional and individualized instruction as well as school-wide cooperation, collaboration, and planning.

In Taking Stock, School 4 reported that 85% of students responding to a survey “felt that an adult in the school cares about them” (p. 5). Feeling understood by school staff was of significant value to students. Many students in the focus group had previously attended large public high schools that did not meet their needs, and, consequently, students had discipline problems or were challenged by learning and motivational issues. Parents, likewise, thought that staff acceptance of students and attention to individual needs was significant. Parents reported that school staff “accepted” the students and “were really interested in them and in their academics.” The parent group, while noting the high faculty turnover, said, overall, teachers seemed to really care about the students. The school does not judge students by “how [they] look, [their] tattoos, for example,” said a parent. Parents also felt that staff members were responsive.

Students frequently mentioned the individual attention they receive at School 4: “I came here to stay out of trouble. It is more of a one-on-one learning situation.” Parents in the focus group, several of whom had children with learning disabilities, found the school environment suitable for their children’s needs: “I looked for an environment with smaller classes so that kids could have close relationships. He [the student] was in another charter school, which was self-paced. He needed more direction and has done well here since last year.” Another parent related that his/her child, who has attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, was having comprehension problems at a previous school and was getting in trouble. Since beginning at School 4 this year, this student’s grades have improved.

## II. MODEL ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

### *Selection Process*

School 4 was awarded a Improving Teaching and Learning/Texas Title I Comprehensive School Reform (TLI/CSR) grant in August 2004 to implement the Accelerated Schools model. (See Table 5.3 for more information on Accelerated Schools.) Previously in 1998, School 4 had implemented the High Schools That Work (HSTW) program, a commonly used model for CSR, which was developed by the Southern Regional Education Board. According to the principal, HSTW focused on vocational programming. In adopting Accelerated Schools as its CSR model, she said the school shifted focus to concentrate on “academic strengthening as well as rethinking and reorganizing [the] school [and] including all stakeholders. This model helps staff to take responsibility for what happens at the school. It also, through the Taking Stock process, helps staff do a realistic assessment of where the school is.”

School 4 also selected Accelerated Schools because another school in area had used the model. The principal visited with the school administrator, heard about model strategies and staff training, and was impressed: “I saw their school climate change under the model.” She then came back to her staff and told them about it: “It involves janitors to principals and has a lot of planning, but the process means long-term change.”

Though a key component of the Accelerated Schools model is to involve most staff in selecting the model—90% of staff are supposed to vote for it—one teacher noted that they did not get to vote on whether or not they wanted to participate. Another teacher did not know how or why the Accelerated Schools model was selected. The principal confirmed that a faculty

**Table 5.3. Accelerated Schools Model Design**

<p><b>Background</b> Established in 1986, Accelerated Schools serves around 1,300 schools across all grade levels. Accelerated Schools is designed to provide gifted and talented instruction for all students through “powerful learning.” The program is guided by three principles: unity of purpose, empowerment plus responsibility, and building on strengths. The primary goal of the Accelerated Schools program is to provide all students with enriched instruction based on the school community’s vision of learning.</p> <p><b>Key Strategies and Features</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• High standards for at-risk students</li><li>• A gifted and talented curriculum to stimulate academic growth</li><li>• Focus on students’ strengths</li><li>• A unified, school-wide sense of purpose</li><li>• Staff participation in governance and decision-making process</li></ul> <p><b>Key Components</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Full staff must participate in a 1–3 month exploration of the Accelerated Schools philosophy.</li><li>• Members of the school community take a formal vote or agree (90%) upon the adoption of the program.</li><li>• The Technical Assistance Provider supports local needs assessment, strategic planning, and continuous assessment.</li><li>• State education department and universities provide training and follow-up sessions.</li></ul>
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Source. Accelerated Schools website, <http://www.swacceleratedschools.net/>

vote was not held. However, all school staff members (including teaching, administrative, and facilities staff) have been involved in ongoing planning and development.

### **Initial Implementation**

A CSR campus leadership team comprised of the principal, assistant principal, two internal teacher/facilitators, and the designated Accelerated Schools Technical Assistance Provider was established. The assistant principal of School 4 was identified as the CSR coordinator. All professional staff (administrators and teachers) participated in mandatory Accelerated Schools trainings in summer and fall 2005.

Staff reported that they received program binders and that program consultants came to a meeting to present an overview of the program. The first step in implementing the program was the Accelerated Schools Taking Stock process, which involved assessing and documenting the current status of the school and its effectiveness in all components of operation. To do this, School 4 established six committees (7–10 members each) that included staff from all areas (teaching, administrative, facilities, and business office) to conduct local research and collect data. Committees investigated several topics: school organization, parental and community involvement, instruction, curriculum and assessment, school leadership and professional development, and culture and

climate. This process incorporated surveys of school stakeholders, including teachers and students, and intensive data review.

To continue the implementation process, School 4 established three cadres focused on curriculum, instruction, and organization. Each cadre consists of teachers, counselors, support staff, special programs staff, and school leadership. In 2005–06, cadres were charged with completing research and data collection, writing reports, developing challenge statements to guide reform efforts, testing hypotheses, and developing action plans for each focus area. According to the principal, the goal is to implement action plans in the 2006–07 school year.

### ***Factors Impacting CSR Implementation***

#### ***SCHOOL CAPACITY***

##### ***Materials***

The principal and staff indicated that badly needed office supplies as well as consumable classroom supplies and materials for science, art, and drama were purchased with CSR funds. A science teacher said that they received additional supplies for the labs so that they could do hands-on activities. Another teacher indicated that previously staff had to purchase some classroom materials: “When I first came here, I had to outfit my lab with things from my kitchen. I was here at the beginning, and,

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***Another teacher indicated that previously staff had to purchase some classroom materials: “When I first came here, I had to outfit my lab with things from my kitchen. I was here at the beginning, and, believe me, it is much better now.”***

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believe me, it is much better now.” Another teacher noted that “teachers got more materials and more computers for their classrooms.” (The principal stated that CSR funds were not used for equipment purchases.)

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##### ***Staffing and Planning Time***

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The principal said there were no changes in staffing levels, just reorganization. School 4 focused on increasing collaborative planning time for staff and participating in Accelerated Schools professional development. School 4 has institutionalized a school-wide planning and training period every Thursday afternoon. Students are dismissed early, and all the professional staff work together for approximately two hours. In addition to the Thursday planning sessions, a teacher reported that groups of teachers meet for 30 minutes before class. Another teacher said that they were now given extra time for cadre meetings.

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##### ***Fiscal Resources to Support Staff, Materials, and Technical Assistance***

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The principal reported that grant expenditures have been on the Accelerated Schools technical assistance and training, substitute pay for teacher professional development, supplies and materials, and consultant costs.

The principal indicated that professional development had focused on learning styles and use of research-based materials. Quantum Learning, the Family Advocates for Mathematics Education (FAME), the Reading Is FAME program, professional development created by educator Harry Wong, and a TAKS preparation program were identified as training teachers had attended.

Of the 23 professional staff at School 4, 20 responded to surveys for a response rate of 87%. In terms of school capacity, 40% of

staff said they were given sufficient planning time, and 40% had the necessary materials for implementing CSR. Seventy percent of the School 4 staff had sufficient staffing and technology resources because of CSR. (Again, the principal indicated the computers were not purchased with CSR funds, though teachers associated the timing of their availability with the CSR grant.) (See Figure 5.1 for more information on the Capacity construct.)

Overall for the Capacity construct, staff rated it to be a 3.41 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all four questions of the construct, 25% of staff rated school capacity as high, compared to 5% of the respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all four questions of the construct. (See Appendix B for scale description.) The Technical Assistance Provider indicated that school capacity was sufficient for effective implementation of the grant.

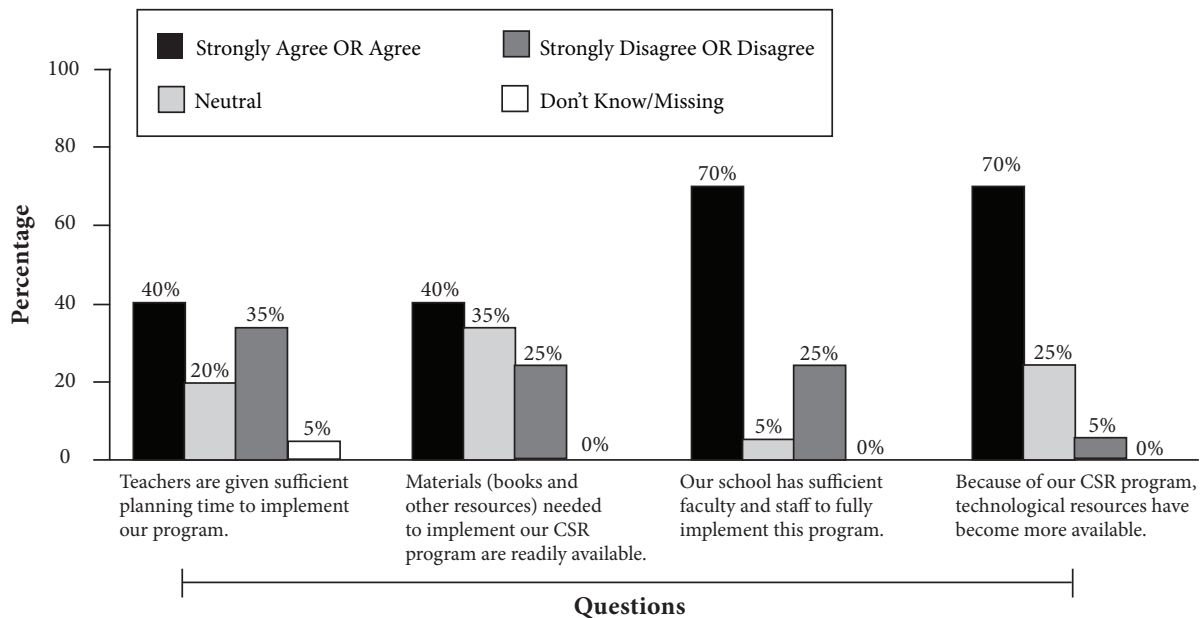
## EXTERNAL SUPPORT

### External Professional Development

School 4 received external support from a Technical Assistance Provider from the Southwest Center for Accelerated Schools at the University of Texas at Austin. The principal participated in school leader training; and the assistant principal received cadre leader training, steering committee training, and governance training. Faculty training sessions focused on the model's Powerful Learning approach and student learning styles. One teacher described a training at which representatives from schools that used the program did presentations and worked with those who were beginning to implement the model.

The principal felt that technical assistance had been very "hands on." He said Accelerated Schools staff members are actively involved as presenters and are available by phone and for

**Figure 5.1. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Capacity (N = 20)**



Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.



site visits. An Accelerated Schools staff member visits School 4 weekly to bring materials. The Technical Assistance Provider indicated the Center had provided over 1,000 hours of technical assistance over the first two years of the grant, assisting the school with each of the 11 components of CSR and offering a wide variety of professional development opportunities (whole-school training, conferences, workshops, coaching/mentoring, study groups, and training in stages of CSR).

Staff comments indicated some ambivalence about the specific Accelerated Schools consultant. While one teacher described her as well prepared, there is some indication of staff dissatisfaction with the presenter: “Some people get frustrated because she talks to us as if we are in kindergarten, but we have so many different groups represented that we need it.” One teacher reported, “I do question that she tries to tell us something and doesn’t let us figure out the kinks on our own.” He noted that teacher turnover could affect the relationship with the consultant.

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***Of the respondents, 75% strongly agreed or agreed that they had a thorough understanding of the school CSR program.***

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However, in survey data staff described the level of support the school receives from the Technical Assistance Provider as high. Of the respondents, 75% strongly agreed or agreed that they had a thorough understanding of the school CSR program. Sixty-five percent judged the initial and ongoing professional development to be adequate and valuable. Only 20% of respondents agreed that the school received assistance from external partners such as businesses. (See Table 5.4 for

more information on the Support construct.) The mean scale score for the Support construct was 3.45 at School 4 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all five questions of the Support construct, 10% of staff rated the support provided as high. Combining respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all five questions of the construct, none rated capacity as low. (See Appendix B for scale description.)

### *INTERNAL FOCUS*

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#### *Staff Buy-In and Support*

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Securing faculty consensus and buy-in for launching Accelerated Schools is key to the model philosophy, but School 4 staff did not vote on model adoption. Acknowledging that there was some initial resistance, administrators reported that overall staff buy-in and support for the program is now high. The principal said that initially teachers did not have time to invest in the program and that understanding the process was a challenge. However in Year 2, staff began to see results, and the principal and assistant principal believe that staff support the program.

Teacher perspectives on staff buy-in indicated that during the initial implementation, there was some conflict between non-teaching staff and teachers. While one teacher noted that the Accelerated Schools process engenders “buy-in where all the stakeholders are involved,” another teacher said that “the buy-in is hard and creates conflict among the faculty.” Teachers said some of the non-teaching staff “didn’t buy into this process as much as the teachers.” One teacher questioned the need to involve all staff and said that “the people who are not teaching (e.g., accountants) do not respect us.” Teachers believed that other staff felt the reform was necessary because the teachers were not doing their job. However,



**Table 5.4. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Support (N = 20)**

Support	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don't Know/ Missing
I have a thorough understanding of this school's CSR program.	75%	10%	15%	0%
I have received adequate initial and ongoing professional development/training for CSR program implementation.	65%	25%	10%	0%
Professional development provided by external trainers, model developers, and/or designers has been valuable.	65%	25%	10%	0%
Guidance and support provided by our school's external facilitator, support team, or other state-identified resource personnel have helped our school implement its program.	55%	35%	10%	0%
My school receives effective assistance from external partners (e.g., university, businesses, agencies).	20%	25%	40%	15%

*Note.* Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

there was indication of progress in these relationships: "I think we are moving in that direction since they have seen what we do." Teachers felt other staff "appreciate us more now that they know what we have to deal with."

While staff members were positive about the increased communication and collaboration among members of the school community as a result of CSR implementation, there was evidence of growing frustration with the Accelerated Schools process. Multiple teachers cited staff turnover as contributing to the frustration and decreased support for the program: "It gets frustrating when we have to go back because of the turnover of the faculty. We hear things too many times and are uncertain about what we are being asked to do." Because the school's action plans for CSR implementation were not to be completed until summer 2006, staff may feel there is a

lack in progress. Consequently, School 4 could be losing ground in terms of staff ownership, support, and commitment to the program.

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*Alignment and Integration  
 With Existing Programs*

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Interview data indicated that staff from existing programs participate in the CSR reform planning and implementation meetings. The assistant principal said that the CSR grant is the only grant program currently being implemented at School 4 but mentioned the integration of the CSR efforts with the Comprehensive Youth Development Program; the Youth Build program (an on-campus vocational program); and services provided by the SIRC and Title I programs, such as before- and after-school tutoring. Teachers felt that Youth Build is appropriate for integration with reform efforts: "It fits in with Accelerated

Schools because it has a real-world emphasis, and they [students] have to keep up in school to stay in the program.”

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### *Monitoring*

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The principal reported monitoring the progress of the reform by being actively involved in the process. The school also has reflection time when the staff gives feedback. According to the principal, other monitoring processes include Taking Stock, committee reports, and conversations that “live and breathe every day.”

Staff reported that Accelerated Schools external facilitators have assisted in monitoring implementation progress, including annual site visits. The principal described the most recent assessment by the Technical Assistance Provider: “We [have] not demonstrated the highest level of progress but [are] close to it.” The Accelerated Schools evaluator’s insight has been “invaluable,” she said.

Faculty members at School 4 were asked about the level of internal focus on CSR at the school. Half of the 20 respondents believed that teachers were generally supportive of the CSR program, and 60% were aware of a CSR evaluation plan. However, only 35% of respondents were satisfied with the fiscal resources that were supporting CSR. It should be noted that more than 20% of respondents reported “Don’t Know” or skipped this item;

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***Most observed classes, with the exception of an algebra class in which the teacher was conducting a TAKS practice session, included project- or student-oriented instruction, collaborative teaching and learning environments, and/or personalized instruction.***

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therefore, comparisons with this item should be made with caution. Additionally, the high occurrence of non-response indicates that staff may have limited knowledge about the financial resources that support CSR. (See Figure 5.2 for more information on the Focus construct.)

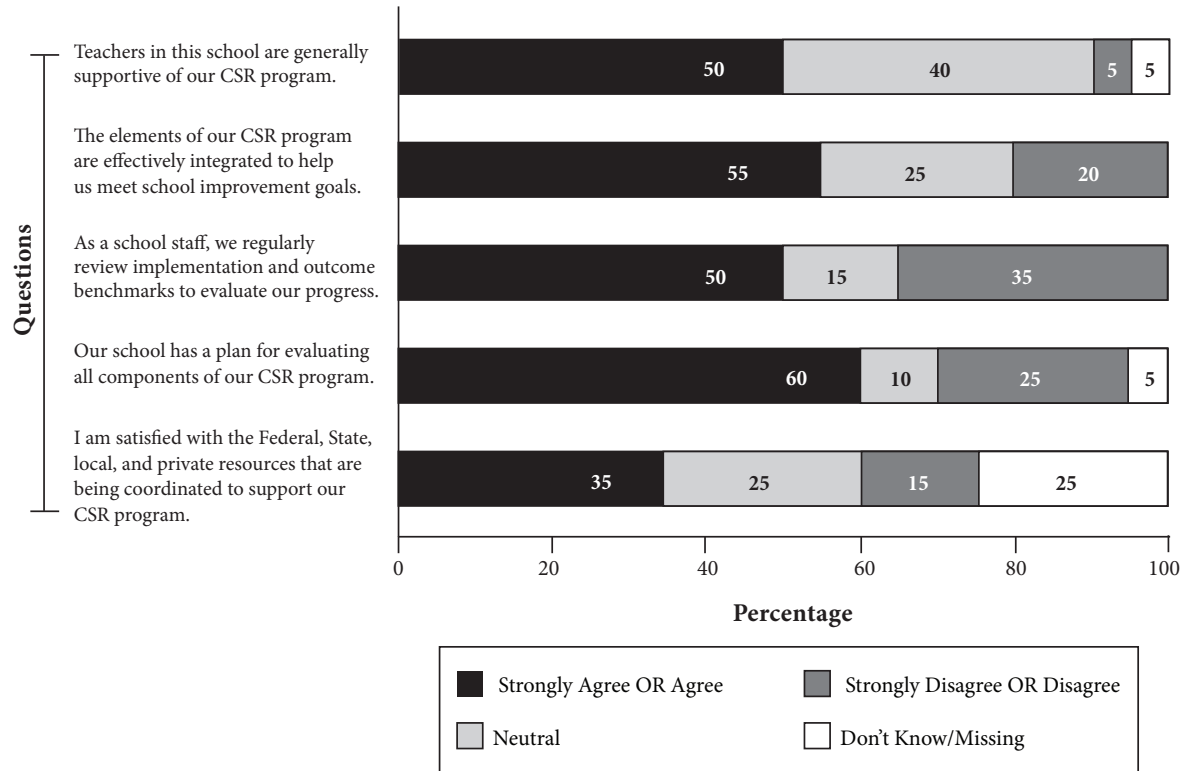
The mean scale score for the Focus construct was 3.40 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all five questions of the construct, 25% of staff rated the level of CSR focus as high. Combining respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all five questions of the construct, none rated Focus as low.

### *PEDAGOGICAL CHANGE*

The principal felt that the program has made significant impacts on instruction. She said teachers had a greater understanding of TEKS and TAKS objectives, held more substantive conversations about teaching, and focused more on student learning. Identification of student needs and cooperative and group learning approaches, including peer tutoring, are also being implemented. In addition, teachers have done an objective review to develop authentic assessments at multiple grade levels.

While some teachers reported more interactive, hands-on, and technology-based teaching as a result of Accelerated Schools training, others said that many teachers are not engaging in project-based learning. They cited teacher inexperience as a contributing factor: “For some of the things that Accelerated Schools advocates, you need a little experience.” Also, they said that implementation varies by teacher. One teacher said, “I have had students working in pairs more now than before I had the training.” A mathematics teacher, however, reported that she focused on the basics: “You can’t win until you learn the basics.” Teachers said that they had to have the students “doing something, not just worksheets” so that discipline would not be a problem.

Figure 5.2. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Focus (N = 20)



Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Observation data indicated that overall teachers are incorporating reform-based strategies into their teaching. Most observed classes, with the exception of an algebra class in which the teacher was conducting a TAKS practice session, included project- or student-oriented instruction, collaborative teaching and learning environments, and/or personalized instruction. Direct instruction and independent seatwork were not prevalent. Instead, the majority of teachers observed employed project-based teaching strategies. An English IV class worked on creating a newspaper for School 4. Small groups and/or individual students in an economics class were given an imaginary \$25,000 to create a business, name, slogan, and marketing plan. Teachers in these classrooms functioned as facilitators for student-led activity. Several classes featured independent-

or paired-inquiry activities with students using classroom computers for research purposes.

Overall, in project-oriented classes student interest and engagement and academically focused class time were high. Students were less engaged in the classes where teachers reviewed TAKS items, students completed TAKS worksheets, or behavior problems were observed.

In one class, the evaluator observed team teaching, the purpose of which was to transition a new teacher into an English I special education class. One English teacher integrated mathematics-based content into student-developed games. Evaluators frequently observed cooperative/collaborative learning, including groups of students creating games,

researching key subject-area questions, and creating instructional posters. Students also had the choice to work in pairs or alone.

Personalized instruction was frequently observed in many classrooms at School 4 through the grouping of students of varying ability, knowledge, and grade levels. Two English II students received one-on-one instruction in an English IV class. In an algebra class, the teacher (new to the school in February) worked one-on-one with students “to determine at what level they are working.”

Higher-level instructional feedback and questioning strategies were not observed in any classroom, and no parental/community involvement was evident during the observation periods. Most observed student discussion was informal and social.

Overall, staff survey data on pedagogical issues confirmed observations. Of the 20 respondents, 70% indicated that students spend much of their time working in cooperative learning

teams. Forty percent agreed students spent two hours per day on interdisciplinary or project-based learning. Over half of the respondents (55%) denoted that they used textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets less and that CSR had changed classroom learning activities a great deal. Half of the staff suggested that students used technology more effectively because of CSR. (See Table 5.5 for more information on the Pedagogy construct.)

The mean scale score for the Pedagogy construct was 3.54 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all five questions of the construct, 35% of staff rated pedagogical change as high. Combining respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all five questions of the construct, none rated pedagogical change as low. (See Appendix B for scale description.) The Technical Assistance Provider survey indicated that changes in the classroom were being made at all levels except in the areas of interdisciplinary and project-based lessons and use of authentic assessments.

**Table 5.5. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Pedagogy (N = 20)**

Pedagogy	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don't Know/ Missing
Because of our CSR program, I use textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets less than I used to for basic skills or content area instruction.	55%	20%	15%	10%
Our CSR program has changed classroom learning activities a great deal.	55%	20%	20%	5%
Students in my class spend at least two hours per school day in interdisciplinary or project-based work.	40%	35%	10%	15%
Students in my class spend much of their time working in cooperative learning teams.	70%	20%	0%	10%
Students are using technology more effectively because of our CSR program.	50%	30%	20%	0%

Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

## RESTRUCTURING OUTCOMES

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### Student Impacts

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*Achievement.* Student achievement attributable to CSR efforts was not reported. Due to the early stage of CSR implementation at the campus, TAKS performance data are not yet available.

*Academic engagement.* Staff reported evidence of increased student engagement, especially in terms of improved attendance. Increased motivation and participation were also mentioned: “We have started letting the students assess themselves. When we complete a module, I let them grade their own papers, and it has motivated the students.” While one teacher commented that improvements in student conduct were not an impact attributable to reform efforts, another said, “No, if you keep the students engaged in the activities, conduct improves.” When teachers presented advanced content, they saw the impact on engagement: “Then it is like WOW!”

Students indicated that they were more interested in classes with projects, such as hands-on science classes and classes that relate to the real world. Students did not want classes “that teach to the test. It is not like that here like it was at [his previous school].” Students preferred something challenging, as opposed to courses that are basic. There was some dissatisfaction among students regarding their classroom experiences. One student felt unprepared for mathematics because the mathematics teacher “is not helping me.” Another student thought that the classes stayed on a topic too long so that the whole class could get the concept. Another who was working in A+ said he has problems because the instruction does not match his learning style: “I can’t learn that way on a computer. I need a teacher to help me.” Another student said the teacher who monitors the A+ does not know the curriculum.

*Affective impacts.* The principal saw heightened respect for learning. A teacher reported that the program has impacted students by making them realize they are responsible for their actions. Another teacher said that the program has fostered relationships by having the students participate in group work in class. Technical Assistance Provider survey data indicated moderate overall impacts on students, including affective impacts.

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### Staff Impacts

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The principal felt that the reform model had changed the way she does her job because it highlighted the importance of professional development: “It has increased my knowledge of strategies for learning, emphasized the importance of planning when everyone is involved, and reinforced my feeling that staff has to be a part of problem solving.” The assistant principal reported that the data gathering and documentation required in the Accelerated Schools process had significantly influenced how he does his job.

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***Teachers felt that the most effective parts of the program were receiving the Powerful Learning training, seeing all students as unique, and focusing on student strengths to build their confidence.***

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In terms of impact on teachers, the principal has heard more student-focused conversations. She felt that teachers know more about strategies, planning, and training opportunities. The assistant principal said the strong teacher leadership from the cadres has been critical. He also reported that the program has prompted teachers to return to school for Masters degrees.

Teacher reports of impacts were mixed, but anecdotal data indicated an increased focus

on students, data-driven decision making, and collegial relationships. Teachers felt that the most effective parts of the program were receiving the Powerful Learning training, seeing all students as unique, and focusing on student strengths to build their confidence. Teachers have begun to rely on each other for help and have shared ideas, lessons, and models. One of the teachers who attended Accelerated Schools training with other staff felt more involved: “That was the first time I felt a part of this building. To see people outside of this element really made a difference.” The assistant principal agreed that teacher and staff relationships were more interactive.

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### *Parental Involvement*

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Staff indicated little change in parental involvement but some level of increased effort to engage parents, though this perception was not held by all staff. The principal reported that 21 parents attended the last monthly PTO meeting and that there is an active group of six parents who meet every two weeks. The assistant principal is making efforts to increase contact with parents: “Three nights of the week I visit families. My goal is to visit every parent in the school and try to explain the value of an education. My main job as an administrator is to bridge the gap so that the parents will come to me. I have a big van and take the students home when necessary, although I really go just to meet their parents.”

One teacher felt the impact on parental involvement was limited: “I don’t think we have really invited the parents to understand. Sending out letters is not enough. A PTO meeting should be where they go to the classroom and do activities that the kids do, not just stand around and talk.”

None of the parents in the focus group knew anything about the reform model.

Community involvement efforts are focused on marketing and sharing success. Broader efforts to inform and involve the community include publishing the Taking Stock report, sending more letters home, and holding more community events. “We are working with a marketing group to compile all our success stories in the form of a brochure so that we can leave them at different places, such as parochial schools and military bases,” the principal said.

Professional staff members were asked about issues related to the school’s CSR outcomes. Overall, staff responses varied on the Outcomes construct. Over half of respondents (55%) felt student achievement had been positively impacted by CSR, and another 45% attributed more positive interactions between teachers and students to CSR. Half of the respondents indicated that teachers were more involved in decision making. Almost an equal number (30% and 35% respectively) agreed and disagreed that CSR had impacted parental involvement. It should be noted that more than 20% of respondents reported “Don’t Know” on or skipped several items across this construct; therefore, comparisons with these items should be made with caution. Additionally, the high non-response rate indicates that staff may have limited knowledge about how CSR efforts have impacted student enthusiasm, community support, and teacher involvement in decision making. (See Table 5.6 for more information on the Outcomes construct.)

The mean scale score for the Outcomes construct was 3.27 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all nine questions of the construct, 15% of staff saw strong evidence of CSR-related outcomes. Combining respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all nine questions of the construct, 5% rated evidence of CSR-related outcomes as low. (See Appendix B for scale description.)



**Table 5.6. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Outcomes (N = 20)**

Outcomes	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don't Know/ Missing
Student achievement has been positively impacted by CSR.	55%	30%	15%	0%
Students in this school are more enthusiastic about learning than they were before we became a CSR school.	40%	20%	15%	25%
Because of CSR, parents are more involved in the educational program of this school.	30%	20%	35%	15%
Community support for our school has increased since CSR has been implemented.	30%	15%	25%	30%
Students have higher standards for their own work because of our school's program.	45%	30%	20%	5%
Teachers are more involved in decision making at this school than they were before we implemented CSR.	50%	10%	20%	20%
Our program adequately addresses the requirements of students with special needs.	35%	25%	35%	5%
Because of our school's program, teachers in this school spend more time working together to develop curriculum and plan instruction.	45%	15%	35%	5%
Because of CSR, interactions between teachers and students are more positive.	45%	40%	15%	0%

*Note.* Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

### III. IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

#### *Key Points*

In selecting Accelerated Schools to guide its school reform efforts, School 4 chose a model intended to provide all students with enriched academics based on the school community's vision of learning. Key Accelerated Schools model strategies include providing gifted and talented instruction for all students, identifying student strengths, and creating a unified

school community involved in governance and decision making. School 4's implementation efforts are most successful in the area of unifying the school community despite high staff turnover rates.

The administration at School 4 is supportive of the Accelerated Schools process and has adhered to basic model procedures, such as the involvement of school staff in the collection and review of local data; participation in Accelerated Schools professional development; and regular, collaborative, and ongoing

planning periods. The small size of the school and teaching staff has enabled a high degree of whole-staff participation.

Observation data indicated that teachers frequently use individualized instruction. Having small classes helped facilitate this method of instruction. Additionally, some level of project-based learning was observed. Taking Stock stated that more than half the teachers had previously practiced direct instruction, indicating that a possible change in instructional practice as a result of the CSR efforts has occurred.

Because the school has yet to develop action plans for the next stage of implementation, it is not clear how data from the initial needs assessment have been used to identify campus priorities. In particular, strategies for addressing a key barrier to effective implementation—staff qualifications and turnover—are not yet in evidence. Further, staff comments indicated that School 4 could be losing ground in terms of staff ownership of, support for, and commitment to the program. The lack of progress and existing resource shortages at the school could also account for mixed staff perceptions about the school's capacity to implement CSR. In survey data, more than half the staff strongly disagreed, disagreed, or were neutral about the adequacy of planning time and materials for CSR implementation. Further, while there is evidence of pedagogical change in the classroom, certification data and student comments indicated that teacher content knowledge, classroom management, and instructional skill may be inhibiting student performance.

### ***School Climate Inventory***

One way to tap success of CSR implementation indirectly is to measure school climate. The School Climate Inventory (SCI), which was administered as part of the staff survey,

measures school climate across seven dimensions. The SCI rating for School 4 was 3.34 on a 5-point scale. Results indicated that school climate overall at School 4 compares with the national average for secondary schools (3.73). The highest mean rating of 3.55 was given for Leadership (compared to the national norm of 3.94). Other dimensions rated highly were Instruction and Collaboration (both 3.53). Order was the lowest rated dimension (2.51), and the national norm for secondary school on Order is 3.26. (See Figure 5.3 and Table 5.7 for more information on SCI data.)

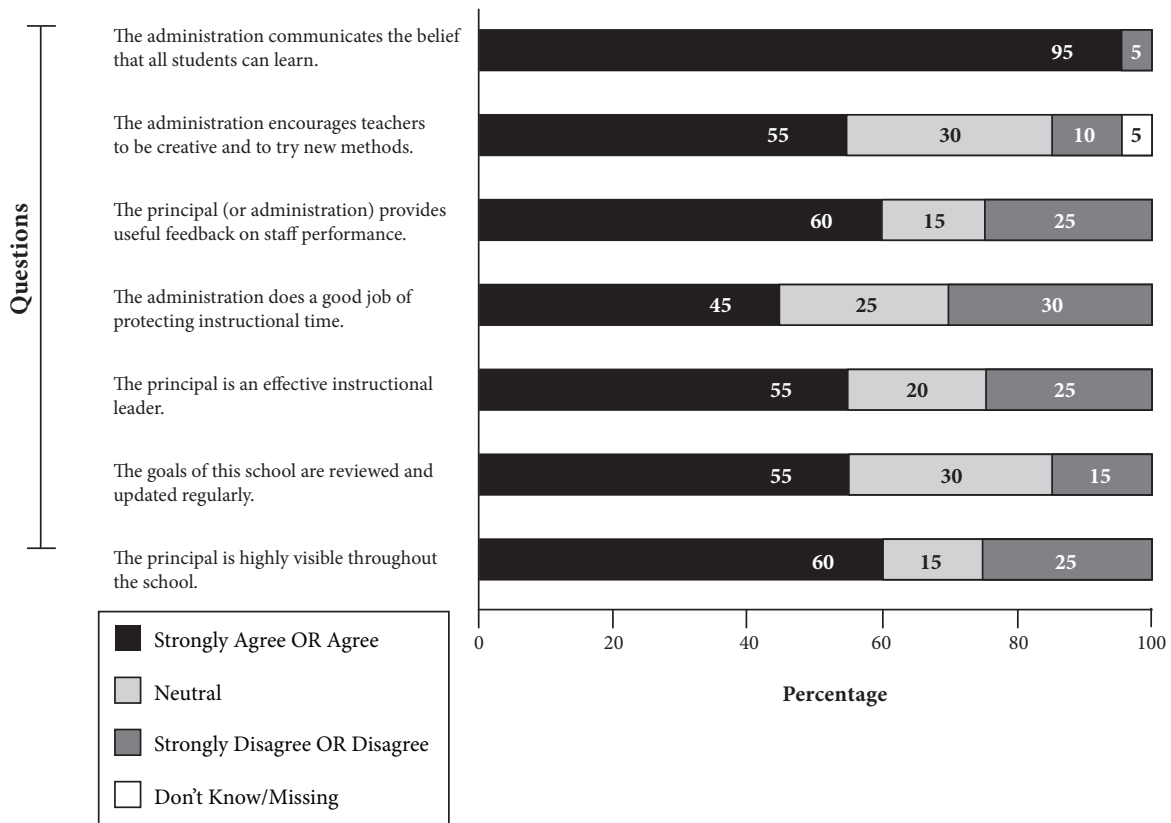
Over 95% of staff believed that the administration communicates a belief that all students can learn. In most other areas of leadership, a little over half the staff consistently strongly agreed or agreed that the principal and administrators were effective. (See Figure 5.3 for more information on the Leadership dimension.)

Corroborating site visit and survey data, order was identified as a key issue at School 4 affecting school climate with consistently high rates of agreement on a range of discipline and behavioral issues at the school. Ninety percent of respondents identified student tardiness and absence as a major problem, and 85% indicated that student misbehavior interfered with the teaching process. Sixty-five percent of respondents felt that rules for student behavior were not enforced, and 55% believed that discipline was not administered fairly and appropriately. (See Table 5.7 for more information on the Order dimension.)

### ***Assessment of Implementation Level***

Measuring implementation of CSR efforts with an instrument designed to assess the strength of CSR implementation based on the 11 CSR components, School 4 received a score of 25 out of a possible 51 points. School 4 received all or

Figure 5.3. School Climate Inventory Responses About Leadership (N = 20)



Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

the most credit in three areas: 4–Measurable Goals and Benchmarks because all teachers in the school (all grade levels and subjects) are involved in CSR efforts; 6–Support for Teachers and Principals; and 9–Evaluation Strategies because of the high level of staff involvement and assessment and progress monitoring provided by the Technical Assistance Provider.

The evaluators were not yet able to assess CSR plans or implementation of those plans; thus the school received low or no points for several components primarily due to the lack of an existing written plan (2–Comprehensive Design and 7–Parent and Community Involvement). However, School 4 staff members have conducted a needs assessment (Taking Stock) and have undergone a process of investigating priority areas of need. Action

plans based on these assessments are scheduled to be developed in summer 2006 with full implementation in the 2006–07 school year.

With the implementation of action plans, School 4 should be in the piloting stage of CSR. This assessment conflicts with Technical Assistance Provider survey data that indicated a rating of CSR implementation at School 4 as fulfilling. The Technical Assistance Provider rating appears inflated in the context of all the site visit data. This disconnect could be attributed to the fact that the survey was completed by the central office of the Southwest Center for Accelerated Schools rather than the individual consultant who has worked with School 4 staff. Survey data from another Accelerated Schools site included in the case study section reflected a similar tension

**Table 5.7. School Climate Inventory Responses About Order (N = 20)**

Order	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don't Know/ Missing
Rules for student behavior are consistently enforced.	20%	15%	65%	0%
Student discipline is administered fairly and appropriately.	20%	25%	55%	0%
Student misbehavior in this school does not interfere with the teaching process.	10%	5%	85%	0%
Student tardiness or absence from school is not a major problem.	10%	0%	90%	0%
This school is a safe place in which to work.	75%	20%	5%	0%
Teachers, administrators, and parents assume joint responsibility for student discipline.	40%	30%	30%	0%
Student behavior is generally positive in this school.	20%	30%	50%	0%

*Note.* Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

between Technical Assistance Provider survey data and site visit data.

### **Facilitators**

As a small school, School 4 has been able to engage the school community in reform efforts at a high level. Most teachers commented on how participating in the process had enhanced collaboration: “I came here retired and feel that this program makes us welcome. Accelerated Schools is the motor that really drives this.” One of the younger teachers was impressed with the process: “It is hard to see, but I think that the process will really make a difference. It makes us take ownership about how our students can benefit.” Another teacher echoed those sentiments: “It creates a culture of learning, a multitude of people with the same goals.” Staff survey data identified support from the school administration, support (buy-in) from teachers, and the whole-school focus of School 4’s reform efforts as facilitators.

School 4 can take advantage of the improvement in teacher relationships, development of a common vision, and enhanced sense of belonging to the school community to build a professional environment in which teachers stay at the school and commit to a professional growth plan to benefit student learning. Because class sizes are small, teachers could also have more opportunities to experiment and integrate new approaches into their teaching. Further, efforts by the assistant principal to improve student attendance, discipline, and parental engagement could address some of the factors contributing to the high teacher turnover rate.

### **Barriers**

Despite staff satisfaction with the CSR model and the unification of the school community, there is evidence that staff are becoming bogged down in the process. CSR efforts seem to be on the brink of losing ground in

terms of staff commitment and motivation: “We keep hypothesizing and reflecting ... After we identify where we need to get to work, everything slows to a crawl.” Many staff comments about the Thursday afternoon planning meetings were neutral, but several staff members had negative feelings. One teacher related how “brain dead” participants were at the end of the day, especially with meetings often going until 7:00 in the evening. Some teachers described the meetings as tedious: “It seems like we do the same thing every week, over and over again. There is no progression.”

It would seem with the level of technical assistance that was reported by the Accelerated Schools Technical Assistance Provider, that the Technical Assistance Provider could help move the process along. After an initial period of excitement, teachers are beginning to resent the amount of time spent on reform efforts: “Do I have enough time to spend all this time on committees?” A new teacher said, “It is tedious and thick, and I have never seen a process like this before.” Another teacher expressed frustration at the lack of progress: “The walls in the other classrooms should be full of projects, and students should be involved in the process. We are nowhere near the Demonstration Schools I saw at the conference.”

It is possible that the high teacher turnover at School 4 could inhibit efforts to sustain a common educational vision and move to the next stage of implementation. Because of the high teacher turnover, there is a persistent need to introduce new staff to the program. Since the start of this school year, 3 of 13 teachers had left and been replaced, and few of the teachers who originally participated in the Accelerated Schools training are at the school any longer. According to one staff member, “Last year more people believed in it. They worked more closely together. [But] only three of our teachers have been here for the second or third year ... There

is high turnover of teachers and administrators, which does not help the trust factor.” A plan that focuses on teacher training needs and targeted strategies for addressing teacher turnover is an obvious priority for improving student performance. Specifically, addressing teacher qualification and certification needs, job satisfaction, and professional environment require immediate attention.

Finally, an organizing principle of the Accelerated Schools program is to provide gifted and talented education for all students. The school currently offers no courses identified as G/T or any advanced courses, though the principal reported that two students participated in dual-enrollment courses in 2005–06, and School 4 is in discussions with a local community college to expand this option. Overall, observed classroom instruction was engaging for the majority of students but was focused on basic content and skills.

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***Because of the high teacher turnover, there is a persistent need to introduce new staff to the program.***

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In terms of staff perceptions of barriers, conflicting responses to the survey are indicative of different levels of awareness of CSR implementation activities and goals among staff. Survey data indicated that the top barriers to CSR implementation on the campus include lack of or poor parental/community involvement, lack of or insufficient time, and lack of whole-school focus. That some teachers identified the whole-school focus as a facilitator and others as a barrier indicates that some staff at School 4 have come into the process possibly at a later stage or have not been fully oriented to the process undertaken at the school. This speaks to one of the key potential barriers to CSR implementation at School 4, the high turnover of staff.









## SCHOOL 5

## MIDDLE-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION

**GRADE LEVEL: MIDDLE SCHOOL**

**CSR MODEL: ADVANCEMENT VIA INDIVIDUAL DETERMINATION (AVID)**

**GRANT TYPE: IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING (ITL)**

**AWARD DATE: AUGUST 2004**

## I. LOCAL CONTEXT

SCHOOL 5 IS A MIDDLE SCHOOL LOCATED IN the southeast corner of a large metropolitan area. It serves over 1,200 students in grades 7–8. A high number of students are identified as Hispanic and economically disadvantaged. (See Table 6.1 for more demographic information.)

### Starting Points

In 2003–04, School 5 earned an Academically Acceptable accountability rating. The following year, however, when the standard for the state accountability rating system increased, the school's rating was Academically Unacceptable due to one student group's performance in mathematics and writing. (See Table 6.2 for more accountability information.)

Data suggested that academic concerns, though, have not been the highest priority for the school community in previous years; rather, safety was a more immediate issue. Parents described the climate at School 5 several years ago as one in which their children were “scared”

and “afraid of being hurt” on campus because of the school's reputation for gang activity and fighting among students. Students relayed accounts of warnings from older siblings about gang activity on campus: “When I was in grade 7, [sibling] would tell us there was going to be a grade 7 knockout.” Due to gang activity, parents welcomed a district dress code policy requiring a school uniform: “You don't know what gang they belong to [now].” Students also indicated satisfaction with this policy. Beyond safety, parents mentioned the lack of constructive activities after lunch as a concern.

School 5 represents a school attending to some of the intermediary barriers that can inhibit student achievement. Parents, students, and teachers recognized that a new campus principal implemented positive changes for the school and created a school environment in which learning could become a priority. The principal said he viewed safety as his “first charge” at School 5, and parents credited him with making the school a safe place: “When [the new principal] came, I didn't have to be here every day.” Another parent observed that

**Table 6.1. Demographic Profile, 2004–05**

Total Students	African American	Hispanic	White	Other	Economically Disadvantaged	Mobility (2003–04)	LEP
1,280	27%	71%	2%	1%	90%	25%	27%

Source. Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS)

**Table 6.2. Accountability and TAKS Performance History**

Year	Campus Rating	TAKS Met Standard All Grades Tested (All Tests)	Reading	Writing (Grade 7)	Mathematics
2003–04	Academically Acceptable	22%	53%	70%	25%
2004–05	Academically Unacceptable	30%	67%	68%	34%

Source. Texas Education Agency, AEIS

following the hiring of the principal there were “many changes here, more respect, more discipline.” Students also commended the new principal for “really improving the school” and “cleaning things up,” including enforcing the district dress code. He also created a zero-tolerance policy for loitering, which included placing monitors in conspicuous locations to ensure that students went to classes and left the campus when school was over.

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***The principal said he viewed safety as his “first charge” at School 5, and parents credited him with making the school a safe place: “When [the new principal] came, I didn’t have to be here every day.”***

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The school also changed its organizational structure to provide the students with more consistent contact and interaction with adults by implementing academic clusters wherein a group of students is assigned to the same core content teachers. These teachers share the same planning time, allowing for more collaboration. Creating clusters also facilitated more contact with parents and guardians because teachers know students as individuals. Issues needing attention may now be divided among the core teachers rather than individual teachers operating in isolation.

Another important contextual factor is the focused effort the new principal made to increase parental involvement at the school. For example, at the end of the 2005 school year, School 5 hosted a “Night Out” that opened the school to parents and the community. The principal established “Principal Coffees” to provide an informal environment where parents and community members could voice concerns or learn more about what was happening at the school. One parent mentioned that she had first met the principal at one of these community meetings, which led her to send her child to School 5 because she felt comfortable with the school leadership and thought the school provided an environment where her child could learn to respect authority. Parents whose other children had attended the school in the past noted the differences in parental involvement and outreach.

Further, the hiring of a bilingual community liaison with Community in Schools funding contributed to increased parental engagement. Through the liaison’s efforts, the school created a GED program for parents at night and provided childcare during that time. The school also offered parenting classes on Saturdays while the students attended TAKS preparation sessions. Parents viewed the Saturday parenting classes as valuable with 10–20 parents attending each week.

Another change welcomed by parents was a “friendly” and “organized” front office. Spanish-speaking staff members were added to the office, making communication with parents easier. One grandmother reported that the school planned to start a “Grandparents’ Club” for those who are responsible for raising their grandchildren, indicating the school’s receptiveness to community needs. Parents appreciated being able to meet with all core content teachers during two scheduled times a day, either 8:00 a.m. or 3:00 p.m., rather than having to meet with each teacher individually. The timeliness of school communications also improved: “In the past, we got the third-week report during the fifth week.”

Teachers also noted a marked difference in community and parental involvement: “The sheer number of volunteers and people in the Parent Center every day are evidence” of increased involvement. The campus recorded 1,900 volunteer hours this school year, compared with 0 hours last year. Additionally, in an effort to make parental volunteering more official, the school provided embroidered aprons to identify authorized volunteers.

By establishing a safe environment, creating clusters to improve teacher-student relationships, and improving parental involvement and school communications, School 5 is now in a better position to focus on academic issues.

## II. MODEL ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

### *Selection Process*

School 5 was awarded an Improving Teaching and Learning/Texas Title I Comprehensive School Reform grant (ITL/CSR) in August

2004. The former principal initiated the grant process with the district. The district then recommended the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program because it had been successful at the high school that School 5 students would likely attend, creating “continuity and follow up for these students,” stated the principal. (See Table 6.3 for more information on AVID.) The faculty did not have the opportunity to participate in the assessment, research, or acceptance phase of the CSR model adoption process. Most teachers interviewed could not identify AVID as the school’s CSR model though they were aware of the CSR grant. This indicated a limited understanding of the intent of the ITL grant and CSR effort.

### *Initial Implementation*

The teacher identified to lead the AVID elective class and seven members of the campus leadership team attended an AVID training in the summer of 2005. The rest of the school’s approximately 85 teachers were then introduced to the AVID concept through a teacher-led training in Cornell note taking, an AVID strategy. Other campus-wide exposure to AVID included a video clip that featured the story of an AVID coach who had started an AVID program on his own campus.

The process for selecting students to participate in program activities combined self-selection and staff identification of eligible students. Seventh graders who wanted to participate in the grade 8 program requested letters of recommendation from their language arts teachers. The CSR Coordinator identified students through a review of student data using AVID criteria. The Dean of Students and the CSR coordinator then chose the final participants.

**Table 6.3. AVID Model Design**

***Background***

Since 1980, the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program has been implemented in more than 2,200 middle schools and high schools in 36 states and 15 countries worldwide serving an estimated 30,000 students. AVID is aimed at those students who attend school regularly but get “C” grades in courses that are not rigorous.

***Key Strategies and Features***

- Rigorous and relevant curriculum
- Socratic method
- Note-taking skills
- Subject-specific study groups
- Writing to learn
- Test-taking skills

***Key Components***

- AVID academic elective class is offered for one period per day.
- AVID teacher or “coach” helps students organize their time in school, provides tutoring for in-class assignments, and monitors student progress and school activity.
- AVID site team is composed of teachers in academic departments, counselors, and administrators. The team visits “demonstration schools” to see programs in operation and extend the model throughout the school.
- Extracurricular activities, such as cultural and career events, are available.
- College awareness and orientation with financial planning activities are offered to parents and students.

Source. AVID website, <http://www.avidonline.org/>

In Year 1 of AVID implementation at School 5 (2005–06), the program provided the following services to a group of 30 students:

- Three sections of the AVID elective class serving 10 students per section
- Tutoring from teachers and college students for AVID students
- Formal and informal mentoring by teachers for AVID students
- Guest speakers and extracurricular activities

Services were funded either through the CSR grant or by opening up after-school and Saturday activities funded through

other programs (namely the 21st Century Community Learning Center Program) to participating students.

***Factors Impacting  
CSR Implementation***

***SCHOOL CAPACITY***

Overall, staff viewed AVID as an isolated program for a small group of students and did not use AVID strategies in their individual classrooms for all students. The principal’s description of the program also indicated AVID is only applicable to those students participating in the program. When asked how the model involved the whole staff, he responded that all

grade 8 teachers are “involved” because the students participating in the AVID elective class are in their classes also. He did not indicate viewing the AVID strategies as transferable to other classes, other grade levels, or non-AVID students.

Thus, when teachers were asked to discuss the school’s capacity for supporting CSR, most did not know how to respond. The teacher focus group suggested that AVID should be “publicized” more throughout the building and made more visible. The teacher noted a problem with scheduling of the AVID teacher: “If the administration wants [the AVID teacher] to do a better job with the program, they should give him only AVID classes.” That teacher’s schedule consists of three grade 7 language arts classes in the morning and three AVID classes in the afternoon.

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### *Materials*

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The school used CSR funds to purchase a self-paced mathematics software program called “Study Island” for AVID students. Technology purchased with CSR funds, such as laptops and Smart Boards, are available for all teachers, but teachers indicated they did not have time to learn how to apply the technology in their classrooms: “We have what we need, but we need to learn how to work it in.” Teachers could attend technology workshops during their off periods but found this difficult due to other responsibilities.

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### *Staffing and Planning Time*

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Staff roles and responsibilities and reporting structures associated with CSR implementation were unclear. Staff identified in campus documents and at site visits as associated with the CSR effort are described:

- The AVID elective teacher (also the AVID coordinator) is responsible for teaching the three AVID elective

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### ***Staff roles and responsibilities and reporting structures associated with CSR implementation were unclear.***

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courses, in addition to three language arts classes, and for working with other teachers in addressing AVID students’ academic needs. This person is also responsible for making sure the AVID plan is followed.

- The AVID site team is made up of members of the campus leadership team and includes seven teachers from different content areas. The AVID plan indicates that this team participates in expanding AVID and meeting the plan goals.
- The campus CSR coordinator assists in student data collection to identify eligible students and meets regularly with the AVID teacher. The CSR coordinator also meets with district staff to handle budgeting issues.

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### *Fiscal Resources to Support Staff, Materials, and Technical Assistance*

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CSR funds were used to reduce a language arts teacher’s teaching load to accommodate three AVID elective sections. The school also purchased software and technology, such as the AVID DVD and curriculum guide, mathematics software, Smart Boards, digital projectors, and document imagers.

Teachers said the additional resources allowed AVID students to engage in extra-curricular activities like those available in more affluent areas of the district. Funds were also used to bring in motivational speakers and provide AVID students the opportunity to meet AVID students from other campuses.

