



# Texas Study of the High School Redesign and Restructuring Grant Program

## Interim Report

Qualitative Analysis of Cycle 1 Programs | January 2007

*Prepared for the Texas Education Agency by*



**Resources for Learning, LLC**

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TEXAS STUDY OF THE  
HIGH SCHOOL REDESIGN AND RESTRUCTURING (HSRR)  
GRANT PROGRAM



*Interim Report*  
*Qualitative Analysis of Cycle 1 Programs*

*January 2007*



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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

**H**IGH SCHOOL EDUCATION IS WIDELY CRITICIZED, TO THE POINT OF being characterized as obsolete (Wagner, 2001). While many reform initiatives of the 1990s focused on elementary and middle school education, high school education has become the focus of many reform initiatives in this decade because of the need to fast-track innovation in preparation for post-secondary education and employment.

The Texas High School Project (THSP) is a \$261 million public-private initiative dedicated to increasing high school graduation and college enrollment rates all over Texas. The four key strategies of the THSP are rigorous curriculum, effective teachers, building leadership, and multiple pathways. Through programs such as the Texas High School Redesign and Restructuring (HSRR) Grant Program, THSP provides opportunities for Texas high schools to create innovative ways to ensure that all students are served (Texas Education Agency, 2005). This program is open to high schools that have been rated “academically unacceptable” for one year in the Texas Accountability Rating System. Grants require schools to develop and put into place a comprehensive design for effective school functioning. The redesign is not intended to be an add-on to any existing program and is intended to avoid a piecemeal or fragmented approach. Each school’s redesign needs to align the school’s curriculum, technology, and professional development into a cohesive, school-wide plan.

In considering potential foundations for eventual impacts on student achievement, the application of a wide variety of models and approaches to even more varied school contexts and a spectrum of implementation issues present challenges for evaluation. Resources for Learning (RFL) has modeled its approach on the Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) evaluation designs that take into account context and implementation in the identification of preliminary indicators of successful practices in high schools.

## *Executive Summary*

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The evaluation was guided by the following objectives:

- **To document grant implementation**  
The evaluation describes grant implementation through assessing school context and elements important to school change, such as capacity, support, focus, pedagogy, outcomes, and school climate.
- **To extract preliminary indications of effective components and promising practices**  
The evaluation identifies schools associated with strong overall implementation and provides preliminary analysis of promising practices and effective redesign components.

The evaluation was based on the following questions:

1. **How did grantee schools differ in their implementation of the High School Redesign and Restructuring grants, including:**
  - a. use of grant funds,
  - b. degree of implementation,
  - c. level of external technical assistance,
  - d. teacher buy-in, and
  - e. leadership qualities?
2. **What barriers and successes have schools experienced in implementing redesign plans?**
3. **What was the climate of each school and how has it changed over the course of the grant?**
4. **What methods and objectives were associated with positive change in school climate?**

## **METHODS**

The interim evaluation includes case studies and evaluation findings consisting of a cross-case analysis.

The case study components include:

- school profiles developed from document review,
- site visit data including interviews and focus groups, and
- surveys of Technical Assistance Providers (TAPs) and school staff.

The evaluation findings include:

- descriptive statistics across various indicators, such as elements of school change, school climate, overall implementation, and assessment of TAP support.

## PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Summary of early aspects of grant implementation including case studies and qualitative analysis at twelve Cycle 1 schools, which received their grant funds in April 2005, is the focus of this Interim Report. Also included is School 5, a site non-competitively funded by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) as a part of a multi-school THSP redesign project in a major urban district, for a total of 13 schools. Key study components included case studies of the Cycle 1 schools and a cross-site analysis summarizing qualitative findings. Quantitative findings will be presented in the Final Report in December 2007.

### *Implementation Levels*

Evaluators used all data points available to assess the strength of implementation with a 53–point overall scale that covers important HSRR components by breaking each component into sections that focus on measurable standards. After reviewing grant applications, budgets, school documents, progress reports submitted to TEA by the schools, site visit data, and survey data, evaluators assigned an implementation score to each school on each of the implementation components (USDE, 2003b). (See Appendix A for protocol.) Scores on each of the components were then summed, and an overall implementation score was assigned to each school that corresponds with one of five school reform implementation levels (Bodilly, 1998). Schools were then categorized into three implementation-level groups. Clear differences arose for one group of schools, which included the three charter schools and which served student populations very unlike the students in the other nine schools. This group included a residential facility and three other schools that are assessed under the TEA Alternative Education Accountability. Although their implementation scores are quite high, the circumstances at these schools, such as small number of teachers needing to be trained, make them difficult to compare to the regular public schools.

The implementation level and type of school are listed in Table E.1 for each of the sites.

**Table E.1. School Implementation Score and Type**

School	Implementation Score (0-53)	Implementation Level (Low-High)	Type (Regular/Alternative)
School 1	33.12	High	Regular
School 2	37.25	High	Regular
School 3	38.74	High	Regular
School 4	23.50	Mid	Regular
School 5	29.50	Mid	Regular
School 6	26.96	Mid	Regular
School 7	14.23	Low	Regular
School 8	21.70	Low	Regular
School 9	17.67	Low	Regular
School 10	27.67	Mid	Alternative
School 11	41.44	High	Alternative
School 12	32.62	High	Alternative
School 13	26.26	Mid	Alternative

For the five schools identified for inclusion in the high implementation category, the overall implementation score on the strength of implementation scale described above averaged 37 out of a possible 53 points. The five middle-level implementation category schools had a mean of 27 out of 53 points, while the three low-level implementation category schools averaged 16 out of 53 possible points.

**Table E.2. Mean Overall and Self-Assessed Implementation Scores by Group**

Overall Implementation		Self-Assessed Implementation Score**
Level	Score*	
High-Level Implementation	37	2.83
Middle-Level Implementation	27	3.04
Low-Level Implementation	16	3.14

\*Note. 1-53 scale

\*\*Note. 1-5 scale

Self-assessed implementation levels from school progress reports were then compared to the overall implementation categories assigned by evaluators. Results from the self-reported implementation levels contradicted the implementation category scores. Schools with high levels of implementation on the 53-point scale used by evaluators averaged 2.83 on a scale of 5 for the self-assessed school implementation score. Schools with middle-level implementation had an average score of 3.04, while schools with low levels of implementation rated this construct an average of 3.14. (See Table E.2 for mean self-assessed implementation score by group.)

The discrepancy between overall implementation score calculated by evaluators and the self-assessed implementation score may result from low-implementing schools lacking a thorough understanding of the HSRR grant requirements, and therefore not fully comprehending what high levels of implementation should look like. Rather the influx of money is used to fill badly needed gaps in basic services and supplies, which is greatly appreciated by staff.

### ***Summary of High-Level Implementation Schools***

School 1 is part of a rural school district in East-central Texas. Student enrollment in 2005–06 was 330 students. Sixty-two percent of students are African American, 29% Latino/Hispanic, and nine percent White. Seventy-six percent of students are economically disadvantaged, and 63% are at risk. Student mobility is 15%. The school has adopted Accelerated Schools (AS) as its HSRR program.

School 2 is part of a large urban school district in East-central Texas. Student enrollment in 2005–06 was 2,678 students. Ninety-one percent of students are Latino/Hispanic, six percent African American, three percent White, and one percent Other. Eighty-nine percent of students are economically disadvantaged, and 82% are considered at risk. Student mobility is 24%. The school has adopted Schools for a New Society (SNS) as its HSRR program.

School 3 is part of a large urban school district in Central Texas. Student enrollment in 2005–06 was 735 students. Eighty-one percent of students are Latino/Hispanic, 18% African American, two percent White, and one percent Other. Eighty-three percent of students are economically disadvantaged, and 87% are at risk. Student mobility is 40%. The school has adopted High Schools That Work (HSTW) as its HSRR program.

## *Executive Summary*

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School 11 is a charter school in a major urban area in Central Texas. The school serves 329 students in grades PK–12. Seventy-eight percent of students are Latino/Hispanic, 12% African American, and 10% White. Seventy-nine percent of students are economically disadvantaged and 58% at risk. Mobility is relatively low at 22%. The school has adopted International Center for Leadership in Education/Agile Mind/Capturing Kids' Hearts as its HSRR program.

School 12 is a charter school in a major urban area in Central Texas serving 111 students in grades 9–12. The majority (78%) of students are Latino/Hispanic, with 16% White and six percent African American. Ninety-six percent of students are economically disadvantaged and 96% at risk. Student mobility is a concern at 56%. The school has adopted Accelerated Schools (AS) as its HSRR program. This is the smallest school in the high-implementing group.

Schools with high levels of implementation as assigned by evaluators tended to vary widely in their local context. Schools with high levels of implementation all reported high levels of External Support. These schools had the highest scores on Internal Focus, and reported high levels of buy-in from teachers, whether or not they had been involved in choosing the program being used for restructuring. The school climate was reported to be the most positive at these schools, with the highest scores on the leadership scale and the lowest scores on the order scale, in general.

### ***Summary of Middle-Level Implementation Schools***

School 4 is part of a large urban school district in East-central Texas. Student enrollment in 2005–06 was 668 students. Eighty-eight percent of students are African American, 11% Latino/Hispanic, and one percent White. Eighty-five percent of students are economically disadvantaged, and 85% are at risk. Student mobility is 39%. Twenty-eight percent of students require special education services. The school has adopted SNS as its HSRR program.

School 5 is part of a large urban school district in South-central Texas. Student enrollment in 2005–06 was 1,408 students. Ninety-nine percent of students are Latino/Hispanic and one percent African American. Ninety-nine percent of students are economically disadvantaged, and 77% are at risk. Student mobility is 34%. The school has adopted HSTW as its HSRR program.

School 6 is part of a large urban school district in East-central Texas. Student enrollment in 2005–06 was 1,359 students. Ninety-one percent of students are African American, eight percent Latino/Hispanic, 0.2% White, and 0.7% Other. Seventy-two percent of students are economically disadvantaged, and

79% are at risk. Student mobility is 35%. The school has adopted SNS as its HSRR program.

School 10 is a charter school residential facility located in eastern Texas. The 91 students live in cottages with other students and house parents. Fifty-two percent of students are White, 35% are African American and 12% Latino/Hispanic. One hundred percent of students are economically disadvantaged and 93% at risk. Student mobility is very high at 80%. The school has adopted Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound (ELOB) as its HSRR program. This is the smallest of the schools in the middle-level implementation group, and the nature of the school makes it quite different from the other schools.

School 13 is part of a large urban school district in north Texas. Student enrollment in 2005–06 was 223 students. Seventy-three percent of students are Latino/Hispanic, 19% African American, and seven percent White. Forty percent of students are economically disadvantaged, and 100% are at risk. Student mobility is very high at 71%. The school is a non-traditional option for students who are English language learners or who have previously dropped out of high school and has adopted HSTW as its HSRR program.

Schools with middle-level implementation scores as assigned by evaluators in general reported scores more similar to low-level implementation schools than high-level implementation schools. In general, like high-level implementation schools, teachers were not involved in choosing the program for redesign. However, in these schools, there was not the level of reported enthusiasm and support once the program began, that there was in the high-level implementation schools. Scores on the Capacity construct were lowest for this group of schools. The school climate scores were highest on the instruction scale and lowest on the order or involvement scale for the middle-level implementation schools. Results on the scales in general were more mixed than those for the high-level implementation schools.

### ***Summary of Low-Level Implementation Schools***

School 7 is located in East-central Texas in a small rural town. Student enrollment in 2005–06 was 76 students. Ninety percent of students are African American, seven percent Latino/Hispanic, and three percent White. Ninety-three percent of students are economically disadvantaged, and 86% are at risk. Student mobility is 18%. Twenty-nine percent of students require special education services. The school has adopted HSTW as its HSRR program.

School 8 is located in Central Texas and is its own school district. Student enrollment in 2005–06 was 69 students. The school serves grades PK–12, and the demographic data represents all grade levels. Thirty-eight percent of

## *Executive Summary*

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students are White, 31% African American, 31% Latino/Hispanic, and one percent Other. Sixty-six percent of students are economically disadvantaged, and 53% are at risk. Student mobility is 20%. The school has adopted the Dana Center Support and Odyssey Computer Program as its HSRR programs.

School 9 is located in East-central Texas and is part of a district that is adjacent to a large urban school district. Student enrollment in 2005-06 was 1,251 students. Seventy-three percent of students are African American, 26% Latino/Hispanic, 0.6% White, and 0.4% Other. Ninety-six percent of students are economically disadvantaged, and 55% are at risk. Student mobility is 28%. The school has adopted a locally-developed HSRR program.

Low-level implementation schools had the least in common. In general, they reported high expectations but low levels of evidence for any of the five constructs related to school reform, other than Capacity. This is likely due to the influx of resources related to redesign and lack of understanding among the many new staff members of the requirements of the redesign program. This group of schools had their lowest average score on the Restructuring Outcomes construct, probably because their implementation was not yet at the stage of being reflected in outcomes.

### ***Summary of Restructuring Constructs***

This section identifies the main factors that facilitated or hindered HSRR implementation at the sites and provides a summary of the evidence.

#### ***Local Context***

- *Staff turnover, limited resources, shifting accountability ratings, and pre-existing reform initiatives influenced the context in which initial implementation of the HSRR efforts occurred.*

Schools in all three implementation categories ranged from very small to very large. Discipline and staff turnover were greater problems at the middle- and low-level implementation schools than they were at the high-level implementation schools.

#### ***Model Adoption and Implementation***

- *Redesign plans included a variety of models, but awardee schools did not consistently research selected redesign plans; nor did they involve staff in their selection and development.*

School staff members were rarely involved in the selection or development of redesign plans. However, in high-level implementation schools, teachers

reported supporting the model once it was implemented. This was less common in middle-level implementation schools. Locally developed plans varied widely in terms of unified vision, specificity, and support structures. About a third of grantees implemented some form of smaller learning communities.

### **Capacity**

- *Redesign funds equipped needy schools with basic materials and enabled them to develop credit recovery options, facilitate teacher collaboration, and increase professional development.*

High-level implementation schools allocated the largest portions of their grant funds to professional salaries or contracted services, as did middle-level implementation schools. However, the middle-implementers tended to budget higher proportions of funds to categories such as capital outlay or supplies. Low-level implementation schools had a higher score on this construct than either of the other groups, which may indicate staff appreciation of the influx of money into the school, without a real understanding of the requirements of the redesign program.

### **External Support**

- *The perceived effectiveness of Technical Assistance Providers varied, as did the intensity and depth of support provided by professional development. School districts generally provided little support.*

Due to the wide variation in redesign approaches, schools used a variety of TAPs. Focused, intensive professional development was often associated with an external model provider, with local efforts being less cohesive and intensive. High-level implementation schools report strong support, while middle-level implementation schools indicate a weak level of TAP support. Low-implementers report varying levels of support and varying quality of the support received.

### **Internal Focus and Buy-In**

- *Most schools had limited initial staff involvement and staff buy-in, with limited staff understanding of redesign. Schools also faced pressure resulting from their accountability ratings.*

Campus or district officials often developed the HSRR application and selected the design plan with minimal staff input. Turnover in administration resulted in limited understanding of the HSRR program by new school leaders, which impeded the garnering of staff support. While staff in high-level implementation schools bought into the program once it was adopted, staff in middle-level implementation schools were less enthusiastic,

and staff in low-implementation schools reported a “wait and see” attitude. Teachers in these schools were not as well versed in the program as teachers in the other schools.

### ***Pedagogical Change***

- ▶ *For most grantees, the period of time covered in this Interim Report was too short for significant pedagogical change to be measured.*

Staff most frequently characterized the level of pedagogical change as a new awareness of enhanced, more student-centered teaching strategies. They reported that they had not yet had enough time to reflect upon training, apply new strategies, or monitor changes in classroom teaching as a result of redesign activities. A focus on learning teams was the most-reported activity in middle- and high-level implementation schools.

### ***Restructuring Outcomes***

- ▶ *Stakeholders shared a sense of immediacy and common purpose and reported school climate improvements, improved relationships, increased engagement in learning, and improved staff attitudes and commitment.*

Teachers in general felt it was too early to see much change in student achievement outcomes, but they were positive about the changes in relationships and climate. The small learning communities adopted by some schools resulted in increased contact with and responsibility for students by specific identified teachers, and collaborative structures in smaller learning communities built stronger ties among staff. Student engagement in learning was positively impacted by the investment in improving teacher quality and in properly equipped classrooms. Students also tended to appreciate the availability of more advanced academic opportunities and increased exposure to career-aligned study at some schools. Teachers were extremely appreciative of improved classroom resources, availability of professional development, improved school climate, and in some schools smaller class sizes.



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**INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY**


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**BACKGROUND**

**B**UILDING ON THE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL Reform movement, innovation and change in high school education has been a significant topic in education reform since the mid-1990s. The catalyst for this discussion comes from the concern that high school education structured as it has been since the 1950s is obsolete (Wagner, 2001). Traditional high schools should, but sometimes do not, provide access to challenging curriculum so that students complete high school and are prepared to succeed in academic studies or employment (Plucker, Zapf, and Spradlin, 2004).