Other sources of funding in addition to the ITL include Title I School Improvement, 21st Century Community Learning Center Program, and Communities in Schools.

Forty-five professional staff out of 104 responded to the survey for a response rate of 43%. While 45% agreed they were given sufficient planning time, an almost equal percent (47%) were neutral or did not know. One third (33%) indicated having necessary materials for CSR implementation, but over half (53%) were neutral or did not know about this issue. Staff indicated the strongest support (56%) for having sufficient staff to implement the program. Additionally, over half (53%) linked more technology resources to CSR. It should be noted that more than 20% of respondents reported “Don’t Know” or skipped several items across this construct; therefore, comparisons with these items should be made with caution. Additionally, the high non-response rate indicated that staff may have limited knowledge about how CSR efforts have impacted planning time and materials. (See Figure 6.1 for more information on the Capacity construct.)

Overall for the Capacity construct, staff rated it to be a 3.57 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all four questions of the construct, 36% of staff rated school capacity as high, compared to 4% of the respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all four questions. (See Appendix B for scale description.)

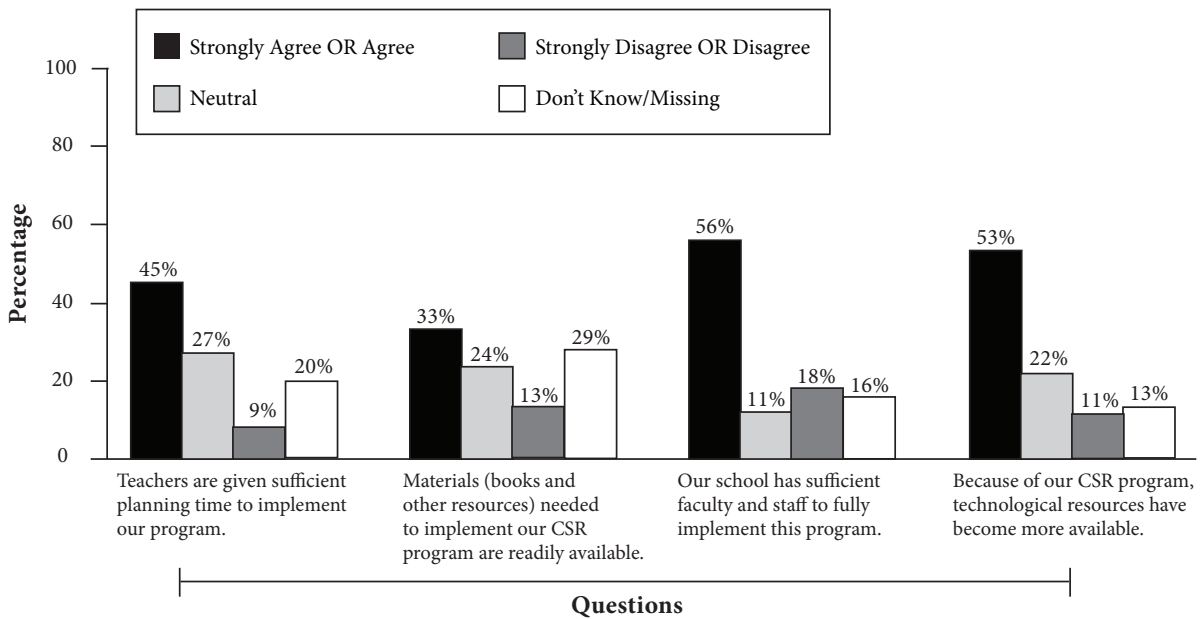
*EXTERNAL SUPPORT*

Unlike the traditional CSR model of external assistance provided by an outside agent or Technical Assistance Provider, the AVID model includes a trained district director. This person then provides technical assistance to schools implementing AVID, blurring the line between district support and external support.

*External Professional Development*

The AVID coordinator and the AVID site team attended a formal AVID training session held in Austin, Texas, June 26–30, 2005. The training introduced the AVID philosophies and strategies. Attending teachers then redelivered the training locally. Teachers in the focus

**Figure 6.1. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Capacity (N = 45)**



Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.



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***The AVID model suggests implementing additional on-site training from an external technical assistance provider, and there is no record of this taking place at School 5.***

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group discussed receiving three days of training from the AVID coordinator on Cornell note taking. As follow up, a person from each cluster was encouraged to check to see if the other members of the cluster were using the note-taking strategy. While teachers reported liking the strategy, its use was not widely observed in classroom instruction.

The AVID model suggests implementing additional on-site training from an external technical assistance provider, and there is no record of this taking place at School 5.

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*Integrated District Assistance*

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There was no indication of district-level professional development related to AVID. The progress report submitted to TEA for the period January–June 2005 and completed by the principal described the district’s role as follows:

The AVID district director provides ongoing and regular support to the campus. The campus AVID coordinator meets monthly with the district director, and the district director makes visits to the campus to observe the program implementation. More campus professional development in AVID methods is needed, but over the course of the year as the site plan is implemented, there will be an increased awareness and use of AVID methods by faculty. The AVID coordinator, campus principal, and district director will facilitate this process (p. 14).

The district supported CSR efforts by assigning a person from the Grants and Programs Office

to oversee spending decisions to ensure all budget lines were used appropriately, purchase orders were timely, and expenditures were allowable according to grant specifications. The principal stated that district staff members are also available to offer support by phone, which was “a great help” for campus staff.

Staff members at School 5 were asked about the level of support the school receives for its CSR efforts. Of the 45 respondents, 62% noted having a thorough understanding of their CSR program. Additionally, 44% indicated receiving adequate initial and ongoing professional development related to CSR. However, when asked if the training were valuable, 38% agreed but almost half (49%) were neutral, did not know, or skipped the question. A similar pattern existed for the question asking if there had been external support for implementing the CSR program. About a third (36%) noted receiving effective assistance from external partners, and a quarter (24%) disagreed with the statement. It should also be noted that more than 20% of respondents reported “Don’t Know” or skipped this item; therefore, comparisons with this item should be made with caution. Additionally, the high non-response rate indicated that staff may have limited knowledge about assistance from external partners. The ambivalence across this construct may be a reflection of the AVID structure of providing support through a district-level trainer. (See Table 6.4 for more information on the Support construct.)

The mean scale score for the Support construct was 3.40 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all five questions of the Support construct, only 18% of staff rated the support provided as high. Combining respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all five questions of the construct, none rated Support as low. (See Appendix B for scale description.)

**Table 6.4. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Support (N = 45)**

Support	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don't Know/ Missing
I have a thorough understanding of this school's CSR program.	62%	11%	13%	13%
I have received adequate initial and ongoing professional development/training for CSR program implementation.	44%	29%	16%	11%
Professional development provided by external trainers, model developers, and/or designers has been valuable.	38%	33%	13%	16%
Guidance and support provided by our school's external facilitator, support team, or other state-identified resource personnel have helped our school implement its program.	38%	36%	11%	16%
My school receives effective assistance from external partners (e.g., university, businesses, agencies).	36%	18%	24%	22%

Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

### INTERNAL FOCUS

#### *Staff Buy-In and Support*

Although teachers were not involved in the model selection process and were, in many cases, not aware that AVID was the CSR model adopted at the school, they did support the AVID program in theory and viewed it as affirming for the students who participated: "This is a positive for our campus because before we didn't have this type of program for our low-SES kids from single-parent families. We can now better serve our kids with potential."

Teachers agreed with the basic AVID goal of increasing student enrollment in college: "We all know that college is important, and we are finally giving these kids a chance to go to college." However, there was little evidence that the basic program strategies, such as rigor, Socratic Method, and Cornell note

taking, were embedded in the daily practices of the whole staff. Teachers thought these strategies were used with students enrolled in the AVID program but had yet to integrate them into their own teaching. In an effort to involve new teachers and gain wider support for the program, the AVID elective teacher sought to identify teachers who would be interested in serving on the AVID site team next year. Responses were positive: "As we understand more about it, I feel that support for the program is increasing. [The AVID teacher] works with me whenever I need help in presenting material to the AVID students. He even watched me teach some of my math classes so that he would be better able to help the AVID students with their work."

#### *Alignment and Integration With Existing Programs*

The extent of alignment and integration of CSR model strategies with existing programs

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***Staff understanding of how AVID fit with existing programs, such as the 21st Century Community Learning Center Program and Communities in Schools, was limited.***

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represents an additional measure of internal focus. Staff understanding of how AVID fit with existing programs, such as the 21st Century Community Learning Center Program and Communities in Schools, was limited. They tended to view AVID as a separate elective class that “integrates” into the other classrooms through the presence of AVID students in other classes.

The principal described the alignment of CSR activities with the school’s 21st Century Community Learning Center Program in terms of shared goals with AVID: “It is all about student achievement and improving our kids so that they can plan for their futures and go to college.” The principal and CSR Coordinator viewed both programs as providing academic rigor while allowing students to be involved in other programs and “fun” activities, such as chess, dance, and fine arts: “Students really do not realize how much they are learning.” The principal commented that the “grants help us keep students in school instead of dropping out, luring them in with certain programs, and then talking about college.”

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***Monitoring***

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Monitoring of the CSR effort was limited to following the academic achievement of the students participating in the AVID program. The CSR coordinator indicated that she meets with the AVID site team to review the progress of each student. They compared last year’s results with current year data. The data showed that attendance has improved for this group of students. The CSR coordinator also indicated that the AVID group’s aggregate six-weeks GPA

showed improvement from their prior aggregate GPA. The CSR coordinator also noted that the monitoring of the CSR program included input from the site team, the principal, the counselors, and the community liaison.

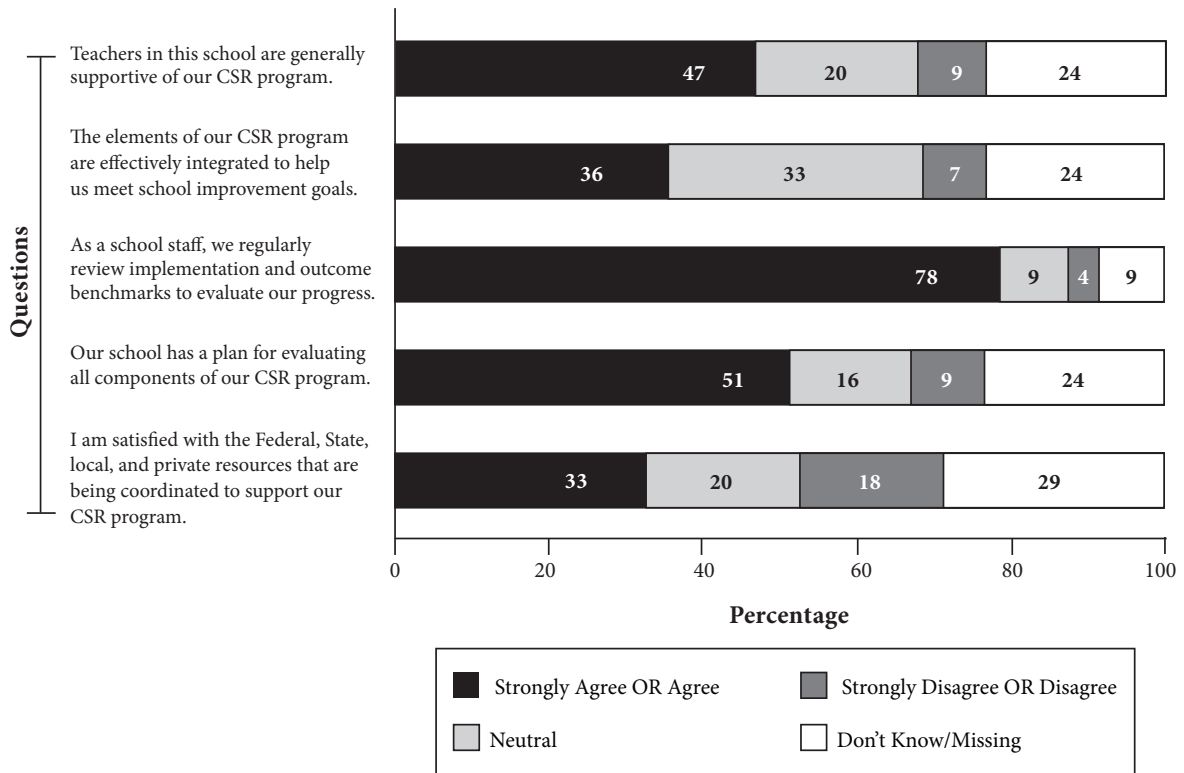
Staff members at School 5 were asked about the level of internal focus on CSR at the school. The staff mostly agreed (78%) that they regularly reviewed implementation and outcome benchmarks to evaluate progress. Less than half (47%) of the 45 respondents judged that teachers were generally supportive of the CSR program. About one third (36%) stated that the CSR program was effectively integrated; however, over half (57%) indicated being neutral or not knowing if the program was effectively integrated. Half (51%) of the staff agreed the school had a plan for evaluating their CSR program, and one third (33%) were satisfied with the coordination of resources to support CSR efforts. It should be noted that more than 20% of respondents reported “Don’t Know” or skipped several items across this construct; therefore, comparisons with these items should be made with caution. Additionally, the high non-response rate indicated that staff may have limited knowledge about how CSR efforts have impacted teacher support, CSR integration with existing programs, plans for CSR evaluation, and external financial support for CSR. (See Figure 6.2 for more information on the Focus construct.)

The mean scale score for the Focus construct was 3.69 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all five questions of the construct, 24% of staff rated the level of CSR focus as high. Combining respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all five questions of the construct, 2% rated Focus as low.

***PEDAGOGICAL CHANGE***

Professional development in AVID strategies was limited to an initial campus-wide training

**Figure 6.2. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Focus (N = 45)**



Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

in the Cornell note-taking process. While focus group teachers stated they were trained in the note-taking method, they did not mention implementing any AVID strategies when prompted to provide examples of how their instructional practices changed due to AVID.

One teacher stated that “things are better this year; we are doing fewer worksheets and more hands-on projects.” During classroom observations, however, the evaluator did not see students engaged in special projects or team-based activities. Independent seatwork with students completing worksheets and multiple-choice questions was a typical classroom activity. In one mathematics class, the teacher walked around the room and provided limited feedback as students worked on independent seatwork assignments. In another class, students were asked to copy figures from textbooks. In a social studies class, students

read aloud to the class from the textbook. During interviews, more than one teacher commented that evidence of project-based learning included having AVID students design posters/collages to advertise the program to the new seventh graders who would be eligible for participation.

Overall, the observed level of student engagement was low. In some classes, students were unruly. In others, students were quiet but disengaged; they sat at their desks but did not do their assignments. Teachers who had an opportunity to comment said that this student behavior was typical.

This evidence indicated that AVID strategies have not yet been embedded in daily practice across the school. The limited professional development for those teachers directly involved with the AVID program and the lack

of professional development in AVID strategies for the rest of school staff could account for this lack of impact on pedagogical change.

Survey questions also tapped pedagogical issues related to the school's CSR efforts. Overall, responses across the Pedagogy construct indicated respondents perceive that CSR may not have had a strong impact on the school-wide pedagogical practices. This observation was consistent with the type of model selected and was also corroborated by site visit data. For example, only 27% of respondents felt that CSR had changed classroom learning activities a great deal, while 58% registered responses as neutral or did not know. Several items across this construct had more than a 20% non-response rate. Comparisons using these questions should be interpreted with caution. Additionally, this information indicated that staff at this school have limited knowledge about AVID-promoted strategies and their

impact on classroom practices. (See Table 6.5 for more information on the Pedagogy construct.)

The mean scale score for the Pedagogy construct was 3.20 on a 5-point scale. Consistent with the site visit data, combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all five questions of the construct, only 9% of staff rated pedagogical change as high. Combining respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all five questions of the construct, 2% rated pedagogical change as low. (See Appendix B for scale description.)

### RESTRUCTURING OUTCOMES

#### Student Impacts

Many program outcomes at School 5 were positive. However, data indicated that these program outcomes were limited to the

**Table 6.5. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Pedagogy (N = 45)**

Pedagogy	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don't Know/ Missing
Because of our CSR program, I use textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets less than I used to for basic skills or content area instruction.	27%	29%	20%	24%
Our CSR program has changed classroom learning activities a great deal.	27%	31%	16%	27%
Students in my class spend at least two hours per school day in interdisciplinary or project-based work.	24%	33%	22%	20%
Students in my class spend much of their time working in cooperative learning teams.	44%	22%	16%	18%
Students are using technology more effectively because of our CSR program.	40%	27%	16%	18%

Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.



participating teachers and students, with some secondary impacts spilling over to additional students and teachers.

*Achievement.* When asked directly about the impact of CSR efforts on academic achievement, staff responded that the assessment process is just beginning since AVID was first implemented in the fall of 2005. While there was anecdotal evidence of AVID student achievement improving, the principal said “the true test will be TAKS.” More information will be available from the school’s district report, which was not available at the time of publication.

*Academic engagement.* Teachers noticed that participation in AVID impacted student engagement and motivation: “These [AVID] students are very motivated.” Because they must maintain an average of 80 to remain in the program, their behavior and study habits in all classes are impacted. Teachers commented that “attendance is up for [AVID] students because now they see the importance of their GPA and the Honor Roll. Before, they really didn’t.” One teacher noted that AVID students were “constantly asking me to rephrase the question” and challenged him to provide “relevant experiences in math because they had to report ‘relevance’ to [the AVID teacher]. At least the kids are trying now.” Another teacher noted that “the AVID students are more conscientious about their class work than they were before.” He said that the students are now more motivated to complete assignments. One teacher observed that “you can tell an AVID student, because you can almost see them processing a problem—they are serious about school now.”

Students also acknowledged the positive impact AVID has had on their academic skills. They noted participation in the program required “hard work,” but they also had fun in the

process. They “work hard Monday to Thursday,” and on Fridays they reflect on the week’s activities and have guest speakers. Students recognized they gained skills: “[AVID] teaches us how to be organized.” Staff also reflected that valuable skills were taught through AVID, such as “study habits that emphasize organization and structure.” For example, students transferred the Cornell note-taking process to all classes and used it to prepare for tests. Individual tutors, including college students, were also available to AVID students as another method of supporting student academic success.

*Affective impacts.* In addition to teaching explicit skills and goals, AVID also created a safety net of relationships intended to prevent participants from being missed or slipping “through the cracks” academically and socially: “When teachers find out that I am an AVID student, they pay attention to me.” This personal investment from teachers encouraged students to try harder than they had previously. Students described strong bonds between students and teachers as a result of AVID. A salient point was that students in the focus group immediately and unanimously identified the AVID teacher as an important adult in their lives: “He gets on our level and can help us.” “He puts [us] first and tries to help fix our problems.” Formal and informal mentoring also facilitated student-teacher relationships.

AVID also fostered new peer friendships, and students relied on each other to help “catch up” when academically behind. Staff described AVID students as a “family of 30” that works as a cooperative team to ensure the success of all the group members. The principal noted that AVID-sponsored activities outside of school fostered relationships between students “because anytime you do things outside of school, like a field trip, you have common experiences and form friendships.”



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***Before AVID was implemented, the coordinator explained, “only about 4 of the 30 students would have thought about going to college. Now they all say they plan to go to college.”***

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*Future orientation.* The principal felt that AVID’s “impact has been great” for creating college aspirations. AVID students were working with someone “who can help them open their minds to college.” These students understood that they had been identified as individuals with potential. Staff described AVID as a leadership program. They praised the program for bringing college students in to speak to the AVID students about their experiences so that the AVID students could understand what it might be like to go to college. Students said that they particularly enjoyed hearing about the personal experiences of college speakers. Students saw AVID as “prepar[ing] me for the future.” Before AVID was implemented, the coordinator explained, “only about 4 of the 30 students would have thought about going to college. Now they all say they plan to go to college.”

*Impact on non-AVID students.* The positive experiences of AVID students this first year encouraged other students to maintain a strong grade point average so that they can have the opportunity to be considered for participation in the AVID program in the future. Teachers noted that “AVID has motivated other students” to want to become involved with the program in the future. One teacher said his seventh graders were asking how they could be in the program next year. According to the principal, enthusiasm for AVID had spread because the program is intentionally visible: “We don’t isolate the other kids from the program.”

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### *Staff Impacts*

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Based on information gathered during the site visit, the largest staff impact occurred among those teachers directly involved in the program and through regular contact with AVID students. The AVID site team met regularly, and such collaboration created a true “team” because of the common goal of keeping the AVID students on track.

Teachers who did not have regular contact with AVID students knew less about it and were less impacted by AVID. One teacher looked forward to the expansion of AVID and thought it would have more impact as it grew: “I think it will [have an impact] in time and be much bigger and have someone from every department [involved in instructing].” Only one teacher felt that the reform had “not really impacted teachers, nor had it impacted relationships between teachers.” Others viewed the staff as a “cohesive unit” prior to AVID and credited the new principal with increasing communication between administrators and teachers: “The management team is getting better and better.” These responses indicated the difficulty of attributing staff impacts directly to CSR activities.

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### *Parental Involvement*

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AVID parents participated in specific activities in addition to the general parent activities offered by the school. At the beginning of the year, parents of AVID students were given an overview of the AVID program during an induction event. School personnel viewed these parents as more involved than they ever were in the past: “I can’t say that I have seen more parental involvement [in the specific class], but they really show up for [the AVID program].”

Students corroborated this notion by stating that their parents and other family members

came to the campus for conferences. However, they saw parents as involved in their education most often in terms of ensuring that they finished their homework. Students said their parents helped with homework when they had the knowledge to help; otherwise, they encouraged their children to work with siblings on assignments.

Professional staff members at School 5 were asked about issues related to the school’s CSR-related outcomes. Responses across all questions of this construct again indicated that many survey respondents were unsure or unaware of how CSR may have impacted outcomes. While 40% agreed that student achievement has been positively impacted by

CSR, almost half (49%) were neutral or did not know. Less than a quarter (24%) of respondents attributed increased parental involvement to CSR efforts. Additionally, less than a quarter of the staff indicated teachers were more involved in decision making (22%) or that teacher-student interactions were more positive due to CSR implementation (24%). Generally, the high number of respondents reporting “Don’t Know” or skipping most items across this construct indicated that staff are unaware of how CSR impacted their campus in terms of the outcomes addressed here. Comparisons made within and across these questions should be made with caution. (See Table 6.6 for more information on the Outcomes construct.)

**Table 6.6. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Outcomes (N = 45)**

Outcomes	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don’t Know/ Missing
Student achievement has been positively impacted by CSR.	40%	22%	11%	27%
Students in this school are more enthusiastic about learning than they were before we became a CSR school.	31%	22%	18%	29%
Because of CSR, parents are more involved in the educational program of this school.	24%	22%	27%	27%
Community support for our school has increased since CSR has been implemented.	38%	20%	13%	29%
Students have higher standards for their own work because of our school’s program.	33%	22%	16%	29%
Teachers are more involved in decision making at this school than they were before we implemented CSR.	22%	36%	25%	18%
Our program adequately addresses the requirements of students with special needs.	40%	24%	20%	16%
Because of our school’s program, teachers in this school spend more time working together to develop curriculum and plan instruction.	40%	16%	22%	22%
Because of CSR, interactions between teachers and students are more positive.	24%	44%	9%	22%

Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

The mean scale score for the Outcomes construct was 3.29 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all nine questions of the construct, 11% of staff saw strong evidence of CSR-related outcomes. Combining respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all nine questions of the construct, 12% rated evidence of CSR-related outcomes as low. (See Appendix B for scale description.)

### III. IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

#### *Key Points*

While School 5 was implementing AVID according to the model specifications, its implementation as a school-wide reform model was more tenuous. AVID was being implemented as an isolated elective directly impacting 30 of 1,280 students—or less than 1% of the student body—and the teachers serving these students.

As described in its model specifications, AVID is a catalyst for school-wide change but requires substantial supplements to meet the goals of CSR. For example, campus-wide delivery of the primary pedagogical strategies used in AVID, such as note taking, write-to-learn, inquiry and collaboration, and the delivery of rigorous coursework, requires extensive planning, a strong academic focus, sustained professional development, and assessment that must be led by campus administrators and implemented by a motivated staff. Further, the AVID model is not intentionally designed to impact school-wide ongoing professional development, pedagogy, or school management. Adapting AVID to a school-wide model places extensive demands on school resources.

Data indicated a very limited understanding of the AVID program beyond those directly involved with it. While teachers knew about the

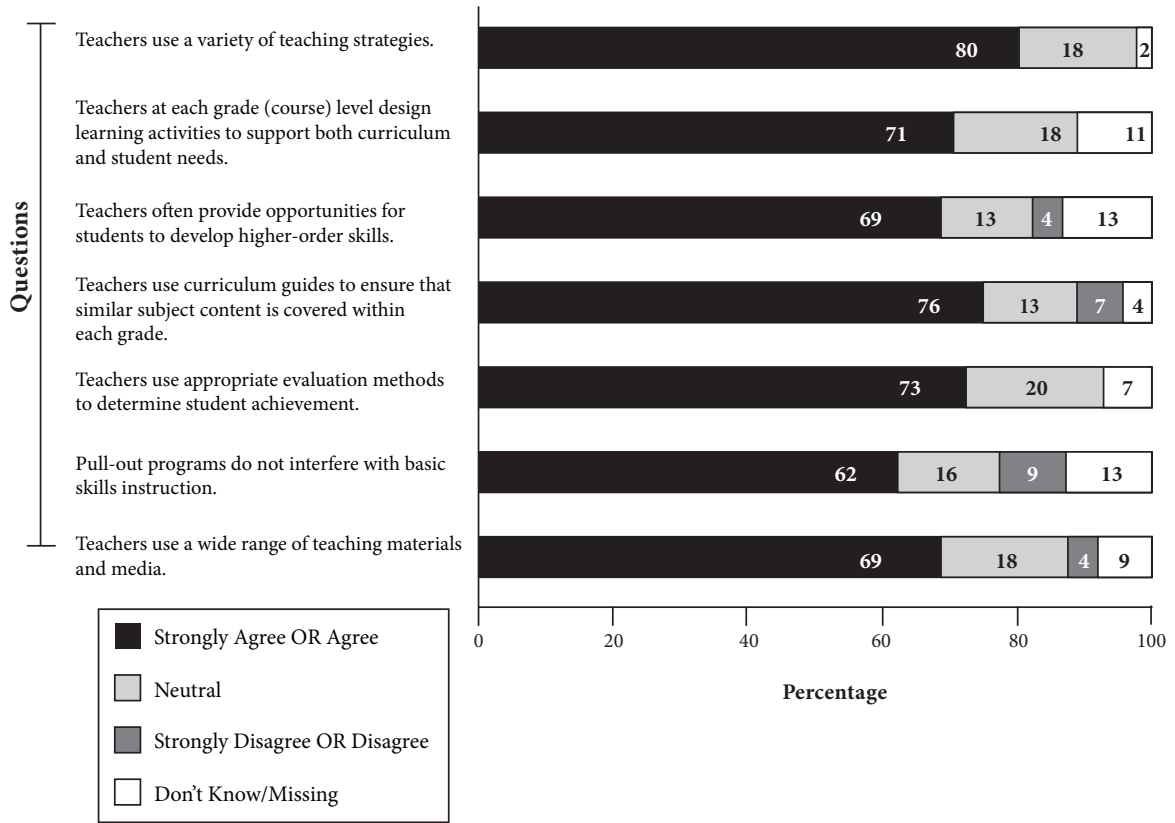
AVID program, they did not see it as a vehicle for school-wide change, nor could they identify how it had impacted their classrooms. From observations and interviews, teachers did not appear to be implementing AVID teaching philosophies or strategies in their daily practice. Staff did not voice plans for the expansion of AVID into a school-wide model. However, the AVID plan did indicate the expansion of activities into the seventh grade in Year 2 of program implementation.

#### *School Climate Inventory*

One way to assess the success of CSR implementation indirectly is to measure school climate. The School Climate Inventory (SCI), which was administered as part of the staff survey, measures school climate across seven dimensions. It is composed of seven dimensions logically and empirically associated with effective school climates. (See Appendix B for scale description.) The overall mean SCI rating for School 5 was a 3.52 on a 5-point scale. Results from the SCI indicate an overall school climate that is comparable to the national average for secondary schools 3.73. The highest mean rating of 3.87 was given for the Instruction dimension (compared to national norm of 4.06), and the lowest mean rating of 2.88 was obtained for the Order dimension (compared to national norm of 3.26). (See Figure 6.3 and Table 6.7 for more information on SCI data.)

Professional staff consistently agreed that teachers demonstrated strong instructional practices as noted in their responses to individual items. Eighty percent agreed that teachers use a variety of teaching strategies. Three quarters of respondents indicated that teachers use curriculum guides to ensure that similar subject content is covered within each grade. Notably, less than 10% disagreed with any item in this dimension. (See Figure 6.3 for more information on the Instruction dimension.)

**Figure 6.3. School Climate Inventory Responses About Instruction (N = 45)**



Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Considering individual items in the Order dimension, 71% of teachers indicated that student misbehavior interferes with the teaching process. About one third of respondents agreed that rules were consistently enforced (36%), discipline was administered fairly and appropriately (36%), and tardiness and absence were not major problems (31%). (See Table 6.7 for more information on the Order dimension.)

### Assessment of Implementation Level

With an instrument designed to assess the strength of CSR implementation based on the 11 CSR components, School 5 produced a score of 21 out of a possible 51 points. The campus received the most credit in area 1–Research-

Based Method or Strategy. This part of the scale relies on reporting provided by the AVID state director who completed the TEA progress report. This information indicated that the school was implementing AVID according to model specifications. It should be noted that during the site visit the school did not report receiving professional development from this person. Additionally, the AVID specifications do not mirror CSR specifications. School 5 also earned high points for CSR component 7–Parent and Community Involvement, in this case represented by parental involvement. The school received low or no points for several components: 2–Comprehensive Design, 3–Professional Development, 4–Measurable Goals and Benchmarks, 5–Support Within the School, 9–Evaluation Strategies, and 11–Strategies That Improve Academic Achievement.

The Technical Assistance Provider did not complete an evaluation survey; therefore, more recent information about implementation from this source is unavailable.

### **Facilitators**

Campus improvement efforts that benefited CSR implementation were generally credited to the principal and the community liaison and included improved safety and environmental issues at the school, positive personnel and staffing changes, and a dynamic parent outreach program. Additionally, the AVID program was considered strong because of the exposure it provided participants to college-oriented experiences.

While teacher buy-in at School 5 may have been slower to garner due to limited staff input and awareness of the model selection process, there was no evidence of opposition to the program. The AVID teacher was making efforts to increase awareness of the program and strategies. Survey results indicated that staff listed support from school administration, buy-in from teachers, and training and professional development as

the three main facilitators for CSR program implementation.

School 5 exemplified a school-wide reform effort in the piloting stage, starting the program with a few classes at one grade level. Its potential to expand was limited due to a lack of a clear plan for school-wide implementation that addresses all 11 CSR components and institutionalizes and sustains the effort beyond the grant.

### **Barriers**

Barriers to implementing AVID as a school-wide reform stemmed from several sources. Foremost was the school's starting point in the reform process. Key issues, such as safety and meeting state accountability goals, took precedence in school planning and resources: "[District] administration is concerned about test scores, [and] kids have to worry about other things." Next, inherent to the CSR process is initial staff buy-in, ideally represented by an internal needs assessment, research of options to fit local context, and a staff vote or direct assessment of staff response to model selection. In this particular context, these crucial initial steps

**Table 6.7. School Climate Inventory Responses About Order**

Order	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don't Know/ Missing
Rules for student behavior are consistently enforced.	36%	18%	36%	11%
Student discipline is administered fairly and appropriately.	36%	22%	33%	9%
Student misbehavior in this school does not interfere with the teaching process.	16%	9%	71%	4%
Student tardiness or absence from school is not a major problem.	31%	27%	36%	7%
This school is a safe place in which to work.	47%	29%	18%	7%
Teachers, administrators, and parents assume joint responsibility for student discipline.	33%	22%	42%	2%
Student behavior is generally positive in this school.	38%	24%	36%	2%

Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

were omitted and superseded by a district-level decision to use AVID. The district selected the model for the school because other schools in the district, including the receiving high school for School 5, used it. This process circumvented critical steps for any model to be used in a school-wide capacity and explained why very few teachers viewed AVID as more than an elective course.

Because the staff was not included in the initial adoption phase, the internal focus of the school was still in the piloting phase and limited to staff and students directly involved with the program. As such, the program continued to be viewed as fragmented. Additionally, observation and interview data suggested that only the AVID teacher embeds model strategies into daily practices. There was no concerted effort to align the CSR model with other programs. Progress monitoring lacked formal attention to the overall progress of the reform effort and was instead limited to the academic performance of students enrolled in the AVID program.

An underlying challenge facing School 5 in using AVID was that additional resources, school-wide professional development efforts, and/or additional external technical assistance were not provided. There does not yet appear to be substantial or active support from the district or an external AVID Technical Assistance Provider. When asked to comment on CSR-related professional development, teachers spoke of the general difficulties of transforming the theoretical or ideal professional development into practice: “[Most professional development] is not quite to the point and not realistic enough—everything you learn is for the perfect classroom, and I have never been there.” Additionally, because teachers do not yet consider AVID a school-wide approach, they were unaware of what resources would be necessary for all teachers to implement AVID strategies across the school.

The AVID model’s reliance on training a district-level coordinator necessarily makes an important level of facilitation and support external to, or removed from, the process of implementing the reform. While staff knowledgeable about the assistance suggested this support was adequate, it was apparent that support was not embedded, intense, or ongoing, possibly crippling the campus efforts for expansion beyond 30 students after two years of funding. So while the model may have been implemented according to its design, to stretch it to a school-wide model that meets the 11 components of CSR may go beyond what a struggling campus can provide without extensive support in terms of technical assistance and planning, professional development, and financial resources.

Further, there was little evidence of plans for supporting the program beyond grant funding. While the Mid-Project Report submitted to TEA stated that the AVID coordinator, the campus principal, the AVID site team, and the AVID district director were “facilitating resources for program continuation,” specific plans were unclear (p. 14).

Survey data indicated that respondents listed a lack of or poor parent/community involvement, insufficient time, and a lack of support from teachers to be the three main barriers to CSR implementation. This conclusion is somewhat contradictory in that teacher support was also found to be a facilitator and the school focused on increasing parent involvement this past year.

While the success of AVID as a school-wide reform model is tentative at School 5, it does have the potential to affect those students directly involved, as the principal commented: “We have a capability within our school to make a difference in [AVID students’] future and make it more positive.”







## SCHOOL 6

### MIDDLE-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION

**GRADE LEVEL:** HIGH SCHOOL

**CSR MODEL:** PRINCETON REVIEW PROGRAM

**GRANT TYPE:** TEXAS HIGH SCHOOL INITIATIVE (THSI)

**AWARD DATE:** JANUARY 2005

#### I. LOCAL CONTEXT

SCHOOL 6 IS A LARGE HIGH SCHOOL (grades 9–12) located on the south side of a large urban city. School 6 serves a high minority, economically disadvantaged student population. (See Table 7.1 for more demographic information.) Over the last decade, the school has seen a shift in demographics. AEIS reports indicate a steady decline in African American students (from 78% in 1994 to 64% in 2004) and a steady increase in Hispanic students (from 20% in 1994 to 35% in 2004) as well as a sharp rise in the number of economically disadvantaged students (from 20% in 1994 to 82% in 2002).

#### *Starting Points*

School 6 staff members faced several challenges that potentially detracted from the school's focus on CSR goals and objectives. These issues included unexpected increases in student enrollment, changing demographics, a decline in student performance, limited equipment and

resources for extracurricular activities, and low parental involvement.

In 2005–06, despite a projected enrollment of 1,900 students, School 6 actually served 2,400 students, approximately 250 more students than the previous year. The transfer of students impacted by Hurricane Katrina and an influx of students from new housing developments in the area were cited as reasons for the unexpected increase. Overcrowded classrooms and staffing shortages were the result. Teachers and administrators described the strain of the increased enrollment in the classroom: “There are too many students for the school to accommodate.” Despite having a number of portable classrooms installed on the grounds, a need for more classrooms was a recurring theme. In terms of staffing, the district did hire some additional teachers from Louisiana (and provided tutoring for students who were displaced by the hurricane) with funds from the Communities in Schools program, but the principal indicated a continued need for more teachers. Teachers commented that

**Table 7.1. Demographic Profile, 2004–05**

Total Students	African American	Hispanic	White	Other	Economically Disadvantaged	Mobility (2003–04)	Limited English Proficiency
2,161	62%	37%	1%	1%	83%	22%	6%

Source. Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS)

**Table 7.2. Accountability and TAKS Performance History**

Year	Campus Rating	TAKS Met Standard All Grades Tested (All Tests)	Reading	Math	Science	Social Studies
2003–04	Academically Acceptable	33%	69%	41%	50%	82%
2004–05	Academically Acceptable	33%	70%	45%	44%	78%

Source. Texas Education Agency, AEIS

the prevailing strategy for handling the staff shortage was to add another class period to the current teachers’ schedules.

School 6 also experienced a dramatic demographic shift, as noted by parents, teachers, and administrators. Over the last three decades, the school shifted from serving a predominantly white middle-class student body to a largely African American middle-class student population. Most recently, in addition to a big increase in the number of low-income students, School 6 saw an increase in Hispanic students. Teachers noted that this shift has additional implications for staffing at School 6.

The school also experienced a decline in assessment scores in several subject areas. (See Table 7.2 for more accountability information.) A teacher who had recently returned to teach at School 6 indicated that performance of students at the school had declined during the years he was teaching elsewhere. Parents were concerned with the decline in assessment scores but felt that School 6 was still a good school. Teachers were frustrated because of the lack of parental involvement on the issue. Previously, teachers had organized a meeting to discuss low passing rates on TAKS and how parents could help students. They advertised on the local radio stations and sent home flyers

and letters, but only six parents, including the organizers, attended the meeting.

Parental involvement was another challenge. Though some parents noted that “the community as a whole identified with being a member of the [School 6] family,” parents, teachers, and students perceived parental involvement as widely lacking. Teachers acknowledged that parents might have other priorities due to “limited income,” and the school was seeking ways to involve the parents by providing incentives like free meals at school events. Overall, teachers thought low parental involvement was “the missing link to [School 6] moving into a [higher performing] school category.” Among the students, the consensus was that parents only came to campus when they were asked to come for discipline reasons or to complain about a new rule or policy. Students suggested that the

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***Teachers and administrators described the strain of the increased enrollment in the classroom: “There are too many students for the school to accommodate.”***

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school should do a better job of informing parents about school activities: “We [the students] can’t be trusted to take home the

flyer.” The students thought School 6 could benefit from having parents actively involved in the school. From the administrators’ perspective, they attempted to involve parents through flyers, calendars, the school marquee, and an automated telephone system; all of which amounted to a small increase in parental involvement. For next year, the school is planning to hire a community liaison to help with this area.

The school used its site-based decision-making committee (called the Support Team) to involve all stakeholders in the efforts to improve student achievement. One of the goals of the School Improvement Plan, which was developed by the Support Team, was to enhance college awareness and focus on college access. The school implemented a variety of initiatives to refocus students academically on this goal. For example, the school introduced opportunities for tutoring on Saturdays and after school. Several ongoing campus initiatives also focused on college awareness and success, including a Smaller Learning Communities

(SLC) grant program (implemented in 2002–03), Texas High School Success and Completion program, and NASA Explorer Schools.<sup>1</sup> To increase parental involvement, the principal held Friday morning meetings each week and appointed a bilingual community liaison.

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***For many students at School 6, college was not a real consideration. Rather, one teacher said, “Graduation from high school is the goal.”***

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For many students at School 6, college was not a real consideration. Rather, one teacher said, “Graduation from high school is the goal.” To increase student expectations in this area, a specific goal of the 2005–06 School Improvement Plan was to increase participation in college admissions testing and scores. (See Table 7.3 for information about college readiness.) School 6’s CSR implementation seemed tightly focused on this specific goal. Particularly noteworthy was that

**Table 7.3. Indicators of College Readiness, 2003–04**

Indicator	School 6	District	State
Advanced course/Dual enrollment completion	18%	21%	20%
Recommended HS/ Distinguished Achievement Program	91%	80%	68%
AP/IB results (percent passing/scoring 3 or above)	9%	18%	17%
SAT/ACT tested	54%	65%	62%
Mean SAT score	782	934	987
Mean ACT score	15.7	19.1	20.1

Source. Texas Education Agency, AEIS

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<sup>1</sup> NASA Explorer Schools is a grant from NASA to develop and implement a three-year plan to address the school’s challenges in science, math, engineering, and technology.

**Table 7.4. Princeton Review Model Design**

The Princeton Review provides a variety of services for K–12 schools:

- Low-stakes formative assessment
- Extended day, summer school, and supplemental education services
- School-based coaching and mentoring
- Academic enrichment programs

The Princeton Review’s online tool called the Education Career and Opportunity System (ECOS) features the following:

- SAT preparation and registration
- Descriptions of colleges and technical schools
- Salary scales for various careers
- College admissions and financial aid information

Source. Princeton Review website, <http://www.princetonreview.com/educators/guidance/prep.asp>

almost all seniors at School 6 complete their diplomas at the Recommended High School or Distinguished Achievement Level, which is significantly above the state average. However, the school’s mean SAT and ACT scores were considerably lower than state and district averages.

## II. MODEL ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

### *Selection Process*

School 6 received a Texas High School Initiative/Comprehensive School Reform (THSI/CSR) grant in January 2005. Because of the school improvement focus of increasing performance on college admissions tests, the School 6 Support Team made the decision to use the Princeton Review program. (See Table 7.4 for more information about the Princeton Review program.)

According to the principal, the Support Team choose the model because “our college admissions scores were low—we need to get them up.” The CSR coordinator described a California study of schools with demographics similar to School 6 where the Princeton Review

was found to be more effective in increasing college admissions scores than Kaplan: “The Princeton Review was a better fit for School 6.” After attending a district presentation on the Princeton Review program, the principal recommended the reform. Only one of the teachers who participated in site visit activities had been involved in the selection process. Even though others were not involved in the selection process, the general consensus was that the “AP/SAT strategies work.”

The Princeton Review program was not designed to be aligned with the criteria for CSR. So even though the school implemented the program according to the program design and as approved by TEA in their application, some areas of CSR were still neglected. For instance, Princeton Review at School 6 did not feature a comprehensive design to meet the needs of all students, did not provide continuous professional development for all staff, and did not involve parents and community members.

### *Initial Implementation*

After the Princeton Review program was selected, School 6 implemented the program

through two approaches. One approach was to target specific small groups of students in grades 10–11 in an intensive test preparation class; the other was to train teachers in test-taking strategies with the intent that they would integrate the strategies into their classroom teaching. Thus far, this approach focused on a limited number of teachers and students. In 2005–06, 24% of teachers were trained, and 3% of the student body participated in the classes. There were plans for small-scale expansion to include additional participants in both activities.

In summer 2005, 30 of the school’s 115 teachers participated in the Princeton Review’s Teacher-to-Teacher (T2T) training for PSAT/SAT strategies designed to help teachers incorporate these techniques in their classes. The five-day training is aligned with the mathematics and verbal sections of the test. This initial group of teachers trained represented staff across subject areas in grades 10–11. Staff received 20 to 40 hours of training credit in mathematics, critical reading, and/or verbal sections of the test. These teachers received certification to teach an SAT course. An additional 15 teachers were to be trained in July 2006 followed by another 15 in July 2007. Any teacher who was interested was able to enroll in the training.

In 2005, the school offered a one-semester skill-building course for selected students in grade 10 called Smart Start, which focused on mathematics, reading, grammar, vocabulary, and writing concepts tested on the PSAT and SAT. The principal reported that students who were eligible to take the SAT, including special needs students, were eligible to take the course. Participating students took two practice tests to track progress in the course. In 2005–06, a total of 30 students took the course. A certified Princeton Review instructor taught an additional one-semester course in SAT preparation. To prepare students for the new

SAT, this course featured test-taking strategies and two to three practice tests. Approximately 40 students participated in this course in 2005–06. According to the CSR coordinator, School 6 planned to offer one section of the PSAT course and one section of the SAT course in fall 2006 and again in spring 2007.

## ***Factors Impacting CSR Implementation***

### *SCHOOL CAPACITY*

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#### *Materials*

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The Princeton Review consultant provided materials that included study guides and practice tests as well as support for teachers who were incorporating SAT test-taking skills into their lesson plans. Records indicated that 10 of the teachers who were certified to teach SAT content received additional resources, such as specific exam-related resources (“Cracking the SAT Chemistry Subject Exam,” for example). School 6 staff and students also had access to the online tools offered by the Princeton Review, though it is unclear whether they used the web-based tools as no one mentioned them. A teacher who had been trained in the Princeton Review program felt the scope of the materials provided was limited. He wanted to see more essays and samples of writing that were assigned various SAT scores. He also thought the book they received at training had useful passages but that the reading level was too high to use with ninth graders. The teacher wanted more PSAT materials to use in his class.

#### *Staffing and Planning Time*

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There was no evidence that staff shortages were addressed by the CSR efforts in 2005–06 or that new teachers were hired with CSR funds. However, staff members perceived that CSR was influencing staffing in terms of the quality

of new teachers hired. Teachers generally agreed that the principal is making an effort to hire quality faculty members. One teacher strongly believed that the school redesign would go well but that horizontal and vertical teaming must also occur. He said that the principal is “putting a team in place” for this by hiring effective teachers and administrators.

Efforts to build staff capacity appeared limited by the relatively small number of teachers who participated in training—a little under a quarter of the total teaching staff. The principal noted that there was a need to train more teachers: “We have a ways to go to train more of our teachers in the [PSAT/SAT] strategies.” An additional 30 teachers were to receive training over the next two summers. Therefore, the total staff trained at the start of the 2007–08 school year will account for about half the teachers on campus. Teachers indicated that some portion of daily planning sessions, which included trained and non-trained staff, was spent with the CSR coordinator. According to the principal, teachers who received the Princeton Review training have collaborative planning time with one another.

Teachers stated that trained staff members are expected to incorporate the strategies into all their classroom instruction and that they are trying to incorporate the materials and strategies at least 10–15 minutes every day. The teachers who were certified to teach the SAT course were required to demonstrate in-depth understanding of the PSAT/SAT test, course structure, and course content; the ability to articulate and apply techniques and strategies used in the training; and the skills to adapt to different classroom situations and students. Data suggested there was ongoing contact with a Princeton Review consultant who provided professional development and onsite support for trained teachers.

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***Efforts to build staff capacity appeared limited by the relatively small number of teachers who participated in training—a little under a quarter of the total teaching staff.***

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Teachers at School 6 had a 90-minute planning period every day, and, according to the principal, sometimes half of that period was devoted to informational sessions with the CSR coordinator. Teachers noted that they meet 45 minutes of the planning period for professional development or to receive “points of information.” The CSR coordinator indicated that the informational sessions were a means for spreading awareness of the Princeton Review program to teachers who have not been trained. Other than these meetings with the coordinator, it is unclear how much of the planning period was used for CSR planning purposes. One teacher shared that “the 90-minute conference period provides professional development opportunities,” but it was not clear how or if this professional development was linked to the CSR model.

The principal noted that trained teachers plan together, as do the teachers involved in the grade 9 Smaller Learning Communities: “Teachers trained in SAT prep work together cooperatively, and the grade 9 team for the Smaller Learning Communities cohort has a common planning period so they can have mini-conferences.” One teacher who received Princeton Review training expressed an interest in doing more interdisciplinary work and project-based learning with other teachers at School 6. Another teacher hoped that School 6 could implement planning times for vertical and horizontal team to work together cooperatively: “We need to work on this.”



*Fiscal Resources to Support Staff,  
 Materials, and Technical Assistance*

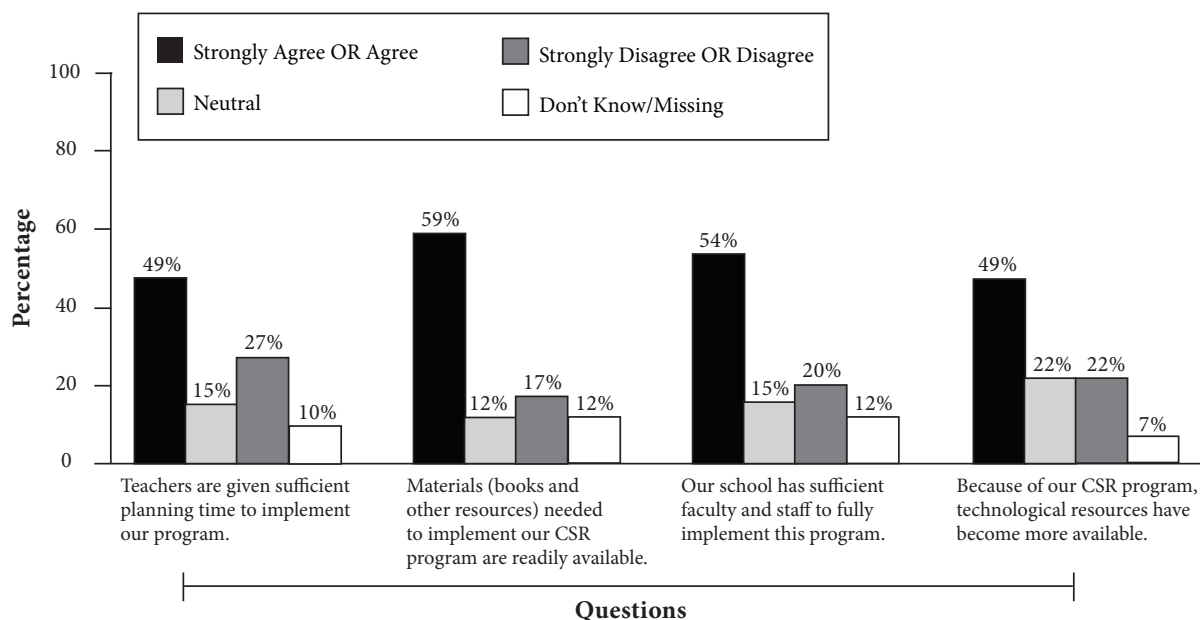
Funding from the CSR grant enabled School 6 to send teachers to Princeton Review training and to offer one PSAT course and one semester-long SAT preparatory course. Each trained teacher received a book of practice SAT tests for each of their students. Additionally, the school provided a set of 30 of the same book for each English and Spanish teacher. The principal and those involved wanted to see the Princeton Review program continue beyond the grant period, but the principal did not explain how the program would be supported.

With a response rate of 27%, 41 out of 154 professional staff members responded to a survey assessing staff perceptions about local CSR implementation efforts. Note that conclusions based on this low of a response rate should be interpreted with caution and generalizations to the rest of the school staff are not recommended. Based on responses to survey questions, 49% said they were given

sufficient planning time, and 59% of the School 6 staff strongly agreed or agreed that they had the necessary materials for implementing CSR. A little over half (54%) of the School 6 strongly agreed or agreed that they had sufficient staffing, and 49% judged technology resources to have become more available because of CSR. (See Figure 7.1 for more information on the Capacity construct.)

Overall for the Capacity construct, staff rated it a 3.50 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all four questions of the construct, 42% of staff rated school capacity as high, compared to 10% of the respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all four questions of the construct. (See Appendix B for scale description.) Additionally, results from the Technical Assistance Provider survey suggested that the provider judged the school’s capacity to be adequate in terms of materials, staffing, and planning time. The provider was unaware of the school’s capacity in terms of fiscal resources.