Since the 1990s, a considerable number of federal and other major national initiatives have been launched that are focused on improving secondary public education. The U.S. Department of Education (USDE) introduced the New American High Schools program in 1996. More recently, in 2003 at the High School Summit in Washington DC, the USDE launched the Preparing America's

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*Since the 1990s, a considerable number of federal and other major national initiatives have been launched that are focused on improving secondary public education.*

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Future High School Initiative, which was designed to support educators, policymakers, and leaders committed to ensuring that all high school graduates have the academic grounding and the necessary skills for postsecondary education, an apprenticeship, and/or a career. This initiative had these goals:

- Equip state and local education leaders with current knowledge about high schools through special forums, print and electronic materials, and targeted technical assistance;
- Develop the expertise and structures within the Department of Education to provide coordinated support and outreach to state and local education systems to help improve high school and youth outcomes; and
- Facilitate a national dialogue to raise awareness about the need for significant reform in American high schools (USDE website, 2006).

The National Governor's Association (NGA) launched the Redesigning the American High School Initiative in 2004 and followed it up in 2005 with a comprehensive action plan for improving high schools (NGA website, 2006). The NGA action plan includes promoting rigorous curricula, expanding college-level learning opportunities in high

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### Introduction and Methodology

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school, improving school performance, and examining high school graduation and dropout rates. The nation's governors partnered with business leaders to create Achieve Inc. to "raise academic standards and achievement so that all students graduate ready for college, work and citizenship" (Achieve Inc. website, 2006). Achieve Inc. notes that there is an unusually strong consensus across audiences of educators, employers, young people, and the general public about the need to increase high school graduation requirements, provide a more rigorous course of study, and expect more from high school students.

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***With the recent surge in private foundation initiatives and funding focused on high school redesign (such as the New Century Schools Initiatives of the Carnegie Corporation, the Open Society Institute, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation), much public attention has been drawn to efforts focused on restructuring large urban high schools into several smaller schools.***

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Twenty-six states including Texas have joined with Achieve Inc. to form The American Diploma Project (ADP) Network, a partnership of four national organizations along with the states. ADP was launched in 2001 and since then has been developing policies to support and sustain a consistent system of education from kindergarten through the fourth year of college. The ADP Network seeks to align K-12 curriculum, standards, assessments, and accountability

practices with the demands of college and the workplace (ADP website, 2006). The ADP recently published benchmarks that delineate high school graduation expectations.

The Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills is another consortium of organizations that is contributing to high school reform efforts. Twenty-six organizations and businesses including the American Federation of Teachers, Microsoft, the Ford Motor Company Fund, and the Educational Testing Service have come together to address high school reforms (Zapf, Spradlin, & Plucker, 2006). The Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills states that in order to be meaningful, reforms must address three domains: standards, assessment, and professional development. They have published three briefs addressing these domains: State Standards for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Assessment of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, and Professional Development for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills website, 2006). The key objectives sought by this reform initiative include engaging underserved students by establishing closer relationships, higher expectations, and stronger teacher communities in American high schools.

With the recent surge in private foundation initiatives and funding focused on high school redesign (such as the New Century Schools Initiatives of the Carnegie Corporation, the Open Society Institute, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation), much public attention has been drawn to efforts focused on restructuring large urban high schools into several smaller schools. However, in reality, high schools across the nation, small and large, are employing a variety of models to reform their high schools in an effort to create the kinds of learning environments that

provide personalized, high-quality instruction for underserved students. This has happened largely in response to federal and state accountability mandates. The USDE provides a list of high school reform models<sup>1</sup> that, with a few exceptions, is a subset of the reform models that have been widely implemented nationwide as part of the Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) initiative. Primary restructuring approaches include those that focus on secondary and postsecondary curricular alignment, smaller learning communities, alternative schools, career and technical education, middle college high schools, and competency-based promotion (Plucker, Zapf, & Spradlin, 2004).

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***The HSRR program is open to high schools that have been rated Academically Unacceptable for one year in the Texas Accountability Rating System.***

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In a review of research findings on key high school reform strategies, MPR Associates suggest that a combination of strategies that fit the unique context of the school, rather than any one strategy such as smaller learning communities, are most likely to have impact (Visher, Emanuel, & Teitelbaum, 1999).

In considering potential impacts on student achievement, the application of a wide variety of models and approaches to even more varied school contexts and a spectrum of implementation issues present challenges for evaluation. Given the likelihood that schools participating in the Texas High School Redesign and Restructuring (HSRR) Grant Program were implementing practices associated with CSR, Resources

for Learning (RFL) modeled its approach on the CSR evaluation designs that take into account context and implementation in the identification of preliminary indicators of successful practices in high schools.

## STATE CONTEXT

The Texas High School Project (THSP) is a \$261 million public-private initiative dedicated to increasing high school graduation and college enrollment rates all over Texas. The THSP was begun out of recognition that the traditional American high school is based on a model that is fast becoming obsolete in the context of a knowledge economy. The assumption of this model is that education for most students ends with high school graduation. The new reality is that an increasing proportion of jobs require at least some postsecondary education. THSP aims to raise expectations and improve the academic achievement of students so that they will graduate from high school highly skilled and ready to meet the increasing demands of the workforce or postsecondary education.

The four key strategies of the THSP are rigorous curriculum, effective teachers, building leadership, and multiple pathways. ADP reports that students entering the workforce have the same need for high skill levels as students entering postsecondary education (ADP website, 2006). The Office of Education Initiatives at the Texas Education Agency supports a number of Texas initiatives that provide funding for schools implementing a rigorous curriculum for students. Additional initiatives fund programs supporting highly-qualified teachers who have full certification, a bachelor's degree, and who have demonstrated competence in subject knowledge and teaching. Further initiatives supported by

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<sup>1</sup> (see <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/hs/reform.html>)

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THSP focus on building leadership capacity for principals and other school administrators enabling them to better lead and sustain effective change. The fourth key strategy of THSP stimulates creation of multiple pathways for learning and postsecondary success. Through the THSP, Texas high schools are creating innovative ways to ensure that all students are served, including variations in institutional arrangements, personalized learning environments and additional academic and social support (Texas Education Agency, 2005).

As part of the THSP, TEA has implemented the HSRR Grant Program. This program is open to high schools that have been rated Academically Unacceptable for one year in the Texas Accountability Rating System. Texas Education Code (TEC) §39.132 imposes sanctions on campuses that have been designated as Academically Unacceptable. The commissioner may permit campuses that have been designated as Academically Unacceptable to participate in innovative redesign of the campus to improve campus performance. Those high schools that meet the criteria for sanctions under TEC §39.132 are eligible to apply for the Texas HSRR Grant programs to assist them with the innovative redesign process. These grants require schools to develop and put into place a comprehensive design for effective school functioning. The redesign is not intended to be an add-on to any existing program and is intended to avoid a piecemeal or fragmented approach. The redesign must align the school's curriculum, technology, and professional development into a school-wide reform plan.

HSRR Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 of the grant program are funded through Rider 67, High

School Completion and Success, of the General Appropriations Act, 78<sup>th</sup> Legislature Regular Session and Rider 59, Texas High School Initiative, 79<sup>th</sup> Legislature Regular Session, respectively.

In Cycle 1, TEA awarded \$3,897,164 in grants to 12 school districts with Academically Unacceptable high schools to build capacity for implementing school-wide improvement strategies and to create a demonstration project that will supply case studies in successful practices for turning around low-performing campuses. In Cycle 2, TEA awarded \$4,449,899.18 in grant funding to support 17 Academically Unacceptable campuses. In December 2006, TEA preliminarily awarded funding for a third cycle of redesign grants to 15 Academically Unacceptable high school campuses.

The Texas HSRR Grant, Cycle 1, meets the goals of Rider 67 by providing low-performing high school campuses with the resources to build capacity for implementing innovative, school-wide improvement strategies to increase student achievement and graduation rates. Additionally, this grant program was created as a demonstration project that would provide case studies and models for successful practices in turning around low-performing high schools. The Texas HSRR grant requires that high school campuses receiving funding integrate a comprehensive design for effective school functioning, including instruction, assessment, classroom management, professional development, parental involvement, and school structure and management. The goal is to meld the school's curriculum, technology, and professional development into a coherent school-wide reform plan. The Texas HSRR

grant also requires that high school campuses receiving funding under this grant have measurable goals for student performance tied to the state's content standards and student performance standards. High schools are required to have benchmarks for meeting these goals.

The specific program goals for the Texas HSRR grant are to:

- Correct the specific areas of unacceptable performance identified in the campus accountability rating;
- Increase overall student achievement;
- Raise academic standards and expectations for all students;
- Demonstrate innovative management and instructional practices;
- Ensure that every student is taught by a highly qualified, effective teacher;
- Develop leadership capacity in principals and other school leaders; and
- Engage parents and the community in school activities.