**Figure 7.1. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Capacity (N = 41)**



Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

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## EXTERNAL SUPPORT

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### *External Professional Development*

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Of the teachers at School 6 who attended Princeton Review training, the one interviewed noted that the consensus among them was that the training was “very useful—the trainer was knowledgeable and made the material consumable.”

There was a certified Princeton Review staff member at School 6 who taught the PSAT and SAT courses. According to the principal and CSR coordinator, a Princeton Review consultant was in frequent contact with the teachers to provide support and materials and who also reported results from practice tests. A Princeton Review master trainer was also available via e-mail to help teachers with strategies they are implementing in their classrooms. However, the teacher interviewed who had been trained reported having no interaction with the consultant after the training. He thought that was because he taught grade 9 and the focus of the program was on students in grades 10–11 doing specific PSAT and SAT preparation.

Results from the Technical Assistance Provider survey indicated that the school received approximately 130 hours of support over the course of the grant. Survey information also stated that support was provided across 9 of the 11 CSR components with the exception of generating staff support for reform and evaluating school reform and implementation and results. The Technical Assistance Provider indicated that all of this support was provided through workshops.

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### *Integrated District Assistance*

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Data did not indicate specific district support for School 6 CSR efforts beyond general ongoing support, including professional

development opportunities for teachers. Most teachers mentioned the AP training that the district provided, which they felt was aligned with the Princeton Review SAT preparation strategies. The district also supported sending teachers to AP Seminars at Rice University and the University of Texas at Austin. The district offered other opportunities for training, including training for teaching gifted and talented students and AP Connects.

Staff members at School 6 were asked about the level of support the school receives for its CSR efforts. Of the respondents, 71% agreed that the professional development had been valuable, and 66% had received adequate initial and ongoing professional development. Less than half of respondents (46%) expressed that the school received effective assistance from external partners. However this question received a high non-response rate, signaling that staff may have had limited knowledge of assistance from external partners. Over half (59%) of respondents agreed that they had a thorough understating of the school’s CSR program. (See Table 7.5 for more information on the Support construct.)

The mean scale score for the Support construct was 3.85 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all five questions of the Support construct, 46% of staff rated support provided as high. Combining respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all five questions of the construct, none rated Support as low. (See Appendix B for scale description.)

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## INTERNAL FOCUS

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### *Staff Buy-In and Support*

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Buy-in and support on campus at School 6 varied. Because few teachers were involved in model selection and/or trained in Princeton Review strategies, many staff members

**Table 7.5. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Support ( $N = 41$ )**

Support	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don't Know/ Missing
I have a thorough understanding of this school's CSR program.	59%	22%	10%	10%
I have received adequate initial and ongoing professional development/training for CSR program implementation.	66%	15%	5%	15%
Professional development provided by external trainers, model developers, and/or designers has been valuable.	71%	15%	5%	10%
Guidance and support provided by our school's external facilitator, support team, or other state-identified resource personnel have helped our school implement its program.	68%	15%	5%	12%
My school receives effective assistance from external partners (e.g., university, businesses, agencies).	46%	17%	17%	20%

*Note.* Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

could not comment on the Princeton Review program or how the school was meeting the CSR requirements. One teacher said that “the teachers may not remember the name of the program.” Others noted that the CSR awareness efforts on campus were limited to a video introduction for staff. Those teachers who were trained generally supported the program and tried to implement the Princeton Review strategies in their classrooms. The principal echoed that support for the model: “We do not hear any negative comments from the teachers about this program; it is enhancing what they are doing in the classroom.”

While most teachers at the campus had limited knowledge of CSR efforts, many supported the need for reforms but wanted more leadership from the administration: “There is always a core of teachers who will do what is necessary

for students to learn—this used to be voluntary, but the word has come down from the principal that it will be done.” The principal also thought the teachers would eventually support change in the school: “As with any school, some teachers are more reluctant than others—teachers have a lot of demands on their time, and we need to keep their spirits up so we maintain focus.”

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#### *Alignment and Integration With Existing Programs*

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Data indicated that the School Improvement Plan was driving the implementation of programs and activities around the common goal of increasing the college preparatory focus at School 6. However, though aligned philosophically, the extent to which programs and activities are operationally aligned was not apparent.

Parents and teachers were complimentary of the CSR coordinator, specifically for applying for grants that were aligned with the goals of the school: “[The CSR coordinator] coordinates all of our grant efforts and goes after those that support the School Improvement Plan objectives.” A campus push to offer more advanced courses was aligned with the Princeton Review goals, and several teachers mentioned that the training they received in teaching AP courses and preparing students to take the AP examinations was aligned with the SAT preparation strategies. In addition, the Texas High School Success and Completion grant and the NASA Explorer Schools programs shared the objectives of high achievement for all students and increased aspirations to attend college. A teacher mentioned alignment with a grant from General Electric to provide information about postsecondary opportunities and the college application process for college-bound students.

The only program with which staff indicated specific integrated activities with CSR was the grade 9 Smaller Learning Communities program in which a team of teachers moves with a group of students through high school. Staff members were very aware of the SLC program, and the principal made efforts to connect the teachers involved in the Princeton Review program and the SLC program.

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### *Monitoring*

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There were no data to suggest that teacher implementation of strategies received in training was monitored or that other teachers had responsibilities or expectations related to CSR. Student progress in the PSAT/SAT classes was monitored through the practice tests built into the courses. The participating students took two to three 4-hour practice SAT examinations to track their progress and mastery of the techniques. The Princeton Review consultant provided each student with

a multiple-page score report that highlighted strengths and weaknesses based on the practice test. One teacher reported that “[the CSR consultant] shared with us the increase in test scores on diagnostic practice SAT tests,” which indicated that students showed improvement on SAT practice test scores after engaging in the Princeton Review program.

As this year is the first year of program implementation, TAKS data were not yet available. Members of the school community were focused on the TAKS during the site visit, which occurred two weeks prior to TAKS administration. Students during many classroom observations were preparing for the test. Students in the focus group felt like they were “generally” ready for the test but could use more help.

Professional staff members at School 6 were asked about the focus on CSR at the school. A little over half of the 41 respondents (54%) believed that teachers were generally supportive of the CSR program, and 51% felt that the CSR program helped the school meet improvement goals. However, only 34% of respondents were satisfied with the fiscal resources that were supporting CSR. (See Figure 7.2 for more information on the Focus construct.)

The mean scale score for the Focus construct was 3.63 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all five questions of the construct, 29% of staff rated the level of CSR focus as high. Combining respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all five questions of the construct, 5% rated CSR focus as low. (See Appendix B for scale description.)

### *PEDAGOGICAL CHANGE*

The principal felt that the Princeton Review strategies were a helpful tool for teachers in classroom instruction. Teachers stated that

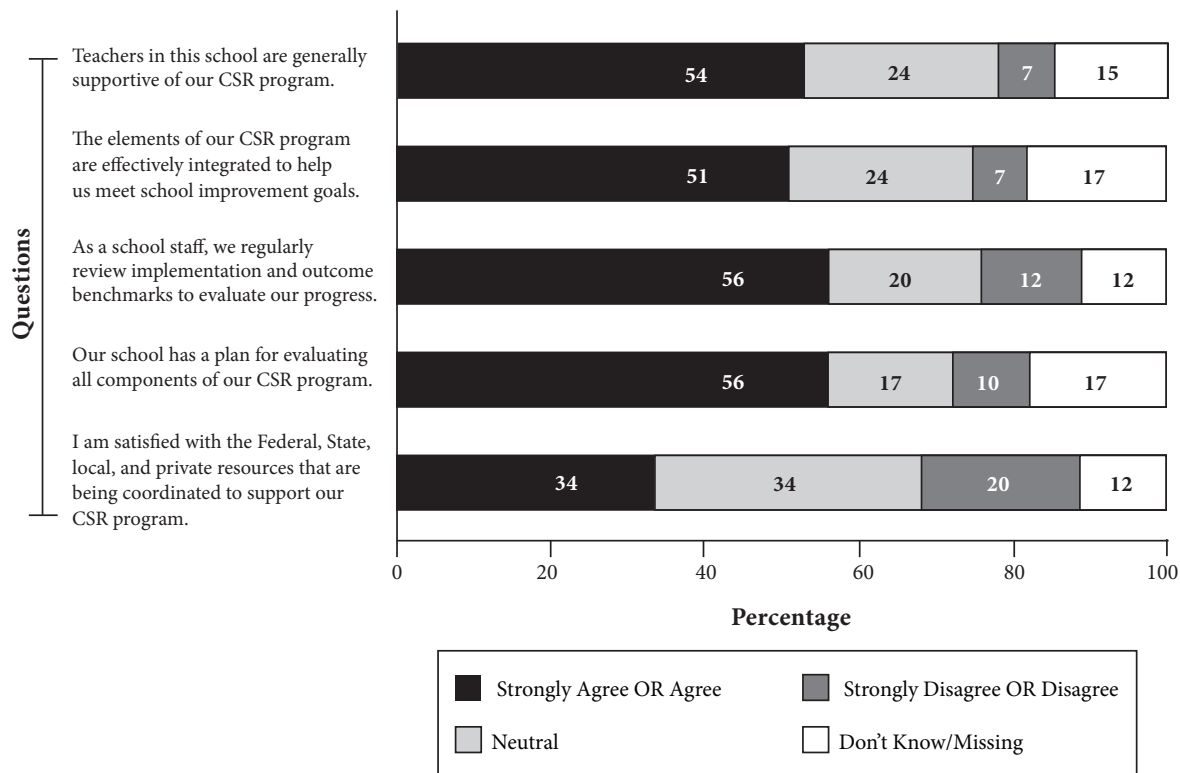
those teachers who attended the Princeton Review training were trying to incorporate the materials and strategies into their classroom instruction; however, these efforts were isolated into a 10–15 minute block each day rather than integration of the strategies. One teacher who was trained said that he used the methods daily in his class: “[The program is] going well—the techniques we learned in the training are universal—the same strategies can be used in taking the TAKS.”

The principal and teachers reported that typical pedagogical approaches at School 6 included project-based learning, hands-on experiments, and student portfolios—though these strategies were not attributed to the Princeton Review program. The Technical Assistance Provider survey indicated that the program was not designed to impact these types of instructional practices. One teacher who received training felt that he was more focused on student-

centered learning due to Princeton Review: “There is less of me talking in front of the class.” He also said, “It has forced us to make the curriculum more challenging.”

Despite these reports of a more academically rigorous environment at School 6, in the classroom observations evaluators noted that the level of academically focused time was low to moderate overall. Survey data also supported this finding. Additionally, direct instruction, rather than project-based or student-centered learning, was typical. In many observations, the teacher was at the front of the room talking while students sat at their desks. Most students were quiet and well behaved but disengaged. The level of student attention/engagement was low overall. In at least three of the classes, several students were asleep in the front row. Sustained writing was not observed in any class.

Figure 7.2. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Focus (N = 41)



Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

In four of the classes, teachers did use higher-level questioning strategies. The students were asked several questions about a particular topic. Chemistry students were asked to stand and answer four questions about a particular element, and they could not sit down until they answered all the questions. Independent seatwork was typical and included multiple-choice assignments, writing definitions for vocabulary words, and note taking.

Though not observed, teachers provided examples of project-based learning, such as participating in the History Fair, setting up a home budget, making plans for opening a business, and designing web pages.

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***Teachers stated that those teachers who attended the Princeton Review training were trying to incorporate the materials and strategies into their classroom instruction; however, these efforts were isolated into a 10–15 minute block each day rather than integration of the strategies.***

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Staff members were asked about pedagogical issues related to the school's CSR efforts. Of the 41 respondents, 49% felt that the CSR program had changed classroom learning activities a great deal. Further, about one third thought that they used fewer textbooks or worksheets (34%), used interdisciplinary or project-based learning two hours per day (34%), and allowed students to work more in cooperative learning teams (39%). Just over half (54%) thought that students used technology more effectively because of CSR. (See Table 7.6 for more information on the Pedagogy construct.)

The mean scale score for this construct was 3.27 out of a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree

or agree across the above five questions of the construct, 17% of staff rated pedagogical change as high. Combining respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all five questions of the construct, 12% rated pedagogical change as low. (See Appendix B for scale description.)

## *RESTRUCTURING OUTCOMES*

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### *Student Impacts*

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***Achievement.*** Parents and teachers were concerned with the decline in assessment scores. The principal and teachers felt it was too early to determine CSR's impact on student achievement but did judge that students were "excited about the program." There was no TAKS data available because this was the first full year of the CSR program at School 6.

***Academic engagement.*** Students reported liking classes in which they could be challenged, classes in which the teacher "goes beyond the book" and where "everyone learns." When asked about their least favorite classes, students listed classes that were not academically focused: "The teacher only went over the key terms; you are expected to get the information on your own." In another class, the teacher was too focused on classroom management: "There were a lot of discipline problems that prevented us from spending time working on our assignments." The CSR program at School 6 is geared towards providing more students with more rigorous classroom experiences. Classroom observations support the need for offering more rigorous curriculum. Additionally, results from the Technical Assistance Provider survey indicated that for the students who participate in the

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***Classroom observations support the need for offering more rigorous curriculum.***

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program, the program has had a positive moderate impact on them in terms of motivation, quality of work, and performances on tests. Overall, the Technical Assistance Provider indicated that the CSR program at School 6 has had a moderate impact on students.

*Future orientation.* According to the CSR coordinator, and as echoed by the principal, as a result of the program, “The students are exposed to the SAT earlier and can become comfortable with that type of test.” For those in the SAT courses, the CSR program provided an opportunity to build the skills necessary for being successful with college preparation tests; however, it was not clear how many students were “exposed” to these skills beyond those who participated in one of the two classes offered each semester.

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#### *Staff Impacts*

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The impact of CSR on the staff was mostly limited to those who received Princeton Review training. Those teachers used the strategies that

they learned in their classroom instruction, and they were supposed to incorporate results from practice SAT tests into their planning. One teacher made an adjustment by starting to time students’ writing assignments in order to help them prepare for taking timed tests. The principal saw an increase in teacher collaboration and also a change in teaching styles and strategies: “It is more focused now on preparation for college testing.” Teachers felt that the collaboration was extremely important: “The best thing we have is teacher collaboration—we are using teaching methods geared to the students’ needs.”

In general, the teachers who received training and were using the strategies with their students were positive about the program. The principal felt that there was more college awareness at School 6: “There is more conversation about the need for SAT preparation for students, beginning in grade 9.” Teachers also recognized the need to make college a focus for students: “We do want reform—the students are different, so we need to do things differently.”

**Table 7.6. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Pedagogy (N = 41)**

Pedagogy	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don’t Know/ Missing
Because of our CSR program, I use textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets less than I used to for basic skills or content area instruction.	34%	24%	27%	15%
Our CSR program has changed classroom learning activities a great deal.	49%	17%	27%	7%
Students in my class spend at least two hours per school day in interdisciplinary or project-based work.	34%	24%	29%	12%
Students in my class spend much of their time working in cooperative learning teams.	39%	27%	20%	15%
Students are using technology more effectively because of our CSR program.	54%	15%	22%	10%

*Note.* Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

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### *Parental Involvement*

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Teachers, administrators, students, and parents all noted that parental involvement at School 6 was low. The Princeton Review program's impact seemed limited to the parents whose sons/daughters were involved in the courses. Staff perceived that these parents were generally pleased with the CSR effort: "The parents are very excited about this program ... especially that the test preparation is provided to their students on campus and at no additional cost."

Parents were concerned that the program was very limited, and they wanted the program to be open to all students. The parents believed that increasing the SAT scores of students would allow more students to go to top-tier schools. They were excited about the potential of the program. However, parents who attended the focus group may not have reflected the larger parent population at the school.

Professional staff members were asked about issues related to the school's CSR outcomes. Nearly half of respondents (46%) felt that student achievement had been positively impacted by CSR, and another 46% attributed more positive interactions between teachers and students to CSR. However, only 12% of respondents thought that parents were more involved because of CSR, and 27% felt that community support had increased. It should be noted that more than 20% of respondents reported "Don't Know" or skipped the item related to parental involvement. Therefore, comparisons should be made with caution. Additionally, the high non-response rate indicated that staff may have limited knowledge about how CSR efforts impacted parental involvement. (See Table 7.7 for more information on the Outcomes construct.)

The mean scale score for the Outcomes construct was 3.28 on a 5-point scale.

Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all nine questions of the construct, 12% of staff saw strong evidence of CSR-related outcomes. Combining respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all nine questions of the construct, 7% rated evidence of CSR-related outcomes as low. (See Appendix B for scale description.)

## **III. IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY**

### ***Key Points***

CSR implementation at School 6 was limited by the model chosen for implementation and its inherent constraints. Because the model was only designed to serve a small group of students, the school needs to supplement with a plan or structure for disseminating training and providing enriched academic instruction to a broader group of students. Particularly at a school where the more immediate goal for a majority of students is to graduate from high school, a test prep program designed for students already planning to go to college requires substantial supplements to address the goals of CSR and serve more students.

The Princeton Review program is not aligned with the 11 components of CSR, and thus, CSR at School 6 does not feature a comprehensive design to meet the needs of all students, does not provide continuous professional development for all staff, and does not involve parents and community members in meaningful ways. Further, the model choice may not adequately address student needs. While the Princeton Review program has helped move the school closer to meeting its School Improvement Plan goal of spreading awareness of college attendance and admissions testing, the focus is narrow and needs supplemental support in order to address the needs of more students. For instance,

teachers need additional materials that are grade-level appropriate for ninth graders who are not developmentally ready for the PSAT preparatory resources.

Again, during the 2005–06 academic year, 24% of teachers were trained, and 3% of the student body participated in the CSR program at School 6. At least in the first year of implementation, the school’s implementation focus has been on improving SAT scores for a small group of students rather than creating a structure for improving teaching and learning campus wide. While there are plans to train more teachers, these activities will still only impact fewer than half the teachers and a small

fraction of the student body at the school. To impact more students with enriched teaching and learning strategies would require staff professional development, collaborative planning, and additional activities that are structured and comprehensive. However, School 6’s approach to serving more students seems unlikely to impact a large group of students in any immediate way. For example, the initial group of teachers trained in Princeton Review strategies have a joint planning time, but no one articulated a goal for this collaboration. Further, excluding teachers who have not been trained from these groups limits dissemination of the strategies among teaching staff.

**Table 7.7. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Outcomes (N = 41)**

Outcomes	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don’t Know/ Missing
Student achievement has been positively impacted by CSR.	46%	22%	15%	17%
Students in this school are more enthusiastic about learning than they were before we became a CSR school.	27%	29%	27%	17%
Because of CSR, parents are more involved in the educational program of this school.	12%	34%	32%	22%
Community support for our school has increased since CSR has been implemented.	27%	32%	24%	17%
Students have higher standards for their own work because of our school’s program.	37%	22%	27%	15%
Teachers are more involved in decision making at this school than they were before we implemented CSR.	49%	15%	22%	15%
Our program adequately addresses the requirements of students with special needs.	49%	20%	20%	12%
Because of our school’s program, teachers in this school spend more time working together to develop curriculum and plan instruction.	44%	24%	24%	7%
Because of CSR, interactions between teachers and students are more positive.	46%	22%	15%	17%

Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Without a comprehensive effort to improve student preparation beginning with grade 9, limited course offerings that prepare students in test preparation alone are not going to improve the academic achievement of a larger group of students. Opening the program to more students could be accomplished in the long term with a focused effort on vertical teaming and curricular alignment. While staff stated the need for these types of activities, there was no evidence of an explicit plan with support for implementation.

Analysis of teacher reports and observation data indicated a disconnect between the strategies that trained teachers reported using in their classrooms and what observers saw in the classrooms. Staff mentioned the expectation that teachers implement strategies “10–15 minutes” each day, but it is unclear if there is a monitoring process to ensure that teachers who have been trained are implementing the strategies in their classroom. Additionally, there was no indication of efforts to integrate strategies into daily instruction rather than treating them as isolated segments.

The teachers and parents who were involved in the CSR efforts liked the Princeton Review program and felt that it was affecting students positively. The program needs to be expanded so that the whole student body can benefit. Further, school-wide staff training is also needed.

### ***School Climate Inventory***

One way to tap success of CSR implementation indirectly is to measure school climate. The School Climate Inventory (SCI), which was administered as part of the staff survey, measures school climate across seven dimensions. The overall mean SCI rating for School 6 was a 3.67 on a 5-point scale. (See Appendix B for scale description.) Results from the SCI indicate an overall school climate

that is comparable to the national average for secondary schools 3.73. The highest mean rating was given for the Instruction dimension of 3.98 (compared to national norm of 4.06), and the lowest mean rating was obtained for the Order dimension of 3.09 (compared to national norm of 3.26). (See Figure 7.3 and Table 7.8 for more information on SCI data.)

Professional staff consistently agreed that teachers demonstrated strong instructional practices as noted in their responses to individual items. The one exception is that only about half the teachers (56%) indicated that pull-out programs do not interfere with basic skills instruction compared to almost 75% or more agreeing to other items. (See Figure 7.3 for more information on the Instruction dimension.)

Considering individual items in the Order dimension suggested that tardiness or absence was perceived to be a problem at the school. Specifically, only 10% of professional staff felt that tardiness or absence was not a problem. An additional 61% of respondents thought that misbehavior at the school interfered with the teaching process. (See Table 7.8 for more information on the Order dimension.)

### ***Assessment of Implementation Level***

Measuring implementation of the Princeton Review strategies at School 6 with an instrument designed to assess the strength of overall CSR implementation based on the 11 CSR components produced a score of 24 out of a possible 51 points. School 6 received the most credit in area 3–Professional Development. This part of the scale relies on reporting provided by teachers who received training as well as from the CSR coordinator. The score reflects the extensive professional development that the Princeton Review trained teachers received, as well as the onsite visits from the

external consultant. School 6 also earned high points for CSR components 1–Research-Based Method or Strategy and 8–External Technical Support and Assistance, mostly due to the fact that the PSAT and SAT courses are taught by an external consultant. The school received low or no points for several components: 5–Support Within the School, 6–Support for Teachers and Principals, 7–Parent and Community Involvement, 9–Evaluation Strategies, 10–Coordination of Resources, and 11–Strategies That Improve Academic Achievement.

Assessment of the implementation level by the Technical Assistance Provider indicated a 3.09 on a 5-point scale, suggesting the school is nearing the fourth of five levels or the “implementing” phase. The discrepancy between this high score and the information from the site visit is due to credit given because the Princeton Review is being implemented

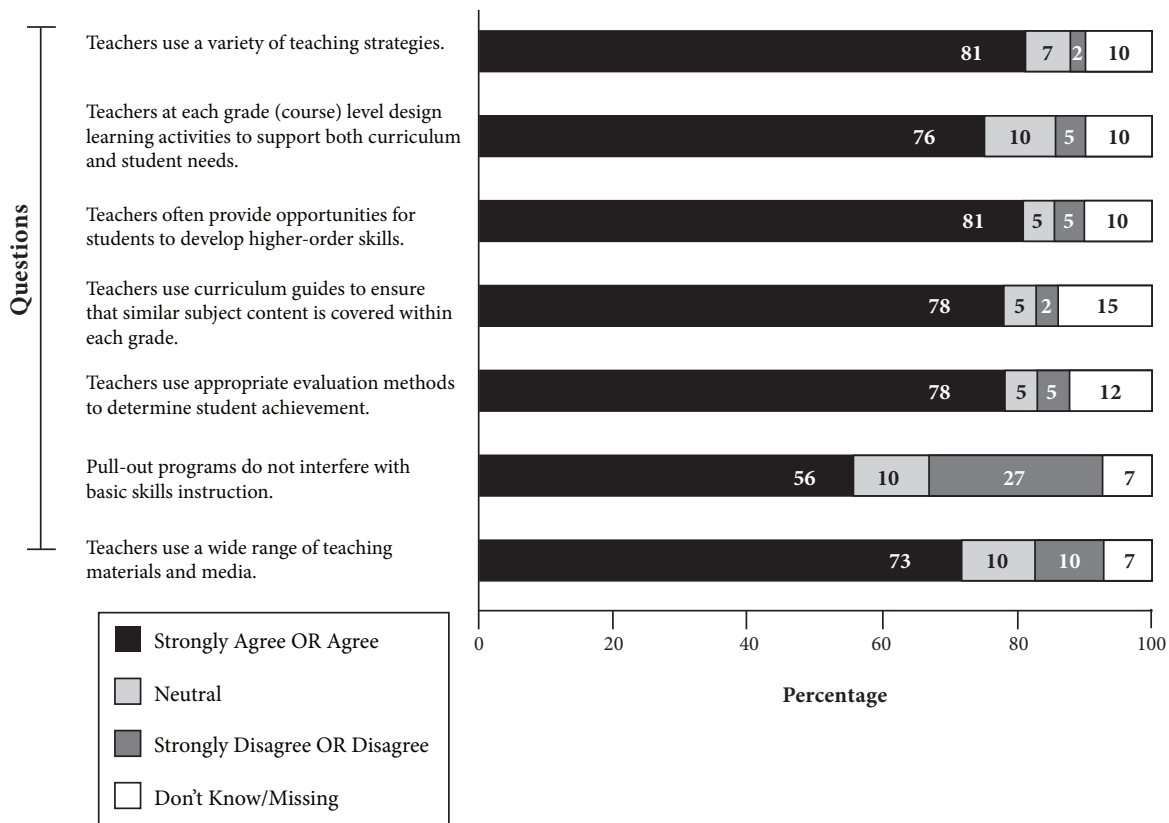
according to model specifications. The discord is that this model is not well aligned with the 11 CSR components.

### Facilitators

The principal and the CSR coordinator have been at School 6 for over five years, and they understand the school and its issues. Further, staff members appeared to respect the CSR coordinator who is “devoted to curricular change,” according to parents. Thus, she is in a good position to lead reform efforts. Survey results supported this observation. Staff stated that the most important facilitator for program implementation was support from school administration followed by professional development and support from teachers.

The school community credited the principal with implementing effective changes and trying to hire new staff who will support

Figure 7.3. School Climate Inventory Responses About Instruction (N = 41)



Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

**Table 7.8. School Climate Inventory Responses About Order (N = 41)**

Order	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don't Know/ Missing
Rules for student behavior are consistently enforced.	59%	10%	24%	7%
Student discipline is administered fairly and appropriately.	49%	12%	24%	15%
Student misbehavior in this school does not interfere with the teaching process.	22%	5%	61%	12%
Student tardiness or absence from school is not a major problem.	10%	10%	66%	15%
This school is a safe place in which to work.	63%	20%	10%	7%
Teachers, administrators, and parents assume joint responsibility for student discipline.	51%	12%	32%	5%
Student behavior is generally positive in this school.	51%	17%	27%	5%

*Note.* Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

the reform process. The parents felt that the principal and CSR coordinator were making strides to revitalize School 6. The teachers thought the principal was putting conditions in place to enable teachers to work together in vertical and horizontal teams in order to create a more cooperative, professional environment. The principal was also addressing the issue of reducing discipline problems and creating an environment in which students feel safe.

In addition to the CSR effort, there was an interest at the school in focusing on college preparation. Administrators and teachers seemed to be working toward the common

goal of preparing students to be successful in college. The CSR coordinator identified and pursued grants that are aligned with this goal.

There also was support for the Princeton Review program at School 6 among those involved and those who are aware of the program. The teachers who received training report having changed their instructional practice and using test-taking strategies in their classrooms. Teachers and parents wanted to see the Princeton Review program expanded, and a limited number of teachers will receive training in the summer.

### **Barriers**

A barrier to comprehensive reform at School 6 is the model choice—the Princeton Review program is not designed to be a school-wide reform. Teacher and student participation was limited, and the Princeton Review materials and resources were not widely available. To affect the whole school, the Princeton Review

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***Staff stated that the most important facilitator for program implementation was support from school administration followed by professional development and support from teachers.***

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program needs to be expanded, through continuous professional development, time for teachers to work collaboratively and reflect on their instruction, and curriculum alignment and materials for various levels of students. Teachers said they wanted to see more project-based learning and cooperative planning, as well as more technology at School 6. There should be a larger effort to show how the SAT test-taking strategies are generalizable and can be used for TAKS and classroom assessments. However, this is not built into the model and would take significant school and staff resources to accomplish.

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***The school community credited the principal with implementing effective changes and trying to hire new staff who will support the reform process.***

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The lack of parental involvement was a factor that all members of the school community, including teachers, parents, and students, mentioned. In fact, the parents called this “epidemic.” One component of CSR is to look for ways to involve parents and community members. While the principal has enacted some strategies for increasing involvement, the level remains low and is a barrier to comprehensive reform.

Survey results corroborate this conclusion. The three most significant barriers staff identified as limiting comprehensive school reform implementation were insufficient time, lack of parent/community involvement, and lack of financial resources.





## MIDDLE-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION

**GRADE LEVEL:** HIGH SCHOOL

**CSR MODEL:** INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION (ICLE)

**GRANT TYPE:** TEXAS HIGH SCHOOL INITIATIVE (THSI)

**AWARD DATE:** JANUARY 2005

## I. LOCAL CONTEXT

SCHOOL 7 OPENED IN 1998 AS A FRESHMAN-only campus and is located in a well-established residential area of a large metropolitan area. One class was added each year with the class of 2002 the first to graduate from the high school. The district purchased the original land and buildings and used portable buildings until a bond election allowed it to expand to its present size that includes 33 classrooms. There are presently 85 teachers with a student enrollment of approximately 1,400. Each grade level has its own counselor and assistant principal. (See Table 8.1 for more information demographic information.)

### *Starting Points*

The relatively new school faces several challenges. During the parent focus group, participants reported that the school led the district in student pregnancies. Students discussed being afraid at school, and they

described an incident involving students bringing knives and guns on the campus. Additionally, parents expressed academic concerns because the school had not had National Merit Scholars in five years, and the school lacked a focus on postsecondary education: “We need to push the kids to go to college. If you don’t expect excellence, you don’t get it.” (See Table 8.2 for accountability information.)

Staff cited administrator turnover as a staffing concern at School 7. The current principal has been with the school for three years. Prior to that, the school had little administrative continuity. Those interviewed partly attributed the lack of a coherent vision to frequent change of principals. Teacher turnover and teacher quality also concerned parents and students. Parents listed turnover and attendance as challenges noting that one student had two teachers quit, and then the class was taught by “different substitutes over and over” until the student finally completed the course online. Students said they felt like the “teachers just

**Table 8.1. Demographic Profile, 2004–05**

Total Students	African American	Hispanic	White	Other	Economically Disadvantaged	Mobility (2003–04)	Limited English Proficient
1,389	18%	67%	13%	2%	66%	24%	19%

Source. Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS)

**Table 8.2. Accountability and TAKS Performance History**

Year	Campus Rating	TAKS Met Standard All Grades Tested (All Tests)	Reading	Math	Science	Social Studies
2003–04	Academically Acceptable	27%	61%	40%	38%	78%
2004–05	Academically Acceptable	32%	63%	45%	42%	76%

Source. Texas Education Agency, AEIS

didn't care," and the "students who do care go to another high school." Students also noted a lack of responsibility for learning: "We need people to come in and motivate our teachers so that they can motivate us." Together, these reflections have led to the public perception of the school "as a throwaway school" or "a low-class school." One of the students felt it could be summed up as "demography and economy."

In order to combat these perceptions and improve student achievement, the school and district launched numerous programs:

- **Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model.** SIOP is a program for English language learners that spans all grade levels and content areas. It focuses on using specific strategies that emphasize high-quality instruction. Model engineers advertise it as an umbrella program or framework around which other efforts can be organized.
- **Project GRAD.** Project GRAD is a program geared at increasing the graduation rate of traditionally underrepresented student populations. The program requires a staff vote prior to adoption, teacher training, and implementation of the same instructional approaches for teaching reading and mathematics and the same classroom management strategies at all grade levels.

- **Questioning and Understanding To Improve Learning and Thinking (QUILT).** QUILT is a district-wide staff development program that is part of the district's literacy plan. It is designed to encourage all students to think at higher cognitive levels through effective questioning. Ultimately, students ask their own questions, resulting in improved learning. QUILT is applicable across grade levels and content areas. Schools send an administrator and a team of teachers to national training where they learn how to facilitate the program at their own schools.

## II. MODEL ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

### *Selection Process*

School 7 was awarded a CSR—Texas High School Initiative (CSR—THSI) grant in January 2005. School 7 is one of three high schools participating in a larger district effort associated with the grant. Academically Intense Methods (AIM) is the local acronym for the CSR projects for the three district high schools. The purposes of the grant were to support and align programs within the school and district, increase the academic focus of the school, increase emphasis on postsecondary education, and increase positive relationships between teachers and students.

District and school administration heavily influenced grant participation and model selection. Under the AIM umbrella, the district implemented the same three programs in the three participating schools:<sup>1</sup>

- International Center for Leadership in Education—the primary CSR model
- Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)—the secondary CSR model (operating in grades 9–11)
- Cooperative Discipline—the tertiary CSR model

International Center for Leadership in Education (ICLE) was chosen as the primary school model based on an introduction to the program at a Model Schools Conference in Washington, DC, that the principal and district assistant superintendent attended. At the conference, they were impressed by the leader of the ICLE organization. (See Table 8.3 for more information about ICLE.)

After a needs assessment, the ICLE consultant met with the AIM Leadership Team and prioritized school needs into 15 areas. The school chose to focus on three during the first phase:

- Develop and implement a unity of adult purpose
- Develop and implement strategies for personal connections (adult-adult and adult-student)
- Reinvent the ninth-grade year

The Ninth-Grade Initiative was implemented under CSR to address the latter two priorities. It targeted resources at this specific group, including efforts to restructure the ninth-grade program into clusters wherein the same groups of students share the same core curriculum

teachers. The Ninth-Grade Initiative also had a detailed plan for identifying and providing an intervention for students in danger of failing. The planned intervention entailed immediate contact with students and parents, tutoring, and continued scrutiny. Ninth graders receive additional services under other initiatives.

The school chose Achievement via Individual Determination (AVID) as a secondary model and Cooperative Discipline as a tertiary model. Other schools in the district reported success with these models. This evidence influenced the school to include them. AVID is an elective class focused on teaching middle-level students the skills needed for postsecondary education. It emphasizes the use of strategies geared towards college entry and persistence. Cooperative Discipline is a framework designed to foster positive relationships between students and teachers through attention to student contributions, improvement, and past successes.

### ***Initial Implementation***

In a mid-term progress report to TEA, School 7 reported taking the following steps toward its initial implementation during the first six months of activities:

- Creating an active CSR Grant Leadership Team that consisted of the principal, assistant principals, curriculum specialist, department chairs, teachers, academic coordinator, and counselor
- Conducting a campus self-assessment to determine areas for improvement
- Conducting individual student assessments to reveal curriculum areas that need intervention (ongoing every six weeks)

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<sup>1</sup>Later, the school added the Ninth-Grade Initiative as part of CSR programming.

**Table 8.3. ICLE Model Design**

<p><i>Background</i></p> <p>The International Center for Leadership in Education (ICLE) approaches school reform through creating a shared vision, building leadership, making data-driven decisions, and supporting change through professional development. The model addresses curriculum and instruction through the Rigor/Relevance Framework. The framework is a way to look at curriculum, instruction, and assessment in order to foster higher standards for students and, thus, increase student achievement. The ICLE model is designed for use across all grade levels. ICLE’s philosophy is that students retain knowledge when they apply it in a relevant setting.</p> <p><i>Key Strategies and Features</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A focus on the application of knowledge in relevant contexts</li> <li>• Four quadrants to categorize the level of rigor and relevance of teacher instruction and student work           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Quadrant A—Acquisition: Students gather facts and recall the knowledge.</li> <li>▪ Quadrant B—Application: Students solve problems and develop solutions with acquired knowledge.</li> <li>▪ Quadrant C—Assimilation: Students refine knowledge through analysis to solve problems.</li> <li>▪ Quadrant D—Adaptation: Students manipulate knowledge in complex ways to create solutions and take further actions.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><i>Key Components</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers implement rigorous standards and hold students to high expectations.</li> <li>• Teachers choose instructional strategies to meet student needs and achieve goals.</li> <li>• Teachers examine curriculum, instruction, and assessment.</li> <li>• Students analyze, synthesize, and evaluate knowledge in relevant ways.</li> <li>• Students solve complex, real-world problems.</li> <li>• A guidebook includes information on using the framework, planning instruction, assessment, interdisciplinary instruction, suggestions for administrators, and professional development activities.</li> </ul>
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Source. International Center for Leadership in Education website, <http://www.daggett.com/>

- Upgrading curriculum and instruction through a teacher curriculum review process and changes in instructional delivery
- Aligning curriculum with the TEKS

While teachers were not explicitly included in the site needs assessment, model research, and model selection process, they did participate in student data assessment, curriculum review,

and curriculum alignment. However, few understood these activities to be associated with AIM. Most were familiar with AIM and the programs under it—ICLE, AVID, and Cooperative Discipline—but were not aware of how these programs were aligned with other school activities.

When asked to recall the model adoption process, one teacher stated the process



consisted of the administration and ICLE program representatives gathering the teachers and convincing them the selected program fit: “Most of what we got was scary stuff [statistics on different outcomes] trying to get you concerned. We could have told them that. Then they told us about model schools and showed films of a classroom where everything was perfect.” When probed to demonstrate awareness about the research base, teachers stated that the programs were based on research because the orientations and follow-up meeting were data driven. Teachers also demonstrated an understanding of ICLE’s emphasis on relevance, a basic tenant of the primary model: “Given current demographics, kids must be taught differently. They have access to so much that they cannot just learn facts—they need to know how to use the facts.”

While teachers indicated a general familiarity with AIM, they did not seem to understand the thrust of these programs as part of a CSR effort. In addition, they were confused about which programs belonged to which organizing structures, partly due to the sheer number of programs the site implements. One teacher expressed frustration with the process: “Everything is so dumped on us that it all runs together and we can’t even decide what it is—mountains of paper, but no time to read it.” Due to the alternative model selection and adoption process used by the district, staff had minimal input, knew little about the models’ histories, and expressed limited ownership of the school reform process.

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***In addition, staff were confused about which programs belonged to which organizing structures, partly due to the sheer number of programs the site implements.***

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Alternatively, those directly involved with grant management have a much more active role. The school’s grant program management committee meets monthly to review the budget, grant outcomes, necessary training, and miscellaneous other items associated with the grants. This committee includes the district representatives, the principal, the academic coordinator, and several teachers.

## ***Factors Impacting CSR Implementation***

### *SCHOOL CAPACITY*

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#### *Materials*

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When asked about materials, most teachers referred to the materials already being used to administer the programs, such as ICLE handbooks for teachers and AVID notebooks for students. They were not apprised of any additional materials that would be needed. The grant application and school records indicated the school used grant funds for the following materials:

- AVID coordinator computer and printer
- AVID training materials
- Evaluation and Project Development materials
- ICLE and AVID instructional materials

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#### *Staffing and Planning Time*

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Teachers were unaware of any current staffing needs. However, the principal and coordinator explained that grant funds were used to fill staffing shortages as well as to bring in additional personnel to staff initiatives adequately. Specifically, CSR funds were used to partially support additional teachers for the Ninth-Grade Initiative academies. The AVID coaches and campus CSR coordinator positions were also supported by CSR funds. Other staffing covered through the grant included an internal evaluator, AVID tutors and monitors,

**Table 8.4. Strategies for Supporting CSR Activities**

<b>Year 1 Strategies and potential sources include:</b>	<b>Year 2 Strategies and potential sources include:</b>	<b>Year 3 Strategies and potential sources include:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Build collaboration with other community organizations, thus acquiring additional resources from collaborators.</li> <li>- Conduct an extensive evaluation plan to help refine the program, thus identifying what activities need to be sustained.</li> <li>- In-kind cost sharing from local funds.</li> <li>- Coordination between funding sources, e.g., state and federal compensatory and discretionary funded programs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create a Finance Committee on the Project AIM Advisory Council to locate additional funding, thus identifying resources and finance plan before end of project.</li> <li>- Collaborate among diverse partners to strengthen the variety of services the community offers, thus building sustainable assistance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Locate other Federal, State, and local (including foundation and corporate) program funding to add to program, thus identifying some funding sources.</li> <li>- Identifying obstacles to sustaining the initiative, thus developing a strong plan for sustainability and offering potential funders a highly effective and streamlined program.</li> <li>- In-kind cost sharing from local funds.</li> <li>- Coordination between funding sources, e.g., state and federal compensatory and discretionary funded programs.</li> </ul>

Source. Texas Education Agency Standard Application System (SAS) School Year 2004–05 Comprehensive School Reform—Texas High School Initiative, Schedule #4.

the project specialist, and external AVID and ICLE consultants.

Most teachers recognized time as an essential element of implementing the programs successfully. Teachers indicated that finding enough time was an obstacle and frustrating: “When [the school] put in so many initiatives, time is essential. [New programs are] tough to implement.” Teachers also reported that, with several different initiatives operating at once, it was very difficult to keep new teachers informed.

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*Fiscal Resources to Support Staff, Materials, and Technical Assistance*

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Staff found the lack of fiscal resources beyond grant funding as a continuing and pressing

concern, especially since grant funds were reduced each year. This concern contributed to their belief that the CSR effort was “just another flavor of the month.” The school depended on the CSR grant for providing funding for the professional development workshops, travel, tutorial money, and extra-duty pay for teachers. Specifically, grant funds were mainly used to support personnel and purchase materials. (See Table 8.4. for an explanation of how CSR activities would be supported.)

Additionally, the district was considering continuing the program for at least two additional years with funding from local sources. It has historically been the responsibility of the district’s Grants and Development Department to identify state, federal, corporate, and foundation funding

sources. Specific information about the status of these plans was unavailable.

Staff members were asked to answer questions about capacity to implement CSR at School 7 as part of a survey. Out of 108 professional staff, 32 responded to the survey for a response rate of 30%. Because the survey response rate is low, readers should be careful in interpreting results and generalizing the survey results from the respondents to the entire professional staff. An overwhelming majority (72%) of professional staff indicated that teachers are not given sufficient time to implement the school's program. A lower percentage of respondents indicated that they did not have the necessary materials for CSR implementation (34%), did not have sufficient faculty or staff to implement the CSR program (38%), and did not think that they had more access to technology as a result of the CSR program (38%). These figures show that a segment of teachers felt the school lacked the capacity to implement the CSR program. (See Figure 8.1 for more information on the Capacity construct.)

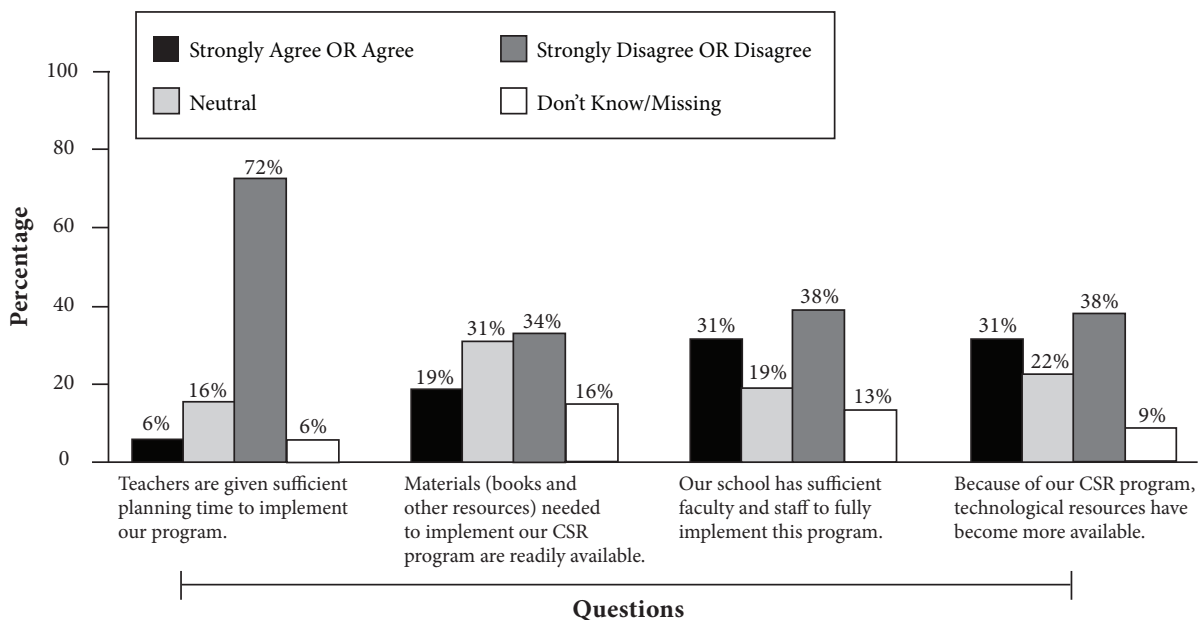
Overall for the Capacity construct, staff rated it 2.63 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all four questions of the construct, only 3% of staff rated school capacity as high, and 16% of the respondents answered strongly disagree or disagree across all four questions of the construct. (See Appendix B for scale description.) Results from the Technical Assistance Provider survey, however, show that the Technical Assistance Provider judged the school's capacity to be adequate in terms of materials, staffing, planning time, and fiscal resources.

### EXTERNAL SUPPORT

#### External Professional Development

ICLE Technical Assistance Providers guided a needs assessment process at the school in January 2005. The provider then led follow-up training in March to introduce the Rigor/Relevance Framework. This training occurred at school-wide staff meetings as well as at

Figure 8.1. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Capacity (N = 32)



Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

smaller departmental meetings, which focused on specific content areas. According to the campus CSR progress reports, these trainings by ICLE Technical Assistance Providers are scheduled to occur once per semester. Results from the Technical Assistance Provider survey indicated that the school received approximately 130 hours of support and that support was provided across all 11 components of CSR reform, except in the areas of parental and community involvement and evaluation of school reform implementation and results.

Teachers described the ICLE training as “useful and connected.” The training focused on how to develop lessons that were more challenging or rigorous. They compared strong lessons with “regular lessons and tried to see where [they fit] into the quadrants [of the Rigor/Relevance Framework].” The administration supported these efforts with classroom walkthroughs to evaluate the implementation of Rigor/Relevance. The school reported also receiving assistance from ICLE in classroom management. Even though the ICLE Technical Assistance Provider only comes to the campus twice a year, the teachers interviewed indicate having regular contact: “We get correspondence from [the Technical Assistance Provider], updates and ideas, samples from other schools.”

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***The training focused on how to develop lessons that were more challenging or rigorous.***

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While all staff participated in training, the leadership team was the primary target for intense training. They were then responsible for disseminating information to other staff. The principal reported that Rigor/Relevance was “the first staff development that [was] not all theory and philosophy, but actually comes into schools and shows them the steps of

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***Results from the Technical Assistance Provider survey indicated that the school received approximately 130 hours of support.***

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implementation.” The principal indicated that the Technical Assistance Provider provided training that was “hands on and relevant.”

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***Integrated District Assistance***

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School 7, supported by the district, provided significant staff development opportunities. School records indicated that district-sponsored, whole-school training related to AIM/CSR initiatives occurred eight times between January and November 2005. However, these trainings often combined numerous programs. For example, on August 11–12, 2005, professional development was reported to have occurred on Cooperative Discipline, PDAS, Guide to Grade Reporting, AVID, ESL Sheltered Instruction Grant, Project GRAD, and TAKS. Other district-sponsored, grant-specific activities included several teams of teachers and administrators conducting observations of similar schools that were implementing the Rigor/Relevance Framework. Smaller groups of staff were regularly involved in monthly district-wide AVID site team meetings and AVID council meetings.

While the district provided little direct training, much of the professional development was coordinated through district efforts. Teachers indicated that they perceived district support for professional development for these grants was more behind the scenes than through direct assistance. The Technical Assistance Provider reported a high level of district support. The district did provide training focused on literacy and mathematics this past year as well as Rigor/Relevance training for four hours at the district

professional development center. Additionally, staff reported receiving mailings from the district on different research about ICLE to remind them of its importance.

Overall, professional staff at School 7 reported high levels of support for the program. A majority of teachers claimed to have a thorough understanding of their school’s program (59%). This understanding may be attributed to the professional development and guidance received by the teachers. Over two thirds of teachers reported that they received adequate (69%) and valuable (69%) professional development. Teachers were either neutral (25%) or disagreed (31%) about the effectiveness of the assistance they received from external partners like businesses or universities. (See Table 8.5 for more information on the Support construct.) The mean scale score for the Support construct

was 3.61 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all five questions of the Support construct, 25% of staff rated the support provided as high. Combining respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all five questions of the construct, 3% rated Support as low.

*INTERNAL FOCUS*

*Staff Buy-In and Support*

Because model selection and adoption may have been a more top-down process on this campus than recommended in CSR research, garnering staff buy-in has been a slow and after-the-fact process. The staff expressed limited ownership of the programs. The leadership team was reported to be “enthusiastic” in one of the campus’s grantee progress reports. The principal stated that continuing to gain support

**Table 8.5. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Support (N = 32)**

Support	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don't Know/ Missing
I have a thorough understanding of this school’s CSR program.	59%	25%	9%	6%
I have received adequate initial and ongoing professional development/training for CSR program implementation.	69%	19%	6%	6%
Professional development provided by external trainers, model developers, and/or designers has been valuable.	69%	19%	6%	6%
Guidance and support provided by our school’s external facilitator, support team, or other state-identified resource personnel have helped our school implement its program.	66%	25%	6%	3%
My school receives effective assistance from external partners (e.g., university, businesses, agencies).	28%	25%	31%	16%

Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.



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***...the staff feared that the programs would not continue beyond grant funding, and then a new program would crop up requiring teachers to change directions and focus.***

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would be challenging because “the money is going down.” The decrease in funds comes at a time when the school was seeing progress, increased teacher support, and classroom implementation. As staff developed a better understanding and worked with the programs more, they were seeing success. Also working with the ICLE Technical Assistance Provider and the continued administrative support led to increased teacher buy-in: “[AIM] is good. It will lead these kids in the right direction.” However, the staff feared that the programs would not continue beyond grant funding, and then a new program would crop up requiring teachers to change directions and focus: “Federal grants are frustrating. You work your tail off, and when the money is gone, it’s over. You spend all this money, and then the program is gone. That is why we are disillusioned. I think that hurts buy-in. [It takes] five years to make a decent change.” This teacher’s comments reflect the general distrust of the staff towards new initiatives

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*Alignment and Integration  
With Existing Programs*

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School 7 faced a difficult challenge aligning and integrating all of the programs implemented at the school. Aside from the programs under AIM, the school also implemented SIOP, Project GRAD, and QUILT. Teachers also spoke about other content-specific activities, such as a mathematics strategies program to help with algebra skills offered by the University of Texas at Austin as well as a literacy program.

The school identified the programs as providing a rigorous curriculum through supported staff development. Staff generally viewed programs as “all go[ing] hand in hand,” but there needed to be more effort to create a cohesive and explicit map of how the programs supported one another: “If we took all of them and wrote them down, they would probably be under the same umbrella—we see the fingers, but where is the hand?” The school and district took advantage of many grant opportunities but lacked a systemic plan for aligning the efforts. Thus, the staff did not receive a clear message about how the efforts fit together. The staff also did not believe the school and district had a plan for continuing the initiatives after the grant funding ended.