Innovative redesign involves comprehensive school-wide improvements that cover all aspects of a high school's operations, based on careful assessment of campus needs—through curricular and instructional changes, structural and managerial innovations, sustained professional development, and enhanced involvement of parents and community. While state law requires all campuses rated Academically Unacceptable to implement targeted improvement plans, school districts or charter schools that receive grant funding from the Texas HSRR grant must engage in long-term, comprehensive reform efforts (TEA website, 2005). High

schools that receive grant funding are expected to implement programs and activities that result in a redesigned school that is fundamentally different from the existing one and that:

- Corrects identified deficiencies;
- Raises academic standards and boosts student achievement;
- Redesigns failing management and instructional practices;
- Develops the skills and knowledge of teachers, principals, and other school leaders; and
- Engages parents and the community in improvement efforts (TEA web site, 2006).

The 12 Texas schools that received Cycle 1 grants ranged from small public and charter schools serving under 100 students each to large high schools with enrollments of well over a thousand students. (See Table 1.1) Though all but one site received Academically Unacceptable accountability ratings in 2003–04, by 2004–05—and the award of Cycle 1 grant funds—seven of the 12 schools had achieved Acceptable ratings, some through required improvement and some through meeting the accountability standard. Also included is School 5, a site non-competitively funded by TEA as a part of a multi-school Texas High School Project redesign project in a major urban district, for a total of 13 schools. (See Table 1.1 for more campus background information.)

Given the variety and diversity of grantee sites, the redesign approaches and models employed by the thirteen Cycle 1 schools and the specific activities implemented in each of the “areas of reform”<sup>2</sup> varied widely.

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<sup>2</sup> The areas of reform in the RFA include curriculum, instruction, school structure, professional development, classroom management, school management, parental involvement, and student assessment.

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**Table 1.1. Campus Background Information**

School	Campus Accountability Rating: 2003–04	Campus Accountability Rating: 2004–05	Campus Accountability Rating: 2005–06	Reasons for Unacceptable Rating	Percent of Economically Disadvantaged Students	Number of Students
School 1	Unacceptable	Acceptable	Unacceptable	TAKS reading/ELA and mathematics (2003–04) TAKS mathematics and science (2005–06)	81%	329
School 2	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	TAKS mathematics (2003–04) TAKS reading (2004–05) TAKS mathematics (2005–06)	91%	2788
School 3	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	TAKS reading/ELA and mathematics (2003–04) TAKS mathematics (2004–05) TAKS mathematics and science (2005–06)	80%	1028
School 4	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	TAKS mathematics (2003–04) TAKS reading (2004–05) TAKS mathematics (2005–06)	90%	790
School 5	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	n/a	98%	1473
School 6	Unacceptable	Acceptable	Unacceptable	TAKS mathematics (2003–04) TAKS mathematics and science (2005–06)	76%	1302

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

\*Number of students enrolled in grades 9–12 for schools with student populations that include additional grades.

**Table 1.1. Campus Background Information** *(continued)*

School	Campus Accountability Rating: 2003–04	Campus Accountability Rating: 2004–05	Campus Accountability Rating: 2005–06	Reasons for Unacceptable Rating	Percent of Economically Disadvantaged Students	Number of Students
School 7	Unacceptable	Acceptable	Unacceptable	TAKS mathematics (2003–04) TAKS science (2005–06)	92%	73
School 8	Unacceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	TAKS mathematics (2003–04)	63%	76*
School 9	Unacceptable	Acceptable	Unacceptable	TAKS mathematics and science (2003–04) TAKS mathematics and science (2005–06)	80%	1402
School 10	Unacceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	TAKS reading/ ELA, writing, and mathematics (2003–04)	100%	49*
School 11	Unacceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	TAKS mathematics (2003–04)	77%	74*
School 12	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Acceptable	TAKS mathematics (2003–04) TAKS reading/ELA and mathematics (2004–05)	22%	70*
School 13	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Acceptable	TAKS science (2003–04) TAKS reading/ ELA; completion rate (2004–05)	44%	247

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

\*Number of students enrolled in grades 9–12 for schools with student populations that include additional grades.

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***From its research, USDE (2003) concluded that due to the complexity of school reform it could take years for strategies to impact student performance.***

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Further, implementation levels of redesign plans and activities were diverse, as many were tied to previously implemented programs and activities that resulted in the improved accountability ratings at some of the schools prior to the grant award.

### **REPORT ORGANIZATION**

This interim report includes case studies of each Cycle 1 school and a cross-site analysis of qualitative data. The timeframe for the grant and this evaluation required that the evaluators look at Cycle 1 grantee schools in the very early stages of implementation (end of year one). A final report will be submitted to TEA in December 2007 and will include Cycle 2 schools as well as quantitative analysis for Cycle 1 and 2 schools.

### **CASE STUDY THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

From its research, USDE (2003) concluded that due to the complexity of school reform it could take 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 school reforms include change in areas that can be collapsed into a theoretical model involving five constructs: school capacity, external support, internal focus, pedagogical change,

and restructuring outcomes (Nunnery et al., 2005). Finding impacts in these areas may positively impact longer-term outcomes such as student achievement. The constructs are defined in the following paragraphs.

#### ***School Capacity***

School capacity refers to the infrastructure that schools need 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 actors outside of the school, including support provided through design-based assistance organizations (DBAO) and 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 reform model at the school level (Borman et al., 2004).

#### ***Internal Focus***

Internal focus refers to the degree to which the essence of reform efforts becomes 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 et al., 2004).

### ***Pedagogical Change***

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 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, and Smith, 1996).

### ***Restructuring Outcomes***

Restructuring outcomes refers to the outcomes that go beyond just student achievement to the other areas reform efforts are intended to impact, such as teacher support and parental involvement (USDE, 2002).

Investigation of the five constructs involved in successful school reform sets the stage for investigation of long-term impacts such as improved student achievement. Borman et al. (2002) examined the association between school reforms and student achievement. They showed that the impact of school reforms may be due to “unmeasured program-specific and school-specific differences in implementation” (p. 36) rather than to the model itself or the model’s specific components. Implementation issues that contribute to differences may involve specific obstacles at individual sites, such as turnover in leadership, little staff buy-in, and the phase of implementation.

In order to understand the effectiveness of the grant strategies and activities, it is important that the study of implementation of redesign and restructuring initiatives consider site-specific starting points and context.

### ***Evaluation Objectives***

This evaluation has two purposes: to document grant implementation and to extract preliminary indications of effective components and promising practices. The first objective describes grant implementation through an assessment of school context and elements important to the process of school change, such as capacity, support, focus, pedagogy, outcomes, and school climate. The second objective requires identification of schools associated with strong overall implementation to provide preliminary analysis of promising practices and effective redesign components. The evaluation was based on the following questions:

1. How did grantee schools differ in their implementation of the HSRR grants, including:
  - a. use of grant funds,
  - b. degree of implementation,
  - c. level of external technical assistance,
  - d. teacher buy-in, and
  - e. leadership qualities?
2. What barriers and successes have schools experienced in implementing redesign plans?
3. What was the climate of each school, and how has it changed over the course of the grant?
4. What methods and objectives were associated with positive change in school climate?

HSRR as implemented by TEA allows participating schools to adapt a diverse set of models appropriate to their needs. Because all grantee schools were in early stages of implementation, it is important to recognize that the evaluation occurred simultaneously with implementation of HSRR strategies.

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***This evaluation has two purposes: to document grant implementation and to extract preliminary indications of effective components and promising practices.***

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## METHODS

This interim evaluation includes case studies and a cross-case analysis. The case study components include school profiles developed from document review, site visit data including interviews and focus groups, and surveys of technical assistance providers and school staff. The cross-case analysis includes descriptive statistics across various indicators, such as elements of school change, school climate, overall implementation, and assessment of Technical Assistance Provider (TAP) support and implementation, as well as grant funding allocation.

### ***Case Study***

To assess program impacts adequately, it is important to understand the contextual factors surrounding the redesign process. This is especially relevant since seven of the 12 campuses with Unacceptable ratings that received Cycle 1 grants effectively improved their deficiencies enough to earn an accountability rating of Academically Acceptable prior to receiving grant funding. In addition, the request for applications encouraged sites to propose redesign plans

that combined with other reform programs and funding. Finding out what programs and activities could have contributed to preliminary improvements and what existing programs and efforts have been integrated with redesign activities was key to providing accurate information.

### ***SCHOOL PROFILES***

School profiles were created as an initial documentation of school progress with redesign efforts and were used to guide site visits. They were developed from grant applications, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) reports, Campus Accountability reports, progress reports, expenditure reports, and general site research. The profiles reported the following information:

- Demographic data
- Performance data
- Redesign descriptions and models
- Model strategies
- Identified areas of deficiency
- Projected grant funding
- Actual grant spending (when available)

### ***SITE VISITS***

Two-member teams visited 13 Cycle 1 schools in the fall of 2006. Teams consisted of an educational specialist and a methods specialist. RFL staff trained site visit team members in the goals of the site visits and evaluation, a review of site profiles, site visit activities and protocols, and creation of a site visit summary. Site visit activities included interviews with principals, randomly selected teachers, and counselors along with focus groups with teachers, parents, and students that typically occurred over a two-day period. In some cases where school staff members were few, some evaluation activities were eliminated. For example, if a school had a teaching staff of seven, evaluators conducted a focus group but no individual teacher

interviews. The RFL team identified a school contact, provided the school with agendas and protocols prior to the site visit, and worked with the school contact to provide any additional necessary information to participants.