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*Monitoring*

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School administration and district administration took serious steps to link progress to reform efforts. The principal cited using data to measure the progress of their restructuring efforts. The central office evaluation department provided the school with a variety of outcome data such as retention rates, attendance rates, discipline incidents, GPA, percentage of students passing all four core courses (particularly in grade 9), and AEIS indicators. The district compiled this information and disseminated it to the campus management team on a six-week or semester basis, depending on the outcome. However, teachers not on the management team were less involved, were unaware of this process, and were unable to comment on how restructuring efforts were monitored. They did not link these activities to reform initiatives.

The campus improvement plan also documented specific action steps for improving student achievement linked to hard data. Each



action step was supported by identifying a person responsible for initiating the action, monitoring the progress, identifying resources needed, identifying the funding source, presenting a monitoring timeline, and including formative evaluation.

Survey data on internal focus on CSR at School 7 show a relatively high number of responses in the “Neutral” and “Other” categories across the questions related to this topic, indicating that many staff members were unaware or could not comment about their school’s focus on the CSR program. An exception to this is evident in two areas. About two thirds (66%) of school staff indicated that the school meets regularly to review implementation and outcome benchmarks. Also, survey results indicate that teachers were dissatisfied with the resources provided by federal, state, local, and private entities for the coordination of their CSR model (41%). It should be noted that more than 20% of respondents reported “Don’t Know” or

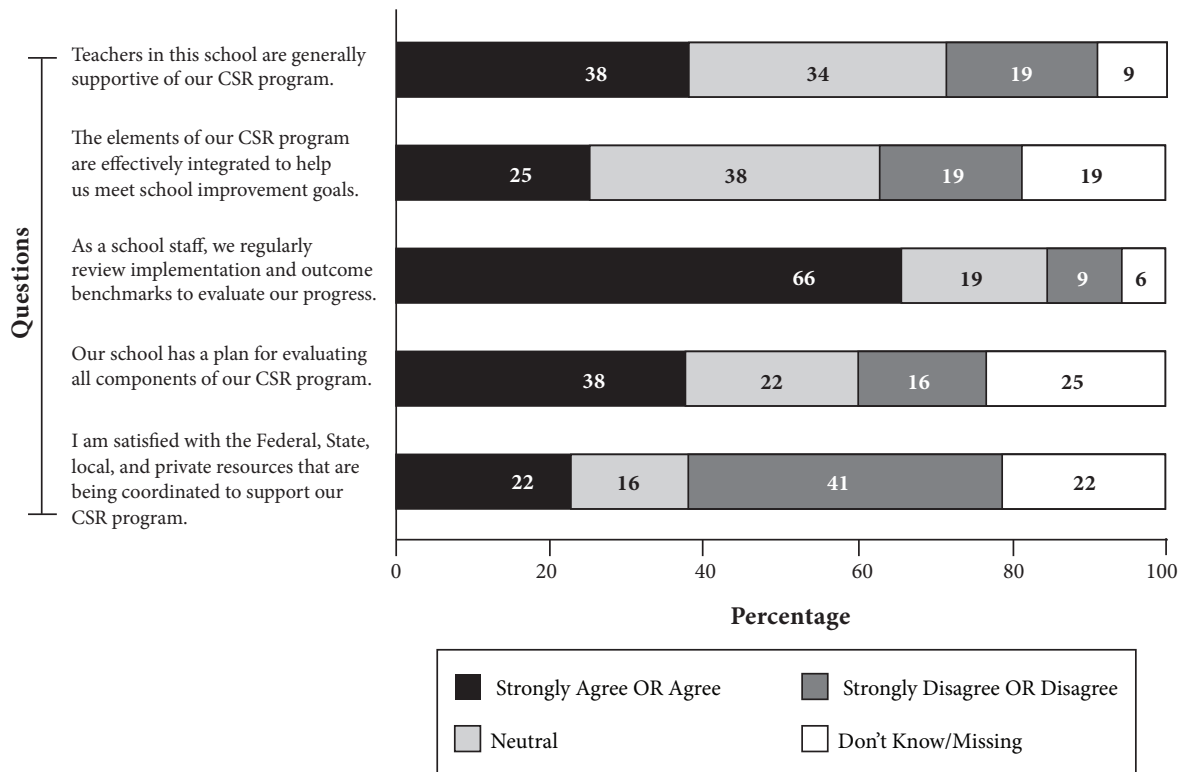
skipped several items across this construct; therefore, comparisons with these items should be made with caution. Additionally, the high non-response rate indicates that staff may have limited knowledge about how the school will evaluate their CSR efforts or the coordination of funding to support CSR efforts. (See Figure 8.2 for more information on the Focus construct.)

The mean scale score for the Focus construct was 3.18 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all five questions of the construct, 13% of staff rated the level of CSR focus as high. Combining respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all five questions of the construct, 6% rated Focus as low.

*PEDAGOGICAL CHANGE*

Both ICLE and AVID prescribe adding rigor and relevance to the curriculum. During interviews, teachers discussed aligning their lessons with the ICLE framework and

**Figure 8.2. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Focus (N = 32)**



Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

emphasizing the most rigorous quadrant. The Rigor/Relevance Framework is divided into four quadrants. Quadrant D is the area that describes instruction with the most rigor and relevance. Students working on this level are able to analyze, synthesize, and apply knowledge across the disciplines and in real-world situations. Posters of the ICLE framework were hung throughout the school.

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***Teachers reinforced that they were trying to implement rigor in the classroom: “We all get excited when the projects are in the D Quadrant because they are fun and interesting.”***

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The principal noted an increased use of strategies aligned with the grant initiatives, such as using the Cornell note-taking process (a strategy of the AVID program) and increasing rigor in classes. Teachers reinforced that they were trying to implement rigor in the classroom: “We all get excited when the projects are in the D Quadrant because they are fun and interesting.” However, teachers also felt that they needed more class time or smaller classes to teach in the higher quadrants. Students liked challenging courses where the work was “hard and very fast paced, and the teacher had high expectations.”

Teachers stated that they saw the learning becoming more relevant with an emphasis on connecting to “real life.” Evaluators also observed teachers making material relevant in classes. For example, one Algebra II student asked when “would [we] ever use exponents.” The teacher explained in detail about the banking industry and the role of exponents. A science teacher demonstrated energy in her discussion of work by using manipulatives to provide students with a concrete example of energy. The Technical Assistance Provider survey also indicated that teachers aligned their instructional practices with the model goals;

increased the use and integration of technology in instruction; used more interdisciplinary, project-based lesson plans; and cooperated with other teachers.

Teachers talked about adding rigor and relevance to the curriculum, and evaluators observed that in most classes, instructional time was highly academically focused and that there was a high level of student engagement and participation. Teachers almost exclusively delivered curriculum through direct instruction. Rigor was mostly seen through the frequent use of higher-level instructional feedback to enhance student learning. For example in an algebra class, the teacher prompted students to answer rigorous questions: “What is happening in the graph? How would the graph look with negative correlations or no correlations?” Most student activities consisted of independent seat work. Hands-on, experiential learning rarely occurred, and the use of technology was also rare. The CSR coordinator noted that the implementation of Rigor/Relevance was hard. She thought the members of the leadership team made the most progress implementing it in their classes and that there was still a lot of progress to be made in disseminating strategies to all classes.

Survey questions also tapped pedagogical issues related to the school’s CSR efforts. Across four of the five questions, a greater percentage of staff responses fell into the “Neutral,” “Disagree” or “Other” category than the “Agree” category. This pattern indicates that either staff were unaware of the extent to which the CSR model had influenced instructional and teaching practices or that CSR may not have had a strong impact on school-wide pedagogical practices. A majority of teachers (59%), however, did indicate that students spent a significant amount of time working in teams. (See Table 8.6 for more information on the Pedagogy construct.)

The mean scale score for the Pedagogy construct was 3.11 on a 5-point scale. Consistent with the above reports, combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all five questions of the construct, only 6% of staff rated pedagogical change as high. Combining respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all five questions of the construct, 3% rated pedagogical change as low.

### RESTRUCTURING OUTCOMES

#### Student Impacts

*Achievement.* The school, supported by the district, paid close attention to monitoring student progress. The district central office provided the school with detailed data reports each six weeks and semester. Teachers felt that the impact on student achievement could not really be measured until the TAKS tests were taken. However, when the students took the released TAKS test and compared their scores to last year's TAKS, there was improvement.

*Academic engagement.* Staff judged academic interest and engagement to be higher in the school since ICLE implementation. They attributed this increase to the relevance promoted by ICLE: "The strategies given by ICLE based on [the] real world help the kids to get it." One teacher observed that students were more attentive and asked more questions: "I get questions from students who normally don't say a word." Teachers found the students to be more motivated, particularly in grade 9 due to the extra supports provided by grant initiatives. Additionally, more students attended tutoring since the computer lab stays open after school and afternoon bus schedules were amended to transport students home. Class projects with increased rigor and relevance that required teams of students to work together, including spending more time at school, also contributed to improving academic engagement. The Technical Assistance Provider indicated that student interest, motivation, conduct, and respect toward teachers were moderately affected by the school's reform efforts.

**Table 8.6. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Pedagogy (N = 32)**

Pedagogy	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don't Know/ Missing
Because of our CSR program, I use textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets less than I used to for basic skills or content area instruction.	41%	38%	16%	6%
Our CSR program has changed classroom learning activities a great deal.	38%	28%	31%	3%
Students in my class spend at least two hours per school day in interdisciplinary or project-based work.	31%	19%	31%	19%
Students in my class spend much of their time working in cooperative learning teams.	59%	22%	13%	6%
Students are using technology more effectively because of our CSR program.	16%	38%	28%	19%

*Note.* Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

*Affective impacts.* One component of the ICLE program was to create relationships between adults and students. One staff member said, “The piece between the student and the teacher is big.” The focus of building student-teacher relationships was in the Ninth-Grade Initiative, which included the establishment of an advisory period. The advisory period was intended to provide a time for teachers to focus on student needs and improve relationships. Teachers reported that through the advisory period they were getting to know students better and that the mentoring was positive. Outside of the

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***“The strategies given by ICLE based on [the] real world help the kids to get it.”***

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Ninth-Grade Initiative, the provision of more structured formal tutoring was identified as an effort to build relationships: “[Tutoring] gives [staff] a chance to work with kids as individuals.”

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### *Staff Impacts*

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While improving student achievement is the primary goal of CSR, a secondary outcome has been to create a more collegial campus through increased teacher collaboration. At School 7, teachers interacted around instructionally driven topics, such as how to increase the rigor of specific lessons, primarily through trainings and staff development. This process led teachers to collaborate more: “I talk to teachers I have never talked to before about how the model is working.” From these experiences, teachers shared that they “[have] a better perspective on what people do in other classrooms,” as well as “look[ing] to one another as resources.”

The principal reported that shared leadership was increasing through “collaborative decisions from teachers.” He viewed the staff as becoming more autonomous and empowered: “This [CSR]

has made the teachers take ownership of the campus and the changes they would like to see.” However, it should be noted that shared leadership and increased responsibility of decision making were not noted by the staff.

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### *Parental Involvement*

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School 7 struggled to improve parental involvement in meaningful ways. The CSR progress report to TEA listed parental involvement as an area that needed further attention: “The school is working to improve communication with the parents and community members. For example, next school year, the school will increase the number of mailings about school activities as well as increase the use of a computerized calling system.

Parental involvement was limited beyond participation in the site-based decision-making committee. However, parents felt they were on the committee more to receive information than to contribute to the decision-making process. Parents also expressed frustration about the communication with the school: “[It is] hard to communicate with teachers directly because you have to call, make an appointment, and take off work.” Additionally, parents complained that the school did not initiate communication about student performance: “You never know until progress reports come out.”

Survey data about issues related to the school’s CSR outcomes indicated that survey respondents were unsure or unaware of how CSR may have impacted outcomes. Across six out of nine questions, a greater percentage of teachers recorded a “Neutral” or “Other” response category when compared to teachers who agreed or disagreed with the questions. However, higher levels of disagreement than agreement were evident when teachers were asked if the CSR program increased parental involvement

(59% versus 9%) or increased student standards towards their work (50% versus 6%). In contrast, a higher level of agreement than disagreement was reported by teachers when asked if the CSR program addressed the needs of special needs students (44% versus 16%) and increased the time teachers spent together working on curriculum (44% versus 25%). (See Table 8.7 for more information on the Outcomes construct.)

The mean scale score for the Outcomes construct was 2.95 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all nine questions of the construct, none of the respondents saw strong evidence of CSR-related outcomes. Likewise, when combining respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across

all nine questions of the construct, none of the respondents reported that the program's impact on outcomes was low.

### III. IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

#### *Key Points*

School 7 received strong support from the district central office in choosing and supporting reform programs that addressed academic focus and emphasized college readiness. The school and district implemented three programs: ICLE, AVID, and Cooperative Discipline. Additionally, the school added the Ninth-Grade Initiative as part of its CSR efforts. Because the district played a strong role in the model selection process, school staff members

**Table 8.7. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Outcomes (N = 32)**

Outcomes	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don't Know/ Missing
Student achievement has been positively impacted by CSR.	34%	34%	9%	22%
Students in this school are more enthusiastic about learning than they were before we became a CSR school.	19%	44%	22%	16%
Because of CSR, parents are more involved in the educational program of this school.	9%	19%	59%	13%
Community support for our school has increased since CSR has been implemented.	19%	25%	31%	25%
Students have higher standards for their own work because of our school's program.	6%	31%	50%	13%
Teachers are more involved in decision making at this school than they were before we implemented CSR.	34%	22%	31%	13%
Our program adequately addresses the requirements of students with special needs.	44%	28%	16%	13%
Because of our school's program, teachers in this school spend more time working together to develop curriculum and plan instruction.	44%	19%	25%	13%
Because of CSR, interactions between teachers and students are more positive.	28%	41%	16%	16%

Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.



were not thoroughly involved and expressed little ownership or empowerment. They did appear to be familiar with the programs, especially the rigor and relevance emphasis of ICLE since many teachers used this language in discussing their instructional practices and goals. However, staff also struggled to understand how all the programs worked together since the school had implemented several additional programs simultaneously. Having so many programs without an explicit and articulated plan for how the various efforts fit together left many staff feeling overwhelmed by the various program requirements.

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***Internal focus for CSR efforts was present but diluted by the sheer number of programs implemented and the lack of a clear strategy for aligning the programs and communicating a cohesive message to the staff about the goals of the overall grant.***

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School 7 used CSR grant monies to increase the capacity of the school to implement programs through hiring and training. The grant partially funded several staff positions, including a grant coordinator, AVID support staff, and additional staff for the grade 9 clusters. The additional grade 9 staff made it possible to have team planning across the grade levels. However, it is unclear how these positions will be funded in the future.

The school received intensive and ongoing support from the ICLE Technical Assistance Provider. This support provided staff with the opportunity to review lesson plans and align them with the ICLE Rigor/Relevance Framework. It was described as a time-consuming process but one that most staff supported. The district also provided strong

support for the CSR process, from aiding in model selection to supplying extensive data on a variety of outcomes.

Internal focus for CSR efforts was present but diluted by the sheer number of programs implemented and the lack of a clear strategy for aligning the programs and communicating a cohesive message to the staff about the goals of the overall grant. Additionally, several other non-CSR funded programs were designed to operate school wide, possibly duplicating efforts. Teachers did not have the opportunity to offer input in the CSR model selection and adoption process. Teachers were aware of the programs and had begun to agree with the philosophy and to apply the strategies in their classrooms. Again, staff members voiced a concern about how to continue efforts beyond grant funding and were frustrated by the prospect of programs ending.

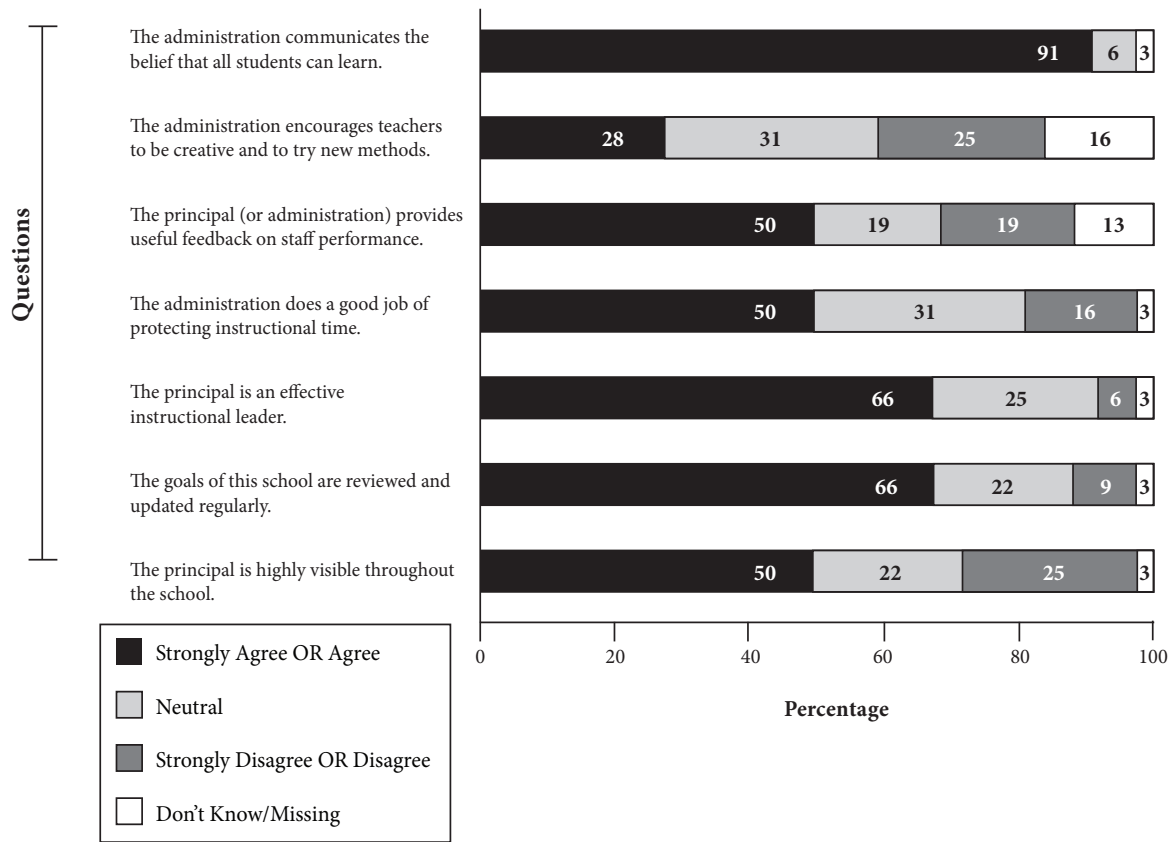
### ***School Climate Inventory***

One way to tap the success of CSR implementation indirectly is to measure school climate. The School Climate Inventory (SCI) is a global measure of school climate composed of seven dimensions logically and empirically associated with effective school climates. (See Appendix B for scale description.) The overall mean SCI rating for School 7 was a 3.27 on a 5-point scale. Results from the SCI indicate an overall school climate that is comparable to the national average for secondary schools 3.73. The highest mean rating was given for the Leadership dimension of 3.61 (compared to national norm of 3.94), and the lowest mean rating was obtained for the Order dimension of 2.72 (compared to national norm of 3.26). (See Figure 8.3 and Table 8.8 for more information on SCI data.)

Overall, the professional staff agreed that the administration exhibited good leadership skills. A majority of surveyed professional



Figure 8.3. School Climate Inventory Responses About Leadership (N = 32)



Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

staff reported that the administration communicates the belief all students can learn (91%), the principal is an effective instructional leader (66%), and the goals of this school are reviewed and updated regularly (66%). Half of all respondents (50%) also indicated that the principal/administration provide useful feedback on staff performance, the administration does a good job of protecting instructional time, and the principal is highly visible throughout the school. (See Figure 8.3 for more information on the Leadership dimension.)

A majority of the professional staff reported that rules for student behavior are not consistently enforced (56%) and that student misbehavior interferes with the teaching process (69%). A higher percentage of teachers

reported student tardiness or absence as a major problem (44%) when compared to teachers who did not view these issues as problems in the school (16%). Interestingly, 59% of the respondents reported that the school was a safe place. (See Table 8.8 for more information on the Order dimension.)

### Assessment of Implementation Level

Measuring implementation of CSR efforts at School 7 with an instrument designed to assess the strength of CSR implementation based on the 11 CSR components produced a score of 31 out of a possible 51 points. School 7 received the most credit in areas of 2–Comprehensive Design, 4–Measurable Goals and Benchmarks, 8–External Technical Support

**Table 8.8. School Climate Inventory Responses About Order (N = 32)**

Order	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don't Know/ Missing
Rules for student behavior are consistently enforced.	19%	19%	56%	6%
Student discipline is administered fairly and appropriately.	44%	19%	34%	3%
Student misbehavior in this school does not interfere with the teaching process.	13%	16%	69%	3%
Student tardiness or absence from school is not a major problem.	16%	38%	44%	3%
This school is a safe place in which to work.	59%	22%	16%	3%
Teachers, administrators, and parents assume joint responsibility for student discipline.	28%	25%	44%	3%
Student behavior is generally positive in this school.	34%	28%	34%	3%

Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

and Assistance, and 9–Evaluation Strategies. The school received low or no points for several components: 5–Support Within the School, 6–Support for Teachers and Principals, and 7–Parent and Community Involvement.

The Technical Assistance Provider survey data indicate a rating of CSR implementation at School 7 as “implementing” or a score of 4.00 out of 5.00. This rating is higher than site visit data suggest. The discrepancy could possibly be explained by the fact that the school is following the model design. Additionally, Technical Assistance Providers may be unaware of issues associated with the many other programs competing for staff attention.

### **Facilitators**

Staff at School 7 repeatedly listed ICLE’s Rigor/Relevance Framework as a facilitator of school reform in that it contributed to improved student engagement, especially relevance:

“Rigor can come next, but relevance has to come first so that students will feel school is important.” Several staff reported that the application of relevance in their classrooms has helped students become more motivated.

Another component that has helped the campus implement school reform is the professional development provided by ICLE on how to bring rigor and relevance into the classroom. Survey data also indicated that training/professional development and support from the administration are important facilitators to the implementation of CSR. A small number of staff also mentioned visiting other sites with similar demographics as useful.

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***Survey data also indicated that training/professional development and support from the administration are important facilitators to the implementation of CSR.***

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Recognizing that that student performance may not be impacted by reform efforts in the short term, School 7 and the district central office organized a process for monitoring student performance in terms of test scores as well as intermediate achievement outcomes like retention rates, GPA, and percentage of students passing all four core courses. This approach allowed the staff and administration to make decisions based on and evidence of student improvement or weaknesses. The amount, organization, and timeliness of assessment information suggested an impressive level of coordination between the campus and district. Building stronger relationships between students and teachers through the Ninth-Grade Initiative and creating a more collaborative staff have also occurred through the implementation of CSR initiatives.

### **Barriers**

Several issues have held back implementation efforts at School 7. The first is internal focus. The campus lacked a strategic plan for aligning different models under the CSR umbrella and communicating and disseminating the goals of the program. Additionally, due to the model selection and adoption process at this campus, teachers demonstrated limited ownership of the CSR initiatives. Further exacerbating limited staff buy-in was the anticipated end of grant funding and the perception that the program would be over. Interestingly, the district viewed support for the programs as high and planned to expand the ICLE model into nine high schools next year.

Because so many programs were implemented, time was another obstacle. Survey results indicate that a majority of teachers identified insufficient time as a barrier encountered during implementation of the program. Teachers felt pulled in different directions without enough time to embrace any one approach. Staff reported that the ICLE program

took time to learn and time to implement. Additionally, some programs were implemented without sufficient follow-up support. For example, teachers were trained in the AVID Cornell note-taking process, but this strategy was not made a priority and was lost amid the other programs that teachers were required to implement.

Program sustainability was another concern for staff at School 7. To continue to implement services now supported by grant monies, it will need to find additional fiscal resources to support staff development and staffing. Continued funding is also an important component of garnering staff buy-in and demonstrating a strong commitment to reform efforts.

School 7, with the support of the district central office, has mounted an ambitious plan to address campus needs through multiple programs. As the principal acknowledged, their challenge remains to unify these efforts into a single meaningful and coherent plan: “This school has great potential. There is still much to do, but we are more cohesive than when we started.”







## SCHOOL 8

## LOW-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION

**GRADE LEVEL: HIGH SCHOOL**

**CSR MODEL: HIGH SCHOOLS THAT WORK (HSTW)**

**GRANT TYPE: IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING (ITL)**

**AWARD DATE: AUGUST 2004**

*PLEASE NOTE: The 2006 site visit to School 8 coincided with the immigration reform demonstrations occurring nationwide in spring 2006. Because many School 8 students participated in local demonstrations, the school was under lockdown conditions, attendance was low, the atmosphere was charged, and there was considerable disruption in the classroom and hallways. Students who had participated in the walkout were being held in the gymnasium; some students were roaming the halls interrupting classes. The principal was not available for interview due to these events. Further, data collected during this time may have been influenced by events and may not accurately reflect CSR implementation.*

## I. LOCAL CONTEXT

SCHOOL 8 IS LOCATED NEAR THE DOWNTOWN area of a large urban city. The school serves approximately 1,800 students, 96% of whom are Hispanic. Almost all of students (94%) are economically disadvantaged. (See Table 9.1 for

more demographic information.) According to the School Improvement Plan for 2005–06, the professional staff consists of more than 130 teachers, five counselors, seven administrators, and eight others.

A staff member reported that the attendance zone for the school is on the verge of gentrification. Older, single family homes are being replaced by condominiums, town homes, and apartments. There are numerous industrial and warehouse facilities in the vicinity.

### Starting Points

School 8 is challenged by safety and security concerns and frequent disruptions. Gang activities have historically been a problem, and the campus has the highest pregnancy rate of any high school in the district. One teacher considered campus security to be an overarching issue, and he observed that the school has had “dangerous intrusions, gang fights, and the halls need to be patrolled constantly, but we don’t have the personnel to

**Table 9.1. Demographic Profile, 2004–05**

Total Students	African American	Hispanic	White	Other	Economically Disadvantaged	Mobility (2003–04)	Limited English Proficient
1,833	2%	96%	1%	1%	94%	27%	19%

Source. Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS)

**Table 9.2. Accountability and TAKS Performance History**

Year	Campus Rating	TAKS Met Standard All Grades Tested (All Tests)	Reading	Math	Science	Social Studies
2003–04	Academically Acceptable	38%	72%	51%	51%	85%
2004–05	Academically Acceptable	47%	72%	66%	55%	83%

Source. Texas Education Agency, AEIS

control it.” Parents attributed most of the fights on campus to outsiders entering the campus. The sports trophy cases in the halls had been vandalized and memorabilia destroyed. Though students did not report being afraid at school, one student described a school procedure called “Code Mustang” to alert students and staff to intruders or emergencies. The protocol involves teachers locking the door and turning out lights and all the students crowding into a corner of the classroom. According to one teacher, the criminal justice center has contracted with School 8 to educate individuals under its supervision, and these students contribute to the discipline problems on campus.

Poor student performance on state tests and the large size of the school also are issues. In terms of academic performance, less than half the students at School 8 (47%) passed all TAKS tests in 2004–05, though this was an increase

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***School 8 is challenged by safety and security concerns and frequent disruptions.***

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from passing rates on all tests in 2003–04 (38%). (See Table 9.2 for more accountability information.) Several staff members mentioned high dropout rates as a problem. In terms of

enrollment, according to one of the parents, the school’s enrollment had been as high as 3,500 in the past. Teachers reported that the sizes of the school and district inhibited staff collaboration and that they often did not know what was happening outside of their departments.

Despite the severity of these challenges, data indicate that security problems and student performance are worse at comparable campuses in the district. Parents said that students from other campuses in the district wanted to transfer to School 8 because the campus violence was worse at other schools.

The campus has instituted a number of measures to address the security issues at the school. School bus arrivals and departures are carefully monitored. Hall monitors stop strangers in the building to determine the nature of their business on the campus. A patrol officer monitors suspicious behavior in the area. As many as 98 security cameras are scheduled for installation. A dress code policy has been instituted with student support. The school is now providing information to increase public awareness about drug problems and help parents and community members identify drug paraphernalia.

In terms of academics, the school has begun implementation of a number of initiatives



aligned with its mission as stated in 2005–06 School Improvement Plan: “To provide students with an Academic and Technological University Preparatory Program with a Social and Emotional System within Smaller Learning Community Academies” (p. 2). The establishment of smaller learning communities, which at School 8 are called “academies,” has been a major undertaking at the school. A teacher said that the academies were for science, mathematics, business, education, and LEP (which is preparation for TAKS). School 8 has a magnet program for the teaching professions that serves as a drawing card for approximately 200 students. Magnet students are provided with a four-year sequential specialized curriculum designed to attract them to the teaching profession.

School 8 also has established an “A/B” block schedule in which students meet with their teachers every other day. This schedule was intended to provide greater flexibility for students to receive advanced diplomas and to engage in various extracurricular activities while earning their high school diplomas within four years.

## II. MODEL ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

### *Selection Process*

School 8 was awarded an Improving Teaching and Learning/Texas Title I Comprehensive School Reform grant (ITL/CSR) in August of 2004. The CSR coordinator said that the district had offered workshops featuring 12 different reform models so that a campus could choose the model that best fit its needs. During monthly site-based decision-making committee meetings, participants discussed the need for a school reform model that would incorporate the Smaller Learning Communities initiative (academies) being implemented at School 8.

During weekly departmental meetings, faculty members from the core academic areas and the vocational education department expressed the need for a reform model that would incorporate vocational technology courses as well as the core academic courses and integrate the two curricula. Enhancing the use of technology was also highlighted. At an October 2003 faculty meeting, the chairperson of the Career and Technology Department described the High Schools That Work (HSTW) model and explained how it could help to integrate the two different programs of study.

According to the school’s grant application, responses from the faculty and staff member survey indicated they felt the HSTW model would address the same needs identified for the Smaller Learning Communities initiative. Overall survey results indicated that teachers believed HSTW would be a great asset in reaching the school’s goal of improving teaching and learning by bringing rigor and relevance into the curriculum. (See Table 9.3 for more information about HSTW.)

### *Initial Implementation*

Although the CSR grant was approved for the 2004–05 school year, a delay in the receipt of the Notice of the Grant Award (NOGA) and district policy regarding funding expenditures significantly delayed the start of CSR implementation. The CSR coordinator said that though the grant award was dated August 2004, the NOGA was not received until December 2004. The district business office then would not allow grant funds to be expended until the school board approved the NOGA in March 2005. By the time the school received all of the necessary approvals and could proceed, the 2004–05 school year was almost over, and the \$150,000 had to be spent by August 2005. According to progress reports submitted by the district, the contract with the HSTW Technical Assistance Provider was delayed.

**Table 9.3. High Schools That Work Model Design**

<p><i>Background</i></p> <p>HSTW began in 1987 as an initiative of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) State Vocational Education Consortium. HSTW is in operation in more than 1,200 sites in 32 states. The HSTW model focuses on the idea that students can master challenging academic and career/technical studies if school leaders and teachers encourage an environment that motivates students to make the effort to succeed. The program is centered on a challenging curriculum recommended by the program and literacy goals.</p> <p><i>Key Strategies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• High expectations</li><li>• Program of study</li><li>• Academic studies</li><li>• Career/technical studies</li><li>• Work-based learning</li><li>• Teachers working together</li><li>• Students actively engaged</li><li>• Guidance</li><li>• Extra help</li><li>• Culture of continuous improvement</li></ul> <p><i>Key Components</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A clear, functional mission statement</li><li>• Strong leadership</li><li>• A plan for continuous improvement</li><li>• Qualified teachers</li><li>• Commitment to goals</li><li>• Flexible scheduling</li><li>• Support for professional development</li></ul>
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Source. High Schools That Work website, <http://www.sreb.org/programs/hstw/hstwindex.asp>

## ***Factors Impacting CSR Implementation***

### *SCHOOL CAPACITY*

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#### *Materials*

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In its CSR grant application, the school listed the intent to purchase the following materials: consumable teaching and office supplies for parental involvement activities, classroom

activities, and HSTW supplies; SREB/HSTW reading materials and reference books; and testing materials and HSTW assessments. When interviewees were asked to describe the materials provided by the grant, books were the only resources mentioned. Because HSTW has a heavy emphasis on reading, additional books were purchased for individual classroom libraries and the academies. Teachers also received materials describing the HSTW 10 Key Practices.

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### *Staffing and Planning Time*

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According to the grant application, funds were designated to cover costs for substitute teachers so that staff could participate in HSTW professional development activities during the school work day. They also were used for extra-duty pay for teachers and other personnel to plan, coordinate, and participate in after-school programs and weekend events that pertained to the CSR program.

Teachers reported that they had several in-service trainings focused on implementing the HSTW key practices, but staff development days in 2005–06 were cut due to time missed because of Hurricane Rita in fall 2005. Follow-up training was conducted during conference periods throughout the year. Staff also reported weekly meeting time for planning, though the extent to which it is devoted to HSTW was unclear.

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### *Fiscal Resources to Support Staff, Materials, and Technical Assistance*

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The grant application and School Improvement Plan for 2005–06 show considerable funds being directed to consulting services, primarily for the Read 180 reading intervention software program, including staff development and technical support. Additional online programs (an online college prep service called TestU and an online reference library) were identified in the grant as professional and contracted services. None of these resources were mentioned by staff during the site visits. The School Improvement Plan identifies CSR/ITL funds as resources to support the school's professional development plan but specific details are not provided. Funds to support AP teachers are also indicated. Additional funds were to be allocated to general supplies and HSTW materials.

Of 136 professional staff, 64 completed surveys at School 8 for a response rate of 47%. Survey data indicate that sufficient planning time to implement the CSR program is a point of disagreement among the staff. Thirty-nine percent of the staff agreed and another 39% disagreed that the school had sufficient planning time. Sixty-one percent of respondents indicated having enough staff to implement the program. Forty-eight percent of staff agreed that they received adequate materials for implementing CSR, and 52% agreed technology had become more available. (See Figure 9.1 for more information on the Capacity construct.)

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***Teachers reported that they had several in-service trainings focused on implementing the HSTW key practices, but staff development days in 2005–06 were cut due to time missed because of Hurricane Rita in fall 2005.***

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Overall for the Capacity construct, staff rated it to be 3.42 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all four questions of the construct, 28% of staff rated school capacity as high, compared to 5% of the respondents who rated school capacity as low. (See Appendix B for scale description.)

### *EXTERNAL SUPPORT*

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#### *External Professional Development*

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Due to the late district approval for distribution of grant funds, the contract with the Technical Assistance Provider was delayed. Consequently, no training was delivered until August 2005. Trainers from the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) in Atlanta, Georgia, provided most staff development related to HSTW. Eight

members of the school staff were budgeted to attend the HSTW National Summer Conference. Two administrators were budgeted to attend the HSTW Leaders Retreat. Grant funds were also used so that five experienced teachers could travel to Baltimore, Maryland, to observe the program being implemented in schools there.

staff development during Thanksgiving week. Additional training was optional, and about half of the teachers participated.

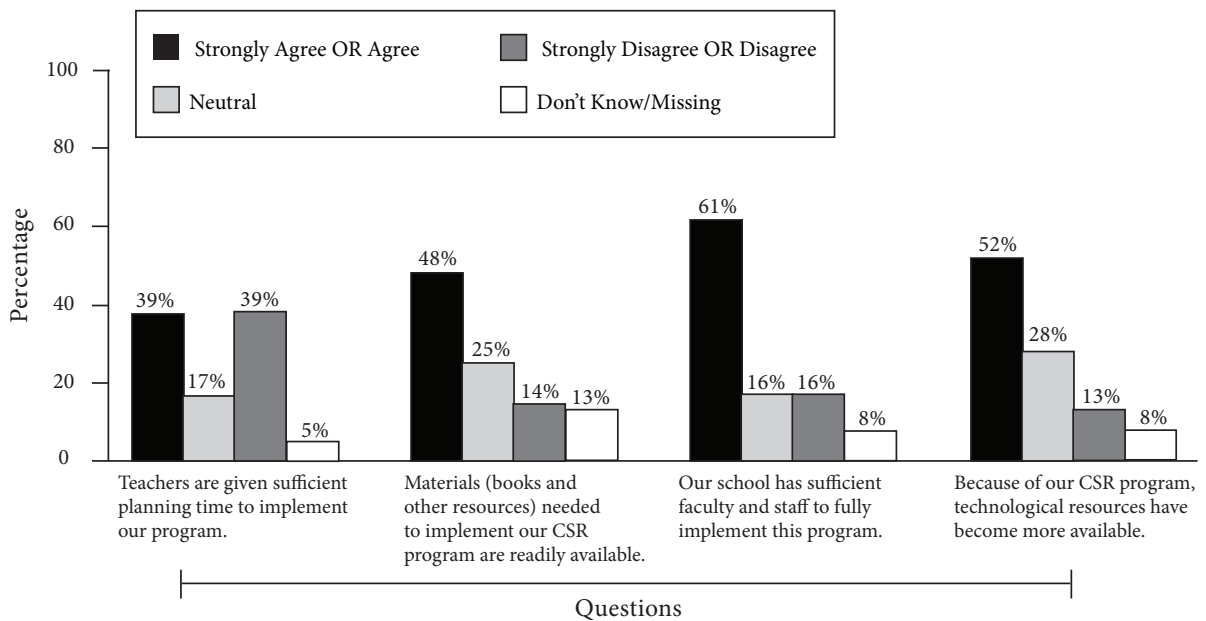
***The Technical Assistance Provider indicated in a mid-term progress report to TEA that not all teachers are participating.***

The Technical Assistance Provider indicated in a mid-term progress report to TEA that not all teachers are participating: “TTL/CSR grant is allowing only a certain number of professionals from this [school] to receive professional development provided by the Technical Assistance Provider” (p. 11). It is unclear if this is a local decision to target some, but not all, teachers for participation or if it is a financial constraint.

Following the summer conferences, two days of staff development were conducted on campus in August 2005 to train all faculty members in the Key Practices of HSTW and to inform them of program expectations. The initial training session was held for the whole school. Subsequent training sessions were offered for each department and during teacher conference periods. Three workshops were required for

Teachers who participated had various reactions to the training. Some felt that that the presentations were informative and interesting and provided innovative new strategies. Others felt that the training was “a waste of time” and “teachers were not listening.” Some of the trainers were “not good salesmen” for the program. According to one teacher, trainers needed to make the program “shine and tell people what they were going to get out of it ...

**Figure 9.1. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Capacity (N = 64)**



Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

rather than saying ‘this is good for you.’” One teacher said that the trainers “meant well, but it fell flat.”

The CSR coordinator indicated that she was satisfied with the level of contact and support from the HSTW consultant assigned to the school. “I can get our consultant by cell or email whenever I need her,” she said. She did indicate, though, that she wished they had been able to select the consultant to see who was the best match for the campus.

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### *Integrated District Assistance*

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District-level support included a workshop at which a representative from the district’s grants department conducted a meeting before funds were released to advise staff about spending limitations and implementation reports required by TEA.

In surveys, staff members at School 8 were asked about the level of external support the school receives for its CSR efforts. Of the 64 respondents, 64% strongly agreed or agreed that they thoroughly understood the school CSR program. Sixty-nine percent strongly agreed or agreed that they received adequate initial and ongoing professional development, and 66% agreed the professional development provided was valuable. The lowest response to this question indicated that 42% of respondents agreed that the school received assistance from external partners such as businesses. (See Table 9.4 for more information on the Support construct.)

The mean scale score for the Support construct was 3.63 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all five questions of the support construct, 28% of staff rated the support provided as high. Combining respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all five questions of the construct, 5% rated

support provided as low. (See Appendix B for scale description.)

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### *INTERNAL FOCUS*

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#### *Staff Buy-In and Support*

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Teachers were mixed in their responses to the reform. One teacher said, “Everybody was amenable because we knew that something needed to happen here. When we started training, people were not opposed but were leery about how effective it would be” since earlier programs had failed to result in any meaningful, long-term improvements. Some teachers reported they supported HSTW because they perceived that school administrators “had changed” as a result of the program’s being implemented and had become “a lot more cooperative than before.”

The first HSTW workshop helped one teacher internalize “the importance of truly caring about students.” Another teacher reported, “It was an affirmation of that philosophy for me. You don’t just teach a subject—you reach out to the students. This is a different culture that I am teaching in now. We need to hear that in this school.” Another teacher commented that “this program has served as a reminder of what I need to be doing like teaching lessons on character development and high content standards.”

Other teachers were less complimentary and said that “most teachers will not say anything” and “most of them don’t even think about it [HSTW].” One felt that the veteran teachers viewed this as just one more change: “Every great new idea is fine, but inside the classroom we do what has always been done.”

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***The first HSTW workshop helped one teacher internalize “the importance of truly caring about students.”***

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**Table 9.4. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Support (N = 64)**

Support	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don't Know/ Missing
I have a thorough understanding of this school's CSR program.	64%	19%	14%	3%
I have received adequate initial and ongoing professional development/training for CSR program implementation.	69%	14%	14%	3%
Professional development provided by external trainers, model developers, and/or designers has been valuable.	66%	23%	6%	5%
Guidance and support provided by our school's external facilitator, support team, or other state-identified resource personnel have helped our school implement its program.	59%	23%	9%	8%
My school receives effective assistance from external partners (e.g., university, businesses, agencies).	42%	28%	19%	11%

Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Teacher participation in optional training, about half of staff, is probably indicative of a moderate level of buy-in. Teachers reported that HSTW worked better in some departments than others.

CIS provides counseling services and other assistance to students and their families, such as referrals to social workers, outside clinics, and optometry services. It is not clear how HSTW is aligned with CIS activities.

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*Alignment and Integration  
With Existing Programs*

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According to the school's grant application, the HSTW CSR model was chosen specifically for alignment with the Smaller Learning Communities initiative and for its integration of the academic and vocational curricula. Specific plans or activities illustrating how this alignment is going to be achieved were not available or provided at the time of the site visit.

The Communities in Schools (CIS) program is the major social service entity on campus.

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*Monitoring*

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Teachers had little to say about progress monitoring and were primarily concerned with the success of students in their own classrooms. Since most of the first grant year was lost due to the extended delays in getting funding and board approval for spending, it was generally believed that it was too soon to see significant gains in achievement that could be attributed to HSTW.

In terms of internal focus, survey data generally support findings from site visits. Almost two



thirds (64%) of the 64 respondents judged that teachers were generally supportive of the CSR program. Over half (53%) stated the CSR program was integrated with other school programs. Seventy percent indicated regularly reviewing data to evaluate CSR progress. Fifty-eight percent were aware of a CSR evaluation plan. Fewer respondents (34%) were satisfied with the fiscal resources that were supporting CSR. (See Figure 9.2 for more information on the Focus construct.)

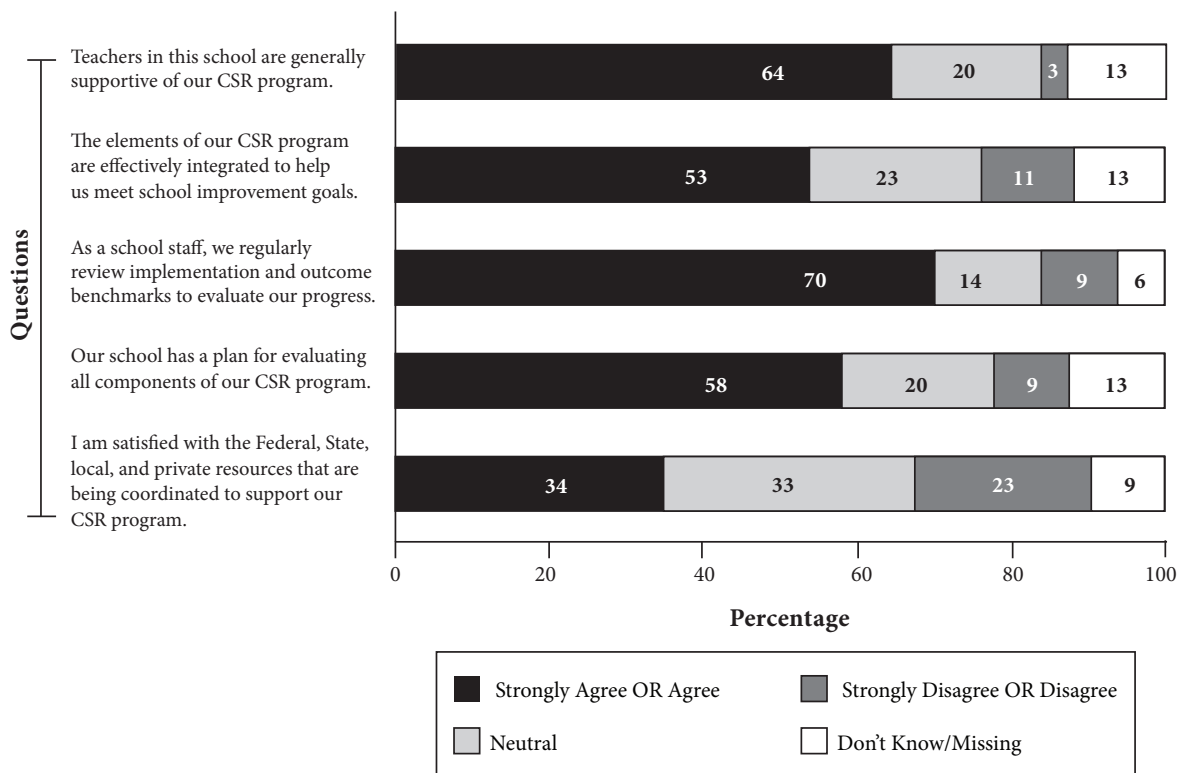
The mean scale score for the Focus construct was 3.62 on 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all five questions of the construct, 30% of staff rated the level of CSR focus as high. Combining respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all five questions of the construct, less than 2% rated the level of focus as low.

### PEDAGOGICAL CHANGE

Overall, teacher comments did not reflect a strong commitment to or focus on concrete HSTW strategies that would result in pedagogical change. Individual teachers reported heightened awareness of isolated topics associated with the HSTW key principles, such as literacy and student advocacy, but the early stage of implementation or, possibly, the moderate level of staff buy-in, may have prevented any pedagogical change from occurring yet. One teacher said that sharing student work was good but was concerned about the amount of time it took. Another teacher related how younger teachers are more receptive about sharing lesson protocols.

Observation data indicated that traditional pedagogical approaches—direct instruction, teacher-centered lecture formats, and independent seatwork—were the norm.

Figure 9.2. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Focus ( $N = 64$ )



Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Strategies such as team teaching, collaborative learning, work centers, high-level instructional feedback, and use of technology as a learning tool were not observed in the classroom environment. Again, it is not clear the extent to which the charged atmosphere associated with the immigration protests and student walkouts influenced how teachers delivered instruction on the days of the site visits, but the evaluators did observe a high level of disruptive student behavior.

***Observation data indicated that traditional pedagogical approaches—direct instruction, teacher-centered lecture formats, and independent seatwork—were the norm.***

Because the HSTW grant emphasized technology, teachers noted that computers had become more commonplace, though it is not clear if CSR funds were used to purchase these computers. Every classroom has a computer,

and a few more computers have been installed in the school library. Each content area or academy now has a technology lab, and students use computers under supervision in the labs.

Professional staff members at School 8 were asked about pedagogical issues related to the school's CSR efforts. Overall, respondents scored this construct lower than others. Of the 64 respondents, 58% indicated that students spend much of their time working in cooperative learning teams, while only 25% agreed that students spent two hours per day on interdisciplinary or project-based learning. Over a third of the respondents indicated that they used textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets less frequently (34%) and that CSR had changed classroom learning activities a great deal (39%). Less than half (45%) of the staff suggested that students used technology more effectively because of CSR. (See Table 9.5 for more information on the Pedagogy construct.)

**Table 9.5. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Pedagogy (N = 64)**

Pedagogy	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don't Know/ Missing
Because of our CSR program, I use textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets less than I used to for basic skills or content area instruction.	34%	31%	28%	6%
Our CSR program has changed classroom learning activities a great deal.	39%	33%	23%	5%
Students in my class spend at least two hours per school day in interdisciplinary or project-based work.	25%	27%	35%	14%
Students in my class spend much of their time working in cooperative learning teams.	58%	23%	10%	9%
Students are using technology more effectively because of our CSR program.	45%	34%	11%	9%

*Note.* Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

The mean scale score for the Pedagogy construct was 3.25 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all five questions of the construct, only 14% of staff rated pedagogical change as high. Combining respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all five questions of the construct, 3% rated pedagogical change as low. (See Appendix B for scale description.)

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### *RESTRUCTURING OUTCOMES*

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#### *Student Impacts*

*Achievement.* Because of the significant delays in program implementation the first year, the general attitude among staff was that it was too early to see any significant gains in student achievement attributable to HSTW.

*Academic engagement.* Although attendance continued to be a problem, some students seemed to show improvements in motivation and conduct, according to some staff. Again, though it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which the student protest impacted student engagement on the days of the site visit, observation data indicate that the overall level of student academic engagement was low.

*Affective impacts.* Due primarily to the block scheduling, some felt that students had developed closer relationships with other students. There were differences of opinion about the relationships that students had established with teachers. Some felt that closer relationships had been established, while others felt that the daily turnover with A/B scheduling made teacher-student relationships more difficult since teachers had to relate to more students.

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#### *Staff Impacts*

Some teachers had told administrators that HSTW was the type of program they needed to

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***Some teachers had told administrators that HSTW was the type of program they needed to inspire them to want to work harder for their students.***

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inspire them to want to work harder for their students. Some teachers felt that there was an increased emphasis on creating a classroom culture and building rapport as well as trying to get teachers to collaborate more. Staff felt that the program required more teamwork and input from other teachers during planning time, which “was much harder to accomplish.”

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#### *Parental Involvement*

Parental involvement has been a challenge at School 8. A group known as the Metropolitan Organization is working with the school to promote parent participation. Each of the academies works on parental involvement within the academy by making calls and hosting a parent night. Once a year the school hosts a breakfast or brunch for parents and community members to gather their input.

Parents in the focus group said that the school has conducted several meetings to make them aware of services that are available for their children, including tutorials, opportunities for community service, and assistance in completing college application forms and financial aid requests. Meetings have also been held to provide information about classes that are available for parents, including ESL classes, parenting classes, computer classes, and GED classes. A parent commented that other parents would not know what was available unless they attended the meetings.

The primary means of communication with all members of the community is through published minutes of meetings via email. The minutes are also posted on a school bulletin

board. According to the School Improvement Plan, issues may be presented orally before the site-based decision-making committee by the faculty, staff, parents, students, or community members during the public hearing portion of the agenda.

Staff mentioned that communication with parents has been problematic in the past, and several staff mentioned that efforts are now made in English and Spanish. No specific parental involvement activities associated with the CSR grant were mentioned.