Staff interview and focus group instruments were adapted from protocols developed by the Center for Research in Educational Policy (CREP) and designed to report information about staff perceptions related to context, redesign involvement, capacity, support, focus, pedagogy, outcomes, and facilitators and barriers to redesign implementation. Parent and student focus group instruments were designed to capture information about school climate, involvement/engagement in schools, school services, and perceived improvement in student outcomes. (See Appendix A for interview and focus group protocols.)

### **Survey**

The purpose of the staff survey was to collect information related to implementation, staff buy-in, barriers to and early indicators of success, and school climate. RFL combined and adapted two reliable and valid instruments designed specifically for evaluating perceptions of school reform. TEA reviewed and modified the instruments. The first instrument was the School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire (SWPTQ, Goldfeder and Ross, 2003), which has been adapted by researchers from CREP for evaluation of redesign efforts from the Comprehensive School Reform Teacher Questionnaire (CSRTQ, Ross & Alberg, 1999). Its 28 items are designed and reported to measure the five constructs underlying school reform: external support, school capacity, internal focus, pedagogical change, and outcomes. Teachers respond using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly agree to

strongly disagree. Construct validation and scale reliability coefficients can be found in Nunnery, Ross, and Sterbinsky (2003).

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### ***Survey data for the 13 case study sites were analyzed to supplement site visit findings.***

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The second instrument measured school climate using the School Climate Inventory (SCI) (Butler & Alberg, 1989). The SCI consists of seven dimensions, or scales, logically and empirically linked with the five constructs associated 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. Scale descriptions and current internal reliability coefficients can be accessed at <http://crep.memphis.edu/web/instruments/sci.php>.

The instruments were combined to create teacher and principal surveys which were approved by TEA. The surveys were then programmed for online administration. A local survey contact from each campus was identified to help administer the online surveys. Evaluators communicated with each survey contact about the data collection schedule and described the assistance needed from the survey contacts. With the assistance of the local survey contacts, the evaluators distributed information about the surveys and step-by-step instructions. The evaluators also provided an e-mail address for technical assistance for respondents who needed help

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in accessing or submitting the questionnaire. The evaluators monitored the response rates on a weekly basis and worked with the local survey contacts to remind staff to complete the surveys. The online teacher and principal surveys were active between September 6 and October 6 in the fall of 2006 for Cycle 1 grantees. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

Additional online surveys were conducted with the external TAPs to assess the level of support and assistance they provided, the stage of implementation at their assigned site, implementation fidelity, and barriers to and catalysts for implementation. Surveys were developed in conjunction with TEA to assess stages of implementation, implementation fidelity, and barriers to implementation for grantee schools. The URLs for accessing the online questionnaires and step-by-step instructions were sent to school contacts with requests to forward to the school's TAP. In some cases, this was not the same person designated in the application or identified by the school. Confusion with identifying the TAP resulted in no response from some sites. The online surveys were active from September 15 to October 6 in the fall of 2006 for Cycle 1 TAPs. (See Appendix A for TAP survey protocols.)

The case study evaluation involved multiple analysis steps that began prior to site entry and continued through project completion. Site profiles began the analysis process. After completion of site visits, team members summarized each school's data, aligned the data with research objectives, and cited evidence in the form of descriptions or quotes that supported preliminary findings. Evaluators cleaned, reviewed, and

supplemented information, combining it across all data points.

Survey data for the 13 case study sites were analyzed to supplement site visit findings. Response rates from the schools were highly variable from school to school and generally fair to good (with the exception of one campus with a particularly low response rate). However, small sample sizes, even when response rates were high, generally limit interpretation. Follow up to detect non-random differences between respondents and nonrespondents was beyond the scope of this evaluation. (See Table 1.2 for more response rate information.)

For the CSRTQ and the SCI, missing data ranged from 0 to 3%. Missing responses were eliminated from percent calculations. Tables only report percentages for those choosing a response linked to a value on the Likert scale. This approach represents a proportion of the total number of survey respondents but is reflective of all responses providing an actual Likert-scale rating. Elimination of missing data from calculations provides an adjusted frequency that minimizes any potential distortion in interpretations caused by including missing data (Rea & Parker, 1997).

To create summary statistics for the survey scales, missing responses were assigned the school mean 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

**Table 1.2. Survey Response Rates**

Campus	Staff Responded	Total Staff	Response Rate
School 1	22	31	71%
School 2	88	156	56%
School 3	36	76	47%
School 4	38	47	81%
School 5	74	105	70%
School 6	32	77	42%
School 7	7	9	78%
School 8	8	9	89%
School 9	85	85	100%
School 10	2	11	18%
School 11	7	7	100%
School 12	8	9	89%
School 13	24	25	96%

number of respondents at the school level was judged too low to use multiple imputation (Rubin & Schenker 1986) based on predicting missing responses from prior responses. Descriptive statistics were also calculated without missing responses. There were no significant or practical differences between the two approaches.

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. School staff also member-checked case studies to ensure validity of findings.

After reviewing grant applications, budgets, schools' documents, progress reports submitted to TEA by the schools, site visit data, and survey data, evaluators assigned an implementation score to each school on each of the implementation components (USDE, 2003b). (See Appendix A for protocol.) The implementation scale taps components of school reform 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 a

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Component	Measure	Score
<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

teacher's classroom; and explicit guidance to align training with standards, curriculum, or assessment tools. Where appropriate, each section is then marked yes or no and given one point for yes and zero points for no. So if a school provides HSRR-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.

Scores on each of the components were then summed, and an overall implementation score was assigned to each school that corresponds with one of five school reform implementation levels listed below (Bodilly, 1998).

- 1) **Not Implementing.** No evidence of the strategy.
- 2) **Planning.** The school is planning 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 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.

Schools were then categorized into three implementation-level groups through analysis of site-visit data, survey data, and the overall implementation scale. One of the clear differences in sites that arose from the case studies was a variation in implementation of reform strategies based on whether the school was operating as a regular education school or an alternative school. While analysis of the level of implementation put the four alternative schools in the High-Level or Middle-Level Implementation category, they were in many ways not comparable to other grant recipients. Alternative schools tended to serve distinctive student populations and often were assessed under the Alternative Education Accountability System by TEA. In addition, their small size resulted in strong differences in implementation categories affected by such activities as training the entire staff. Alternative schools are included

in the Implementation category indicated by their score, but are often discussed separately. The 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 or the “Not Implementing” stage

The Evaluation Findings chapter contains a cross-case analysis of the findings from site visits and survey data. Each of the five constructs important to school reform is discussed from the perspective of high-, middle-, and low-implementing schools.







Thirteen case studies were conducted as part of the High School Redesign and Restructuring (HSRR) evaluation. The following thirteen chapters present the results of those case studies. Results are reported for five schools with high-level implementation of their chosen HSRR program, five schools with middle-level implementation, and three schools with low-level implementation. Topics discussed include the local context of the school, model adoption and implementation, and an implementation summary detailing the effects of the reform effort and facilitators and barriers impacting the implementation.





## SCHOOL 1

## HIGH-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION

**HSRR PROGRAM: ACCELERATED SCHOOLS****AWARD DATE: CYCLE 1–APRIL 2005****AWARD AMOUNT: \$337,360****SITE VISIT DATE: SEPTEMBER 6–7, 2006****IMPLEMENTATION SCORE: 33.12 (0–53)****I. LOCAL CONTEXT**

SCHOOL 1 IS LOCATED IN A RURAL SCHOOL district in East-central Texas. Student enrollment at School 1 for the 2005–06 school year was 330 students. The student population is predominately African American (62%). The next largest racial/ethnic group is Latino/Hispanic (29%). A majority of the student body is considered economically disadvantaged (76%) and at risk (63%). In addition, 17% of School 1’s students are in special education programs. (See Table 2.1 for more demographic information.)

**Starting Points**

School 1 faces many challenges related to a history of low academic performance, a negative and uncooperative school climate, and high levels of administrator and staff turnover. According to the school’s grant application, student discipline was also an area

of concern, with over 300 incidents reported in the 2003–04 school year. Staff described the norm in years past as students “sleeping” and not participating in class.