Professional staff members at School 8 were asked about issues related to the school's CSR outcomes. Fewer than half of the respondents (47%) felt that student achievement had been positively impacted by CSR, and 48% attributed more positive interactions between teachers

and students to CSR. Interestingly on several questions, a similar number of respondents agreed or disagreed on the same item. For example, about one third (34%) of respondents indicated that students were more enthusiastic about learning while one quarter (23%) disagreed. About one third (31%) indicated parents were more involved and 30% disagreed. Almost a third (31%) judged academic standards were higher while one quarter (25%) disagreed. (See Table 9.6 for more information on the Outcomes construct.)

The mean scale score for the Outcomes construct was 3.30 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all nine questions of the construct, 13% of staff saw strong evidence of CSR-related outcomes. Combining respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree

**Table 9.6. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Outcomes (N = 64)**

Outcomes	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don't Know/ Missing
Student achievement has been positively impacted by CSR.	47%	36%	6%	11%
Students in this school are more enthusiastic about learning than they were before we became a CSR school.	34%	33%	23%	9%
Because of CSR, parents are more involved in the educational program of this school.	31%	28%	30%	11%
Community support for our school has increased since CSR has been implemented.	33%	22%	28%	13%
Students have higher standards for their own work because of our school's program.	31%	36%	25%	8%
Teachers are more involved in decision making at this school than they were before we implemented CSR.	38%	25%	27%	11%
Our program adequately addresses the requirements of students with special needs.	58%	20%	11%	11%
Because of our school's program, teachers in this school spend more time working together to develop curriculum and plan instruction.	53%	20%	20%	6%
Because of CSR, interactions between teachers and students are more positive.	48%	28%	9%	14%

Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

across all nine questions of the construct, 2% rated evidence of CSR-related outcomes as low. (See Appendix B for scale description.)

### III. IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

#### *Key Points*

Due to the late receipt of funds and approval for expenditures, School 8 was just introducing the program and model strategies to staff in 2005–06, and it still is not clear how HSTW and the stated goal to align the academic and vocational curricula is being addressed. This delay in funding, several disruptive events (e.g., Hurricane Rita, immigration protests), and the existing challenges faced by the school (e.g., violence and security issues, high poverty population) are probable factors contributing to the low implementation level at the school. Further, it is possible that data on implementation are incomplete due to the disruption occurring on the campus during the site visit. While staff were generally positive about the concurrent Smaller Learning Community initiative, it is also possible that the implementation of the academies, which would have required a major restructuring, have unsettled staff and/or confused or diluted understanding of the reform. Often teachers, when asked about HSTW, responded with comments about the academies.

#### *School Climate Inventory*

One way to tap success of CSR implementation indirectly is to measure school climate. The School Climate Inventory (SCI), which was administered as part of the staff survey, measures school climate across seven dimensions. The overall mean SCI rating for School 8 was 3.5, which is comparable to the national average of 3.73 for secondary schools. The highest mean rating was for Instruction at 3.98 (the national norm is 4.06); the lowest

mean rating was for Order at 2.79 compared to a national norm of 3.26. (See Figure 9.3 and Table 9.7 for more information on SCI data.)

Staff assessment of current instructional practice on the SCI is high, which conflicts with site visit data and with other survey data indicating a wide range of opinions about use of instructional practices. For example, a high number of respondents (92%) indicated on the SCI that staff used a variety of teaching strategies though this was not evident during observations. (See Figure 9.3 for more information on the Instruction dimension.)

The SCI clearly supports site visit data indicating that discipline and behavioral concerns at School 8 are significant. A majority of respondents (63%) indicated that student misbehavior interfered with the teaching process and that student tardiness and absences were a major problem (72%). Over half the respondents (55%) strongly disagreed or disagreed that rules for student behavior were consistently enforced. (See Table 9.7 for more information on the Order dimension.)

#### *Assessment of Implementation Level*

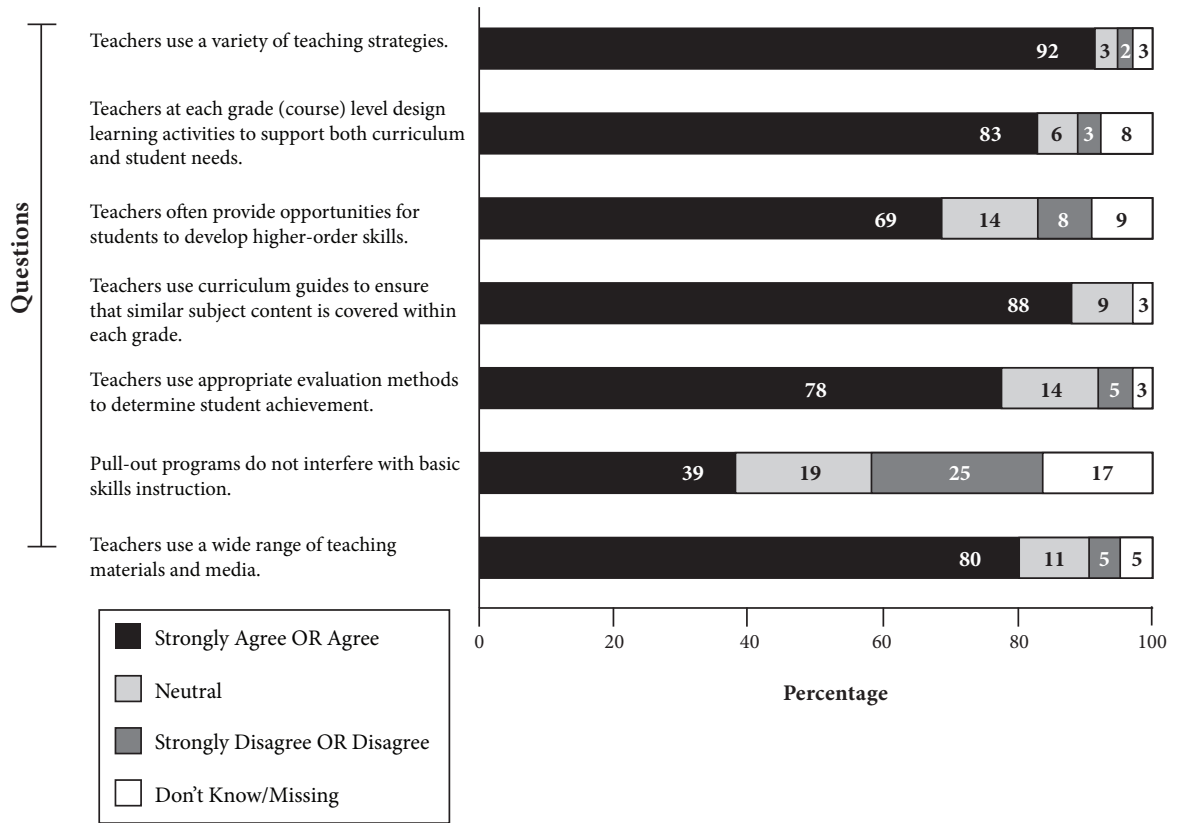
Due to the disruptions at the campus during site visits, which affected data collection, a score on the implementation scale is not appropriate at this time. In addition, the Technical Assistance Provider for School 8 did not complete a survey.

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***Teachers identified support from other teachers, support from school administration, and training/professional development as the most significant facilitators for CSR implementation.***

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**Figure 9.3. School Climate Inventory Responses About Instruction** ( $N = 64$ )



Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

### Facilitators

When interviewees were asked to identify elements that facilitated the implementation of HSTW, they mentioned the research-based strategies. Some felt that the program affirmed their philosophies about teaching and/or served as a reminder about what he/she should be doing. One teacher said, “Kids will respond if you give them positive leadership.” Staff reported that it was especially beneficial that the campus was participating in the Smaller Learning Communities initiative and had been divided into the academies. Having school administrators personally involved in the reform was considered by teachers to be a very positive element of this model.

Staff surveys confirmed these data. Teachers identified support from other teachers,

support from school administration, and training/professional development as the most significant facilitators for CSR implementation.

### Barriers

When asked to identify barriers to the successful implementation of HSTW, interviewees mentioned the time lost because of delays in getting the notice that the grant had been awarded and then getting school board approval for spending the funds. According to progress reports, there were also delays in getting the contract to service providers approved. Program sustainability is another concern because funding is being reduced.

Being required to use SREB program developers for training was considered by some staff to be detrimental. They would have



**Table 9.7. School Climate Inventory Responses About Order (N = 64)**

Order	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don't Know/ Missing
Rules for student behavior are consistently enforced.	31%	11%	55%	3%
Student discipline is administered fairly and appropriately.	33%	22%	39%	6%
Student misbehavior in this school does not interfere with the teaching process.	19%	14%	63%	5%
Student tardiness or absence from school is not a major problem.	13%	9%	72%	6%
This school is a safe place in which to work.	66%	22%	8%	5%
Teachers, administrators, and parents assume joint responsibility for student discipline.	41%	11%	41%	8%
Student behavior is generally positive in this school.	50%	23%	20%	6%

Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

preferred to have the option of choosing from several independent consultants to provide the staff development because other trainers might have been a “better fit” for their campus. Some of the teachers felt that the SREB staff members were “not good salesmen” for the program. One said that any teacher in the school would be willing to put in the effort if they just knew how something would benefit them and their students. Some also felt it was unfortunate that the grant budget limited the number of staff members who could attend the national conferences sponsored by SREB.

Another possible barrier is the reluctance or apprehension of some teachers to embrace the reform methodologies. Some teachers complained that implementing the reform takes too much time. Some teachers felt that if all teachers didn't support the reform, it wouldn't work. Requiring more teamwork or input from

other teachers during planning periods was difficult to accomplish, according to a staff member. There still appears to be a “wait-and-see” attitude in terms of teacher support of CSR.

Finally, while it is not clear if the academy approach facilitates or inhibits the implementation of the reform, should the school decide to abandon the academy approach, or if the academies obstruct or obfuscate reform efforts and/or their effects, this could seriously impact CSR implementation.

Survey data indicated that staff perceptions of barriers to CSR implementation included lack of sufficient time, poor parent involvement, lack of sufficient financial resources.







## SCHOOL 9

## LOW-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION

**GRADE LEVEL:** HIGH SCHOOL

**CSR MODEL:** ACCELERATED SCHOOLS

**GRANT TYPE:** TEXAS HIGH SCHOOL INITIATIVE (THSI)

**AWARD DATE:** JANUARY 2005

## I. LOCAL CONTEXT

SCHOOL 9 IS LOCATED IN A SMALL TOWN IN southeast Texas. This community was once known as an oil “boomtown.” Today 17% of families, and 22% of those under the age of 18 are living below the poverty line. Teachers reported that students sometimes live in homes without electricity or telephones. One teacher indicated that many adults in the community do not have high school diplomas.

The district office, elementary school, and middle school are located in the immediate vicinity of School 9. The school serves approximately 450 students in grades 9–12 with 37 teachers (92% of whom are white), two support staff, and two administrators. A little over half the student population is Hispanic (52%), and about half are economically disadvantaged (54%). (See Table 10.1 for more demographic information).

**Table 10.1. Demographic Profile, 2004–05**

Total Students	African American	Hispanic	White	Other	Limited English Proficient	Mobility (2003–04)	Economically Disadvantaged
458	9%	52%	39%	1%	7%	16%	54%

Source. Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS)

## Starting Points

Students, teachers, and parents reported a range of challenges at School 9: recent teacher turnover, high student mobility, discipline issues, high teenage pregnancy rates, and poor collaboration between the school and parents. In addition, data indicate poor communication with the district office. While TAKS results for School 9 students improved between the 2003–04 and 2004–05 school years, mathematics performance was well below the state average of 72% passing. (See Table 10.2 for more accountability information.)

According to teachers, there has been considerable turnover in the teaching ranks (10–15 new teachers in 2005–06) for several reasons, including teacher retirements, teachers leaving for “greener pastures,” and teachers leaving because of frustration with student apathy. The athletic director has also left the district.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The school community also has had to deal with several traumatic events, including the heart attack of a teacher and the deaths of a teacher and two students in separate incidents.

**Table 10.2. Accountability and TAKS Performance History**

Year	Campus Rating	TAKS Met Standard All Grades Tested (All Tests)	Reading	Math	Science	Social Studies
2003–04	Academically Acceptable	37%	74%	43%	59%	87%
2004–05	Academically Acceptable	38%	80%	45%	61%	85%

Source. Texas Education Agency, AEIS

Relatively high student mobility also has recently become a problem at School 9. An emergency home for displaced children in a nearby community has begun to send high school students to School 9 instead of a high school in another district where students from the home had previously attended school. Nearly 18 months ago, the home became a “short-term refuge,” and residents can no longer stay more than 90 days. Thus, students from the home are regularly entering and leaving the school community. Parents said that these students often exhibited behavior problems and were disruptive. One teacher felt these students “act out in classes because they don’t want to be here.”

Discipline problems pose another challenge for the school. Teachers mentioned that tardiness is a problem on campus. Students often are late to or skip their first classes. Because the school does not have a cafeteria large enough to accommodate the students, they have an open-campus policy. As a result, students often skip their afternoon classes. Students in the focus group<sup>2</sup> also indicated that there “were a lot of discipline problems.” They provided specific examples that included a speech classroom described as “always loud and out of control—they [students] have no respect

[for the teacher], and they don’t care if they fail.” Parents in the focus group thought that the school waited too long to solve problems, causing them to escalate.

Teen pregnancy was identified as being prevalent on campus. One of the parents in the focus group, a former teacher at School 9, reported that as the result of a lawsuit several years ago, pregnant teens must be given the choice of attending school during their pregnancy or being educated at home. Prior to the ruling, pregnant teens were taught at home by district-provided teachers. Focus group students were concerned that “a lot of girls are getting pregnant right now, it’s really bad ... probably 13 or so, out of this school.” Students in the focus group and some teachers seemed to be uncomfortable with the pregnancy issue primarily because the girls were allowed to attend school during and after the pregnancy and come back “as if nothing happened.” One student said, “It happens, and nothing is really said about it.”

Another challenge for School 9 is low parental involvement. The principal commented that the level of parent participation at the school is “down, down, down,” and a teacher described it as “very low.” One teacher described parental involvement as being very limited

<sup>2</sup> Student participants in the focus group were honors and G/T students. They had been selected because they had participated actively in the CSR model program. The six participants included five seniors, five female students, and five white students. Thus, the focus group make up did not reflect the student population as a whole.

from the standpoint of their involvement with academics, but “they are very involved when it comes to athletics.” One parent in the focus group hypothesized that some parents are hesitant to become involved because they are afraid that if they say “yes” once, they will be pestered to help with everything. Parents also indicated that many primary caregivers of School 9 students, such as grandmothers and single parents, are stretched already with work commitments. Students in the focus group, while noting that their parents were involved, felt that most parents were not: “A lot of parents don’t care.” Some student respondents felt that education was not a priority for some families: “It’s the town—if they [the parents] didn’t finish school, why would they push their kids? Why would it matter?” Parents noted that there were barriers to involvement for single parents and for parents who did not finish high school themselves. Teachers in the focus group were also frustrated with parent disengagement. They said that parents would often schedule appointments to discuss their students but failed to come to the meetings.

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***Relatively high student mobility also has recently become a problem at School 9.***

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There was little evidence of opportunities to engage parents in their students’ academic experiences beyond traditional parent-teacher conferences. In the past, parents recalled that the district sent home a newsletter that contained “everything about everything,” but parents have not received anything similar in the last year or two. At the present time, there is a freshman orientation night but no other parent-teacher nights. There is no PTA program at the high school and no formal mentoring program. Direct communications from the school are limited, and one teacher

said that there are no school newsletters. One teacher mentioned that some families do not have residential phone service and their students’ cell phones are often their only phone service, which was another barrier to communicating with parents.

Other problems mentioned during the site visit included low teacher support for some curricular programs (especially in math), limited opportunities for advanced and G/T students, and problems with supporting students in their transition from middle school to high school.

## **II. MODEL ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION**

### ***Selection Process***

The district was awarded the Comprehensive School Reform—Texas High School Initiative (CSR—THSI) grant in January 2005. However, the school did not receive the funding until later and did not begin implementation until the spring of 2005.

School 9 is implementing the Accelerated Schools Project based on a district decision to use the model. (See Table 10.3 for more information about Accelerated Schools.) The district grant coordinator had been impressed by the successful implementation of the program in a nearby district. While staff involvement in model selection is a key feature of Accelerated Schools—90% of staff are supposed to vote for it— School 9 faculty did not have the opportunity to participate in the assessment, research, or acceptance phase of the CSR model adoption process.

According to the grant application, the initial goals of the school’s CSR effort were

**Table 10.3. Accelerated Schools Model Design**

<p><i>Background</i> Established in 1986, Accelerated Schools serves around 1,300 schools across all grade levels. Accelerated Schools is designed to provide gifted and talented instruction for all students through “powerful learning.” The program is guided by three principles: unity of purpose, empowerment plus responsibility, and building on strengths. The primary goal of the Accelerated Schools program is to provide all students with enriched instruction based on the school community’s vision of learning.</p> <p><i>Key Strategies and Features</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hold at-risk students to high standards</li><li>• Implement a gifted and talented curriculum to stimulate academic growth</li><li>• Identify and build on students’ strengths</li><li>• Create a unified, school-wide sense of purpose</li><li>• Involve the staff in a governance and decision-making process</li></ul> <p><i>Key Components</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Full staff must participate in a 1–3 month exploration of the Accelerated Schools philosophy.</li><li>• Members of the school community take a formal vote or agree (90%) upon the adoption of the program.</li><li>• Provider supports local needs assessment, strategic planning, and continuous assessment.</li><li>• State education department and universities provide training and follow up.</li></ul>
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Source. Accelerated Schools website, <http://www.acceleratedschools.net/>

to “improve attendance, decrease dropout rates, increase academic achievement in both academic classes and TAKS scores, and increase the number of students that are enrolled in advanced courses” (p. 142). A need to improve the science and mathematics programs at School 9 was emphasized, and the application earmarked CSR funds to “equip our science labs with essential equipment that will enhance the learning opportunities of our students” (p. 151). Nearly \$50,000 was allotted to purchase “supplies for student success in science, biology, chemistry, and physics” with much more designated for technology purchases by the science department (p. 178).

### ***Initial Implementation***

The principal of the school was identified as the onsite CSR coordinator. The principal identified three internal facilitators to serve as teacher leaders and to guide the reform efforts at School 9. The facilitators were the head of the science department (the CSR grant writer), another science teacher, and a social studies teacher. The principal and the internal facilitators received training in Accelerated Schools in Austin, Texas, in the summer of 2005. Staff reported that at the training sessions, they collaborated with other administrators and teachers who had worked with the program for several years. The principal felt the training was valuable because



it allowed participants “to understand the process in your mind” and “to discover things as you go” so that you could “determine the outcomes for your own campus.”

All staff members interviewed during site visits were familiar with and had participated in the Accelerated Schools process. All teachers received training in Accelerated Schools during in-service training at the school provided by the Technical Assistance Provider in summer 2005. In addition to the initial training, the principal repeatedly mentioned that teachers had received training in Powerful Learning.<sup>3</sup> However, teachers did not emphasize this training as much as he did.

Staff also participated in the Accelerated Schools Taking Stock process in which staff members gather data from a variety of sources to inform and guide the reform process within the school community. At School 9, Taking Stock consisted of surveys completed by teachers, parents, and students. Students were also involved in compiling and analyzing the survey results. Generally, staff felt that the Taking Stock process was a good one and the most useful part of the Accelerated Schools training.

School 9 faculty members chose to join one of the four cadres to address the challenges that had been identified during the Taking Stock process. According to the agenda for the January 2, 2006, cadre meeting, these challenges were:

1. Organization: “We have poor parental involvement, especially in the area of academics.”
2. Instruction: “In a large number of our classrooms, best practices in instruction are not consistently demonstrated.”
3. Curriculum: “We do not offer a diverse selection of courses to our students.”
4. Ad Hoc: “The dress code is not evenly or consistently enforced.”

Overall, teachers have been supportive of the cadres. The principal noted that since the four cadres have been organized, “they [teachers] see that it is a leadership shift from administrators to shared leadership.” The principal also reported that attendance at the cadre meetings has been consistently high. However, no one stated if the cadres had explicit action plans for addressing identified challenges.

## ***Factors Impacting CSR Implementation***

### *SCHOOL CAPACITY*

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#### *Materials*

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According to the principal and several teachers, all materials purchased with CSR funds went to the science department and included science supplies and technology, such as a simulation station and multiple laptops and professional activities for science teachers.<sup>4</sup> Although one social studies teacher described these additions as “more toys” for science, he went on to say that the “the focus of the program is on everybody,” so he did not “feel cheated.” One mathematics teacher felt that the technology purchased for the science department was the most effective part of the CSR initiative and that there was now a program for remediation for the Science TAKS.

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<sup>3</sup> According to the Accelerated Schools website, Powerful Learning training emphasizes the use of effective instructional practices, personal reflection, and collaboration as a means to address the needs of children in at-risk situations. Teachers learn to collaborate in order to create supportive environments for diverse students.

<sup>4</sup> Teacher participants in the interview process and focus group were chosen randomly prior to the site visit. None of the teacher participants benefited from the expenditures in the science department.

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### *Staffing and Planning Time*

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No new staff members were added with CSR funds. As mentioned previously, three teachers at School 9 have been designated as internal facilitators, and the staff is active through the four Accelerated Schools cadres.

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***One teacher felt that ample time for planning had been included in the day but that there were no systematic efforts for defining the goals of planning or carrying out the planning.***

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Teachers have a 50-minute planning period each day, and, according to one teacher interviewed, they spend one planning period a week working on Accelerated Schools activities. Data indicate that additional planning time is worked into schedules on a day-to-day basis. For instance, the four cadres scheduled their meetings whenever time permitted: before school, during lunch, or after school. Training was incorporated into the teachers' days in a similar manner—during planning periods and/or in-service days. The principal has tried to cut down on staff meetings to enable teachers to work together on the Accelerated Schools reform. One teacher felt that ample time for planning had been included in the day but that there were no systematic efforts for defining the goals of planning or carrying out the planning.

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### *Fiscal Resources to Support Staff, Materials, and Technical Assistance*

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About one third of the CSR funds have gone to Accelerated Schools technical assistance. The Technical Assistance Provider is on

campus every Wednesday to provide support. One teacher commented that the Technical Assistance Provider is “the glue to hold everything together.” Other funding went to the Southwest Center for Accelerated Schools for Accelerated Schools training, evaluation, guide books, and Technical Assistance Provider support.

Additional CSR funds were used to purchase materials for the science department as mentioned earlier, including supplies, laptops, a simulation station, student optic benches, equipment for geometric optics and diffraction, and textbooks and TAKS preparation materials. The funds were also used to sponsor teacher travel to the Conference for the Advancement of Science Teachers and membership to the National Science Teachers Association.

Thirty-six of 52 staff members at School 9 completed surveys for a response rate of 69%. Of those responding to the survey, 56% of respondents said they had the necessary materials to implement the CSR program, and 53% said the school had sufficient faculty and staff to implement the program. Only 25% felt that they had sufficient planning time, and 28% felt that technological resources had become more available because of CSR.<sup>5</sup> Interestingly, across the questions, a similar or larger percent of respondents fell into the neutral or disagree category compared to the agree category. (See Figure 10.1 for more information on the Capacity construct.)

Overall for the Capacity construct, staff rated it 3.17 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all four questions of the construct, only 8% of staff rated school capacity as high compared

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<sup>5</sup> Even though School 9 made a significant technology purchase with CSR funds, the effects of the technology may have been limited to the science department, which is a possible explanation for the staff's response to the technology question.

to 6% of the respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all four questions of the construct. (See Appendix B for scale description.) Results from the Technical Assistance Provider survey suggest that the provider judged the school's capacity to be adequate in terms of materials, staffing, planning time, and fiscal resources.

### EXTERNAL SUPPORT

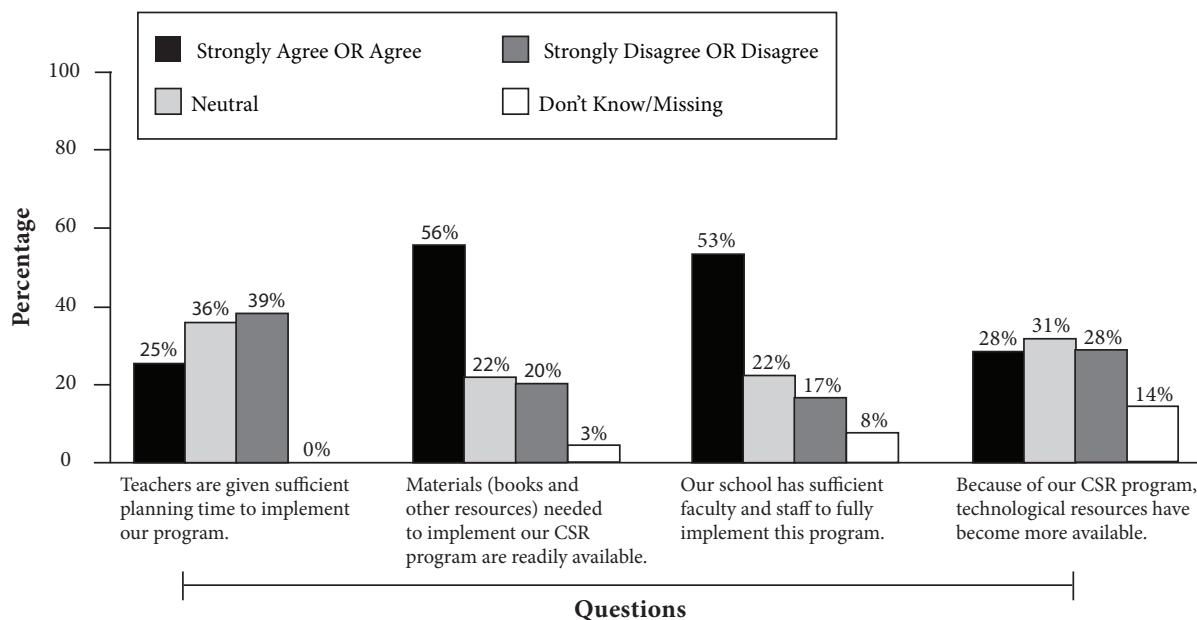
#### External Professional Development

School 9 contracted with the Southwest Center for Accelerated Schools at the University of Texas at Austin to provide technical assistance. The technical assistance that the school purchased included two leadership trainings for three staff and the principal, evaluation support and site visits, 24-hour phone and e-mail support, Accelerated Schools guide books, and support from a coach. An Accelerated Schools coach visits School 9 each week and is assigned to guide, support, facilitate, and encourage the school community during the process. In addition to the initial training for the entire staff, including mini-workshops on

how the program works, training has been provided during some faculty meetings. Staff reported that the Technical Assistance Provider occasionally visits classrooms; one teacher said she had visited her classroom about every five to six weeks. Another noted that the program was still in the planning stages, so the Technical Assistance Provider was the only resource available.

Staff feedback on the technical assistance and training provided was mixed. Again, most teachers thought the Taking Stock process was the most useful part of the process and found the Technical Assistance Provider to be helpful with that. However, the teachers felt that they were “bogged down” after the Taking Stock process because the Technical Assistance Provider did not provide enough information about what was to happen next. Teachers thought that the training did not “get to the point.” Some teachers questioned the coach's classroom experience and knowledge of the model: “Sometimes it is difficult to get information out of her. It seems that she might not be as knowledgeable about the program

Figure 10.1. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Capacity (N = 36)



Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

as she would like for us to believe. She can't explain the big picture, and that is important to teachers." One teacher was disappointed in the way the program was implemented: "Getting the program implemented was not handled in a way to get full support. It could have been done in another manner."

Results from the Technical Assistance Provider survey indicate that the school received approximately 1,040 hours of support over the two years of the grant. Survey information also states that support was provided across all 11 components of CSR reform with the exception of evaluation of school reform implementation and results and strategies to improve student academic achievement. The Technical Assistance Provider indicated that all of this support was provided through whole school training, conferences, workshops, coaching and mentoring, study groups, and cadre meetings.

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*Integrated District Assistance*

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Though the district grant coordinator chose the Accelerated Schools model for School 9, there

was no evidence that the district provides other support for the CSR efforts.

Staff members at School 9 were asked in surveys about the level of support the school receives for its CSR efforts. Of the 36 respondents, 75% agreed that they had received adequate initial and ongoing professional development, while 61% felt the professional development had been valuable. Only 36% of respondents expressed that the school received effective assistance from external partners, such as businesses. However, it should be noted that 22% marked "Don't Know" or skipped this item, which may indicate that respondents had limited information about assistance from external partners. Comparisons should be made with caution on this item. Half of respondents (50%) agreed that they had a thorough understating of the school's CSR program. (See Table 10.4 for more information on the Support construct.)

The mean scale score for the Support construct was 3.61 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all five questions of the construct,

**Table 10.4. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Support (N = 36)**

Support	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don't Know/ Missing
I have a thorough understanding of this school's CSR program.	50%	28%	17%	6%
I have received adequate initial and ongoing professional development/training for CSR program implementation.	75%	14%	8%	3%
Professional development provided by external trainers, model developers, and/or designers has been valuable.	61%	19%	19%	0%
Guidance and support provided by our school's external facilitator, support team, or other state-identified resource personnel have helped our school implement its program.	69%	17%	11%	3%
My school receives effective assistance from external partners (e.g., university, businesses, agencies).	36%	33%	8%	22%

*Note.* Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

25% of staff rated support provided as high. Combining respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all five questions of the construct, 3% rated support as low. (See Appendix B for scale description.)

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### *INTERNAL FOCUS*

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#### *Staff Buy-In and Support*

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As the district chose the CSR model for implementation at School 9, the principal reported that staff members were “hesitant at first” and saw CSR as “just another grant with more work for them.” As teachers became more involved in the Accelerated Schools Taking Stock process and cadre work, support generally increased.

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***This sense of pride in their work according to the principal is related to the idea that teachers are taking part in the leadership decisions at School 9.***

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Teachers were conscientious about attending their cadre meetings and doing what was required of them. The principal felt that it was up to the teachers to make the biggest difference in the reform effort because “they get excited about things that they want to change.” Teachers in the focus group felt that staff generally appeared to be supportive of the reform efforts because the program represented “lots of work” that they had accomplished. This sense of pride in their work according to the principal is related to the idea that teachers are taking part in the leadership decisions at School 9. Survey data indicate about half the teachers feel school staff are supportive of the program. Only one teacher interviewed felt that support was decreasing since other teachers were less enthusiastic because “they have not seen anything come of it” and “we are already in the middle of the project.”

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#### *Alignment and Integration With Existing Programs*

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The other ongoing grant at the school was a Technology Applications Readiness Grant for Empowering Texas (Target) from TEA, which was in its third year. The Target grant had been awarded to integrate technology into math (specifically algebra and geometry) and English language arts. Teachers expressed some concern about a low level of implementation of the Target grant: “Just getting a grant for the sake of getting a grant is not a good thing.” There were no apparent efforts to align the Target and CSR grant programs. None of those interviewed commented on alignment.

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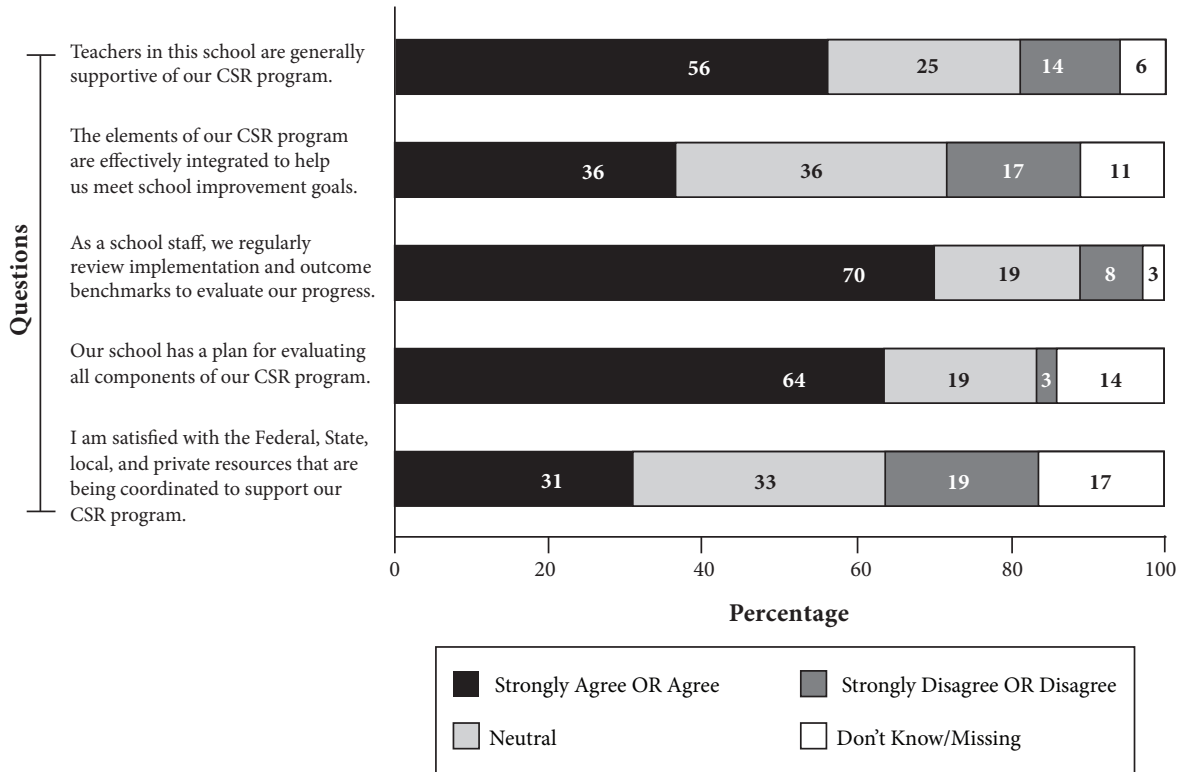
#### *Monitoring*

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The principal, internal facilitators, and the Technical Assistance Provider all provided progress monitoring at a limited level during this initial stage of implementation. One teacher commented that the program is not at a place where it can be monitored because School 9 was only at “the point of teacher awareness.” Repeatedly, faculty members cited that it was too early to measure differences in student achievement.

School 9 staff members were asked on surveys about the focus on CSR at the school, and the results only partially supported site visit data. Of the 36 respondents, 70% agreed that the school staff regularly reviewed implementation and outcome benchmarks to evaluate progress. Another 64% felt that the school had a plan for evaluating all components of the CSR program. Only 36%, however, said that the elements of the CSR program were effectively integrated to help meet school improvement goals, and 31% of respondents were satisfied with the fiscal resources that were supporting CSR. (See Figure 10.2 for more information on the Focus construct.)

**Figure 10.2. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Focus (N = 36)**



*Note.* Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

The mean scale score for the Focus construct was 3.49 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all five questions of the construct, 22% of staff rated the level of CSR focus as high. Combining respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all five questions of the construct, 3% rated focus as low. (See Appendix B for scale description.)

**PEDAGOGICAL CHANGE**

Data indicate that few changes in instruction have taken place due to the CSR program. The principal felt that teachers were using the information provided in the Accelerated Schools Powerful Learning training: “There is a different way in which learning takes place.” Teachers concurred that heightened awareness and reflection were present, though they

could not readily identify many changes in instruction at this point.

Teachers said the model has created an awareness of changes that teachers could make in their teaching practices. Another teacher felt that because of their involvement with Accelerated Schools they had begun to self-examine their classroom practices. As far as implementing Powerful Learning strategies, when asked what contributions the program had made in terms of interdisciplinary and project-based learning, cooperative and team-based approaches, and authentic alternative assessments, one teacher said that all of these topics had been brought up but that she could not see that they were attributable to the Accelerated Schools program. Data from the Technical Assistance Provider survey support



the suggestion of limited pedagogical impact. The Technical Assistance Provider indicated that teachers had failed to integrate technology in instruction, use more interdisciplinary and project-based lessons, cooperate or teach in teams more often, or develop or use authentic assessment.

Teachers could not readily identify any provisions that had been made to accommodate special needs students through the reform model. One teacher did comment that the nature of Accelerated Schools lets students learn from their own perspectives, which lends itself to accommodating student needs. Teachers were already attempting to meet special needs before the model was introduced.

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***Data indicate that few changes in instruction have taken place due to the CSR program.***

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The principal noted that room setups had been changed so that students could work together collaboratively. He said a mathematics honors program has been expanded to include a research component and noted that changes have been limited in grade 9 because of the transition from middle school.

Observation data indicate that overall class time was highly academically focused, instruction was educationally relevant (though not always engaging), and what students were supposed to be learning was clear. In slightly over half of the observations, student attention, interest, and engagement were high. In other classes, students rested their heads on desks, looked out the windows, or read other books during class time. In several classes, teachers worked very hard to elicit responses from the students with little success.

Teachers generally used direct instruction, and many teachers were preparing for TAKS. Cooperative learning occurred in two classrooms, and one class featured team teaching with a student teacher engaged with a student. Higher-level instructional feedback and higher-level questioning were only observed once. Project-based learning occurred in two English classes where students were working on research on self-selected topics. Technology was used in few classes—most often computers were used as a means for delivering instruction, including in science classes.

In survey questions related to pedagogical issues, only 25% of the 36 respondents felt that the CSR program had changed classroom learning activities a great deal whereas one third disagreed with this statement. Further, only 22% thought that they used fewer textbooks or worksheets, while 44% disagreed. Another 22% agreed to using interdisciplinary or project-based learning two hours per day, but 28% disagreed. While 31% agreed that CSR allowed students to work more in cooperative learning teams, 36% disagreed. One third of respondents (33%) thought that students used technology more effectively because of CSR, and 31% disagreed. Considering responses across the neutral and disagree categories combined, pedagogical practices were only minimally impacted by the school's CSR program. (See Table 10.5 for more information on the Pedagogy construct.)

The mean scale score for the Pedagogy construct was 2.89 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly

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***Teachers generally used direct instruction, and many teachers were preparing for TAKS.***

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**Table 10.5. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Pedagogy (N = 36)**

Pedagogy	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don't Know/ Missing
Because of our CSR program, I use textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets less than I used to for basic skills or content area instruction.	22%	28%	44%	6%
Our CSR program has changed classroom learning activities a great deal.	25%	31%	33%	11%
Students in my class spend at least two hours per school day in interdisciplinary or project-based work.	22%	33%	28%	17%
Students in my class spend much of their time working in cooperative learning teams.	31%	22%	36%	11%
Students are using technology more effectively because of our CSR program.	33%	28%	31%	8%

Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

agree or agree across all five questions of the construct, only 3% of staff rated pedagogical change as high. Combining respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all five questions of the construct, 11% rated pedagogical change as low. (See Appendix B for scale description.)

### *RESTRUCTURING OUTCOMES*

#### *Student Impacts*

Impacts on students thus far appear limited. The principal and teachers felt that it was too early in the grant period to see any differences in student achievement. The school had not examined test scores because it was “too soon.” On the Technical Assistance Provider survey, the provider indicated that the CSR had not affected student performance on school tests or standardized tests. When asked about impacts on discipline and conduct, one teacher reported the same as with achievement: there had not been enough time. Tardiness continues to be

a problem, and school attendance is still poor. One teacher commented that “students have bigger problems in their lives than worrying about attendance.” Another teacher doubted that students were even aware of the CSR program. When asked about student impacts, the principal said that there had been “peaks and valleys” and that the school was “working on this one.”

Additionally, results from the Technical Assistance Provider survey indicate that the program has had little impact on students in terms of motivation, quality of work, and discipline problems. Overall, the Technical Assistance Provider indicated that the CSR program at School 9 has had little impact on students.

The main philosophy behind Accelerated Schools is that all students should be presented with in-depth learning experiences that are often reserved for gifted and talented students.

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***Students who completed the Taking Stock survey indicated that they wanted more class options and electives.***

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However, School 9 has limited opportunities for extended or advanced learning. Students who had taken all available classes at the school, including dual-credit courses in English IV and United States history offered online through a nearby community college, became office aides or took study hall. Students who completed the Taking Stock survey indicated that they wanted more class options and electives.

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***Staff Impacts***

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Staff had begun to work together more frequently and more professionally, according to the principal and teachers. Teachers in the focus group agreed that Accelerated Schools provided an opportunity for teachers to meet and discuss ideas and make them more aware of campus-wide issues. The principal felt that relationships between teachers had “really improved” and that there was increased sharing across subject areas. One teacher felt the four cadres brought together teachers who might not have known each other prior to CSR. The principal thought the most effective part of Accelerated Schools was the collaboration across grade levels and disciplines, which served to boost teacher morale. He believed that a teacher on his campus might say, “I am a vital part of what happens, and my input is valuable.”

When asked about motivation, one teacher felt that some teachers were not willing to make changes: “It is hard to be open to something when you have already closed your mind.” Most teachers felt that Accelerated Schools had not affected their teaching because of the subject matter they taught or because they were already using the advocated strategies. For instance,

one teacher did not think CSR was relevant to his subject area.

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***Parental Involvement***

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There was no evidence to indicate that parental involvement had been impacted due to the school’s CSR efforts. Survey data support this assertion.

Staff members at School 9 were asked in surveys about issues related to the school’s CSR outcomes. When asked about the impact on students, the responses indicated little impact. For instance, only 20% felt that students had become more enthusiastic about learning because of CSR. Only 14% of staff felt that parental involvement had increased, and 11% thought community support had increased. Respondents saw the biggest impact on staff-related issues. Almost half (47%) saw teachers as more involved in decision making, and 45% believed that teachers spent more time working together to develop curriculum and plan instruction. (See Table 10.6 for more information on the Outcomes construct.)

The mean scale score for this construct was 2.92 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all nine questions of the construct, 8% of staff saw strong evidence of CSR-related outcomes. Combining respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all nine questions of the construct, 3% rated evidence of CSR-related outcomes as low. (See Appendix B for scale description.)

### **III. IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY**

#### ***Key Points***

According to the grant application budget and site visit data, around two thirds of CSR grant funds went to purchase equipment,

**Table 10.6. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Outcomes (N = 36)**

Outcomes	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don't Know/ Missing
Student achievement has been positively impacted by CSR.	28%	31%	28%	14%
Students in this school are more enthusiastic about learning than they were before we became a CSR school.	20%	19%	44%	17%
Because of CSR, parents are more involved in the educational program of this school.	14%	25%	53%	8%
Community support for our school has increased since CSR has been implemented.	11%	31%	44%	14%
Students have higher standards for their own work because of our school's program.	14%	28%	47%	11%
Teachers are more involved in decision making at this school than they were before we implemented CSR.	47%	33%	20%	0%
Our program adequately addresses the requirements of students with special needs.	50%	32%	8%	11%
Because of our school's program, teachers in this school spend more time working together to develop curriculum and plan instruction.	45%	22%	25%	8%
Because of CSR, interactions between teachers and students are more positive.	36%	28%	22%	14%

*Note.* Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

materials, technology, and professional-related items (such as professional organization memberships) for the science department. This concentration is narrow in the context of comprehensive school reform, and evaluators did not talk to teachers—either in interviews or the focus group—who were affected by these purchases. The rest of the CSR funds supported technical assistance from the Southwest Center for Accelerated Schools. This funding was extended to and benefited the entire staff. All staff members at School 9 have received training in the Accelerated Schools model.

Data indicate that the increased awareness provided through the Taking Stock process and

participation in the cadres has been beneficial for teachers. Through this process, teachers were given the opportunity to reflect and serve as leaders in school decision making. The CSR effort has created awareness and boosted ownership and morale among staff to some extent. Data suggest only about half the staff members are on board with the reform efforts and an overall lack of programmatic focus could be contributing to this lack of buy-in.

While teachers supported the professional aspects of Accelerated Schools and felt empowered to make decisions in the school, the model seems to have had limited effect on their classroom instruction. The principal felt

that “there must be a change in the mindset of the teachers for change to take effect.” Teachers were positive about a cadre structure that had been set up to facilitate the reform process, but data indicate that planning and group activities designed to move efforts forward are limited.

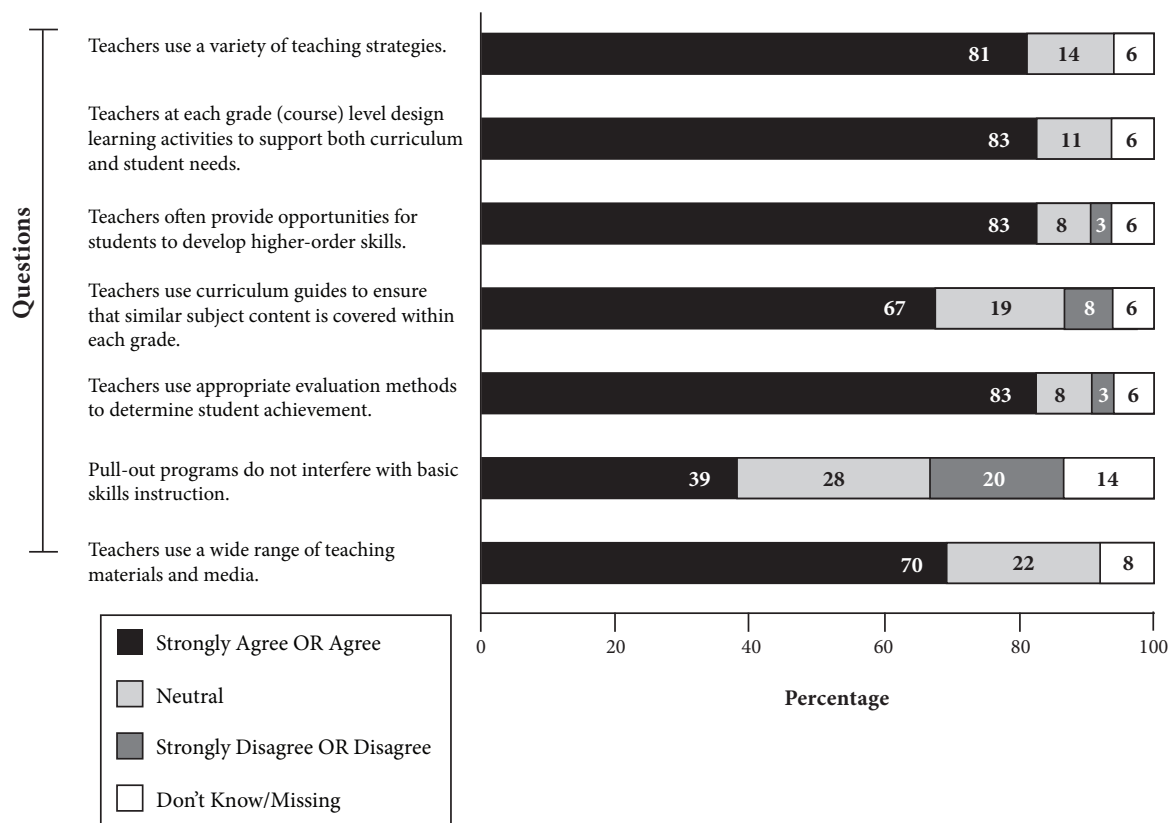
### School Climate Inventory

One way to tap success of CSR implementation indirectly is to measure school climate. The School Climate Inventory (SCI), which was administered as part of the staff survey, measures school climate across seven dimensions. (See Appendix B for scale description.) The overall mean SCI rating for School 9 was a 3.39 on a 5-point scale. Results from the SCI indicate an overall school climate that is lower than the national average for secondary schools at 3.73. The highest mean rating was given for the Instruction dimension of 3.86 (compared to national norm of 4.06),

and the lowest mean rating was obtained for the Order dimension of 2.56 (compared to national norm of 3.26). (See Figure 10.3 and Table 10.7 for more information on SCI data.)

Professional staff consistently agreed that teachers demonstrated strong instructional practices as noted in their responses to individual items. In fact, 83% agreed that teachers design learning activities to support curriculum and student needs, provide opportunities for students to develop higher-order skills, and use appropriate evaluation methods to determine student achievement. Responses to this dimension indicate that while teachers may not be adapting their instructional strategies to those recommended by Accelerated Schools, staff perceive their strategies to be effective. (See Figure 10.3 for more information on the Instruction dimension.)

Figure 10.3. School Climate Inventory Responses About Instruction (N = 36)



Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Responses to the individual items in the Order dimension suggest that tardiness or absence is perceived to be a major problem at the school. Specifically, no professional staff felt that tardiness or absence was not a problem. Other major problems that teachers reported were related to student discipline interfering with the teaching process. However, many teachers (70%) did feel like the school was a safe place to work. (See Table 10.7 for more information on the Order dimension.)

### **Assessment of Implementation Level**

Measuring the implementation of Accelerated Schools at School 9 with an instrument designed to assess the strength of CSR implementation based on the 11 CSR components produced a score of 19 out of a possible 51 points. Implementation of the Accelerated Schools model at School 9 is in the process of building awareness. School 9 received the most credit in area 6–Support

for Teachers and Principals. This part of the scale is reflected in the professional cadres and cooperative planning of the school’s teachers. The school received no points for several components: 5–Support Within the School, 10–Coordination of Resources, and 11–Strategies That Improve Academic Achievement.

The Southwest Center for Accelerated Schools conducted an evaluation of the program at School 9 in March 2006 and rated the school’s overall implementation level as “developing” (50% or more of the model standards were present). Strengths cited in the evaluation included a cohesive faculty and staff, support from the administration, a shared vision, staff empowerment, an external coach, and improved communication. Challenges included low community and parental involvement, staff perception of limited district support, low stakeholder involvement in decision making, teacher-reported need for more training, and a persistent and prevalent use of traditional instructional methods. The report

**Table 10.7. School Climate Inventory Responses About Order (N = 36)**

Order	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don’t Know/ Missing
Rules for student behavior are consistently enforced.	17%	14%	70%	0%
Student discipline is administered fairly and appropriately.	19%	42%	36%	3%
Student misbehavior in this school does not interfere with the teaching process.	14%	14%	72%	0%
Student tardiness or absence from school is not a major problem.	0%	6%	95%	0%
This school is a safe place in which to work.	70%	28%	3%	0%
Teachers, administrators, and parents assume joint responsibility for student discipline.	17%	17%	67%	0%
Student behavior is generally positive in this school.	39%	28%	33%	0%

Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.



recommended that School 9 expand its efforts to involve parents and inform stakeholders, provide time for teachers to work together, continue to provide Accelerated Schools professional development opportunities, and create avenues for monitoring progress.

Interestingly, the Technical Assistance Provider's assessment of the implementation level at the school provided in the survey, conducted in April 2006, one month later, indicated a 4.45 on a 5-point scale suggested the school is nearing "institutionalization." This rating appears inflated in the context of all the site visit data and the provider's March 2006 assessment. This disconnect could be attributed to the fact that the central office of the Southwest Center filled out the survey, rather than the individual consultant who has worked with the School 9 staff at the site.

### **Facilitators**

While Accelerated Schools at School 9 has not currently impacted the whole school, it has created a more collegial and professional workplace environment for the teachers. The principal and teachers mentioned a new feeling of leadership due to participation in the four cadres. Teachers were able to choose which cadre they joined, and then the cadres had brainstorming sessions to build challenge statements for the teachers to explore. Each cadre has benefited from in-service training. The principal believes that Accelerated Schools has "opened teachers' eyes to see where they can make an impact." One teacher felt that the professional development opportunities gave teachers greater responsibility in the school: "If teachers are given directions, they will assume the responsibility to follow through. If they are given guidelines, they have a sense of accomplishment when they are able to complete the tasks." It is clear that the cadres have enabled teachers to develop positive relationships with each other, which is

important to them. School 9 should continue to encourage this interaction.