In its grant application, School 1 reported that less than a third of its African American (22%) and economically disadvantaged (29%) students passed the mathematics portion of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) test. Less than half of these student populations passed the reading portion of the test. In 2004–05, School 1 received an accountability rating of Academically Acceptable, though mathematics performance for African American and economically disadvantaged students was still below the standard, 29% and 32% respectively. In 2005–06, although reading scores continued to improve, School 1’s accountability rating was Academically Unacceptable because of drops in mathematics performance for African American, White, and economically

**Table 2.1. School 1: Demographic Profile, 2005–06**

African American	Latino/Hispanic	White	Other	Economically Disadvantaged	At Risk	Mobility (03–04)	Limited English Proficient	Special Education
62%	29%	9%	0%	76%	63%	15%	5%	17%

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

**Table 2.2. School 1: Accountability Rating and TAKS Performance History, 2003-04 to 2005-06**

Year	Campus Rating	TAKS Met Standard All Grades Tested (All Tests)	Reading	Math	Science	Social Studies
2003-04	Academically Unacceptable	21%	51%	32%	55%	81%
2004-05	Academically Acceptable	28%	62%	34%	44%	79%
2005-06	Academically Unacceptable	25%	77%	34%	40%	74%

Source. Texas Education Agency, 2003-04 and 2004-05 AEIS, 2005-06 Accountability Ratings

disadvantaged student groups. (See Table 2.2 for more accountability information.)

Data indicate that in the past, the climate at School 1 has been one of extreme negativity, lack of support, and distrust. Administrators, teachers, and students all gave examples of incompetent, uncooperative, and unprofessional behavior on the part of staff, especially a former school counselor. One reported that some students retook classes that they had already passed because of scheduling mistakes made by the counselor. Many participants reported that the counselor ignored requests for information such as students' grade point averages (GPA) or transcripts. Parents described the former counselor as being non-responsive and even hostile to parent requests.

Data also show that teaching staff members were unsupportive of students and that there was a lack of trust. In a spring 2005 survey of School 1 students, 50% of responding students reported that they did not feel there was a caring adult on campus. Students talked about a former teacher who would get mad at one student and then take it out on the whole class.

Another student talked about teachers who would "want to hurt students inside" through verbal comments.

Given these challenges, not surprisingly, staff turnover has been extremely high at School 1. The school has had six principals over a three-year period. Overall, the climate at the school was stagnant and unproductive. The school seemed to have a very negative image in the community.

In spring 2005, when the HSRR grant funds were received, the district's former superintendent came out of retirement to assume the position of principal at School 1.

## II. MODEL ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

### *Selection Process*

The redesign model selected for implementation at School 1 is Accelerated Schools (AS). A former curriculum director at the district level chose to redesign the school and wrote the grant proposal. Teachers were not involved in the model selection process,

**Table 2.3. Accelerated Schools Model Design**

<p><i>Background</i></p> <p>Established in 1986, AS serves around 1300 schools, levels K–12. AS provides gifted and talented instruction 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 AS program is to provide all students with enriched instruction based on encompassing the school community’s vision of learning.</p> <p><i>Key Strategies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “At-risk” students are provided with high expectations and a gifted and talented type of curriculum in order to stimulate academic growth</li> <li>• Identify students’ strengths</li> <li>• Create a unified school-wide sense of purpose</li> <li>• Incorporate the staff into 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 one to three month exploration of the accelerated school philosophy</li> <li>• Members of the school community take a formal vote with 90% agreement on the adoption of the program</li> <li>• Off-site coaches</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/>

and several site visit participants described staff resentment at being forced to participate without having been involved in the selection process. Some thought that the program would not last and were unwilling to buy in. (See Table 2.3 for more information on AS.)

### ***Initial Implementation***

School 1 administrators and teachers, with support from the Technical Assistance Provider (TAP), have focused tremendous energy toward changing the negative organizational climate at the school. The first portion of the grant period (the 2005–06 school year) was used to take stock of the school’s current situation, develop an

action plan, and learn about the AS model and processes through early release days and site visits to other campuses that were implementing the AS model.

In spring 2005, School 1 surveyed the students, teachers, and community members. The teachers presented reports on survey findings to the school board, and instruction was identified as the most critical area of need. To improve instruction, the teaching staff divided into three action teams to develop action plans for (1) student achievement, (2) instructional methods, and (3) effective use of teachers’ time. Each team explored the research in its assigned area and then made recommendations to the whole group.

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To accommodate this process, during the first year of implementation, students were dismissed one Wednesday a month for staff planning. Teachers also had the opportunity to take part in site visits to other campuses that were implementing the AS model.

A significant number of veteran teachers opposed the model because they had not been involved in the selection process. The administration developed a strategy to encourage those who were not on board to resign their positions voluntarily. Furthermore, the administration did not renew contracts of veteran teachers who did not embrace the model and who would not leave of their own accord. Because of these actions, approximately 50% of School 1's staff changed by the second year of the grant. Thus, in 2006–07 approximately 15 of the high school's 30 teaching staff were new to the school. Many reported that these new teachers were not from the community but commuted from other towns.

### ***Factors Impacting HSRR Implementation***

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

Once uncooperative staff had left the school, School 1 administration used the AS model as the core of the hiring process, even involving the TAP in interviews. Thus, new teachers have been hired based on their willingness to embrace the redesign. Of particular note was the hiring of a new counselor who, in contrast to the former counselor, is reported to be positive, helpful, and proactive according to staff, parents, and students.

School 1 identified two teachers at the school to fill two AS internal facilitator positions. One of these positions currently is vacant; the general consensus was that once this position

is filled, staffing will be appropriate to support AS implementation.

In summer 2006, all new and veteran teachers at School 1 attended a Powerful Learning Institute to introduce them as a group to the AS model and build group identity. This 30-hour training was followed up by an in-service training prior to the start of the 2006–07 school year. In addition, weekly meetings are designed to continue AS work. One of these meetings involves all new faculty members and is held every Wednesday morning. The purpose is to serve as an induction process for teachers who are new to the school and minimize the influence of any remaining veteran teachers who have negative attitudes about the school and community. The second meeting, held every Wednesday afternoon for 90 minutes, is comprised of all faculty members and focuses on AS effort strategies. These weekly meetings are coordinated by the TAP with assistance from the internal facilitators. It is important to note that the high school's athletic practices are postponed so that all coaches can participate in this weekly afternoon meeting.

Staff felt the time allocated for AS planning was adequate. The TAP suggested additional training for department heads since some current department heads have never held a school leadership role. She also noted that as a result of a teacher-led study of the effective use of teachers' time, assignments have been changed so that instead of four to five preparations, teachers are now only required to prepare for one to two classes. The TAP also reported that the curriculum director purchased a reading program (Read 180) for the school that was not in line with AS.

Parents and students mentioned an increase in tutoring services with tutors from a local university and local churches and also said

academic offerings (such as a dual credit course in English) had increased. It is unclear whether these activities are a coordinated part of the school’s redesign effort.

In terms of supplies and materials to support redesign, most interviewees indicated that the administration quickly filled any requests. The only additional supplies and materials needed were furniture appropriate for groups, and markers and charts were suggested so that teachers could do group activities in the classroom. Because of the emphasis on the teacher becoming a researcher, the creation of a professional library also was mentioned. Some calculators and computers were purchased, though likely with other funds. No other uses of HSRR funds were mentioned.

The AS TAP indicated that the school had sufficient materials, staffing and planning time, and fiscal resources to support implementation.

In its grant application, School 1 budgeted 43% of its funds for professional and

contracted services and 40% of its funds for payroll costs. Staff and services were reported to be more of a need than materials and supplies at School 1. Final budget expenditures were not yet available.

Twenty-two of 31 teachers at School 1 completed surveys for a response rate of 71%. Most respondents (77%) reported that staffing was sufficient and technology more readily available, while fewer teachers (59%) reported that planning time and materials were adequate for program implementation. Overall, the staff rated the Capacity construct at 3.77 on a 5–point scale. (See Table 2.4 for more information on the Capacity construct.)

**EXTERNAL SUPPORT**

The TAP from the Southwest Center for Accelerated Schools has played an integral part in School 1’s AS implementation process. The AS TAP is at the school every Wednesday and Thursday to provide support to teachers.

The TAP survey completed by AS indicated that School 1 received 352 hours of technical

**Table 2.4. School 1: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Capacity**

Capacity	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Teachers are given sufficient planning time to implement our program.	59%	18%	23%	22
Materials (books and other resources) needed to implement our HSRR program are readily available.	59%	27%	14%	22
Our school has sufficient faculty and staff to fully implement this program.	77%	14%	9%	22
Technological resources have become more available.	77%	23%	0%	22

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

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***The TAP survey completed by AS indicated that School 1 received 352 hours of technical support in year 1 of the grant and 680 hours of support in year 2.***

support in year 1 of the grant and 680 hours of support in year 2. The same consultant provided this service over the two-year period.

All of the staff (100%) responding to this portion of the survey found the technical assistance provided by external trainers to be of value. Ninety-five percent (95%) reported this guidance and support had helped the school implement its program. Most of the respondents reported they understood the school's HSRR program (82%) and felt the school received effective assistance from other external providers (95%). This is interesting given the low level of initial

teacher support for the program. Overall, staff rated the Support construct very high at 4.35 on a 5-point scale. (See Table 2.5 for more information on the Support construct.)

### INTERNAL FOCUS

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

Since the personnel changes of 2005–06, administration, teachers and parents describe a situation in which teacher buy-in and support for the redesign efforts has grown exponentially. An experienced teacher who is new to School 1 said that the support she currently receives is the best of her career.

Staff described the positive impact of the AS shared leadership strategy. If teachers are interested in a particular academic program, they research it and then present it to the faculty as a whole and to the administration. In some instances, teachers have been able

**Table 2.5. School 1: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Support**

Support	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
I have a thorough understanding of this school's HSRR program.	82%	18%	0%	22
I have received adequate initial and ongoing professional development/training for HSRR program implementation.	95%	5%	0%	21
Technical assistance provided by external trainers, model developers, and/or designers has been valuable.	100%	0%	0%	21
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.	95%	5%	0%	22
My school receives effective assistance from external partners (e.g., university, businesses, agencies).	82%	14%	5%	22

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

to take their recommendations to the school board. “If we can prove it with research, it can give teachers a voice and serve as the foundation [for the school’s efforts],” a teacher noted. Another example was the TAKS plan that the counselor planned to distribute to

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***“If we can prove it with research, it can give teachers a voice and serve as the foundation [for the school’s efforts],” a teacher noted.***

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the teachers at a Wednesday meeting. After reflecting on the AS tenets, the counselor changed the title of the paper to “Proposed TAKS Plan” so that teachers would have an opportunity to suggest modifications. She noted that if the teachers take ownership during the creation period, they will have buy-in to implement the plan. The counselor indicated that about 20% of teachers were not participating at this point.

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### *Alignment and Integration with Existing Programs*

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According to School 1’s HSRR grant application, existing campus programs include Title I, Part C, Migrant Education Program and the Texas High School Completion and Success Grant, though staff did not mention these grants during site visits. For the most part, administration and staff members describe an academic setting in which most programs are aligned and integrated with AS. While there were some initial problems with scheduling and implementation of a reading program called Read 180, a new English teacher has been assigned to oversee the program and has integrated it with the AS model. The TAP reported that to ensure the alignment and integration of future academic programs with the AS initiative, the staff

has developed a rubric that will be used in considering the adoption of programs.

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### *Monitoring*

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The AS monitoring process is embedded in day-to-day workings of the school. The TAP is at the campus each Wednesday and Thursday to visit teachers’ classrooms and to provide assistance. The internal facilitators are available to coach teachers on the AS strategies. The weekly meetings also provide an opportunity for administrators and teachers to gauge progress. Since a task force of teachers reports any recommendation to the entire teaching staff and administration for approval during the Wednesday afternoon meetings, all teachers have some stake in monitoring the initiative’s progress.

In addition, one staff member mentioned that teachers have received training from the regional Education Service Center (ESC) in use of disaggregated data to make sure that students are mastering the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). She said, “a lot of teachers don’t know how to read those AEIS scores.”

Twenty-two respondents answered all survey questions related to the Focus construct. Almost all respondents (96%) were supportive of the program and felt it was effectively integrated to help meet school improvement goals. Staff had a lower level of agreement (73%) with the federal, state, local, and private resources being coordinated to support the HSRR program. Overall, staff rated the Focus construct at 4.14 on a 5–point scale. (See Table 2.6 for more information on the Focus construct.)

### *PEDAGOGICAL CHANGE*

Staff report that pedagogical changes have occurred as a result of the extensive

**Table 2.6. School 1: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Focus**

Focus	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Teachers in this school are generally supportive of our HSRR program.	96%	4%	0%	22
The elements of our HSRR program are effectively integrated to help us meet school improvement goals.	96%	4%	0%	22
As a school staff, we regularly review implementation and outcome benchmarks to evaluate our progress.	91%	5%	5%	22
Our school has a plan for evaluating all components of our HSRR program.	82%	18%	0%	22
I am satisfied with the federal, state, local, and private resources that are being coordinated to support our HSRR program.	73%	27%	0%	22

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

professional development and the regular coaching provided to teachers. Staff and students described an environment that has changed from traditional approaches (e.g., chairs in a row, teacher lecturing, use of worksheets) to a more active learning environment (e.g., student grouping, teachers’ use of facilitation strategies, student work displayed). To address higher order thinking skills, an administrator said, “Teachers are realizing that they can’t get by with a minimal amount of lesson preparation.” In addition,

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***Because of the staff turnover and the subsequent intensive focus on training, several staff members said it was too early to tell about HSRR’s impact on student achievement.***

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teachers were apprised of each student’s TAKS scores and needs at the beginning of the school year so that they could begin to think about individualizing instruction. “Now teachers are very adamant about student learning,” one teacher said. Differentiated instruction and grouping are strategies that were immediately evident, according to one teacher.

Teaching practices were clearly changed as teacher responses to the Pedagogy construct in the survey indicate. Twenty-two respondents answered all questions concerning the Pedagogy construct. Most respondents (86%) reported that classroom learning activities have changed a great deal, students are working cooperatively in teams, and students are using technology more effectively. Only about half (55%) of respondents reported that

**Table 2.7. School 1: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Pedagogy**

Pedagogy	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
I use textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets less than I used to for basic skills or content area instruction.	82%	18%	0%	22
Classroom learning activities have changed a great deal.	86%	14%	0%	22
Students in my class spend at least two hours per school day in interdisciplinary or project-based work.	55%	36%	9%	22
Students in my class spend much of their time working in cooperative learning teams.	86%	9%	5%	22
Students are using technology more effectively.	86%	9%	5%	22

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

students were engaged in interdisciplinary or project-based work during the school day. Overall, staff rated the Pedagogy construct at 4.00 on a 5–point scale. (See Table 2.7 for more information on the Pedagogy construct.)

### RESTRUCTURING OUTCOMES

School 1 has experienced a dramatic change in school climate due to the school’s stable leadership, the change in personnel, and the wide-spread adoption of the AS model. Interviewees and focus group members indicated that whereas the previous school climate was one of hostility, the current climate focuses on assisting students in achieving success. Further, the current teaching staff members have embraced their role in implementing the AS initiative and believe that results will be forthcoming.

### Student Impacts

*Achievement.* Because of the staff turnover and the subsequent intensive focus on training, several staff members said it was too early to tell about HSRR’s impact on student achievement. There has been an increase in language arts scores, but the correlation with the implementation of the AS model is unclear. Teachers did say that School 1 students are expressing an interest to stretch more academically, which may at some point result in improved student achievement on state assessments.

*Academic engagement.* Student attendance and conduct have improved in the past year. The principal noted that attitudes were very negative last year but that a matrix related to

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***The staff responded positively about the AS program and mentioned their appreciation for the opportunity to take a leadership role in the restructuring process.***

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conduct has provided some structure to the discipline process. “Things are better, but there’s a long way to go,” he said. Teachers believe students have taken awhile to respond to the new model’s instructional methods. The transition appears to be the most difficult for the freshman class since they were coming from a traditional instructional program at the junior high school. Students who participated in the focus group did mention increased engagement in school. Those who were seniors said they were sorry that they were not going to be at the school in the future in order to benefit from this initiative.

*Affective impacts.* Administration and teachers said they have experienced deeper, more trusting relationships with students during the 2006–07 academic year. The counselor noted that students show a different level of respect. Students who participated in the focus group also indicated more positive relationships being established with adults who work at the school. The students singled out the new counselor as being especially supportive of the students.

*Special needs.* Staff reported that Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) meetings were not held last year, although that situation has been rectified with the hiring of the new counselor. The principal noted that teachers are trying to identify individual student strengths and teach to them. Content mastery now is being offered. In addition, teachers have time during the multiple meetings to

discuss challenges that special needs students are encountering.

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#### *Staff Impacts*

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The staff responded positively about the AS program and mentioned their appreciation for the opportunity to take a leadership role in the restructuring process. Data indicated that there were more positive relationships with the administration and that the principal is very supportive of and encouraging to staff. Teaching staff were also less isolated and were working together more. Although there were a few suggestions about changing the weekly Wednesday afternoon meetings to every other week, the staff members who were interviewed talked with pride about their responsibilities. Their comments included examples of new energy and focus on teaching: creating innovative lessons (such as a rap in Spanish class), researching academic programs, and reaching out to parents and the community. The interviewees also proudly pointed to the total buy-in by the staff, including the football coaches who have changed practice times in order to participate in the Wednesday afternoon meetings.