Most members of the school community also felt that the Taking Stock process was important. One teacher felt that Taking Stock was the most effective piece of the CSR efforts because all the stakeholders' opinions were represented, and everyone could work towards a common goal. Another teacher felt that Accelerated Schools created an organizational structure that was focused on change: "When we see a problem, we know that there is a way to get the program resolved." School 9 should continue to build its vision collaboratively and empower teachers to make decisions that foster accomplishing defined goals.

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***While Accelerated Schools at School 9 has not currently impacted the whole school, it has created a more collegial and professional workplace environment for the teachers.***

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When asked to identify components of the school's CSR program that had facilitated implementation, staff responding to the survey at School 9 identified support from school administration, support from teachers, and training and professional development opportunities.

### **Barriers**

The principal felt that the reporting requirements for the grant were extensive and that reduced funding levels might not make it worth applying for in the third year of the grant. Thus, the sustainability of the school effort, especially so early in implementation, is at risk. Survey results also indicated that teachers felt two of the greatest barriers to program implementation were insufficient time and insufficient financial resources. An

additional widely cited barrier was lack of parent/community involvement.

The additional demands on teachers' schedules also present a barrier for CSR implementation. The principal said that teachers try to be creative with their schedules to include time for cadre meetings, but teachers felt it was a struggle: "It is a fine art to balance everything." One teacher did not think there was enough time to learn about the CSR model. A specific recommendation from the Technical Assistance Provider was for the school to provide more time to have "teachers work with each others to identify student strengths in order to more effectively drive instruction."

School 9 does not have full internal support of the model and is thus unable to implement instructional change at this time. One teacher articulated this resistance to change: "The philosophy is wonderful, but it will take time and effort to overcome attitudes." Teachers are not motivated to make changes in their classrooms.

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***One teacher articulated this resistance to change: "The philosophy is wonderful, but it will take time and effort to overcome attitudes."***

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Further, while the administration seems supportive of CSR, no one appears to be driving the efforts. The original plan in School 9's grant application lacked a school-wide design, and the strong leadership that could expand and broaden the impact of the model is not evident. For example, the administration could structure additional time for teachers to meet rather than leaving it up to them. Further, many teachers questioned the authority of the Technical Assistance Provider. Without a strong leader or advocate for change, school reform efforts at School 9 may be in jeopardy of ending.

Finally, while the CSR research base contends that student performance may not be impacted by reform efforts in the short term, the school does not have processes in place to monitor other evidence of student progress. To look at how Accelerated Schools has impacted students, School 9 might develop more intermediate outcomes—other than TAKS—such as discipline referrals or attendance.



## LOW-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION

**GRADE LEVEL:** HIGH SCHOOL

**CSR MODEL:** CO-NECT

**GRANT TYPE:** TEXAS HIGH SCHOOL INITIATIVE (THSI)

**AWARD DATE:** JANUARY 2005

## I. LOCAL CONTEXT

SCHOOL 10 IS LOCATED IN A COUNTY bordering Mexico in a coastal community that strongly relies on the tourism industry. The school serves students in grades 9–12 with an approximate enrollment of 650 students. The majority of the student population at the high school is Hispanic (84%). Eighty-five percent of the students are classified as economically disadvantaged, and census data indicate that 71% of parents are Limited English Proficient. (See Table 11.1 for more demographic information.)

The rating for this campus in the 2004–05 school year was Academically Acceptable. (See Table 11.2 for more accountability information.) The greatest need, according to AEIS, is in the area of mathematics as the percentage of students passing (sum of all grades tested) in 2004–05 was 63% compared to the state average of 72%. Additionally, the school scored below the 2005 state average for all tests (sum of all grades tested) of 62% with a passing rate of 55%. However, it is of note

that the school improved its performance in each of these areas. Further, the school scored above the state average for ELA (83%) with 85% passing (sum of all grades tested).

### *Starting Points*

Staff and parents indicated that the main challenge facing School 10 is that students do not attend college. In the past, most students would stay in the area and not attend college because they could get a job in the tourism industry. A parent recounted how her children, who are now attending college, struggled, “They were not really quite ready to take the challenges, the discipline of the courses ... I feel that [the school] should [have been] preparing them a lot better.” According to the campus improvement plan, School 10 was ranked last of all county high schools in recent graduate college enrollment in local and state colleges, and a goal of most parents is “for their children to get a high school diploma and enter the work force upon graduation.”

Both the district and school have taken a multi-pronged approach to raising awareness and

**Table 11.1. Demographic Profile, 2004–05**

Total Students	African American	Hispanic	White	Other	Economically Disadvantaged	Mobility (2003–04)	Limited English Proficiency
657	1%	84%	15%	0%	85%	15%	12%

Source. Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS)

**Table 11.2. Accountability and TAKS Performance History**

Year	Campus Rating	TAKS Met Standard All Grades Tested (All Tests)	Reading/ ELA	Math	Science	Social Studies
2003–04	Academically Acceptable	46%	80%	56%	61%	88%
2004–05	Academically Acceptable	55%	85%	63%	72%	89%

Source. Texas Education Agency, AEIS

the level of preparedness of students to enroll in, persist, and complete college. The school and district operate several programs geared towards preparing students for postsecondary education:

- Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Program (GEAR UP)
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers Program—Project Puente
- Texas High School Completion and Success Initiative

GEAR UP is designed to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. School 10 worked with the University of Texas at Brownsville (UTB) to provide support for the 2004–05 senior cohort from grade 8 through graduation. According to a GEAR UP Coordinator Memo, the goal was for 100% of all graduating seniors to have some form of postsecondary educational plan in place. The grant also provided online academic preparation for the Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA) so that students would not need remedial courses upon entering college.<sup>1</sup>

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) Program is intended to provide expanded academic enrichment opportunities for children who attend low-

performing schools. Tutorial services and academic enrichment activities are designed to help students meet local and state academic standards in subjects such as reading and math. School 10 operates its CCLC through Project Puente, which is an after-school program that offers some college awareness services.

The purpose of the Texas High School Completion and Success Initiative is to encourage students from low- and under-performing high schools to pursue postsecondary education and training through a variety of means:

- Basic-skills grants to districts implementing special programs for high school students who have not earned sufficient credit to advance to the next grade
- After-school programs designed to prevent high school dropouts
- Middle-college programs that encourage at-risk students and students who wish to accelerate their education by undertaking courses of study that allow both high school and college level work

Additionally, School 10 has been steadily increasing the number of students completing advanced courses and taking college entrance examinations School 10 student enrollment in

<sup>1</sup>Out of 135 seniors in 2004–05 17% were exempt from the THEA based on their SAT and TAKS scores (GEAR UP Coordinator Memo, 10.6.04).

Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses increased from 21% in 2002–03 to 24% in 2003–04 compared to the state enrollment average of 20% for both years. The number of students testing in these areas increased from 35% to 46% compared to state averages of 16% and 17% respectively. However, the percentage of scores at or above the passing score (3 on AP exams or 4 on IB exams) for School 10 students was considerably lower than the state average for both years. (See Table 11.3 for more information on college readiness.)

The number of students taking college entrance examinations has also increased. In 2002–03, 51% of seniors took the SAT/ACT; in 2003–04, 60% of seniors took the SAT/ACT, which is close to the state average of 62%. However, performance on these tests has decreased with the increase in number of students taking them. School 10’s test scores dropped 51 points between 2002–03 and 2004–05, and were significantly lower than the state average for both tests: 881 compared to 989 for 2002–03, and 830 compared to 987 for 2003–04.

This information suggests that while School 10 is exposing more students to college

*In the past, most students would stay in the area and not attend college because they could get a job in the tourism industry.*

preparatory experiences, it still needs to focus on providing students with the skills and knowledge to be successful in advanced courses and on exams. Even so, parents felt these were steps in the right direction. Parents also reported an increase in efforts to bring in college recruiters and college students to talk to students about college life. Parents noted that the school “offers AP classes now, and these classes have really helped ... College is introduced to them at an early age now. As a consequence, a lot of seniors that graduate from here attend college.”

**II. MODEL ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION**

*Selection Process*

School 10 received a Comprehensive School Reform—Texas High School Initiative

**Table 11.3. Indicators of College Readiness, 2002–03 & 2003–04**

Indicator	School 10 2002–03	State 2002–03	School 10 2003–04	State 2003–04
Advanced course/Dual enrollment completion	21%	20%	24%	20%
Recommended HS/Distinguished Achievement Program	76%	64%	85%	68%
AP/IB results (percent passing/at or above criterion)	14%	51%	16%	49%
SAT/ACT tested	51%	62%	60%	62%
Mean SAT score	881	989	830	987
Mean ACT score	20.4	19.9	17.8	20.1

Source. Texas Education Agency, AEIS

(CSR—THSI) grant in January 2005. The grant application indicated that the school intended to use CSR funds to support and continue the school’s initiatives to increase college readiness and enrollment. District and campus administrators who are no longer at the school and who left prior to receiving the award initiated the original grant application process. Staff reported that the grant application was written by an external grant writer with little input from the campus. While the application did include a letter of support from the site-based decision-making committee, several persons who signed the letter did not recollect or have knowledge of the process. In the end, the district grant application had minimal connection to a comprehensive effort for school reform.

### ***Initial Implementation***

The grant application stated that School 10 would implement a framework called Schools Utilizing Reform Practices in Achievement for Student Success in High School Project (SURPASS) as the foundation for reform. The goals of this framework included the following:

- Provide customized professional development
- Create an advisory council
- Align curriculum with state standards
- Provide college mentoring
- Create a bilingual district website
- Offer summer programs
- Implement self-paced learning through technology

Co-nect was the CSR model named in the application, and the first progress report to TEA explicitly referred to Co-nect as the CSR model. (See Table 11.4 for more information about Co-nect.) However, activities associated with SURPASS and Co-nect do not appear to have been implemented. For example, the grant

budgeted for a two-day staff-wide Co-nect training on “CSR research-based strategies,” which, as of the end of the 2005–06 school year, had yet to occur. The disconnect between application intent and current implementation is attributable to a complete administrative turnover at both the district and high school levels between applying for the grant and award of the grant. In addition to the personnel changes, there was little or no communication between administrations. The coordinator explained, “Although the beginning [of the grant] was slow, the process is going better. At the beginning there was no facilitator, and administrators were swamped [with other school issues].”

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***Due to the discontinuity in leadership as well as a lack of communication between administrations, the new principal had little knowledge of the CSR model adoption process or the grant’s intent.***

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Due to the discontinuity in leadership as well as a lack of communication between administrations, the new principal had little knowledge of the CSR model adoption process or the grant’s intent. He stated it would have been helpful to have “basic information” about the grant and how money could be spent. Teachers who were interviewed knew which program was in place, but they had no knowledge of the adoption process or the components of the program, nor did parents have any idea how the CSR adoption process took place. To further exacerbate the situation, a CSR coordinator was not hired until August 2005 even though the grant had begun in January of that year. During the time between the grant award and the hiring of the coordinator, little activity appears to have occurred in regard to Co-nect. Additionally, no one referred to SURPASS at any time.



**Table 11.4. Co-nect Model Design**

<p><i>Background</i></p> <p>Founded by the Educational Technologies Group at BBN Corporation and recently acquired by Pearson Publishing Corporation, the Co-nect model began in 1992. Co-nect is a K–12, school-wide program in over 175 schools. Of the students at these schools, 75% are of color and 62% qualify for free/reduced lunch. The focus of Co-nect is to improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools through the collection and analysis of data. Teams of teachers work with Co-nect facilitators to design instruction that is rigorous, project based, and aligned with state and local standards.</p> <p><i>Key Strategies and Features</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual support for teachers and administrators to develop a course of action that is specific to each school</li> <li>• Local identification of the causes of and a plan to address achievement gaps</li> <li>• Specialized instruction for struggling students</li> <li>• Customized online and on-site training and support that includes diagnostic tools to help schools meet Adequate Yearly Progress</li> <li>• Online learning modules</li> <li>• A database of curriculum projects that are tied to state standards</li> <li>• A library of effective, sustainable instructional techniques</li> <li>• Implementation monitoring and regular progress reviews</li> </ul> <p><i>Key Components</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participating schools should be organized into small learning communities called clusters.</li> <li>• A full-time facilitator is recommended, though not required.</li> <li>• Awareness sessions to create staff buy-in are provided.</li> <li>• Support for Co-nect adoption by at least 75% of faculty members is recommended.</li> <li>• Principals receive an initial two-day training.</li> <li>• All faculty members receive at least three days of training each year.</li> </ul>
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Source. Co-nect website, <http://www.co-nect.net/>

Grant funding was used to support and encourage professional growth for teachers. Teachers were encouraged to pursue master’s degrees in the content area they taught so that the school could offer advanced classes for the students, thus allowing the students to obtain college credit at the high school level. Although the grant did not pay for the teachers’ tuition, it did cover the costs of taking the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). Parents were aware of this use of funds: “The program has allowed some of the teachers to get their master’s degrees by helping them with their GREs.”

Parents viewed teachers’ continued education as important because it would make teachers better prepared as well as good role models. Teachers expressed interest in the grant paying for tuition as well. It should be noted that the original application did provide funding for tuition for four teachers.

The grant also supported curriculum alignment, the purchase of technology equipment, and training in technology skills. With funding left over from Year 1 (due to not hiring the coordinator until August 2005),

the school submitted an amendment to TEA requesting the purchase of four Promethean boards (one for each core area), an interactive whiteboard that allows teachers and students to interact with curriculum materials.

Based on this history, the staff acknowledged the reform model to be Co-nect in name only. In practice, however, they reported that the grant funds supported the broader school goals of improving teaching through professional development and technology. The school does not adhere to the Co-nect model tenants beyond a general focus on technology. There are plans to follow up with Co-nect training for next year. The site-based decision-making committee, which includes the principal, coordinator, and teachers, has met to plan and follow the progress of the program.

## ***Factors Impacting CSR Implementation***

### *SCHOOL CAPACITY*

#### *Materials*

Grant funds were used to purchase general supplies that teachers provide for the students. The school has purchased supporting curriculum material, such as History Alive and other supplemental workbooks. In addition, a college awareness program was created through which students can visit with the CSR coordinator, utilize materials purchased specifically for them, access computers, and receive advice from the coordinator regarding preparation for college. Finally, Promethean boards were purchased, and teachers expressed a desire to see “more technology purchased.”

#### *Staffing and Planning Time*

The only change in staffing through the grant was the hiring of the coordinator. The coordinator stated that the student population

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***Most grant funds, outside of the coordinator’s salary and the Promethean boards, were used to support staff-identified professional development activities in the core areas.***

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is growing, and in the future they will have to increase the number of teachers.

The school schedule follows an eight-period day with 45-minute planning periods for teachers. The planning period did not change with the grant. No one discussed shared planning time or the need for common planning time.

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#### *Fiscal Resources to Support Staff, Materials, and Technical Assistance*

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Most grant funds, outside of the coordinator’s salary and the Promethean boards, were used to support staff-identified professional development activities in the core areas. The coordinator described the process: “Input was sought from the teachers to determine professional development needs. Professional development took place based on teachers’ input. Although professional development was good, there was no follow up.” This support was identified by staff as “wonderful because [we] have been able to bring in people from outside regions ... [and] send faculty to training sessions.”

Staff suggested that they were unaware of efforts to supplement grant funds with local funding. Additionally, as grant funds targeted core academic areas, teachers stated a desire for the district “to provide local money to support those departments that don’t fall in the core subject areas.” Teachers in non-core areas wanted support to purchase more Promethean boards since those supported by the grant were for core areas only.

Nineteen staff members out of 64 professional staff completed surveys for a response rate of 30%. Note that conclusions based on this low response rate should be interpreted with caution, and generalizations to the rest of the school staff are not recommended. There is an additional caveat with the survey data requiring explanation. As explained above, the campus had a very late start implementing CSR, and, therefore, it is unlikely that very many staff understood the requirements or 11 components of CSR and the Co-nect program. Therefore, responses overestimate the impact and implementation level of the CSR program.

Considering the responses to survey questions about Capacity for CSR implementation, 58% said they were given sufficient planning time, and 68% of the School 10 staff strongly agreed or agreed that they had the necessary materials for implementing CSR. Over half of the staff (58%) strongly agreed or agreed that they had sufficient staffing, and 84% judged technology resources to have become more available

because of CSR. (See Figure 11.1 for more information on the Capacity construct.)

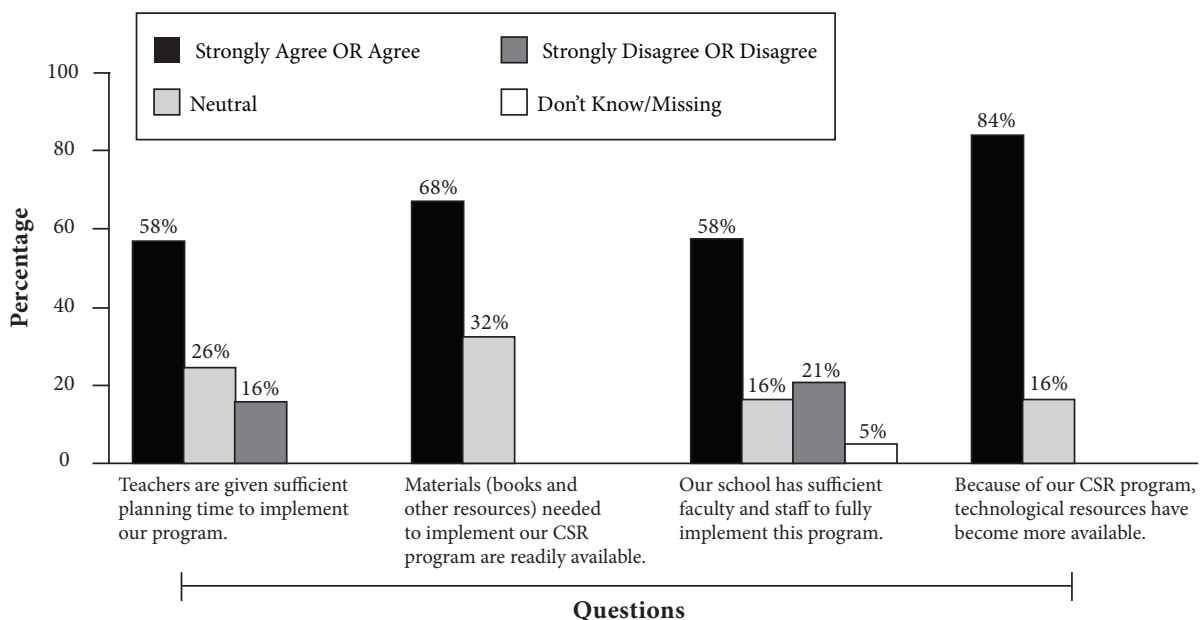
Overall for the Capacity construct, staff rated it to be a 3.80 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all four questions of the construct, 42% of staff rated school capacity as high, compared to none who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all four questions of the construct. (See Appendix B for scale description.)

### EXTERNAL SUPPORT

#### External Professional Development

Typically, a school using Co-nect as the reform model would receive extensive support from a Co-nect external Technical Assistance Provider. In the case of School 10, because of the disconnect between the administrations, Co-nect has yet to be involved with the campus. Training was projected for the 2006–07 school year. However, in school documents, the same

**Figure 11.1. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Capacity (N = 19)**



Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

person who wrote the grant and who also runs an education consultancy, was listed as the Technical Assistance Provider and was scheduled to provide some assistance in terms of grant management and evaluation. These

***Co-nect has yet to be involved with the campus.***

services, however, have been minimal, as indicated by the school's first progress report to TEA: "The fact that our school missed the July 15<sup>th</sup> deadline [for the report] indicates a lack of support services by our Technical Assistance Provider ... Our Technical Assistance Provider did notify me of our continuation application and did come and work with me on our budget for next year."

***Integrated District Assistance***

The district played a supervisory role in oversight of spending and approval of requested trainings. The principal indicated the district

had not yet met with him in regard to the CSR grant but was "very supportive" in general.

Faculty members at School 10 were asked about the level of support the school receives for its CSR efforts. Of the respondents, 79% agreed that the professional development related to CSR had been valuable and that they received adequate initial and ongoing professional development. Over half of respondents (58%) expressed that they had a thorough understanding of the school's CSR program. Another 58% agreed that they received effective assistance from external partners. Several of these summary responses should be interpreted cautiously considering that the school has not yet received any CSR Co-nect training. (See Table 11.5 for more information on the Support construct.)

The mean scale score for the Support construct was 3.88 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all five questions of the Support construct, 42% of staff rated support provided as high. Combining respondents who answered

**Table 11.5. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Support (N = 19)**

Support	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don't Know/ Missing
I have a thorough understanding of this school's CSR program.	58%	32%	5%	5%
I have received adequate initial and ongoing professional development/training for CSR program implementation.	79%	21%	0%	0%
Professional development provided by external trainers, model developers, and/or designers has been valuable.	79%	21%	0%	0%
Guidance and support provided by our school's external facilitator, support team, or other state-identified resource personnel have helped our school implement its program.	74%	21%	0%	5%
My school receives effective assistance from external partners (e.g., university, businesses, agencies).	58%	21%	5%	16%

Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

strongly disagree or disagree across all five questions of the construct, none rated support provided as low. (See Appendix B for scale description.)

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### *INTERNAL FOCUS*

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#### *Staff Buy-In and Support*

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The staff members have demonstrated “overwhelmingly good support” of what they define to be their CSR efforts: “The teachers see what they are getting, and they are happy with the program.” One teacher commented, “We are all for it. How can you not be [supportive]?”

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***“The teachers see what they are getting, and they are happy with the program.”***

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Another stated, “The grant has provided [us] with the opportunity to take AP training classes and bring those back to the students by offering AP classes to them. Teachers have been able to begin working on their master’s degree because the grant pays for the GRE test.” These comments suggest that teachers view the grant as a method of supporting their professional growth in terms of staff development, technology, and going back to school.

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#### *Alignment and Integration With Existing Programs*

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The campus operated several other programs aimed at increasing college awareness, preparedness, and enrollment, including GEAR UP, Project Puente (the CCLC grant program at School 10), and the Texas High School Completion and Success Initiative. Both in the original application and in practice, the CSR funds were dedicated to providing teachers with professional development aligned with “improving student achievement.” Generally, teachers were unable to define a specific

strategy for aligning the programs; rather, they understood that all the programs “promote college for kids.”

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#### *Monitoring*

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Progress monitoring occurred through the use of benchmark tests created by the school’s regional education service center. Students took benchmark tests every six weeks. The results of the tests were disaggregated and analyzed to determine areas of growth and need. In addition, according to the coordinator, she monitors the progress of the program by visiting with teachers to determine what they learned in the professional development sessions: “I look for positive results, measure [what we had at] the beginning and what is available now, and use it as a springboard to get better.” The principal stated that he monitors progress by visiting with teachers and obtaining input from them. Teachers were uninvolved in progress monitoring, but they receive information through meetings, conferences, and reports.

Staff members at School 10 were asked about the focus on CSR at the school. Almost 85% (84%) believed that teachers were generally supportive of the CSR program, and 74% felt that the CSR program helped the school meet improvement goals. Seventy-nine percent of staff agreed that they regularly reviewed implementation and outcome benchmarks to evaluate progress. Half the respondents (53%) stated having a plan for evaluating all components of the CSR program. However, only 37% of respondents were satisfied with the fiscal resources that were supporting CSR. It should be noted that more than 20% of respondents reported “Don’t Know” or skipped the items related to evaluation and coordination of resources. Therefore, comparisons with these items should be made with caution. Additionally, the high non-response rate indicates that staff may have limited knowledge

about how CSR efforts have impacted these areas. (See Figure 11.2 for more information on the Focus construct.)

The mean scale score for the Focus construct was 3.96 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all five questions of the construct, 37% of staff rated the level of CSR focus as high. Combining respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all five questions of the construct, none rated the level of focus as low.

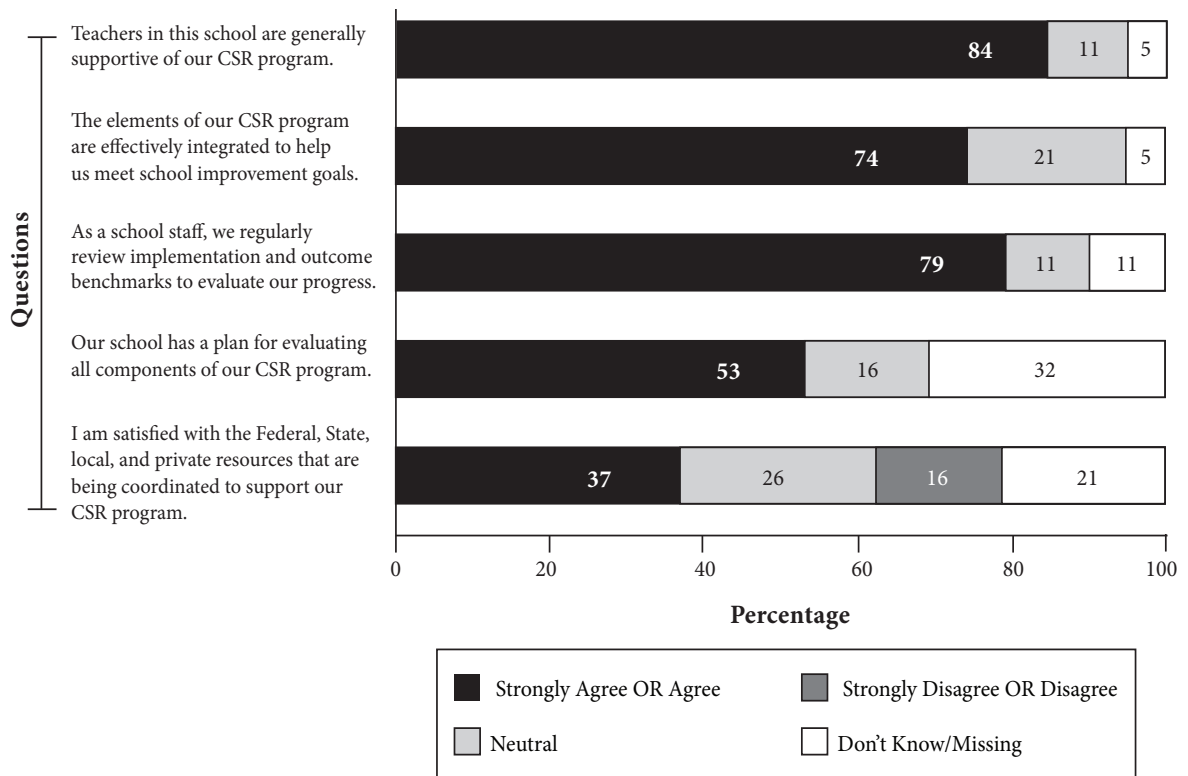
*PEDAGOGICAL CHANGE*

The pedagogical emphasis of Co-nect is project-based learning. Because the staff were unaware of the tenants of Co-nect and the focus on project-based learning, these strategies were not present in the classroom. All observed teachers used direct instruction, typically lecturing

to the students. Data indicated that student engagement and participation were minimal or at a low cognitive level, such as answering recall questions with yes/no responses. For example, one teacher asked, “How many representatives and senators are there?” Occasionally, teachers used higher-level questioning to engage students, such as “Why do we call it a Holocaust?” or “Please explain how and why you would use that word.”

Multiple staff members discussed an emphasis on technology use in the classroom through the Promethean boards: “The biggest [instructional] change [is] the Promethean board. It [has] changed the whole climate of the classroom.” One teacher was observed using a laptop and Promethean board to facilitate instruction. It was a history class covering the topic of why countries go to war. The teacher used a wireless device to highlight important

**Figure 11.2. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Focus (N = 19)**



Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.



**Table 11.6. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Pedagogy (N = 19)**

Pedagogy	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don't Know/ Missing
Because of our CSR program, I use textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets less than I used to for basic skills or content area instruction.	42%	32%	26%	0%
Our CSR program has changed classroom learning activities a great deal.	68%	26%	5%	0%
Students in my class spend at least two hours per school day in interdisciplinary or project-based work.	37%	32%	26%	5%
Students in my class spend much of their time working in cooperative learning teams.	42%	37%	21%	0%
Students are using technology more effectively because of our CSR program.	90%	5%	5%	0%

Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

text while moving around the classroom. Students then came up to the front of the classroom and used the interactive board to respond to questions.

Staff unanimously discussed how aligning the curriculum with the TEKS had positively impacted their instruction: “It has increased our ability to teach the standards, [it] allows us to go more into our TEKS and TAKS.” Observations reinforced this emphasis on the TEKS and TAKS in the classroom. In the majority of classrooms, teachers were working with students on different TAKS items, addressing questions the students might see on the test.

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***All observed teachers used direct instruction, typically lecturing to the students.***

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Staff members at School 10 were asked about pedagogical issues related to the school’s CSR efforts. Of the 19 respondents, 68% felt that the CSR program had changed classroom learning activities a great deal. Further, 42% thought

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***Staff unanimously discussed how aligning the curriculum with the TEKS had positively impacted their instruction.***

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that they used textbooks or worksheets less often, 37% used interdisciplinary or project-based learning two hours per day, and 42% allowed students to work more in cooperative learning teams. The majority (90%) thought that students used technology more effectively because of CSR. (See Table 11.6 for more information on the Pedagogy construct.)

The mean scale score for the Pedagogy construct was 3.52 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all five questions of the construct, 26% of staff rated pedagogical change as high. Combining respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all five questions of the construct, 5% rated pedagogical change as low. (See Appendix B for scale description.)

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### RESTRUCTURING OUTCOMES

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#### *Student Impacts*

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*Achievement.* Staff members at School 10 have not necessarily restructured their focus due to the CSR grant. Instead, they have aligned the CSR grant with their existing focus of preparing more students for college. Efforts towards aligning the curriculum with the TEKS, providing teachers with professional development, and bringing in new technology were viewed anecdotally as contributing to increased achievement and college enrollment; however, these same trends were already occurring prior to the CSR grant award. The coordinator described the new money as being used to build the infrastructure for improved teaching and learning: “The feeling is that a domino effect is taking place; if teachers are being impacted, trained, gaining more experience to improve their teaching methods, it impacts the students. The kids do better because the teachers are better.”

*Academic engagement.* Staff and parents noted that students were motivated. Much of the new enthusiasm was attributed to the new technology: “Students are motivated. They want to utilize the Promethean board and be part of the discussion. Classes have become very interactive.” Others noted that “there [have been] less behavior problems among the students [because] students are motivated and excited.”

*Future orientation.* Staff indicated that students were more aware of and interested in postsecondary options: “Students are applying for college at an earlier stage now.” Students were now beginning their planning as freshmen and sophomores, rather than waiting until the last year to start thinking about post-secondary plans. Parent comments supported the staff sentiments about early planning: “College is introduced to them at an early age now. As a consequence, a lot of seniors that graduate from here attend college.”

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#### *Staff Impacts*

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For School 10 staff, the CSR grant funding provided renewed excitement and enthusiasm for teaching: “Teachers are getting more excited about going back to school, about changing how they do things ... They are willing to go out and obtain the staff development.” The principal stated that the grant has impacted staff in many ways: “It has created an attitude of ‘I want to do it, too.’ They no longer sit and wait ... with this grant they have become eager to receive in-service. They want to be a part of it.” Teachers confirmed that the grant provided funding to allow them to attend trainings that were only talked about in the past. For example, one teacher discussed how he had wanted to attend a particular training for years but that there was never enough money until this year.

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#### *Parental Involvement*

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Both the school staff and the parents concurred that parental involvement with the CSR grant activities was minimal. Both also stated that little information about the grant was provided to parents: “Parents know the school is doing something, but they don’t know where it is coming from. They don’t know who organizes or coordinates the efforts.” The principal stated the school needed to do more to involve the parents and community. Staff confirmed that

**Table 11.7. CSR Teacher Questionnaire Responses About Outcomes (N = 19)**

Outcomes	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don't Know/ Missing
Student achievement has been positively impacted by CSR.	74%	16%	5%	5%
Students in this school are more enthusiastic about learning than they were before we became a CSR school.	53%	32%	5%	11%
Because of CSR, parents are more involved in the educational program of this school.	21%	58%	5%	16%
Community support for our school has increased since CSR has been implemented.	42%	37%	5%	16%
Students have higher standards for their own work because of our school's program.	47%	37%	5%	11%
Teachers are more involved in decision making at this school than they were before we implemented CSR.	47%	42%	5%	5%
Our program adequately addresses the requirements of students with special needs.	47%	42%	5%	5%
Because of our school's program, teachers in this school spend more time working together to develop curriculum and plan instruction.	37%	58%	5%	0%
Because of CSR, interactions between teachers and students are more positive.	79%	16%	0%	5%

*Note.* Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

more information should be provided to the community about what the project offered.

Staff members at School 10 were asked about issues related to the school's CSR outcomes. Nearly three quarters of respondents (74%) felt that student achievement had been positively impacted by CSR, and another 79% attributed more positive interactions between teachers and students to CSR. However, only 21% of respondents thought that parents were more involved because of CSR. (See Table 11.7 for more information on the Outcomes construct.)

The mean scale score for the Outcomes construct was 3.56 on a 5-point scale. Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all nine questions of the

construct, no staff saw strong evidence of CSR-related outcomes. Combining respondents who answered strongly disagree or disagree across all nine questions of the construct, none rated evidence of CSR-related outcomes as low. (See Appendix B for scale description.)

### III. IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

#### Key Points

The CSR model identified in School 10's grant application has not yet been implemented due to several factors:

- The application process was limited to the district and campus administrators and an external grant writer and did

not include school staff in a meaningful way.

- Those responsible for initiating the grant have left the school since initiating the application process.
- No communication about the grant occurred between the old and new administrations; hence, no grant-funded activities began until August 2005.
- Training and support by a Co-nect Technical Assistance Provider has yet to occur.

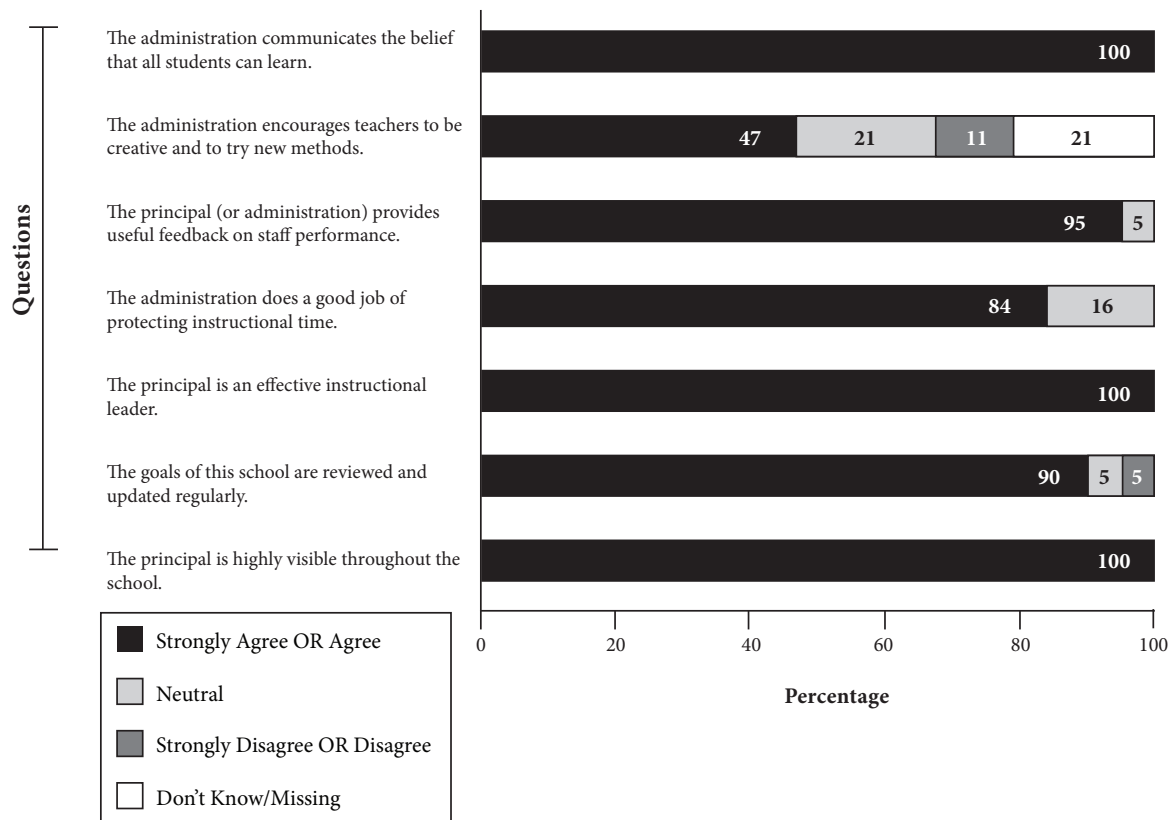
The school used CSR funding to supplement existing efforts to increase college awareness and preparedness mainly through providing teachers with self-identified professional development opportunities. The school very loosely followed the technology emphasis of

*The school used CSR funding to supplement existing efforts to increase college awareness and preparedness mainly through providing teachers with self-identified professional development opportunities.*

Co-nect by purchasing the four Promethean boards.

School 10 and the district had a change in leadership that interrupted original grant plans, thus model selection and adoption did not involve staff in a meaningful way, and the coordinator's position was not filled until August 2005. Regardless of these facts, staff viewed the grant as a source of excitement and motivation. Through grant funding, they were

**Figure 11.3. School Climate Inventory Responses About Leadership (N = 19)**



Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

**Table 11.8. School Climate Inventory Responses About Order (N = 19)**

Order	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	Don't Know/ Missing
Rules for student behavior are consistently enforced.	47%	26%	26%	0%
Student discipline is administered fairly and appropriately.	63%	11%	26%	0%
Student misbehavior in this school does not interfere with the teaching process.	42%	26%	32%	0%
Student tardiness or absence from school is not a major problem.	11%	26%	63%	0%
This school is a safe place in which to work.	95%	5%	0%	0%
Teachers, administrators, and parents assume joint responsibility for student discipline.	53%	16%	32%	0%
Student behavior is generally positive in this school.	84%	16%	0%	0%

Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

able to identify professional development they wanted to attend. Teachers appreciated having someone identify their needs and then provide them with responses to those needs. One teacher stated, “New things bring excitement for all, including teachers.”

**School Climate Inventory**

One way to tap success of CSR implementation indirectly is to measure school climate. The School Climate Inventory (SCI), which was administered as part of the staff survey, measures school climate across seven dimensions. (See Appendix B for scale description.) The overall mean SCI rating for School 10 was a 4.05 on a 5-point scale. Results from the SCI indicate an overall school climate that is higher than the national average for secondary schools, 3.73, and the highest for schools included in this report. The highest mean rating was given for the Leadership dimension of 4.36 (compared to national norm of 4.94), and the lowest mean rating was obtained for the Order construct

of 3.45 (compared to national norm of 3.26). (See Figure 11.3 and Table 11.8 for more information on SCI data.)

Professional staff consistently and strongly agreed that the administration demonstrated strong leadership, as noted in their responses to individual items. All of the respondents agreed that the administration communicates the belief that all students can learn, that the principal is an effective instructional leader, and that the principal is highly visible. Note the high percentage of “Don’t Know” or missing responses for the item referring to the administration encouraging creativity. With over 20% of the responses recorded in this category, comparisons should be made with caution. (See Figure 11.3 for more information on the Leadership dimension.)

Considering individual items in the Order dimension suggests that tardiness or absence is perceived to be a problem at the school. Specifically, only 11% of professional staff felt

that tardiness or absence was not a problem. However, 84% felt that student behavior was generally positive. (See Table 11.8 for more information on the Order dimension.)

### **Assessment of Implementation Level**

Measuring implementation of the Co-nect strategies at School 10 with an instrument designed to assess the strength of overall CSR implementation based on the 11 CSR components produced a score of 18 out of a possible 51 points. School 10 received the most credit in areas 3–Professional Development and 6–Support for Teachers and Principals. The school received low or no points in areas 1–Research-Based Method or Strategy, 8–External Technical Support and Assistance, and 11–Strategies That Improve Academic Achievement.

While a Technical Assistance Provider survey was completed for this school, it was not completed by a Co-nect Technical Assistance Provider but rather by the grant writer who had not provided professional development nor had contact with the school during the grant period; therefore, Technical Assistance Provider survey results were not included.

### **Facilitators**

The teachers stated that the Promethean boards facilitated and increased their motivation. Staff also found the support for professional development as an effective method for increasing their willingness and enthusiasm. They stated this support created an excitement about returning to college and receiving the needed professional development to improve their instructional techniques in the classroom. Referring to the surveys, staff stated that the three main facilitators for implementing the CSR program were support from school administration, buy-in from the teachers, and professional development.

### **Barriers**

Barriers to implementing the Co-nect program, according to model intentions, included the following:

- Discontinuity in administrations at both the district and school level
- Approaching the CSR grant as a way to supplement existing efforts
- Not involving staff in model selection and adoption
- Delaying model training for 18 months
- Supporting professional development activities that were not embedded or ongoing
- Not finding funding to sustain future Co-nect activities beyond the grant







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## CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

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### INTRODUCTION

THE TOPIC OF SCHOOL REFORM HAS attracted considerable attention and funding from a range of stakeholders including the federal government, state governments, philanthropists, local schools, and the general public (Quint, 2006), yet the process for implementing successful reform largely remains a mystery. The purpose of this section of the evaluation is to provide a cross-case analysis of Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) implementation in 10 school sites in Texas during the second year of three-year CSR grants awarded by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). TEA operates two CSR programs, the Improving Teaching and Learning/CSR (ITL/CSR) Grant and the CSR—Texas High School Initiative (CSR—THSI). Both programs adhere to the federal requirement of implementing all 11 components of the CSR program. (See Chapter 1 for discussion of the 11 components.) The programs emphasize school-wide improvements through curricular change, sustained professional development, and increased involvement of parents. Both programs also promote school-wide reform aimed at coherently integrating the 11 CSR

components at high school campuses to enable all students to meet challenging academic standards.

In 2004, Texas received \$11,818,764 in CSR-designated federal dollars that were distributed to 85 schools with an average award of \$139,044. The state distributed an additional \$11,965,695 in 2005 to 83 other schools, averaging \$144,165 per award (CSR database, operated by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory). A total of 170 schools are currently participating in either ITL (Cycle 3) or THSI. Approximately half of the participants are Cycle 3 ITL elementary and secondary schools, which started the second year of three years of funded activities in the 2005–06 school year. Initial awards were made in August 2004. The second group of schools is part of the THSI program and completed the first year of funded activities in December 2006. These initial awards were made in January 2005.

The evaluation was guided by the following research objectives:

- Define where schools started and schools' capacities to implement reform in terms of materials, staff, planning time, and resources
- Measure the external support provided by an external Technical Assistance Provider or the school district

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*...the process for implementing successful reform largely remains a mystery.*

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- Measure internal focus defined as teacher buy-in, integration of model strategies with existing programs, and progress monitoring
- Assess pedagogical change, including how closely instructional strategies align with model specifications and how widely these changes in teaching are being made
- Assess the extent to which schools restructured outcomes to consider intermediate outcomes for students (such as positive affective impacts) and the broader school community, including teachers, staff, and parents
- Assess the level of implementation at this interim stage of the grant program and implementation fidelity

Through these objectives, the evaluation can provide an interim assessment of promising practices, barriers and catalysts to successful implementation, changes in school climate, and the sustainability of reform efforts.

**Methods**

Case studies were developed for 10 of the 170 grantee schools. The case study sites were randomly selected to be reflective

of participating schools in terms of grant type, school size, location, CSR model, and implementation level. Two-member evaluation teams conducted two-day site visits to each site during spring 2006. Instruments used for the evaluation and development of case studies included the following:

- Principal interview
- CSR Coordinator interview
- Teacher interviews
- Teacher focus group
- Parent focus group
- Student focus group
- School Observation Measure (SOM) (CREP, 1998)
- Document review
- Technical Assistance Provider survey
- A survey of all professional staff administered to all 170 grantee schools as part of the full evaluation<sup>1</sup>

Evaluators then used site visit information to assess the strength of CSR implementation with an overall strength of implementation scale (U.S. Department of Education, 2003b). (See Appendix A for protocol.) The scale taps all 11

<i>Component</i>	<i>Measure</i>		<i>Score</i>
<b>3. Professional Development:</b>			
3.1 Strong content focus	<u>yes</u>	no	1
3.2 Evidence of collective participation of groups of teachers from the same school	<u>yes</u>	no	1
3.3 Evidence of some PD taking place in the teacher's classroom, e.g., mentoring	yes	<u>no</u>	0
3.4 Explicit guidance to align PD with standards, curriculum, or assessment tools	<u>yes</u>	no	1

Source. U.S. Department of Education, 2003b

<sup>1</sup> The survey combined the Comprehensive School Reform Teacher Questionnaire (CSRTQ) (Ross & Alberg, 1999) and the School Climate Inventory (SCI) (Butler & Alberg, 1989). Survey responses on the CSRTQ from the Low-Level Implementation group tended to be similar or higher than responses from the other two groups. This pattern may be a result of how staff at low-implementing schools may agree with items as a consequence of lacking a thorough understanding of CSR.

CSR components by breaking each component into sections that focus on measurable standards. For example, the professional development component is broken into four sections: strong content focus; evidence of collective participation of groups of teachers; evidence of some training taking place in teacher's classroom; and explicit guidance to align training with standards, curriculum, or assessment tools. Where appropriate, each of these sections is then marked yes or no and given one point for "yes" and zero points for "no." So if a school provides CSR-related professional development with a strong content focus, it would receive a score of "1" for item 3.1. An excerpt from the scale is shown.

Summing the scores across the components produced an overall implementation score for each school that correspond with one of five CSR implementation levels (Bodilly, 1998):

- 1) **Not Implementing.** No evidence of the strategy.
- 2) **Planning.** The school is planning to or preparing to implement.
- 3) **Piloting.** The strategy is being partially implemented with only a small group of teachers or students involved.
- 4) **Implementing.** The majority of teachers are implementing the strategy, and the strategy is more fully developed in accordance with descriptions by the team.
- 5) **Fulfilling.** The strategy is evident across the school and is fully developed in accordance with the design team's descriptions and signs of "institutionalization" are evident.

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*...at the time of data collection, no school was in the "Fulfilling" stage of implementation.*

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Data collected through site visits to the 10 campuses were organized into case studies and member-checked by schools. The 10 schools were then categorized into three implementation-level groups through analysis of site-visit data, survey data,<sup>2</sup> and the overall implementation scale.

The three implementation levels used to categorize schools in this report include the following:

- High-Level Implementation category schools in the "Implementing" phase
- Middle-Level Implementation category schools in the "Piloting" stage
- Low-Level Implementation category schools in the "Planning" stage and the "Not Implementing" stage

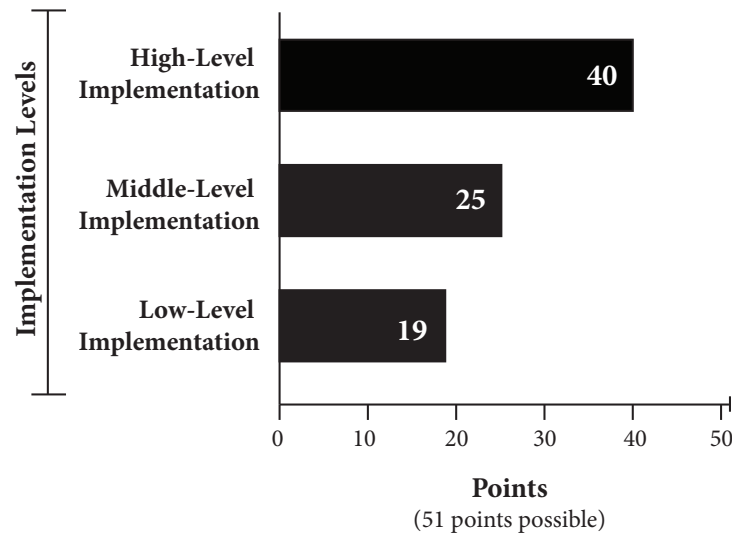
Again, at the time of data collection, no school was in the "Fulfilling" stage of implementation.

For the three schools identified for inclusion in the High-Level Implementation category, the overall implementation score on the strength of implementation scale averaged 40 points out of a possible 51. The four schools in the Middle-Level Implementation category had a mean of 25 points out of 51, while the three Low-Level Implementation schools averaged 19 out of 51 possible points. It should be noted that due to incomplete data collection during the site visit to School 8, an implementation score was not developed for this school. (See Figure 12.1 for mean scores by group.)

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<sup>2</sup>The survey data for one school (School 10) were not included in the calculation of any low-level implementation averages aligned with the evaluation questions because the staff had yet to be trained on model strategies and demonstrated a severely limited understanding of the 11 CSR components. However, their responses to the survey were the highest of any schools, which conflicted with data collected during the site visit. Together, this information indicated that School 10 was an outlier.

Figure 12.1. Mean Overall Implementation by Group



The High-Level Implementation schools demonstrated evidence through all data collected of being in the “Implementing” phase. The majority of teachers at these schools was aware of, supported, and followed the specifications of the model. However, these schools were still developing and were not yet at the level of “full implementation” or “institutionalization.” The Middle-Level Implementation group was defined as those schools in the “Piloting” stage wherein the model is being partially implemented, sometimes with only a small group of teachers or students involved. The Low-Level Implementation group includes those schools that are still in the “Planning” phase of CSR implementation or that demonstrated little evidence of implementing a CSR model. Three schools were labeled as high level, four as middle level, and three were categorized as demonstrating a low level of implementation.

**Organization  
of Cross-Case Analysis**

For discussion in the report and to retain anonymity, schools were grouped by implementation level, alphabetized, and

numbered. Number order does not reflect implementation level only implementation groups. Brief descriptions of each school are included in this analysis. (Detailed descriptions are provided in each case study chapter.) Preliminary findings across schools are then discussed in terms of the research framework—local context, model adoption and implementation, and the factors influencing CSR implementation (capacity, external support, internal focus, change in pedagogy, and restructuring outcomes). Throughout the discussion, schools are referred to by number and the CSR model chosen. This discussion is followed by concluding observations that define specific barriers and facilitators encountered across schools and recommendations.

**School Descriptions**

*SCHOOLS WITH HIGH-LEVEL  
IMPLEMENTATION*

School 1 is a large middle school campus serving over 1,000 students in grades 6–8. The school is located near the Texas/Mexico border. Almost all of the school’s students (98%) are Hispanic, and 87% are economically

disadvantaged. This school is part of the ITL grant program and was awarded funds in August 2004. The school chose AVID as its CSR model. AVID is a targeted model that is not aligned with all 11 CSR components.

School 2 is located in a large urban district and serves about 500 students in grades pre-K–5. Almost all students (91%) are Hispanic, and 97% are economically disadvantaged. Fifty-three percent are English language learners. The school is part of the ITL grant program and was awarded funds in August 2004. Through an earlier federal grant in 2000, the school adopted the Co-nect model and used the CSR grant to continue it.

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***Schools classified in High-Level Implementation category were elementary schools or middle schools.***

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School 3 is a three-year-old elementary campus located in central Texas and serves over 800 students in grades K–5. About two thirds of the students are Hispanic (67%), and 27% are White. Over half (54%) are economically disadvantaged, and 30% are English language learners. The school offers a dual-language immersion program and has become a cluster site for many bilingual children in the area. The school is part of the ITL grant program and was awarded funds in August 2004. This school chose to implement a model that did not meet all 11 CSR components. The model, Accelerated Learning, focuses on brain-based learning research and language-learning techniques.

***SCHOOLS WITH MIDDLE-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION***

School 4 is the only charter school in the case study group. It is located in a major metropolitan area in central Texas and targets at-risk youth. Student enrollment in grades

9–12 is approximately 275. Forty-six percent of students are African American, 43% are Hispanic, and 9% are White. Seventy-two percent are economically disadvantaged. Student mobility is extremely high at 78%. Teacher turnover is also a challenge. The school is part of the ITL grant and was awarded grant funds in August 2004. The school adopted Accelerated Schools as its CSR model.

School 5 is a large middle school located in a large urban district, serving approximately 1,200 students in grades 7–8. Of those students, 71% are Hispanic, 27% are African American, and 90% are economically disadvantaged. The school is part of the ITL grant program and was awarded grant funds in August 2004. The school adopted AVID as its school reform model. Again, this is a targeted program that does not meet all 11 CSR components.

School 6 is a large high school in a large urban district. It serves about 2,000 students in grades 9–12. Sixty-two percent are African American, and 37% are Hispanic. Eighty-two percent are economically disadvantaged. The school is part of the THSI grant program and was awarded grant funds in January 2005. The school chose the Princeton Review program as its school reform model. This program was not designed to be a CSR model and is not aligned with all 11 components.

School 7 is a large high school in a large urban district. It serves about 1,300 students in grades 9–12. Sixty-seven percent are Hispanic, 18% are African American, and 13% are White. Sixty-six percent are economically disadvantaged. The school is part of the THSI grant program and was awarded grant funds in January 2005. The school adopted the International Center for Leadership in Education's (ICLE) Rigor and Relevance Framework as its primary CSR model. AVID was the secondary model, and Cooperative Discipline was the tertiary model.

*SCHOOLS WITH LOW-LEVEL  
IMPLEMENTATION*

School 8 is located in a large urban district and serves approximately 1,800 students, over 95% of whom are Hispanic. Ninety-four percent of the students are economically disadvantaged. The school is part of the THSI grant program and was awarded grant funds in January 2005. The school adopted High Schools That Work (HSTW) as its CSR model.

School 9 is a high school serving approximately 500 students in a small community in central Texas. A little over half (52%) of the student population is Hispanic, and 39% are White. About half (54%) of the student population is economically disadvantaged. The school is part of the THSI grant program and was awarded grant funds in January 2005. The school adopted Accelerated Schools as its CSR model.

School 10 is a small high school located near the Mexican border in a coastal community. The school serves students in grades 9–12 with an approximate enrollment of 650 students. The majority of students are Hispanic (84%). Almost 85% of the students are classified as economically disadvantaged. The school is part of the THSI grant and was awarded grant funds in January 2005. The school adopted Co-nect as its CSR model.

It should be noted that schools classified in High-Level Implementation category were elementary schools or middle schools. In each case, the schools made an intentional effort to maximize current contexts and foster opportunistic attitudes. Schools in the Middle-Level Implementation category ranged from a small charter high school to a large urban high school. These schools balanced CSR implementation with various challenges. All schools rated in the Low-Level Implementation category were high school campuses that faced challenging issues such as administrative turnover or safety concerns.

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*...it may take as many as five years for  
CSR to impact student outcomes (U.S.  
Department of Education, 2004)*

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**PRELIMINARY FINDINGS**

Research examining the impact of CSR on student achievement does not conclusively identify the components that explain the effectiveness of CSR (Borman, Hewes, Overman, & Brown, 2003). The link between CSR and student achievement may be more affected by local implementation processes than by specific model choices or by which components a model does or does not include. Additionally, it may take as many as five years for CSR to impact student outcomes (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Therefore, evaluations of CSR efforts need to include intermediate points. Key factors to consider regarding the evaluation of CSR implementation are local context, model selection and adoption processes, school capacity, external support, internal focus, pedagogical change, and restructuring outcomes. Review of these factors will help identify the barriers and facilitators at schools implementing CSR.

The discussion that follows describes how high-, medium-, and low-implementing schools addressed each of these factors. Specific discussion of relevant data at the three schools in the High-Level Implementation category is provided. For the schools in the Middle- and Low-Implementation categories, summary discussions of findings are provided and supported with examples from individual sites.

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*Knowing the context and starting  
points for reform efforts was critical  
to understanding the implementation  
process across schools.*

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### **Local Context**

Comprehensive school reform is a complex endeavor, subject to the influence of multiple factors. Implementation issues that contribute to differences in the effectiveness of CSR may involve specific obstacles faced by individual sites, such as turnover in leadership or minimal staff buy-in, as well as the stage and length of implementation. Knowing the context and starting points for reform efforts was critical to understanding the implementation process across schools.

#### *SCHOOLS WITH HIGH-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION*

The schools grouped into this category benefited from unique elements of local context that allowed them to maximize the CSR grant opportunity. For example, School 1 (AVID) is the best example of a campus with a history of low expectations and low performance that is using the grant as an opportunity to focus on preparing more students for college readiness. School 1 did benefit, however, from an historical commitment to AVID at the district level and well-developed support from the district administration. School 2 had already been implementing a comprehensive model—Co-nect—since September 2000.

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***School 1 (AVID) is the best example of a campus with a history of low expectations and low performance that is using the grant as an opportunity to focus on preparing more students for college readiness.***

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The CSR grant was then used to continue and strengthen existing plans. School 3 (Accelerated Learning) was a new school that used the CSR opportunity to focus the school's academic philosophy and approach. Specifically, the school wanted to provide a common language

and skill set to be used by all teachers across the campus. Because many staff members were relatively new to the profession, they benefited from the opportunity provided by CSR to experience the extensive training needed to work effectively with the large number of high-need students on the campus.

#### *SCHOOLS WITH MIDDLE-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION*

Across the middle group of schools, starting points varied. Schools 4 (Accelerated Schools), 5 (AVID), and 6 (Princeton Review) shared a common challenge of high turnover and mobility of staff and students. Irregularity occurred either because of administrator or teacher turnover and/or fluctuating student enrollment caused by consolidating schools or large numbers of transfer students. In some cases, such as at Schools 6 and 7 (ICLE), campuses were overcoming a history of low performance and discipline problems that were staples of the school culture. In School 5 (AVID), more immediate concerns such as safety took precedence over academics.

#### *SCHOOLS WITH LOW-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION*

These schools, which were either stalled in implementing CSR or still in the planning phase, shared many of the same concerns as the schools in the middle-level implementation category. However, challenges at these schools typically were exacerbated by compounding negative events or more severe individual circumstances, as well as a culture of accepting these situations as the norm. For example, safety was a concern in School 8 (HSTW). This campus was challenged by security concerns and frequent disruptions from outside intrusions related to gang activity. School 10 (Co-nect) stalled on its implementation due to a complete change in administration at both the campus and district levels that resulted in a lack of continuity of vision and goals for the school.

### ***Model Adoption and Implementation***

This section will provide a summary of how schools across the implementation levels approached model selection, adoption, and implementation efforts, including the role of the district, the school leadership, and the staff. Research indicates the ideal adoption process of a CSR model begins with staff assessment of the current needs of the school and research to determine the model that best meets those needs. The staff then expresses support for model adoption through a vote and develops plans for implementing the required CSR components.

#### *SELECTION AND ADOPTION PROCESSES*

A common finding across all implementation levels was limited staff involvement in model selection and adoption. However, the grant application process and requirements may have limited the extent to which this inclusive approach was possible. First, the ITL and THSI grant programs were invitational grants, meaning TEA selected eligible schools to apply. Additionally, the TEA requirement that Local Education Agencies (LEA) apply (instead of a campus-based application process) may have meant that, in some cases, the district

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***A common finding across all  
implementation levels was limited  
staff involvement in model  
selection and adoption.***

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applied for the grant with little participation from the campus. As part of the grant application process, applicants were required to identify chosen models as well as to provide relatively detailed plans for implementation. The timeframe involved in selection and development of plans may have precluded

the possibility of initiating an ideal selection and adoption process with all staff. Because the Request for Applications (RFA) required signatures from a school's site-based decision-making committee these individuals were, in most cases, the only staff involved in making the decision. Finally, there was little guidance in the RFA concerning model selection. Applications with a variety of models with little CSR alignment or proven success impacting student achievement were approved.

The application process, then, presented an obstacle to implementation in that the staff's introduction to the broader topic of comprehensive school reform as well as to potential CSR models was limited. In most cases, the staff's support for the program had to be garnered after the grant was received, causing a delay in implementation.

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***It should be noted that only one school  
with high-level implementation chose a  
model designed to be aligned with the  
11 CSR components.***

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#### *SCHOOLS WITH HIGH-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION*

School 1 created a site team to research and visit similar schools implementing AVID. After the visits, the team was impressed and returned to "sell the rest of the faculty and staff on [AVID] as our model for school reform to address [the needs of] the underserved students" (Grant Application, p. 17c). The school has already begun a campus-wide expansion process of the model. School 2 used CSR as a continuation of an ongoing program, Co-nect. Though the site-based decision-making committee led the model-adoption process in 2000, the faculty did vote. At School 3, the principal dictated the model choice, Accelerated Learning, because it involved all staff in the creation of a learning

environment at a brand new school and because the program created a school climate that promoted the development of teacher leaders. It should be noted that only one school with high-level implementation chose a model designed to be aligned with the 11 CSR components.

### *SCHOOLS WITH MIDDLE-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION*

Only one of the middle-level group, School 4, chose a model well aligned with the 11 CSR components, Accelerated Schools. The principal chose the model after visiting another school implementing the model and learning that the model helps staff take responsibility for what happens at the school. The Accelerated Schools model involves a realistic assessment of where the school is and involves all staff from janitors to principals. However, a component of the model is that the staff vote to adopt the program and that 90% approval is obtained. No staff vote occurred. Schools 5 and 6 chose to implement models that were not designed to be used school wide and would require significant additional support to expand. These models were AVID and the Princeton Review. In both cases, while there is evidence of plans for limited expansion of the programs, no effort to implement the program throughout the school was evidenced. School 7 chose a model (ICLE) that provided a framework for approaching school change and then supplemented it with secondary and tertiary models. This school was part of a larger district-wide effort to bring the same programs into multiple schools across the district. Therefore, a local staff vote did not occur.

### *SCHOOLS WITH LOW-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION*

Interestingly, all three of the low implementing schools chose models aligned with all CSR components—HSTW, Accelerated Schools, and Co-nect. The HSTW model was chosen by School 8's faculty to bridge the school's

vocational and academic programs. At School 9, the district grant coordinator chose Accelerated Schools after visiting a neighboring district that was implementing the program. School 10's principal and a district administrator worked with an external consultant to write the grant. Staff provided little input.

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***The differences in the impact of selection processes on CSR implementation appear to have had more to do with the influence of other factors that encouraged staff ownership and buy-in of reforms than on how and which model was chosen.***

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Although all these schools selected models aligned with CSR components, mitigating factors have hindered implementation efforts. In two of the schools (School 8 and School 10), staff had limited knowledge or a misunderstanding of the CSR program, impeding implementation. In School 9, there was a failure to develop and communicate a school-wide vision that includes CSR.

The differences in the impact of selection processes on CSR implementation appear to have had more to do with the influence of other factors that encouraged staff ownership and buy-in of reforms than on how and which model was chosen. For instance, while many model selection decisions across implementation levels were made at the district level, factors such as a district program advocate or a strong principal advocate at higher-implementing schools allowed the model adoption and buy-in processes to progress. At the middle and low levels where ongoing district support was generally low, the schools took longer to embrace reforms that were perceived possibly as "mandated." Across the low-level implementation group, staff members were consistently neglected in the

model selection and adoption phase. It is also of note that across all three higher-implementing campuses, only one selected a model specifically designed to align with the 11 CSR components. Additionally, across the lower-implementing schools, all three schools chose models that were specifically aligned with the 11 CSR components. This contrast underscores the finding of Borman et al. (2003) that local context may be more important than the model selected.

**Capacity**

School capacity refers to the infrastructure needed by schools to implement and maintain a restructuring effort. Infrastructure implies access to appropriate materials; sufficient staffing and planning time; and adequate fiscal resources to support staff, materials, and technical assistance (Datnow & Stringfield, 2000).

*SCHOOLS WITH HIGH-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION*

As School 1 implemented AVID, funds were used to support a coordinator’s position and to hire tutors. Acquiring the necessary AVID materials was another step towards building the capacity of the school to support reform efforts. For example, as the staff has found the AVID student binders to be especially useful, additional copies of these student materials have been purchased to cover the planned expansion of the program. At School 2 (Co-nect), the infrastructure was already in place for CSR

**Table 12.1. Mean Capacity by Group**

CAPACITY	
High-Level Implementation	3.57
Middle-Level Implementation	3.28
Low-Level Implementation	3.30

due to the model’s longtime implementation at the campus; however, the school used the CSR funding to increase the number of grade-specific projects that teachers developed and taught by providing targeted professional development and dedicated planning time to achieve this goal. Project development required a large amount of planning and collaboration. The money also funded the grant coordinator’s position. Because of the reduction in the grant amount each year, the coordinator’s position was reduced to part time and less money was available to support staff development of projects. School 3 (Accelerated Learning) used the grant to underwrite significant capacity building through purchasing materials to support academic goals specific to ESL, mathematics, and reading instruction and to support the goal of increased parent involvement in academics.

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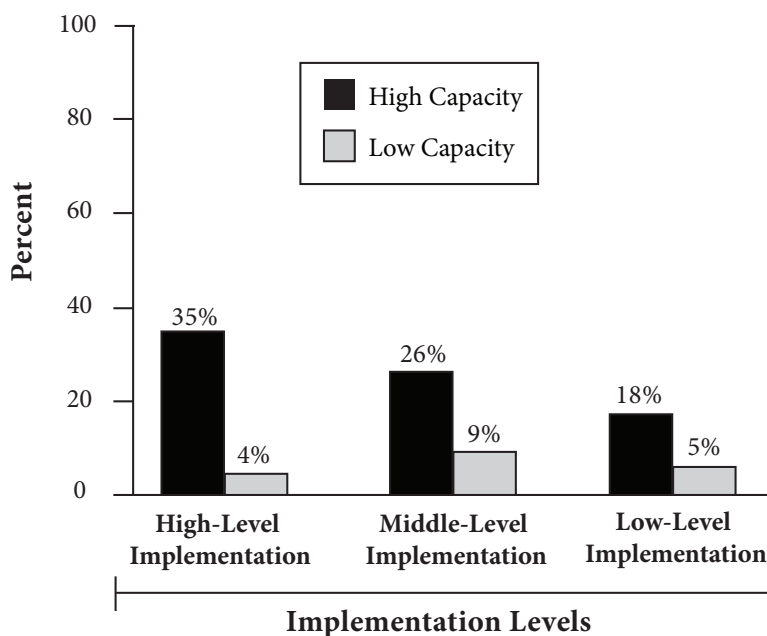
***Schools in the middle level tended to use more of the grant funding for personnel and supply-related expenses that did not necessarily contribute to increasing school capacity to support CSR efforts.***

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*SCHOOLS WITH MIDDLE-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION*

Schools in the middle level tended to use more of the grant funding for personnel and supply-related expenses that did not necessarily contribute to increasing school capacity to support CSR efforts. For example, School 4 (Accelerated Schools) purchased consumable supplies and materials not directly related to CSR. School 5 (AVID) made large technology purchases without identifying and implementing related staff training in the integration of the technologies into instruction. Through CSR, School 6 (Princeton Review) sent a limited number of staff to expensive trainings

Figure 12.2. Percent High and Low Capacity by Group



that were not replicable and purchased a limited number of expensive materials. At School 7 (ICLE), CSR funds were used to support two additional teachers to staff the Ninth-Grade Initiative academies, an internal evaluator, and a project specialist.

#### *SCHOOLS WITH LOW-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION*

Like middle-level schools, low-level schools also used CSR grant funding for seemingly extraneous purposes. School 8 (HSTW) purchased books but could not define how they were related to CSR efforts. School 9 (Accelerated Schools) spent a significant amount of money on external technical assistance as well as equipment and supplies for the science department. School 10 used funding to motivate teachers to get advanced degrees by paying for the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE). It also purchased four interactive boards for delivering instruction.

Considering survey results, high-implementation schools averaged a 3.57 on a 5-point scale for this construct compared to schools with middle-level implementation (which scored an average of 3.28) and schools with lower implementation (which rated this construct an average of 3.30). The range across schools went from a high of 3.78 to a low of 2.63. (See Table 12.1 for the mean scores on the Capacity construct.)

Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all four questions of the Capacity construct, 35% of the staff from high-level implementation schools rated it as high, compared to 26% of staff at middle-level implementation schools and 18% of staff at schools with a low level of implementation. (See Figure 12.2 for percent high and low on the Capacity construct.) These results indicate that, on average, almost twice as many staff members at schools with exceptional levels of



implementation considered their capacity to be high as compared to schools with lower levels of implementation.

The use of grant funds to support capacity building in the broadest sense occurred in schools with high levels of implementation where capacity was viewed as building infrastructure rather than as a consumable or transient resource. Schools in the high-

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***Schools in the high-implementing group used a minimal amount of grant money to fund positions; instead, these schools invested in staff-wide professional development that could be replicated internally or purchased materials that could be used school wide.***

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implementing group used a minimal amount of grant money to fund positions; instead, these schools invested in staff-wide professional development that could be replicated internally or purchased materials that could be used school wide. Schools in the other two categories tended to make capacity decisions either in a fragmented way by purchasing materials and supporting personnel that were not directly related to CSR efforts or in a narrow way by only providing a limited number of staff and students with expensive support.

### ***External Support***

External support indicates the quality and amount of assistance provided by actors outside of the school, including support provided through design-based assistance organizations (DBAO) as well as support provided by the district. Research on DBAO support focuses mainly on the importance of professional development for helping teachers understand and implement the instructional practices promoted by reform models (Bodilly, 2001). Additionally, recent research suggests that

integrating district support in reform efforts is imperative to successful implementation and sustainability of a CSR model at the school level (Borman, Carter, Aladjem, & LeFloch, 2004).

### ***SCHOOLS WITH HIGH-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION***

Each school with a high level of implementation either received strong support from the external technical assistance provider associated with the CSR model or strong district support in the cases where reform efforts were linked to a larger district plan.

School 1, the school implementing AVID, had received limited direct technical assistance but benefited from strong local redelivery of AVID training and district-provided professional development related to the program. The school created a site team that attended AVID trainings and was responsible for redelivering it campus wide and for supporting teachers implementing the AVID strategies in their classrooms. Additionally, the district provided extensive support for training, release time to attend other related trainings, funding to bring in speakers, and strong philosophical support of the program.

At School 2, which implemented Co-nect, the technical assistance provider was a former

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***The staff viewed this intensive and ongoing support as invaluable.***

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teacher at the school who worked intensively once a week with school staff. Teachers had a scheduled planning period every Friday afternoon to conduct data analysis, curriculum mapping, and planning for specific projects with the support of the technical assistance provider. The staff viewed this intensive and ongoing support as invaluable.

School 3 chose Accelerated Learning as its CSR model. No one organization provides



implementation support for Accelerated Learning (unlike some other more traditional CSR models). However, because the district provided supplemental support, the school's staff received ongoing professional development that was aligned with Accelerated Learning's goals. The school and district were implementing many of the components of the Accelerated Learning model, which provided additional resources at the campus, excellent training for the staff, additional support staff, and a district assessment coordinator to assist in data disaggregation.

### *SCHOOLS WITH MIDDLE-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION*

Across the middle group of schools, external assistance from a technical assistance provider varied. In School 4 (Accelerated Schools), the technical assistance provider provided an average of 500 hours of support annually. In another case, the technical assistance provider provided support through weekly planning sessions. In another school in this group, no support was available from a technical assistance provider. District support varied across the sites as well. In School 7 (ICLE), the CSR project was part of a larger well-coordinated district effort to promote the same programs across several campuses. Schools 5 (AVID) and 6 (Princeton Review) reported minimal district support, consisting primarily of formal assistance in meeting grant requirements, such as approving budget items. These schools also implemented models that are not designed to be implemented school wide. In the case of AVID, the school received no assistance from an outside technical assistance provider and very little district assistance. Therefore, program implementation was at the piloting phase with AVID strategies being delivered through an AVID class taught by one teacher to 30 students with few explicit or formal plans for expansion. The school implementing the Princeton Review also delivered services to a limited number of

students and had trained only 14 staff members. The school does have plans to train 30 teachers over the next two years, and those participating directly in the program do receive intensive training and support; however, it is expensive and thereby limits the number who can participate.

### *SCHOOLS WITH LOW-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION*

Schools in the low-implementation group were caught in unique situations that seemed to stall their progress with training. For example, Schools 8 (HSTW) and 10 (Co-nect) received funding very late, therefore causing a delay contracting with an external technical assistance provider. In School 8 (HSTW), training occurred but was limited, and the technical assistance provider indicated in the Mid-Project Report to TEA that not all teachers were participating. It is unclear if this is a local decision to target some but not all teachers for participation or if it is a financial constraint. In School 10 (Co-nect), training had yet to occur due to late funding and a change in administration. School 9, which implemented Accelerated Schools, actually received consistent and ongoing professional development from its technical assistance provider. The technical assistance provider reported providing over 1,000 hours of training during the two years of the grant; however, staff reported making little progress with reform

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***Schools in the low-implementation group were caught in unique situations that seemed to stall their progress with training.***

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efforts other than increasing awareness of the school's current status and areas that might need attention.

**Table 12.2. Mean Support by Group**

SUPPORT	
High-Level Implementation	3.83
Middle-Level Implementation	3.58
Low-Level Implementation	3.63

Survey results show schools with high levels of implementation averaged a 3.83 on a 5-point scale for the Support construct. Schools with middle-level implementation had an average score of 3.58, while schools with low levels of implementation rated this construct an average of 3.63. (See Table 12.2 for the mean scores on the Support construct.) The range across schools went from a high of 4.00 to a low of 3.40 indicating that, in terms of receiving adequate initial and ongoing support and thinking the support was of value, respondents reacted similarly despite the implementation status of their school.

Combining respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all five questions of the Support construct, 49% of staff members at schools with high levels of implementation rated capacity as high, compared to 25% of staff at schools with middle levels of implementation and 30% of staff at campuses with low implementation levels. (See Table 12.3 for percent high and low on the Support construct.) These results indicate that almost half of the survey respondents from schools with high levels of implementation felt strongly that they had received adequate training and

support from external providers and/or their district. Additionally, very few respondents across the implementation categories consistently rated this construct as low.

Across the implementation levels, the amount and intensity of externally provided training and technical assistance was less important than the degree to which the school was able to focus staff on a common intention. The schools with high levels of implementation had either solid district or technical assistance provider support. While this support alone is not

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***Across the implementation levels, the amount and intensity of externally provided training and technical assistance was less important than the degree to which the school was able to focus staff on a common intention.***

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enough (as demonstrated by schools in middle and low categories that received significant amounts of help), it does seem to benefit the schools where staff are prepared and focused on using the training as a vehicle for moving forward with reform efforts. Resources mean little if staff members do not buy into using them. Schools receiving the most assistance from technical assistance providers were not consistently the schools with the highest levels of implementation. Of note, strong district support was found across a variety of district types, including large urban districts serving over 80,000 students.

**Table 12.3. Percent High and Low Support by Group**

	SUPPORT	
	High Support	Low Support
High-Level Implementation	49%	1%
Middle-Level Implementation	25%	2%
Low-Level Implementation	30%	2%

### ***Internal Focus***

Internal focus refers to the degree to which the essence of reform efforts have become embedded in the daily practices of school staff. The research groups several factors as essential to focus, including teacher buy-in and support for reform efforts, alignment of reform with existing mandates, integration of reform with existing school programs or efforts, and formal attention to monitoring the progress of reform efforts (Rowan, Camburn, & Barnes, 2004). As discussed earlier, initial staff involvement in model selection and adoption across all implementation levels may have been limited by the application process itself. However, local activities to build staff ownership and create a school-wide effort focused on the reform approach had significant impacts on how quickly and extensively implementation efforts could begin.

#### ***SCHOOLS WITH HIGH-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION***

Schools with high levels of implementation garnered strong staff buy-in through several methods. At School 1, staff support took about one year to build. Teachers were initially reluctant to change, but teacher support increased after seeing the impact that AVID strategies could have on student success. Additionally, staff at this school stated that the support voiced by the principal increased teacher buy-in. Buy-in for Co-nect by School 2's teachers is relatively high but not unanimous. The principal described strong support by one third of the staff. Another third of the staff is going along with the program, while the remainder of the staff is reluctantly complying. However, it should be noted that all staff participate and teach multiple project-based units a year. At this school, the reform program had become a part of the school culture, and teachers chose to teach at the school to participate in the program. In School 3 (Accelerated Learning), the principal was

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#### ***Schools with high levels of implementation garnered strong staff buy-in through several methods.***

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primarily responsible for driving the reform effort and creating an environment in which teachers could be successful. The principal provided adequate resources (financial, personnel, and planning) and minimized student discipline issues. Additionally, these schools have few programs that interfere with the selected CSR model, or the school has chosen a CSR model that is capable of supporting existing and future programs. All of these schools have a formal monitoring process in place that includes student achievement benchmarks as well as intermediate outcomes.

#### ***SCHOOLS WITH MIDDLE-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION***

Schools at the middle level of implementation demonstrated less unified support for the reform efforts. School 4 (Accelerated Schools) suffered from consistently high teacher turnover, resulting in frustration and difficulty moving forward since so many resources were spent continually educating new staff. Schools 5 (AVID) and 6 (Princeton Review) were implementing programs in which only a small number of teachers and students directly participated. Staff perceptions at these schools were that the programs were isolated and not relevant to them, thus limiting both staff knowledge of and buy-in for each school's comprehensive reform efforts. The last school in this group, School 7 (ICLE), had relatively strong staff support for the idea behind the CSR efforts; unfortunately, the school implemented many other programs and staff reported being overwhelmed. As one staff member put it, "If we took all of [the programs] ... we see the fingers, but where is the hand?" Additionally, formal monitoring processes (other than

standard student achievement data and benchmarking) were not well defined. Only School 7, through a very supportive district, was able to include a variety of outcome measures, such as retention rates, attendance rates, discipline incidents, grade point average (GPA), percentage of students passing all four core courses (particularly in the ninth grade), and Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) indicators.

*SCHOOLS WITH LOW-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION*

Two years into the grant program, the level of teacher support was limited across the schools with low levels of implementation. Teacher comments at School 8 (HSTW) reflected a staff that had been through the attempted implementation of many programs with little consistency, alignment, or success. Their perspective was that this was one more program they were expected to implement until the next one came along. While School 9’s (Accelerated Schools) teachers were open to the training that they were receiving, progress seemed stalled. At School 10 (Co-nect), teachers indicated being very supportive of the CSR program; however, their school is not implementing a cohesive plan and has yet to conduct any training in the model. Rather, the funds are being used to support professional development activities that individual teachers choose without a unifying goal. Monitoring progress across these schools was limited to traditional TAKS benchmarking and was not linked to CSR efforts.

Considering survey results, schools with high levels of implementation averaged a 3.77 on a 5-point scale for the Focus construct. Schools with middle levels of implementation scored an average of 3.48, and those with low levels of implementation had an average of 3.56. (See Table 12.4 for the mean scores on the Focus construct.) The range across schools went from a high of 3.96 to a low of 3.18. Similarly, the site visit data indicated a broader range of internal foci and a consistently expressed high level of internal support across the schools with high implementation levels.

**Table 12.4. Mean Focus by Group**

FOCUS	
High-Level Implementation	3.77
Middle-Level Implementation	3.48
Low-Level Implementation	3.56

Considering respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all five questions of the Focus construct, 49% of staff from schools with high implementation levels rated internal focus as high, compared to 23% of staff at schools with middle levels of implementation and 26% of staff at schools with low implementation levels. (See Table 12.5 for percent high and low on the Focus construct.) These results indicate that almost twice as many survey respondents from schools with higher levels of implementation felt strongly that staff

**Table 12.5. Percent High and Low Focus by Group**

	FOCUS	
	High Support	Low Support
High-Level Implementation	49%	3%
Middle-Level Implementation	23%	3%
Low-Level Implementation	26%	2%

members were generally supportive of CSR efforts, the reform program was well integrated, progress monitoring was in place, and that funding was adequate. Additionally, very few respondents across the implementation categories consistently disagreed with items in this construct.

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***Two years into the grant program, the level of teacher support was limited across the schools with low levels of implementation.***

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While resistance to change is typical and even expected in education where so many new programs are implemented, garnering staff-wide support is an accomplishment. Schools with high implementation levels were able to build support either through very strong efforts by the principal or the creation of a critical mass of staff members who strongly supported the program and were able to bring other more resistant staff along. Additionally, these schools paid attention to program alignment so as not to bring in programs that would distract and confuse staff. These schools also viewed progress monitoring of both intermediate and summative outcomes as important and meaningful rather than obligatory, and momentum for staff support increased by seeing progress from their efforts.

### ***Pedagogy***

This construct refers to the degree to which instructional practices align with the goals of the chosen reform strategy. While different reform models advocate a variety of instructional approaches, some CSR models tend to share a reduced emphasis on workbooks, worksheets, and individual work and more focus on technology, cooperative learning, and project-based work (Stringfield, Ross, & Smith, 1996). Applying instructional

strategies learned from professional development in the actual classroom setting is the first step to impacting achievement; however, there is often a disconnect between training and classroom application.

### ***SCHOOLS WITH HIGH-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION***

Consistently, schools with high levels of implementation were able to take the strategies promoted through their CSR models and embed them in their daily practice. A teacher at School 1 explained that because of AVID, “you would see organization, you would see Cornell notes, writing, student products that reflect new strategies ... A couple of years ago it was hard to pick great achievements, but now we have become more proud of our students and their work.” At School 2 implementing Co-nect, teachers reported “project-based learning is what [the school] is all about.” Every teacher participates and is supported. School 3’s (Accelerated Learning) staff members described creating learning communities through their reform efforts that focused on using fewer worksheets and integrating more cooperative and project-based learning.

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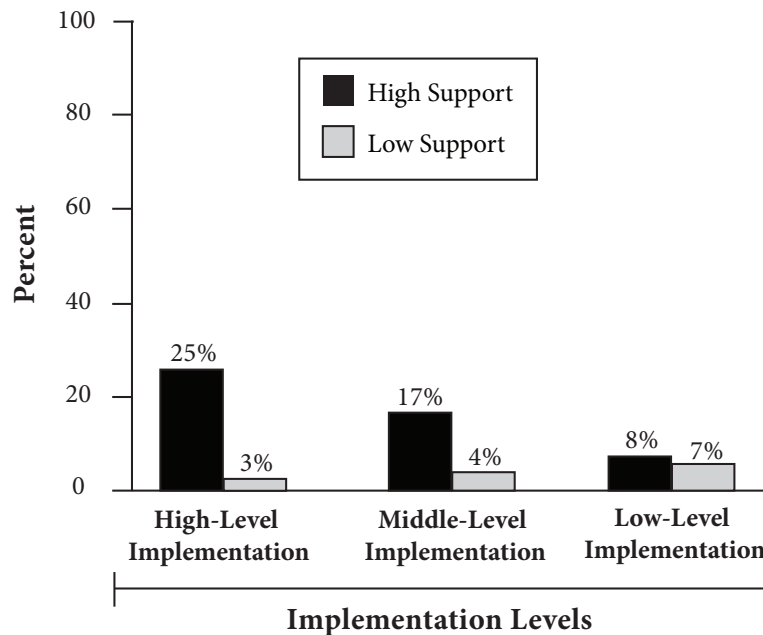
***Consistently, schools with high levels of implementation were able to take the strategies promoted through their CSR models and embed them in their daily practice.***

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### ***SCHOOLS WITH MIDDLE-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION***

The use of strategies aligned with CSR models across these schools varied. In implementing Accelerated Schools, School 4’s teachers reported (and observations confirmed) the use of more project- or student-oriented instruction, collaborative teaching, and



**Figure 12.3. Percent High and Low Pedagogy by Group**

personalized instruction. However, they also struggled since the school had high faculty turnover and a disproportionate number of inexperienced teachers. Schools 5 (AVID) and 6 (Princeton Review) both implemented models that impacted only a limited number of teachers and students; thus, school-wide reforms in pedagogical approaches were not evident. School 7's ICLE model promotes instruction that is student centered and reflects rigor and relevance. While most teachers were conversant about this approach, they also stated they needed more class time or smaller classes to teach to that standard.

#### *SCHOOLS WITH LOW-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION*

Schools in this level were in the very early stages of implementation. New pedagogical strategies had just recently been introduced. Teachers were in the process of understanding new instructional approaches but had not yet implemented them in the classroom. School 8 (HSTW) stated that the training had raised

teachers' awareness about what changes could be made and also reported increased awareness of some isolated topics associated with the school's model. School 9 (Accelerated Schools) stated that because of training, teachers were also more aware of the school's weaknesses. School 10's staff reported making changes due to CSR efforts; however, these changes were not unified, aligned, or promoted by the school's CSR model, Co-nect.

Combining survey results, high-implementing schools averaged a 3.55 on a 5-point scale for the Pedagogy construct compared to schools in the middle category scoring an average of 3.29 and schools in the low category rating this construct a mean of 3.07. (See Table 12.6 for the mean scores on the Pedagogy construct.) The range across schools went from a high of 3.83 to a low of 2.89.

Considering respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all five questions of the Pedagogy construct, only 25% of staff



**Table 12.6. Mean Pedagogy by Group**

PEDAGOGY	
High-Level Implementation	3.55
Middle-Level Implementation	3.29
Low-Level Implementation	3.07

members in schools with strong levels of implementation rated pedagogical change as high, compared to 17% of staff at schools with middle levels of implementation and 8% of staff at schools with low levels of implementation. (See Figure 12.3 for percent high and low on the Pedagogy construct.) These results indicate that three times as many staff members at high-implementation schools as compared to low-implementation schools agree that teaching strategies changed because of CSR efforts. That these percentages are low, even at high-implementation schools, indicates that changing pedagogical practice takes more time and occurs during later implementation stages. Also of note is the number of respondents disagreeing that teaching strategies changed because of CSR, especially at the low-implementation schools.

Pedagogical changes related to CSR efforts occurred in schools further along in the

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***Accomplishing school-wide pedagogical change requires sustained focus and support as demonstrated by the beginnings of change at high-implementation schools.***

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implementation process where staff had had time to identify what strategies were promoted by the model, had been trained in these strategies, and had applied the strategies with support in classroom settings. Accomplishing school-wide pedagogical

change requires sustained focus and support as demonstrated by the beginnings of change at high-implementation schools and the lack of pedagogical change in low-implementation schools.

### ***Restructuring Outcomes***

Restructuring outcomes includes positively impacting affective student outcomes such as engagement and academic responsibility, teacher-student interactions, shared decision making, teacher collaboration, attention to special needs students, parental involvement in educational activities, and community support (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

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***Across high-implementation schools, staff consistently reported that student motivation and engagement were positively impacted by the CSR program.***

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### ***SCHOOLS WITH HIGH-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION***

Across high-implementation schools, staff consistently reported that student motivation and engagement were positively impacted by the CSR program. For instance, School 1's staff felt that the AVID program promoted students taking more responsibility for their learning. Especially noticeable in these schools were the positive impacts that CSR had on the staff. The staff in these schools consistently reported increased collaboration and decision making focused on a commitment to instructional change. Increased parental involvement with educational activities only occurred at School 2 (Co-nect), which attributed the difference to the nature of project-based learning and the collaborative teamwork that was fostered. Additionally, this school is an elementary school where parental involvement already tends to be high. While an increase in general parental involvement (such as more parent

volunteers) was observed across the sites, this involvement was not attributable to CSR efforts. This component of CSR, along with the community support component, continues to be a challenge for these schools. Finally, in no case did staff directly attribute an increase in student achievement to CSR efforts. Even at this level of implementation, most staff members expressed that it was too early to tell how student achievement was impacted.

*SCHOOLS WITH MIDDLE-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION*

Middle-level implementation schools also reported increased student motivation and engagement related to CSR. However, in Schools 5 (AVID) and 6 (Princeton Review), increased motivation was limited to the few participants in the program. The same can be said for staff impacts. At School 5, there were virtually no impacts on the staff because the only teacher involved was the single AVID teacher. A similar impact pattern occurred for the school implementing the Princeton Review program. In the other two schools, staff reported a broad increase in both student engagement and teacher collaboration. In implementing ICLE’s Relevance and Rigor framework, School 7’s staff attributed the increase in student motivation to providing students with lessons that related to the real world. This school also reported an increase in teacher collaboration around instructional issues: “[We] look to one another as resources.” No school in this group reported an increase in parental involvement in educational activities or an increase in community support due to CSR efforts.

*SCHOOLS WITH LOW-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION*

Generally, for schools in the low-implementation group, CSR efforts have had little or no impact on restructuring outcomes. This situation is attributable to the

***Generally, for schools in the low-implementation group, CSR efforts have had little or no impact on restructuring outcomes.***

fact that these schools are at an early stage of implementation. School 9 (Accelerated Schools) staff responded that the CSR program had led to more understanding between teachers across grade levels and disciplines.

Combining survey results, high-implementation schools averaged a 3.58 on a 5-point scale for the Outcomes construct compared to middle-implementation schools scoring a mean of 3.20 and low-implementation schools rating this construct an average of 3.12. (See Table 12.7 for the mean scores on the Outcomes construct.) The range across schools went from a high of 3.79 to a low of 2.92. It is of note that, across this construct, schools in the high-implementation group consistently had over 50% of their staff strongly agree or agree on at least three individual items while no school (other than the outlier) from the other implementation levels had any percentage above 50 for any individual item. This may indicate that high-implementation schools, while not yet fully accomplishing the intent of this goal, are further along in the process.

Considering respondents who answered strongly agree or agree across all five questions of the construct, 25% of high-implementation schools’ staff members rated pedagogical

**Table 12.7 Mean Outcomes by Group**

OUTCOMES	
High-Level Implementation	3.58
Middle-Level Implementation	3.20
Low-Level Implementation	3.12

**Table 12.8. Percent High and Low Outcomes by Group**

OUTCOMES		
	High Support	Low Support
High-Level Implementation	25%	3%
Middle-Level Implementation	10%	4%
Low-Level Implementation	10%	2%

change as high, compared to 10% of staff at middle-implementation schools and 10% of staff at low-implementation schools. (See Table 12.8 for percent high and low on the Outcomes construct.) These results indicate that over twice as many staff members at high-implementation schools as compared to low-implementation schools agree that outcomes were restructured because of CSR efforts. That these percentages are low indicates that restructuring outcomes may take more time and occur during later implementation stages.

While improving student achievement is the end goal of comprehensive school reform, broadening relevant outcomes to include ones that are intermediate to student achievement is an important indicator of potential for successful implementation of CSR. Some high-implementation schools demonstrated progress across several intermediate outcomes, such as increased student motivation and staff collaboration; however, these schools lacked systematic processes for monitoring their progress on these outcomes. Additionally, across all schools, parental involvement and community support were difficult to impact through CSR efforts. Finally, across all schools the consensus was that it was too early in their

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***Some high-implementation schools demonstrated progress across several intermediate outcomes.***

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implementation processes to see improvements in student achievement.

### ***Implementation Summary***

This section summarizes factors that could describe why CSR efforts have succeeded in some schools while other schools have made less progress. Included in this summary is a description of the overall school climate at each case study school, which provides an indirect measure of CSR impacts.

#### ***SCHOOLS WITH HIGH-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION***

Among schools in the high-implementation category, each of the three schools benefited from circumstances that made them ready to capitalize on the opportunities offered through CSR. Strong district support and commitment to the CSR approach at School 1 (AVID) allowed the school to create expectations that they could improve the campus, plan, operationalize strategies to accomplish improvements, and follow through with activities with intention and fidelity. The school chose to invest in building staff capacity through widespread training with the specific intention of expanding AVID school wide. Staff at School 2 (Co-nect) used the grant to continue a reform model begun with an earlier grant. The CSR grant reinforced a critical mass of supporters for the program, providing them the leverage and momentum to keep the program going successfully. By

investing heavily in the services of an external technical assistance provider, the school has created a foundation of project-based lessons that are a springboard for future efforts. At this site, project-based learning has become a key identifier of the culture of the school. School 3's (Accelerated Learning) charismatic principal led the efforts by uniting the staff around a cohesive goal and choosing a model that aligned with district curricular programs. This school also focused grant funds on providing school-wide training to build the capacity of staff. The initial choice of a CSR model and its subsequent match with school needs, culture, and capability impacted implementation for this group of schools.

### *SCHOOLS WITH MIDDLE-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION*

While School 4 (Accelerated Schools) received significant support from external providers, it was unable to move beyond the initial assessment phase into making plans and taking action to change the school. This delay may be attributable to the high teacher turnover and a very high student mobility rate (78%), which inhibited building a consistent group of supporters among staff and parents. Schools 5 (AVID) and 6 (Princeton Review) were limited by choosing models that were not designed to be school wide and that required extensive support to transform into a school-wide model, especially considering these schools may already be overburdened by limited resources. At School 6, there was also dissonance between the needs of the students and the model selected. Expecting a college-prep model to meet the needs of a faculty and student body self-identified as focusing on high school graduation introduced an obstacle to model expansion. The expense of training associated with this model was another obstacle to expansion. Additionally, both schools lacked strong leadership from the district, the school administration, or a critical mass of teachers. Without this support,

progress in any comprehensive sense, i.e., the potential to expand efforts to a broader school population, was limited. School 7 (ICLE), while having strong district support and relatively extensive staff knowledge and support of CSR efforts, needed to streamline its focus. The school implemented many programs, some with a similar goal of school-wide change but some with a different focus. Staff indicated being pulled in too many directions and being overwhelmed by multiple sets of trainings and requirements.

### *SCHOOLS WITH LOW-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION*

For those schools with low levels of implementation, CSR efforts were thwarted by a variety of factors, including a lack of leadership for the reform, lack of staff focus, and lack of staff support. In the case of School 8 (HSTW), data are incomplete due to disruptions at the campus on the days of the site visit; however, it appears that the school is not very far along in implementation. Staff voiced a general knowledge of the grant but knew little else. The next cycle of data collection should better inform the assessment of this school's implementation stage. While School 9 (Accelerated Schools) chose a model specifically aligned with the 11 CSR components and has received extensive external support, the administration and staff lack a level of buy-in and commitment to the program that is commensurate with the amount of time they have invested. Possibly, this model is not a good match for this campus, or the right individual or group willing to lead school-wide efforts has

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***For those schools with low levels of implementation, CSR efforts were thwarted by a variety of factors, including a lack of leadership for the reform, lack of staff focus, and lack of staff support.***

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yet to be identified. Possibly, resistance is too entrenched. At School 10 (Co-nect), the change in district and campus administration and the lack of staff inclusion in the initial phases of grant application left the project orphaned. Consequently, while staff members at this campus are satisfied with what they understand to be the comprehensive school reform program—to pursue individual staff member’s continuing education goals—they have yet to receive any training in the model identified on their grant application.

The school climates across the implementation categories indicate that the highest implementing schools are associated with the highest overall school climate scores. For the high implementing group, this score is similar to the national norm for schools (3.83). (See Table 12.9 for the school climate mean scores.) It is of note, however, that this score is still reflective of schools that are developing their CSR programs and in the “Implementing” stage rather than in the “Fulfilling” stage.

**Table 12.9 Mean School Climate by Group**

SCHOOL CLIMATE	
High-Level Implementation	3.85
Middle-Level Implementation	3.45
Low-Level Implementation	3.65

However, it should also be noted that the score for low-implementation schools included the school climate rating for School 10 (Co-nect), which recorded the highest overall value at 4.05 and which has made the least progress toward CSR implementation aligned to the 11 components. This high rating may be a result of CSR funds being used to support individual teacher interests and providing for more staff development and materials than were previously available. Order (defined by student behavior and discipline, tardiness, absence, and

safety) was cited as the lowest dimension on the scale by all but one school. Additionally, the scale measuring instructional practices (defined as variety of strategies used, teaching to student needs, opportunity for higher-order skills, aligned curriculum through curriculum guides, and use of appropriate assessment methods) was reported as the highest dimension in five schools. Additionally, four schools rated the Instruction dimension the highest and the Order dimension the lowest. This pattern possibly indicates that teachers feel they are doing the best they can but that student behavior impedes student achievement.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Because this is an interim assessment of progress, drawing conclusions and providing recommendations for future implementation efforts may be premature. However, based on the data collected, common points emerged as relevant across schools and may be useful to similar schools engaging in complex school reform efforts. It should be noted that some approaches and components associated with the facilitators to CSR implementation at the high-implementation category schools are definable, tangible, and replicable while others are nuanced, specific to the site, and difficult to replicate.

For example, survey results across all the schools concluded that staff viewed support from school administration (61%) and staff buy-in (46%) to be the most important facilitators for CSR program implementation. However, only data across high-implementation schools indicated that staff members regarded current levels of leadership and reform buy-in as sufficient for supporting CSR implementation. Identifying how schools created strong leadership and achieved high levels of staff buy-in was less obvious and often turned out to be a site-specific process.



This section identifies the main factors that facilitated or stalled CSR implementation at the sites and provides a summary of the evidence followed by recommendations associated with each specific factor.

### ***Application Process***

► ***Across implementation levels, staff played a minimal role in the model selection and adoption process. This limitation restricted initial staff buy-in at most schools.***

Across the schools, the grant application process unintentionally hindered full staff participation in model selection and adoption. The turnaround time was short, applicants were not required to obtain a full faculty vote, and signed support was only required from the site-based decision-making committee. While a faculty vote does not ensure strong implementation, it does raise awareness about CSR efforts and represents an important step towards the shared leadership that CSR promotes.

- **Include sufficient time and support to meet CSR expectations concerning model selection.** At the grant award and administration level, future application processes should be guided by considerations such as allowing sufficient time for needs assessment and encouraging applicants to include the majority of staff in research and selection of reform models as well as model adoption.

### ***Leadership***

► ***A person or group of people was responsible for leading CSR efforts at high-implementation schools.***

At each of the three high-implementation schools, there was either leadership at the district level or a committed cadre of teachers

or strong principal at the school level to support integration of CSR into existing school improvement efforts. These schools benefited from having a strong CSR advocate who provided a defined and widespread message or vision to guide CSR implementation. At the other sites, schools lacked a clear understanding of the goals of their CSR efforts and staff buy-in appeared delayed or stymied.

- **Establish a dedicated CSR advocate to lead reform efforts.** The advocate can be an individual or a group at the district level or at the campus level. The charge to this person or group is to promote and support CSR efforts by disseminating the goals of comprehensive school reform.

### ***Model Choice and Context***

► ***Implementation success did not depend on CSR model choice if schools selected a model appropriate to the local context and provided leadership for sustainable school-wide reforms.***

Choosing a model aligned with the 11 CSR components was not enough to ensure high implementation. In fact, only one of the high-implementation schools chose a CSR-aligned model while all three low-implementation schools chose models traditionally aligned with the 11 CSR components. The high-implementation schools, however, created locally appropriate models that addressed reform school wide. Some of the lower implementing schools confined their efforts to limited models not designed for comprehensive school-wide reform (e.g., AVID, Princeton Review), impacting small numbers of staff and students. If the model is not aligned, meeting the requirements of CSR takes more resources and a much more concerted effort at coordination with other school activities. At low-resource schools already overwhelmed by issues such as safety and security, this level of



focused programming may create a barrier to fuller implementation.

- **Choose a model that can be tailored to campus-specific needs while addressing all CSR components.** Matching model choice to the context of the school limits obstacles to implementation. Models that do not meet at least most of the 11 CSR components may be successfully implemented but may take more resources and time than are available.

### **Clear Goals**

- *High-implementation schools provided staff with a clear plan for CSR.*

Internal focus and the creation of a program that was “on message,” especially in terms of CSR integration with existing school programs, were critical for high-implementation schools. Teachers in these schools demonstrated a consistent understanding of the goals of their school’s CSR model. These schools were also very clear and careful about not bringing in extraneous, unrelated programs or treating CSR as an add-on program.

- **Define and disseminate clearly articulated goals for the CSR program.** Staff members need to understand what is asked of them and how CSR supports existing school efforts. Taking time to define this message will help integrate CSR with other programs and eliminate confusion.

### **Capacity**

- *High-implementation schools viewed the CSR grant as a vehicle for building infrastructure and capacity that could be sustained beyond the grant funding period.*

High-implementation schools used funds to deliver well-defined and focused training school

wide. Just providing training to large numbers of teachers is not enough, as demonstrated by some low-implementation schools that received over 1,000 hours of intensive external support. High-implementation schools also created internal capacity for redelivery. Additionally, the training was not added on to other professional development but was the foundation for other programming. This approach to training enabled school culture to be built around model philosophies. Schools with lower implementation levels tended to treat capacity either as fragmented, by purchasing materials and supporting personnel not directly related to CSR efforts, or in a narrow sense, by only providing a limited number of staff and students with expensive support.

- **Build school capacity through focused campus-wide training.** Using resources to provide a focused campus-wide professional development effort ensures all teachers are trained, builds CSR understanding, and promotes collaboration around CSR efforts. Mechanisms for providing local redelivery of training also help to build capacity in the long term and ensure sustainability.

### **Pedagogy and Collaboration**

- *Through extensive training and support, teachers in high-implementation schools were able to use CSR-related teaching strategies in classrooms.*

Teachers at high-implementation schools were applying CSR-related teaching strategies in classrooms. In one school, in accordance with the model approach, all teachers implemented several project-based learning units each year. This level of implementation and coordination indicates that teachers were provided with effective training, were given time to understand the training, and were able to

transfer this new learning to their classrooms. This process also involved ongoing support in terms of formal and informal collaboration between teachers and external assistance providers and proved to be time intensive. Dedicated planning time was oriented around staff collaboration on key pedagogical approaches. Subject-area cadres and peer observation processes are a few other examples of successful collaborative activities at high-implementation schools.

- **Support classroom application.** Achieving instructional change requires ongoing support, collaboration, and time. This commitment must occur if CSR efforts are ultimately to impact student achievement. Teachers implementing CSR model-promoted strategies in their daily practice need intensive support either from external assistance providers or the district, and, most importantly, dedicated time to collaborate with their colleagues.

### **Identifying Intermediate Outcomes and Monitoring Progress**

- **High-implementation schools instituted formative monitoring across a variety of intermediate outcomes.**

The success of identifying intermediate outcomes and monitoring progress towards them varied across schools. At high-implementation schools, staff comments about model impacts demonstrated an understanding of progress and were evidence that the schools had provided tools and time for analysis and reflection around intermediate outcomes. At middle- and low-implementation schools, grant leaders often failed to define intermediate outcomes and provide a systematic process for monitoring them. Without intermediate goals, such as improvements in student motivation, student attendance, staff buy-in, or teacher collaboration, staff were unsure about the

success of their efforts and felt overwhelmed because student achievement had yet to be impacted. Schools that monitored program implementation formatively indicated seeing progress with their CSR efforts.

- **Monitor progress through both intermediate and summative outcomes.** Defining intermediate outcomes demonstrates an understanding of the cycle of CSR and the time needed to achieve summative outcomes such as student achievement. A systematic process for monitoring progress around intermediate outcomes provides clarity, guidance, and focus and communicates the school's commitment to accomplishing the goals of CSR. This process also encourages optimism about growth.

### **Sustainability**

- **High-implementation schools developed plans for continuing programs and activities initiated with CSR grant funds beyond the grant program.**

High-implementation schools had clear plans for continuing CSR programming. Either district support had already been committed or a strong infrastructure had been created through staff training. In either scenario, the continuation of school efforts was not dependent on grant funding. Building a strong school culture around reform efforts was also instrumental to ensuring sustainability. At one high-implementation campus, the school's identity was built around its CSR model and teachers were hired to teach there based on their interest in participating in the school's program.

- **Plan for sustaining CSR efforts beyond grant funding.** Finding and securing resources for the continuation of CSR programming is essential and indicates to staff that the school is committed to school reform—that CSR is not just a passing

fad. Sustaining CSR efforts also relates to building capacity and school culture around CSR goals and strategies.

Most of the case study sites faced obstacles common to low-resource schools serving high-poverty student populations. These include a history of failure and low expectations, entrenched dysfunctional culture, safety and security issues, staff resistance to change, high teacher turnover, or multiple uncoordinated programs. At one school, these barriers seriously threaten the investment made in CSR efforts. For example, staff resistance to change has stalled CSR efforts. For other schools, these barriers may have caused a delay in implementation, but most have been able to pilot their CSR programs successfully and have viable plans for expanding from the piloting stage to the implementing stage. It is of note that some of these campuses are large urban high schools in large urban districts, which traditionally face significant challenges. Finally, the sites implementing CSR at a higher level have capitalized on local contexts and have been able to provide a firm foundation for school-wide reform. These schools are already seeing impacts for students and the culture of the school. The next round of data collection will document the continued progress of implementation efforts across these campuses.







*Appendix A*







## COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM TEACHER/STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE

*This questionnaire is part of an evaluation of the Comprehensive School Reform grants the Texas Education Agency awarded to 170 schools, including your school. The Comprehensive School Reform grants promote school-wide improvements through activities such as curriculum changes, sustained professional development, and increased involvement of parents to enable students to meet challenging academic standards.*

1. School Name: \_\_\_\_\_
2. District Name: \_\_\_\_\_
3. County-District-Campus Number: \_\_\_\_\_

### I. Demographic Information

101. Is your school: (SELECT ONE ONLY)

- |   |                    |   |       |
|---|--------------------|---|-------|
| 1 | Elementary School  | 5 | K-8   |
| 2 | Middle School      | 6 | K-12  |
| 3 | Junior High School | 7 | 7-12  |
| 4 | Senior High School | 8 | Other |

102. Indicate your position at your school. (SELECT ONE ONLY)

- 1 Teacher
- 2 Counselor (SKIP TO Q.5)
- 3 Librarian (SKIP TO Q.5)
- 4 Other: (DESCRIBE) \_\_\_\_\_

103. What grade level(s) do you teach? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)

PK K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

104. What content areas do you teach: (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)

- 1 Reading/Language Arts
- 2 Mathematics
- 3 Science
- 4 Social Studies
- 5 Other: (DESCRIBE) \_\_\_\_\_

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Instrument adapted from:

Ross and Alberg. 1999. *Comprehensive School Reform Teacher Questionnaire*. Center for Research in Educational Policy, The University of Memphis. 2002. *School Climate Inventory*. Center for Research in Educational Policy, The University of Memphis.

105. How many years of experience do you have as a school employee (teacher or staff)?  
**(SELECT ONE ONLY)**
- |   |                 |   |                    |   |             |
|---|-----------------|---|--------------------|---|-------------|
| 1 | 5 years or less | 2 | 6-10 years         | 3 | 11-15 years |
| 4 | 16-20 years     | 5 | More than 20 years |   |             |
106. How many years of experience do you have as an employee at this school?  
**(SELECT ONE ONLY)**
- |   |                    |   |                    |   |            |
|---|--------------------|---|--------------------|---|------------|
| 1 | Less than one year | 2 | 1-5 years          | 3 | 6-10 years |
| 4 | 11-15 years        | 5 | More than 15 years |   |            |
107. What is the highest level of education you have completed? **(SELECT ONE ONLY)**
- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 | Bachelor's Degree  |
| 2 | Master's Degree  |
| 3 | Law Degree, Doctoral Degree, Other, Please Specify _____ |
108. What is your age group? **(SELECT ONE ONLY)**
- |   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| 1 | 29 years or younger |
| 2 | 30-39 years         |
| 3 | 40-49 years         |
| 4 | 50-59 years         |
| 5 | 60 years or older   |
109. What is your gender?
- |   |        |
|---|--------|
| 1 | Male   |
| 2 | Female |

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## II. Comprehensive School Reform

Using a 5-point scale ranging from 1-strongly agree, 2-agree, 3-neutral, 4-disagree, to 5-strongly disagree, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following items as they are currently reflected in your school. *If you are not sure or do not have the information select the “9-don’t know/not sure” category. If you have no basis on which to respond, leave the item blank.*

	1- Strongly Agree	2- Agree	3- Neutral	4- Disagree	5- Strongly Disagree	9- Don't Know/ Not Sure
<b>200A-1.</b> I have a thorough understanding of this school's comprehensive school reform (CSR) program.						
<b>200A-2.</b> I have received adequate initial and ongoing professional development/training for CSR program implementation.						
<b>200A-3.</b> Professional development provided by external trainers, model developers, and/or designers has been valuable.						
<b>200A-4.</b> Guidance and support provided by our school's external facilitator, support team, or other state-identified resource personnel have helped our school implement its program.						

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*Appendix A*  
 CSR Teacher/Staff  
 Questionnaire

	1- Strongly Agree	2- Agree	3- Neutral	4- Disagree	5- Strongly Disagree	9- Don't Know/ Not Sure
<b>200A-5.</b> Teachers are given sufficient planning time to implement our program.						
<b>200A-6.</b> Materials (books and other resources) needed to implement our CSR program are readily available.						
<b>200B-1.</b> Our school has sufficient faculty and staff to fully implement this program.						
<b>200B-2.</b> Because of our CSR program, technological resources have become more available.						
<b>200B-3.</b> Because of our CSR program, I use textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets less than I used to for basic skills or content area instruction.						
<b>200B-4.</b> Our comprehensive school reform program has changed classroom learning activities a great deal.						

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Instrument adapted from:  
 Ross and Alberg. 1999. *Comprehensive School Reform Teacher Questionnaire*. Center for Research in Educational Policy, The University of Memphis. 2002. *School Climate Inventory*. Center for Research in Educational Policy, The University of Memphis.

	1- Strongly Agree	2- Agree	3- Neutral	4- Disagree	5- Strongly Disagree	9- Don't Know/ Not Sure
<b>200B-5.</b> Students in my class spend at least two hours per school day in interdisciplinary or project-based work.						
<b>200B-6.</b> Students in my class spend much of their time working in cooperative learning teams.						
<b>200C-1.</b> Students are using technology more effectively because of our CSR program.						
<b>200C-2.</b> Student achievement has been positively impacted by CSR.						
<b>200C-3.</b> Students in this school are more enthusiastic about learning than they were before we became a CSR school.						
<b>200C-4.</b> Because of CSR, parents are more involved in the educational program of this school.						

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*Appendix A*  
*CSR Teacher/Staff*  
*Questionnaire*

	<b>1- Strongly Agree</b>	<b>2- Agree</b>	<b>3- Neutral</b>	<b>4- Disagree</b>	<b>5- Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>9- Don't Know/ Not Sure</b>
<b>200C-5.</b> Community support for our school has increased since comprehensive school reform has been implemented.						
<b>200C-6.</b> Students have higher standards for their own work because of our school's program.						
<b>200D-1.</b> Teachers are more involved in decision making at this school than they were before we implemented comprehensive school reform.						
<b>200D-2.</b> Our program adequately addresses the requirements of students with special needs.						
<b>200D-3.</b> Because of our school's program, teachers in this school spend more time working together to develop curriculum and plan instruction.						
<b>200D-4.</b> Teachers in this school are generally supportive of our CSR program.						

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Instrument adapted from:  
 Ross and Alberg. 1999. *Comprehensive School Reform Teacher Questionnaire*. Center for Research in Educational Policy, The University of Memphis. 2002. *School Climate Inventory*. Center for Research in Educational Policy, The University of Memphis.



	1- Strongly Agree	2- Agree	3- Neutral	4- Disagree	5- Strongly Disagree	9- Don't Know/ Not Sure
<b>200D-5.</b> Because of CSR, interactions between teachers and students are more positive.						
<b>200D-6.</b> The elements of our CSR program are effectively integrated to help us meet school improvement goals.						
<b>200E-1.</b> As a school staff, we regularly review implementation and outcome benchmarks to evaluate our progress.						
<b>200E-2.</b> Our school has a plan for evaluating all components of our comprehensive school reform program.						
<b>200E-3.</b> My school receives effective assistance from external partners (e.g., university, businesses, agencies, etc.).						
<b>200E-4.</b> I am satisfied with the Federal, State, local and private resources that are being coordinated to support our CSR program.						

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229. Think of your experience with your school's comprehensive reform program; which of the following helped facilitate program implementation?  
(SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)

- 229-1 Support from district administration
- 229-2 Support from school administration
- 229-3 Support (buy-in) from teachers
- 229-4 Support from TEA
- 229-5 Adequate human resources
- 229-6 Adequate financial resources
- 229-7 Adequate time
- 229-8 Training/professional development
- 229-9 Technical assistance from ESCs
- 229-10 Technical assistance from LEA-selected provider
- 229-11 Technology
- 229-12 Whole school focus
- 229-13 Reform focus
- 229-14 Curriculum focus
- 229-15 Academic standards
- 229-16 Assessment/use of data
- 229-17 Evaluation of progress
- 229-18 Parent/community involvement
- 229-19 Other (DESCRIBE): \_\_\_\_\_

229a. Which three of these do you consider the main facilitators of your school's comprehensive reform program implementation?  
(RECORD NUMBERS FROM Q.229)

\_\_\_\_ \_

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230. Again, think of your experience with your school's comprehensive reform program; what barriers did you and other teachers or administrators experience in implementing the program? (**SELECT ALL THAT APPLY**)

- 230-1 Lack of or insufficient support from district administration
- 2-2 Lack of or insufficient support from school administration
- 230-3 Lack of or insufficient support from teachers
- 230-4 Lack of or insufficient support from TEA
- 230-5 Lack of or insufficient human resources
- 230-6 Lack of or insufficient financial resources
- 230-7 Lack of or insufficient time
- 230-8 Lack of or insufficient training/professional development
- 230-9 Lack of or insufficient technical assistance from ESCs
- 230-10 Lack of or insufficient technical assistance from LEA-selected provider
- 230-11 Lack of or insufficient technology
- 230-12 Lack of whole school focus
- 230-13 Lack of reform focus
- 230-14 Lack of curriculum focus
- 230-15 Lack of assessment/use of data
- 230-16 Lack of evaluation of progress
- 230-17 Lack of or poor parent/community involvement
- 230-18 Other: (**DESCRIBE**): \_\_\_\_\_

230a. Which three of these are the biggest barriers? (**RECORD NUMBERS FROM Q.230**)

\_\_\_\_    \_\_\_\_    \_\_\_\_

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### III. School Climate

Using a 5-point scale ranging from 1-strongly agree, 2-agree, 3-neutral, 4-disagree, to 5-strongly disagree, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following items as they are currently reflected in your school. *If you are not sure or do not have the information select the “9-don’t know/not sure” category. If you have no basis on which to respond, leave the item blank.*

	1- Strongly Agree	2- Agree	3- Neutral	4- Disagree	5- Strongly Disagree	9- Don't Know/ Not Sure
<b>300A-1.</b> The faculty and staff share a sense of commitment to the school goals.						
<b>300A-2.</b> Low achieving students are given opportunity for success in this school.						
<b>300A-3.</b> School rules and expectations are clearly communicated.						
<b>300A-4.</b> Teachers use a variety of teaching strategies.						
<b>300A-5.</b> Community businesses are active in this school.						
<b>300A-6.</b> Students are encouraged to help others with problems.						
<b>300B-1.</b> Faculty and staff feel that they make important contributions to this school.						

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	1- Strongly Agree	2- Agree	3- Neutral	4- Disagree	5- Strongly Disagree	9- Don't Know/ Not Sure
<b>300B-2.</b> The administration communicates the belief that all students can learn.						
<b>300B-3.</b> Varied learning environments are provided to accommodate diverse teaching and learning styles.						
<b>300B-4.</b> The school building is neat, bright, clean, and comfortable.						
<b>300B-5.</b> Parents actively support school activities.						
<b>300B-6.</b> Parents are treated courteously when they call or visit the school.						
<b>300C-1.</b> Rules for student behavior are consistently enforced.						
<b>300C-2.</b> School employees and students show respect for each other's individual differences.						
<b>300C-3.</b> Teachers at each grade (course) level design learning activities to support both curriculum and student needs.						

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*Appendix A*  
 CSR Teacher/Staff  
 Questionnaire

	<b>1- Strongly Agree</b>	<b>2- Agree</b>	<b>3- Neutral</b>	<b>4- Disagree</b>	<b>5- Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>9- Don't Know/ Not Sure</b>
<b>300C-4.</b> Teachers are encouraged to communicate concerns, questions, and constructive ideas.						
<b>300C-5.</b> Students share the responsibility for keeping the school environment attractive and clean.						
<b>300C-6.</b> Parents are invited to serve on school advisory committees.						
<b>300D-1.</b> Parent volunteers are used whenever possible.						
<b>300D-2.</b> The administration encourages teachers to be creative and to try new methods.						
<b>300D-3.</b> Students are held responsible for their actions.						
<b>300D-4.</b> All students in this school are expected to master basic skills at each grade level.						
<b>300D-5.</b> Student discipline is administered fairly and appropriately.						

***Do not use  
without permission.***

Instrument adapted from:  
 Ross and Alberg. 1999. *Comprehensive School Reform Teacher Questionnaire*. Center for Research in Educational Policy, The University of Memphis. 2002. *School Climate Inventory*. Center for Research in Educational Policy, The University of Memphis.



	1- Strongly Agree	2- Agree	3- Neutral	4- Disagree	5- Strongly Disagree	9- Don't Know/ Not Sure
<b>300D-6.</b> Teachers often provide opportunities for students to develop higher-order skills.						
<b>300E-1.</b> Student misbehavior in this school does not interfere with the teaching process.						
<b>300E-2.</b> Students participate in solving school-related problems.						
<b>300E-3.</b> Students participate in classroom activities regardless of their sex, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, or academic ability.						
<b>300E-4.</b> Faculty and staff cooperate a great deal in trying to achieve school goals.						
<b>300E-5.</b> An atmosphere of trust exists among the administration, faculty, staff, students, and parents.						
<b>300E-6.</b> Student tardiness or absence from school is not a major problem.						
<b>300F-1.</b> Teachers are active participants in the decision making at this school.						

*Do not use  
 without permission.*

*Appendix A*  
 CSR Teacher/Staff  
 Questionnaire

	<b>1- Strongly Agree</b>	<b>2- Agree</b>	<b>3- Neutral</b>	<b>4- Disagree</b>	<b>5- Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>9- Don't Know/ Not Sure</b>
<b>300F-2.</b> Information about school activities is communicated to parents on a consistent basis.						
<b>300F-3.</b> Teachers use curriculum guides to ensure that similar subject content is covered within each grade.						
<b>300F-4.</b> The principal (or administration) provides useful feedback on staff performance.						
<b>300F-5.</b> Teachers use appropriate evaluation methods to determine student achievement.						
<b>300F-6.</b> The administration does a good job of protecting instructional time.						
<b>300G-1.</b> Parents are often invited to visit classrooms.						
<b>300G-2.</b> Teachers are proud of this school and its students.						

***Do not use  
without permission.***

	1- Strongly Agree	2- Agree	3- Neutral	4- Disagree	5- Strongly Disagree	9- Don't Know/ Not Sure
<b>300G-3.</b> This school is a safe place in which to work.						
<b>300G-4.</b> Most problems facing this school can be solved by the principal and faculty.						
<b>300G-5.</b> Pull-out programs do not interfere with basic skills instruction.						
<b>300G-6.</b> The principal is an effective instructional leader.						
<b>300H-1.</b> Teachers have high expectations for all students.						
<b>300H-2.</b> Teachers, administrators, and parents assume joint responsibility for student discipline.						
<b>300H-3.</b> The goals of this school are reviewed and updated regularly.						
<b>300H-4.</b> Student behavior is generally positive in this school.						

*Do not use  
without permission.*

*Appendix A*  
 CSR Teacher/Staff  
 Questionnaire

	<b>1- Strongly Agree</b>	<b>2- Agree</b>	<b>3- Neutral</b>	<b>4- Disagree</b>	<b>5- Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>9- Don't Know/ Not Sure</b>
<b>300H-5.</b> The principal is highly visible throughout the school.						
<b>300H-6.</b> Teachers use a wide range of teaching materials and media.						
<b>300H-7.</b> People in this school really care about each other.						

350. Please provide any additional comments you may have pertaining to your school's climate:

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**THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRE!**

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 without permission.

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDER

1. Please record the name of the school and district to which you have been providing technical assistance for the comprehensive school reform (CSR) grant program:

Campus Name: \_\_\_\_\_

District Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE: IF YOU ARE PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO MORE THAN ONE SCHOOL, PLEASE COMPLETE A SEPARATE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EACH SCHOOL**

**PLEASE COMPLETE THE QUESTIONNAIRE BY APRIL 28, 2006!**

2. When did you begin providing CSR-related technical assistance to the school  
(Month/Year)? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2a. Were you the original technical assistance provider on the CSR grant for this school or did you take the position over from another provider?
- 1 Original technical assistance provider  
2 Took over from another provider
3. Approximately how many hours of technical assistance have you provided per year to the school since you started working with this school on implementing the CSR grant? (INDICATE NUMBER OF HOURS PER YEAR FOR THE SPECIFIC GRANT TYPE)

**CSR-High School Grant:**

Year 1 (1/1/05-12/31/05): \_\_\_\_\_

Year 2 (1/1/06-12/31/06): \_\_\_\_\_

**CSR-Improving Teaching and Learning Grant:**

Year 1: (7/1/04-6/30/05): \_\_\_\_\_

Year 2 (7/1/05-7/31/06): \_\_\_\_\_

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## Appendix A

Technical  
Assistance  
Provider Survey

4. What is the **primary** Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) model or program this school is implementing? (**SELECT ONE ONLY**)

- 1 Accelerated Schools
- 2 America's Choice
- 3 ATLAS Communities
- 4 Coalition of Essential Schools
- 5 Community for Learning
- 6 Co-nect
- 7 Core Knowledge
- 8 Different Ways of Knowing
- 9 Direct Instruction Model
- 10 Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound
- 11 First Things First
- 12 High Schools That Work
- 13 High/Scope Primary Grades Approach to Education
- 14 Literacy Collaborative
- 15 Middle Start
- 16 Modern Red SchoolHouse
- 17 More Effective Schools
- 18 Onward to Excellence
- 19 Quantum Learning
- 20 QuESt
- 21 School Development Program
- 22 School Renaissance
- 23 Success For All/Roots & Wings
- 24 Talent Development High School with Career Academies
- 25 Talent Development Middle School
- 26 Turning Points
- 27 Urban Learning Center
- 28 Combination of different models
- 29 Other (**PLEASE DESCRIBE**): \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Comprehensive School Reform has 11 components, listed below. At what stage of implementation is this school? Please rate each component on a 0 to 4 point scale, where “0 – not implementing,” “1 – Planning,” “2 – Piloting,” “3 – Implementing,” and “4 – Fulfilling.”

**0—Not Implementing.** No evidence of the strategy.  
**1—Planning.** The school is planning to or preparing to implement.  
**2—Piloting.** The strategy is being partially implemented with only a small group of teachers or students involved.  
**3—Implementing.** The majority of teachers are implementing the strategy, and the strategy is more fully developed in accordance with descriptions by the team.  
**4—Fulfilling.** The strategy is evident across the school and is fully developed in accordance with the design teams’ descriptions. Signs of “institutionalization” are evident.

- 1 The program uses effective, research-based methods and strategies
- 2 The program uses comprehensive design for effective school functioning that aligns the school’s curriculum, technology, and professional development into a school-wide reform plan
- 3 The program provides continuing professional development to teachers and staff
- 4 The program has measurable goals and benchmarks
- 5 The program has the support of school faculty, administrators, and staff
- 6 The program provides support for teachers and staff through shared leadership and teamwork
- 7 The program provides for parental and community involvement in planning and implementing school improvement activities
- 8 The school utilizes high quality external support and assistance
- 9 The program includes a plan to evaluate implementation of the school reforms and the results
- 10 The program identifies how federal, state, and local resources will be used to coordinate services to support and sustain school reform
- 11 The program includes strategies to improve student academic achievement

6. Please check whether or not you have assisted the school with each of the following CSR components. (INDICATE YES OR NO FOR EACH COMPONENT)

	Yes	No
Research-based methods and strategies	1	2
Comprehensive design	1	2
Continuing professional development	1	2
Measurable goals and benchmarks	1	2
Generating school faculty, administrators, and staff support	1	2
Shared leadership and teamwork	1	2
Parental and community involvement	1	2
External support and assistance	1	2
Evaluation of school reform implementation and results	1	2
Coordination of resources to sustain school reform	1	2
Strategies to improve student academic achievement	1	2

7. How did you gather information from the school and the district on their implementation of the CSR grant? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)

- 1 School visits
- 2 Classroom observations
- 3 Interviews with district administrators
- 4 Interviews with school administrators
- 5 Interviews with teachers and staff
- 6 Interviews with students
- 7 Teacher and staff surveys
- 8 Student surveys
- 9 Compilation and review of assessment data
- 10 Other: (PLEASE DESCRIBE): \_\_\_\_\_

8. How would you rate board, district administration, school administrator, teacher, and staff support for the CSR program? Use the following scale where “1” refers to “Not at all supportive,” “10” refers “Very supportive,” and “0” refers to “Unsure/Don’t Know (DK).” (SELECT ONE NUMBER FOR EACH)

	Not At All Supportive					Very Supportive					Unsure/DK
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	0
Board	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	0
District Administration	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	0
School Administrator	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	0
Teachers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	0
Staff	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	0

9. Which of the following describe the types of support the district provided to the school in implementing the CSR program? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)

- 1 District staff helped the school apply for the grant
- 2 District staff attended staff development associated with the grant
- 3 The district notified all schools about the grant award
- 4 The district web page has updates about grant implementation
- 5 The district supplemented the grant with additional funds
- 6 The superintendent invited the principal to give a presentation to the Board about the grant
- 7 District provided staff to support grant activities
- 8 Don’t know/Not sure
- 9 Other (PLEASE DESCRIBE): \_\_\_\_\_

10. Based on your experience with the CSR program at this school, are each of the following resources allocated by the school sufficient for the effective implementation of the grant? (SELECT ONE NUMBER FOR EACH. IF NO RESOURCES WERE ALLOCATED, SELECT “0”)

	Yes	No	Unsure/Don’t Know	Did Not Allocate Resource
Appropriate materials	1	2	3	0
Staffing	1	2	3	0
Planning time	1	2	3	0
Fiscal resources	1	2	3	0

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## Appendix A

### Technical Assistance Provider Survey

11. Has the school made any changes at the **classroom level** as a result of the CSR program?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No (**SKIP TO Q.14**)

12. To what extent has the school implemented changes at the classroom level?  
(**SELECT ALL THAT APPLY**)

	No Change	Minor Change	Moderate Change	Significant Change
Teachers are teaching to standards	1	2	3	4
Teachers aligned their instructional practices with the program goals	1	2	3	4
Increased use and integration of technology in instruction	1	2	3	4
Teachers use worksheets and workbooks to a lesser extent	1	2	3	4
Lessons are more interdisciplinary and project-based	1	2	3	4
Teachers cooperate and team teach more often	1	2	3	4
Teachers developed and use authentic assessments	1	2	3	4
Other ( <b>PLEASE DESCRIBE</b> ):	1	2	3	4

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13. Have these changes been made by all teachers, at all grade levels, and across all content areas?

	All Teachers		All Grade Levels		All Content Areas	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Teachers are teaching to standards	1	2	1	2	1	2
Teachers aligned their instructional practices with the program goals	1	2	1	2	1	2
Increased use and integration of technology in instruction	1	2	1	2	1	2
Teachers use worksheets and workbooks to a lesser extent	1	2	1	2	1	2
Lessons are more interdisciplinary and project-based	1	2	1	2	1	2
Teachers cooperate and team teach more often	1	2	1	2	1	2
Teachers developed and use authentic assessments	1	2	1	2	1	2
Other	1	2	1	2	1	2

13a. If not all teachers, about what percent of teachers have made these changes? \_\_\_\_\_

13b. If not all grade levels, at what grade level(s) have these changes been made:  
**(SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)**

K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

13c. If not all content areas: in which content area(s) were changes made?  
**(SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)**

- 1 Reading/ English Language Arts
- 2 Mathematics
- 3 Social Studies
- 4 Science
- 5 Other **(PLEASE DESCRIBE)**: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix A

### Technical Assistance Provider Survey

14. In your judgment, to what extent has the CSR program **affected students** in each of the following areas? If you don't know, please leave the item blank. (**SELECT ONE NUMBER FOR EACH**)

	<b>Not At All</b>	<b>A Little</b>	<b>Moderate Extent</b>	<b>Great Extent</b>
Students are more interested in learning	1	2	3	4
Students are more motivated	1	2	3	4
Students do their homework more often	1	2	3	4
Students' quality of work has improved	1	2	3	4
Students attend school more regularly	1	2	3	4
Students' conduct has improved: fewer disciplinary problems	1	2	3	4
Students perform better academically on school tests	1	2	3	4
Students perform better on standardized tests	1	2	3	4
Students have more respect for their teachers	1	2	3	4

15. In your judgment, to what extent has the CSR program had an impact **on students overall**? (**SELECT ONE ONLY**)

- 1 Not at all
- 2 A little
- 3 To a moderate extent
- 4 To a great extent

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without permission.*



16. In your judgment, to what extent has the CSR program **affected teachers** in each of the following areas? If you don't know, please leave the item blank. (**SELECT ONE NUMBER FOR EACH**)

	<b>Not At All</b>	<b>A Little</b>	<b>Moderate Extent</b>	<b>Great Extent</b>
Teachers have become more motivated	1	2	3	4
Teachers show greater enthusiasm in class	1	2	3	4
Teachers work more often in teams	1	2	3	4
Teachers spend more time planning projects with other teachers	1	2	3	4
Teachers feel a great sense of responsibility for implementing the reform program successfully	1	2	3	4
Teachers are very supportive of the school reform effort	1	2	3	4
Other (PLEASE DESCRIBE): _____	1	2	3	4

17. To what extent has the CSR program had an impact **on teachers overall** (**SELECT ONE ONLY**)

- 1 Not at all
- 2 A little
- 3 To a moderate extent
- 4 To a great extent

18. What types of professional development did the school provide to teachers, staff, and administrators in connection with the CSR grant? (**SELECT ALL THAT APPLY**)

- 1 Whole school training
- 2 Conferences
- 3 Workshops
- 4 Coaching/Mentoring
- 5 Study groups
- 6 Other (PLEASE DESCRIBE): \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix A

Technical Assistance Provider Survey

19. Overall, please assess how helpful this professional development has been to the implementation of the CSR program. Use a 10-point scale ranging from “1 – not at all helpful” to “10 – very helpful.” (SELECT ONE ONLY FOR EACH)

Table with 11 columns: Not At All Helpful, 1-10, Very Helpful. Rows: Teachers, Staff, Administrators.

20. Has the school provided staff development related to the implementation of the CSR program to new teachers?

- 1 Yes
2 No
3 Unsure

21. How has the school informed the community about the CSR program it is implementing? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)

- 1 The principal gave a presentation about the program during Parent Night or at PTO meetings
2 The school paper features information and updates about the program and how it will benefit students
3 The principal and teachers call on parents and community members to help with program implementation
4 The school organized an open house dedicated to the program and invited all parents and community members
5 Other (PLEASE DESCRIBE): \_\_\_\_\_

22. Which of the following describe the type of parental and community involvement activities offered through the CSR program? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)

- 1 Home visits
2 Parental involvement in decision-making
3 Parent education or training
4 Parent/community volunteer programs
5 Parent involvement in implementing school improvement activities
6 Parent involvement in evaluating school improvement activities
7 Other (DESCRIBE): \_\_\_\_\_

Do not use without permission.

23(1). Please indicate how supportive the community has been of the CSR program this school is implementing? Use a 10-point scale ranging from “1 – not at all supportive” to “10 – very supportive.” (SELECT ONE ONLY)

<b>Not At All Supportive</b>					<b>Very Supportive</b>				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

23(2). Please indicate how supportive the school has been of you as the technical assistance provider? Use a 10-point scale ranging from “1 – not at all supportive” to “10 – very supportive.” (SELECT ONE ONLY)

<b>Not At All Supportive</b>					<b>Very Supportive</b>				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

24 (1). To what extent has school management changed to align the school’s curriculum, technology, and professional development because of the CSR program? Use a 10-point scale ranging from “1 – not at all” to “10 – to a great extent.” (SELECT ONE ONLY)

<b>Not At All Supportive</b>					<b>To A Great Extent</b>				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

24(2). To what extent has leadership been shared with teachers and staff because of the CSR program? Use a 10-point scale ranging from “1 – not at all” to “10 – to a great extent.” (SELECT ONE ONLY)

<b>Not At All Supportive</b>					<b>To A Great Extent</b>				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

*Appendix A*

*Technical  
Assistance  
Provider Survey*

- 24(3). To what extent has the school integrated the CSR program with other programs or efforts? Use a 10-point scale ranging from “1 – not at all” to “10 – to a great extent.” (SELECT ONE ONLY)

<b>Not At All Supportive</b>					<b>To A Great Extent</b>				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

- 24(4). To what extent has the school implemented the CSR program as designed? Use a 10-point scale ranging from “1 – not at all” to “10 – to a great extent.” (SELECT ONE ONLY)

<b>Not At All Supportive</b>					<b>To A Great Extent</b>				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

25. To what extent has this school experienced the following difficulties or barriers in implementing the CSR program? (SELECT ONE NUMBER FOR EACH)

	<b>Not At All</b>	<b>A Little</b>	<b>Moderate Extent</b>	<b>Great Extent</b>
Lack of teacher buy-in or support of the program	1	2	3	4
Insufficient staff development	1	2	3	4
Lack of district support	1	2	3	4
Lack of parent and community support	1	2	3	4
Inadequate financial resources	1	2	3	4
Lack of staff time	1	2	3	4
Lack of administrative support	1	2	3	4
Lack of coordination with other programs	1	2	3	4
Teacher, staff, and administrator turnover	1	2	3	4
Other (PLEASE DESCRIBE): _____	1	2	3	4

30. Any other comments you wish to make about the CSR program in this school?

Do not use  
without permission.

**THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRE!**

## PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW CSR SITES

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Principal: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### I. General Information

1. What model/program is your school using?
  
2. A criterion for CSR schools is to use a comprehensive program that employs proven strategies and methods for student learning, teaching, and school management that are based on scientifically based research and effective practices. Discuss how your program meets this criterion.
  
3. Describe the process your school used for program selection.

What led to your school deciding to implement whole school reform?

How did you select this model?

4. How is the implementation of comprehensive school reform going?

Compare and contrast this year with last year.

- 4a. What elements are the most effective?
- 4b. What elements are the least effective?
- 4c. How closely do you feel the model design is followed, describe?
- 4d. What other programs/grants does your school implement?  
How are these aligned with your school reform model?
- 4e. How do you monitor the progress of the reform?
- 4f. Describe your role in program implementation.
- 4g. How has CSR changed the way you do your job?

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5. How would you describe teacher support for your school's program?

Would you say support for the program is increasing or decreasing?

What evidence is there of support or opposition?

Can you think of specific positive or negative comments made by teachers about the program?

6. What additional resources have been needed to support your CSR program?

*(Note: resources include time, space, personnel, and materials in addition to money.)*

Have you been able to reallocate resources at the school level?  
(Describe)

What resources have you received from the district?  
From other sources?



## II. Classroom Level Changes

7. What changes have been made at the classroom level?
  
8. Specifically, what contributions has the program made in terms of:
  - teaching to standards?
  
  - technology?
  
  - interdisciplinary and project-based learning?
  
  - cooperative and team-based approaches?
  
  - authentic, alternative assessments?
  
9. Describe the variation in program implementation between classes or grade levels.

What do you see as major contributors to differences between classes and/or grades?
  
10. How does your program accommodate special needs children?

## III. Results

11. How has your CSR program impacted students?
  
12. Can you describe any differences in student motivation or enthusiasm?  
Student attendance? Conduct?
  
13. How has the program fostered relationships between students?  
Between students and teachers?

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14. What differences in achievement have you seen to date (grades or test scores)?

15. How has the CSR program impacted teachers?

16. How has the program impacted relationships between teachers?

Discuss differences  
in teacher  
collegiality  
and teamwork,  
motivation and  
enthusiasm.

17. How has the program created shared leadership and a broad base of responsibility for reform efforts?

#### IV. Professional Development

18. What specific training or support have you received as an administrator in a restructuring school?

19. How would you describe faculty training sessions for this program?

20. How have new faculty been brought into the program?

21. How would you characterize the success of CSR-related professional development initiatives?

22. Describe your school's interaction with program developers.

23. Tell me about training and support from the district.

What kinds of  
support does your  
district provide?

How effective has  
the support been?

**V. Community Support**

24. How would you describe community support for the program?

How has the level of parent involvement in the school been impacted?

Describe efforts to inform and involve the community.

Are parents and other community members more involved in the classroom now than in the past?

What is the evidence of increased involvement?

**Closure:**

Are there any important aspects of program implementation that have not been mentioned today?

Any additional comments you would like to make?

## TEACHER INTERVIEW/FOCUS GROUP CSR SITES

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher/FG: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### INTRODUCTION:

Introduce selves and project.  
State INTVW/FG will last 45-60 minutes.

### I. General Information

1. What model/program is your school using?
2. Discuss how your redesign program employs proven strategies and methods for student learning, teaching, and school management that are based on scientifically based research and effective practices.
3. Describe the process your school used in selecting a redesign model.

What led to your school deciding to implement whole school reform?

How did you select this model?

4. How is the implementation of your school redesign going?

Compare and contrast this year with last year.

- 4a. What elements are the most effective?
- 4b. What elements are the least effective?
- 4c. How closely do you feel the model design is followed, describe?
- 4d. What other programs/grants does your school implement?  
How are these aligned with your school reform model?
- 4e. How do you monitor the progress of the reform?

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5. How would you describe teacher support for the program?

Would you say support for the program is increasing or decreasing?

What evidence is there of support or opposition?

Can you think of specific positive or negative comments made by teachers about your school's program?

6. What additional resources have been needed to support the program?

*(Note: resources include time, space, personnel, and materials in addition to money.)*

Have you been able to reallocate resources at the school level?  
(Describe)

What resources have you received from the district?  
From other sources?

## II. Classroom Level Changes

7. If I were to visit classrooms, what would I see that would represent your school's redesign?

8. How is this different from the way classrooms used to be?

9. Specifically, what contributions has the program made in terms of:

- teaching to standards?
- technology?
- interdisciplinary and project-based learning?
- cooperative and team-based approaches?
- authentic, alternative assessments?

10. How does your school program address special needs children?

### **III. Results**

11. How is the program impacting students?

12. How has the program fostered relationships between students?  
Between students and teachers?

13. Can you describe any differences in student motivation or enthusiasm?  
Student attendance?  
Conduct?

14. Are there differences in achievement (grades or test scores)?

15. How has the redesign impacted teachers?

16. How has the program impacted relationships between teachers?

Discuss differences  
in teacher  
collegiality  
and teamwork,  
motivation and  
enthusiasm.

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without permission.*

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17. How has the program created shared leadership and a broad base of responsibility  
for redesign efforts?



**IV. Professional Development**

18. How would you describe faculty training sessions for this program?
19. How have new faculty been brought into the program?
20. How would you characterize the success of redesign-related professional development initiatives?
21. Describe your school's interaction with program developers.
22. Tell me about training and support from the district.

What kind of support does your district provide? How effective has the support been?

**V. Community Support**

23. How would you describe community support for your school's restructuring program?

How has the level of parent involvement in the school been impacted by your program?

Describe school efforts to inform and involve the community.

Are parents and other community members more involved in the classroom now than in the past?

What is the evidence of increased involvement?

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**Closure:**

Are there any important aspects of redesign implementation that have not been mentioned today?

Any additional comments you would like to make?

## PARENT/COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUP CSR SITES

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### INTRODUCTION:

Introduce selves and project.

State FG will last 45-60 minutes.

- To start off, let's go around the room and have each of you tell us how long you have had children attend this school?
- Tell us about your relationship with the school?
  - o *Prompts: Are you becoming involved at this school?*
  - o *Yes – how did you become involved and how has the school responded?*
  - o *No – why have you not become more involved?*

### MAIN QUESTIONS:

*Attempt to get the respondents' perceptions of the school's characteristics and changes. PROBE actively to get a clear picture of the change process, including barriers and facilitators. Use the probes in the box below to determine how change was initiated, received, and supported or stymied.*

1. What was the school like when your children first started coming here?
2. Have there been any important changes that have happened here in the past several years?
  - If yes:*
    - a. *Who was involved?*
    - b. *Was there a specific event that started the change?*
    - c. *What make the changes work*
  - If no:*
    - d. *Are there any changes you would like to see?*
    - e. *What would it take to bring that change about?*
3. How do you learn about how your child/children is/are doing at school?
4. If you can, think of a recent time when your child was struggling with his or her school work. What did the school do to help your child? How did this work out?

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## Appendix A

Parent/  
Community  
Focus Group

5. Think about a time when you had a concern or a suggestion about the school or about your child's experience here – what did you do? How did the school respond?

6. Do you think parents and community are involved in decision-making at this school? Please explain.

*If yes:*

- a. *What sort of decisions – budget, curricular, discipline?*
- b. *Can you provide examples.*

*If no:*

- c. *Why aren't they involved more?*
- d. *What would increase involvement?*

7. Are you familiar with the [Name of CSR model] program that this school is implementing?

*If yes:*

- a. *How has it impacted the school?*
- b. *What have been some benefits?*
- c. *What have been the disadvantages of the program?*

### Closure:

8. Is there anything else you want to tell us that would help us understand this school?

9. Do you have any questions you want to ask us?

HISTORY	- How is this different from before? - Was this ever tried before?
CRITICAL INCIDENTS	- Were there key events that affected this process?
KEY PLAYERS	- Who started this? - Who was involved? - Who noticed the need for change?
RESPONSE	- How did this change affect you? - How did this change affect the students and the school?
SUPPORT	- What helped make this work? - What was necessary for this to succeed?
BARRIERS	- Was there resistance to change? - What made this difficult?

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## Student Focus Group CSR Sites

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### INTRODUCTION:

Introduce selves and project.

State FG will last 45-60 minutes.

1. To start off, let's go around the room and have each of you tell us a bit about yourselves. Start off with what number you are, and then tell us what grade you are in and how long you have been at this school.
2. Tell me about a class you really like. What made you like this class? What kind of work did you do in the class? What was the teacher like?
3. Tell me about a class you didn't like. How was this class different? What kind of work did you do in the class? What was the teacher like?
4. In thinking about some tests you're going to take in the near future, do you feel prepared for them? Do you think the work you do in class prepares you? What kind of work is the most helpful?
5. Tell me about a time when you or one of your friends was struggling with a class? What did you or your friend do? How did you get help? Did any adults help you?

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6. If you or one of your friends wants to talk, are there adults you could turn to here at school? If yes, why do you feel like you can talk to them?
  
7. Think about a recent time when a classmate misbehaved. What were the consequences for the student? Do you think the situation was handled fairly? Do you think discipline interferes with learning at this school?
  
8. During the past year, have you ever felt fear or unsafe here? What were the circumstances? Did you talk to an adult? How was the situation addressed?
  
9. Take a moment to think about an issue you are concerned about here at school. What were the circumstances and what have you done to address the issue?
  
10. How are your parents or other family members involved with you as a student? How are they involved with the school?

**Closure:**

Are there any additional comments you would like to make?

## SCHOOL OBSERVATION MEASURE

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Observer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Observation: \_\_\_\_\_ SOM # \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Use your class-specific notes to reflect upon the extent to which each of the following is present in the school.

**Response categories include: Not Observed; Rarely; Occasionally; Frequently; Extensively**

### ***Instructional Orientation***

- Direct instruction (lecture)
- Team teaching
- Cooperative/collaborative learning
- Individual tutoring (teacher, peer, aide, adult volunteer)

### ***Classroom Organization***

- Ability groups
- Multi-age grouping
- Work centers (for individuals or groups)

### ***Instructional Strategies***

- Higher level instructional feedback (written or verbal) to enhance student learning
- Integration of subject areas (interdisciplinary/thematic units)
- Project-based learning
- Use of higher-level questioning strategies
- Teacher acting as a coach/facilitator
- Parent/community involvement in learning activities

### ***Student Activities***

- Independent seatwork (self-paced worksheets, individual assignments)
- Experiential, hands-on learning
- Systematic individual instruction (differential assignments geared to individual needs)
- Sustained writing/composition (self-selected or teacher-generated topics)
- Sustained reading
- Independent inquiry/research on the part of students
- Student discussion

### ***Technology Use***

- Computer for instructional delivery (e.g. CAI, drill and practice)
- Technology as learning tool or resource (e.g. Internet research, spreadsheet or database creation, multi-media, CD Rom, Laser disk)

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***Assessment***

Performance assessment strategies  
Student self-assessment (portfolios, individual record books)

***Summary Items***

High academically focused class time  
High level of student attention/interest/engagement

**Rubric for SOM Scoring**

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| (0) Not Observed: | Strategy was never observed.  |
| (1) Rarely:       | Observed in only one or two classes. Receives isolated use and/or little time in classes. Clearly not a prevalent/emphasized component of teaching and learning across classes. |
| (2) Occasionally: | Observed in some classes. Receives minimal or modest time or emphasis in classes. Not a prevalent/emphasized component of teaching and learning across classes.                 |
| (3) Frequently:   | Observed in many but not all classes. Receives substantive time or emphasis in classes. A prevalent component of teaching and learning across classes.                          |
| (4) Extensively:  | Observed in most or all classes. Receives substantive time and/or emphasis in classes. A highly prevalent component of teaching and learning across classes.                    |

51-POINT INSTRUMENT FOR  
 ASSESSING STRENGTH OF CSR IMPLEMENTATION

<i>Component</i>	<i>Measure</i>	<i>Score*</i>
<b>1. Research-Based Method or Strategy</b>		
1.1 Implementation Score (adjusted Bodilly Scale from TA):	4 3 2 1 0	0-4
1.2 Percentage of classrooms using that should have been using (SOM):	_____%	0.0-1.0
1.3 Fidelity rating by TA (high, medium, low, defined as follows):		
<i>high:</i> developer/consultant considers school to be among the best seen	High	3
<i>medium:</i> developer/consultant considers school to be using method in acceptable manner	Medium	2
<i>low:</i> developer/consultant has major complaints about school's use of method	Low	1
<b>Total Possible Score for Component 1</b>		<b>8</b>
<b>2. Comprehensive Design:</b>		
2.1 Existence of written design or plan: name it and give its date	yes          no	1
	Name: _____	
	Date: _____	
2.2 Contents of plan (yes/no to each item):		
2.2.1 Inclusion of needs assessment or other performance data	yes          no	1
2.2.2 Reference to specific financial resources	yes          no	1
2.2.3 Indication of strategic use of financial resources	yes          no	1
2.2.4 Statement of quantitative performance goals	yes          no	1
2.2.5 Discussion of specific curricula	yes          no	1
2.2.6 Discussion of assessment tools	yes          no	1
2.2.7 Discussion of professional development	yes          no	1
2.3 Breadth of plan in covering all school operations (including, implicitly, all other CSR components) (high, medium, low, defined as follow):		
<i>high:</i> covers all CSR components (whether implicitly or explicitly)	high	3
<i>medium:</i> covers four or six components, but not all	medium	2
<i>low:</i> covers one to three components only (also name them)	low	1
<b>Total Possible Score for Component 2</b>		<b>11</b>

\* yes=1 and no=0

(Continued)

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*Appendix A*  
*CSR 51-Point*  
*Implementation*  
*Scale*

<i>Component</i>	<i>Measure</i>		<i>Score*</i>
<b>3. Professional Development:</b>			
3.1 Strong content focus:	yes	no	1
3.2 Range of PD days required or taken by average teacher per year:	7+	4-6	1-3
			7+ =3 4 - 6 =2 1 - 3 =1
3.3 Evidence that preceding estimate excludes traditional teacher set-up (in the fall) and teacher clean-up (in the spring) days	yes	no	Make part of 3.2 total
3.4 Evidence of collective participation of groups of teachers from the same school	yes	no	1
3.5 Evidence of some PD taking place in the teacher's classroom-e.g., mentoring	yes	no	1
3.6 Explicit guidance to align PD with standards, curriculum, or assessment tools	yes	no	1
<b>Total Possible Score for Component 3</b>			<b>7</b>
<b>4. Measurable Goals and Benchmarks:</b>			
4.1 Number of academic subjects covered:	No.: _____		4+ =3 2 - 3 =2 0 -1 =1
4.2 Number of grades covered and total no. of grades in the school:	No.: ___	No.: ___	0.0-1.0 (%)
<b>Total Possible Score for Component 4</b>			<b>4</b>
<b>5. Support within the school:</b>			
5.1 Existence of formal faculty votes on reform or research-based method	yes	no	1
5.2 Formal faculty vote(s) on reform or research based method show 75% support	yes	no	1
5.3 Interviewees voice strong support or enthusiasm	yes	no	1
5.4 Two or more interviewees voice dissent or indicate lack of use	yes	no	1
<b>Total Possible Score for Component 5</b>			<b>4</b>

\* yes=1 and no=0

(Continued)

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<i>Component</i>	<i>Measure</i>	<i>Score*</i>
<b>6. Support for Teachers and Principals:</b>		
6.1 Evidence of shared leadership	yes      no	1
6.2 Evidence of teamwork outside of departments or grade levels	yes      no	1
6.3 Positive acknowledgement of staff accomplishments	yes      no	1
<b>Total Possible Score for Component 6</b>		<b>3</b>
<b>7. Parent and Community Involvement</b>		
7.1 Emergence of new forms of parent involvement during CSR years:	yes      no	
7.1.1 Special parent events	yes      no	
7.1.2 Programs or opportunities for parents in instructional roles	yes      no	3 – 4 =1
7.1.3 Parent advisory or other committees	yes      no	0 – 2 =0
7.2 Level of parental involvement (high, medium, or low, as defined as follows):		
<i>high:</i> you’ve observed parents in the school and interviewees voice strong or satisfactory level or parental involvement in school activities	high	2
<i>medium:</i> school get traditional level of parental involvement (e.g., 10% attendance)	medium	1
<i>low:</i> no evidence of parental involvement beyond a handful of parents and interviewees voice low levels of participation	low	0
7.3 Evidence of at least one community organization and one school/community event or program	yes      no	1
<b>Total Possible Score for Component 7</b>		<b>4</b>
<b>8. External Technical Support and Assistance</b>		
8.1 Developer support and assistance (high, medium, or low, defined as follows):		
<i>high:</i> all CSR years	high	3
<i>medium:</i> at least two years	medium	2
<i>low:</i> one or none of these years	low	1
8.2 Other external (but non-district) support and assistance		
<i>yes:</i> evidence for a specific source and function on two or more occasions	yes      no	1
<i>no:</i> no such evidence (evidence can be documentation, interviewee mentions, or direct observation)		
<b>Total Possible Score for Component 8</b>		<b>4</b>

\* yes=1 and no=0

(Continued)

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*Appendix A*

*CSR 51-Point  
Implementation  
Scale*

<i>Component</i>	<i>Measure</i>		<i>Score*</i>
<b>9. Evaluation Strategies:</b>			
9.1 Existence of a written evaluation plan	yes	no	1
9.2 Evidence of written evaluation findings (could even be a memo)	yes	no	1
<b>Total Possible Score for Component 9</b>			<b>2</b>
<b>10. Coordination of Resources</b>			
10.1 Evidence of some coordination of funds from different external (e.g., federal) sources	yes	no	1
10.2 Evidence of some coordination of external and local funds (i.e. core building)	yes	no	1
<b>Total Possible Score for Component 10</b>			<b>2</b>
<b>11. Strategies that Improve Academic Achievement</b>			
11.1 Evidence the program has been found through scientifically-based research, to significantly improve the academic achievement of participating students	yes	no	1
11.2 The program shows strong evidence that it will significantly improve the academic achievement of participating students	yes	no	1
<b>Total Possible Score for Component 11</b>			<b>2</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>51</b>	

\* yes=1 and no=0

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*Appendix B*







## SCALE DESCRIPTIONS

### Comprehensive School Reform Teacher Questionnaire

This instrument is designed and reported to measure the five constructs underlying comprehensive school reform: external support, school capacity, internal focus, pedagogical change, and outcomes through 28 items. Below are scale descriptions and the Cronbach's alpha for each scale.

Scale	Description	Internal Reliability
<b>Support</b>	The extent to which school receives effective professional development and support to implement its CSR program.	$\alpha = .82$
<b>Capacity/Resources</b>	The extent to which planning time materials, technology, and faculty are available at the school.	$\alpha = .70$
<b>Pedagogy</b>	The extent to which classroom practices, materials, and technology use have changed at the school.	$\alpha = .75$
<b>Outcome</b>	The extent to which positive student, faculty, and parent/community outcomes have occurred as a result of CSR.	$\alpha = .90$
<b>Focus</b>	The extent to which elements of the school's educational program are integrated, evaluated, and supported by school stakeholders.	$\alpha = .83$

### School Climate Survey

This survey consists of seven dimensions logically and empirically associated with effective school organizational climates. The inventory contains 49 items, with seven items comprising each scale. Below are scale descriptions and the Cronbach's alpha for each scale.

Scale	Description	Internal Reliability
<b>Order</b>	The extent to which the environment is ordered and appropriate student behaviors are present.	$\alpha = .84$
<b>Leadership</b>	The extent to which the administration provides instructional leadership.	$\alpha = .83$
<b>Environment</b>	The extent to which positive learning environments exist.	$\alpha = .81$
<b>Involvement</b>	The extent to which parents and the community are involved in the school.	$\alpha = .76$
<b>Instruction</b>	The extent to which the instructional program is well developed and implemented.	$\alpha = .75$
<b>Expectations</b>	The extent to which students are expected to learn and be responsible.	$\alpha = .73$
<b>Collaboration</b>	The extent to which the administration, faculty, and students cooperate and participate in problem solving.	$\alpha = .74$

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