#### *Community/Parental Involvement*

Parent involvement in the initiative appears limited due to the historical disengagement, but the school is utilizing multiple methods, ranging from regular phone calls by teachers to parents and proposed visits to the Chamber of Commerce and churches to establish better relationships with the community and parents. In spring 2005, a survey of parents and students was conducted; results were then used to help develop the school’s action plans. “When the district let all the teachers go (in spring 2005), there were ripples. Parents know things have changed, and where things are going,” one teacher said. Parents commented

that they have a perception that the school has improved tremendously in the past few years. Teachers have been asked to contact parents on a regular basis, often by calling with positive feedback about student progress at school. Because many of the new teachers live in neighboring cities, the administration and staff are encouraging all teachers to be visible at extracurricular activities. Staff and students alike also credited the new counselor with responding quickly to requests and questions.

The majority of respondents (95%) reported that teachers were more involved in decision making and spent more time working together on curriculum and planning. Ninety-five

percent (95%) of respondents also said that interactions between teachers and students were more positive. The fewest respondents (63% and 64% respectively) reported that students are more enthusiastic about learning and have higher standards for their work. Overall, staff rated the Outcomes construct at 3.99 on a 5-point scale. (See Table 2.8 for more information on the Outcomes construct.)

### III. IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

#### *Key Points*

The administration and teaching staff at School 1 have undertaken a major effort to

**Table 2.8. School 1: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Outcomes**

Outcomes	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Student achievement has been positively impacted.	85%	15%	0%	20
Students in this school are more enthusiastic about learning.	63%	32%	5%	22
Parents are more involved in the educational program of this school.	68%	23%	9%	22
Community support for our school has increased.	73%	27%	0%	22
Students have higher standards for their own work.	64%	32%	5%	22
Teachers are more involved in decision making.	95%	5%	0%	22
Our program adequately addresses the requirements of students with special needs.	71%	14%	14%	21
Teachers in this school spend more time working together to develop curriculum and plan instruction.	95%	5%	0%	22
Interactions between teachers and students are more positive.	95%	5%	0%	22

*Source.* Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

*\*Note.* N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

**Table 2.9. School 1: School Climate Inventory Perceived Leadership**

Leadership	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
The administration communicates the belief that all students can learn.	100%	0%	0%	22
The administration encourages teachers to be creative and to try new methods.	100%	0%	0%	22
The principal (or administration) provides useful feedback on staff performance.	86%	14%	0%	22
The administration does a good job of protecting instructional time.	82%	14%	5%	22
The principal is an effective instructional leader.	91%	9%	0%	22
The goals of this school are reviewed and updated regularly.	91%	9%	0%	22
The principal is highly visible throughout the school.	100%	0%	0%	21

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

address tremendous challenges at the school (such as an initially unsupportive faculty) and are making great strides toward implementing the AS model and process. The school staff has used the model to build a cohesive and positive school culture that focuses on improving student achievement and success.

The school climate was identified as a critical issue both through survey and anecdotal data from students, parents, and staff. However, each group interviewed was hopeful about the continued change in climate that appears to be happening through the AS model and process. One staff member described an evolving situation at the school: “If changes don’t happen, I won’t know why.”

### ***School Climate Inventory (SCI)***

The SCI was administered as part of the staff survey. The overall mean SCI rating for School 1 was a 4.24 on a 5–point scale. Results from the SCI indicate an overall school climate rating of 3.73, which is higher than the national average for secondary schools. The highest mean rating of 4.39 was given for the Leadership dimension (compared to a national norm of 3.94). The lowest mean rating of 3.87 was obtained for the Order dimension (compared to the national norm of 3.26). (See Tables 2.9 and 2.10 for more information on SCI high and low scales.)

Respondents were positive about leadership at the school. All respondents indicated

**Table 2.10. School 1: School Climate Inventory Perceived Order**

Order	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Rules for student behavior are consistently enforced.	86%	14%	0%	21
Student discipline is administered fairly and appropriately.	86%	14%	0%	22
Student misbehavior in this school does not interfere with the teaching process.	32%	45%	23%	22
Student tardiness or absence from school is not a major problem.	36%	32%	32%	22
This school is a safe place in which to work.	100%	0 %	0 %	22
Teachers, administrators, and parents assume joint responsibility for student discipline.	82%	9%	9%	22
Student behavior is generally positive in this school.	77%	14%	9%	22

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

that the administration was highly visible. Furthermore, 100% of respondents said the administration communicated the belief that all students can learn and encouraged teachers to be creative. Most of the respondents (91%) felt the principal was an effective instructional leader and that school goals were regularly reviewed and updated.

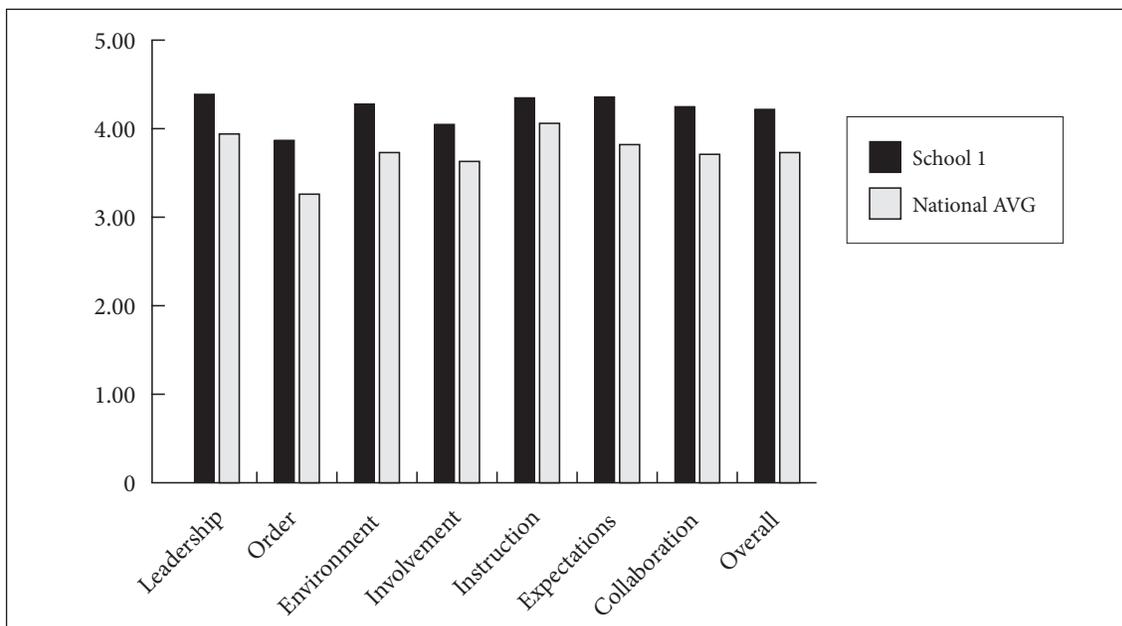
All respondents reported that the school was a safe place to work. Most (86%) reported that student rules were consistently enforced and discipline was administered fairly. The respondents were less in agreement about student misbehavior, tardiness, and absences as problems at the school. Responses to those items tended to be evenly split across the scale.

Figure 2.1 presents scale values for all School Climate Inventory scales.

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

The implementation of the AS model appears to be on track. Every staff member interviewed during site visits could describe the model and the processes, as well as his/her individual role in it. Each staff member genuinely appeared to be focused on the best interest of students, even if that has meant more work for the staff. School 1 administration and staff believe that the redesign has impacted between 75% and 100% of the students. “Hopefully all have

**Figure 2.1. School 1: School Climate Inventory Scale Values (N=22)**



Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

been [impacted] to some degree because the teaching is changing,” the TAP said.

With an instrument designed to assess the strength of implementation based on the HSRR required components, the school received a score of 33.12 out of a possible 53 points. The TAP rated the school’s overall redesign implementation level at 4.79 out of a possible 5 points. The school rated its own implementation level to be 2.33 out of a possible 5 points.

**Facilitators**

Key redesign facilitators at School 1 include an experienced principal who is knowledgeable about the community, the regular presence of the TAP on the campus for meetings and classroom visits, major staffing changes, and collaborative planning time to build teacher buy-in and support. In providing voluntary

and involuntary exit strategies for veteran staff who were not adopting the program, the school sent a strong message to remaining staff and to the community about its commitment to the high school renewal effort. Additionally, the administrators used the AS model as the core of their hiring decisions. The administration and TAP further ensured the change in school culture through the summer institute and the mandatory Wednesday morning meetings of new staff members. These meetings provide a method of inducting new staff and also ensure that new staff members are not swayed by any remaining negative views about the restructuring effort.

Survey results indicated that staff viewed support from school administration, whole school focus, and support from teachers as the three main facilitators for HSRR implementation.

### **Barriers**

Barriers to School 1's implementation of the AS model are linked to the tremendous change in personnel and short grant period. The AS model is based on a three-year implementation schedule. Given the time and effort taken to address school culture and staffing issues, School 1 has had much to accomplish during the 18-month grant period.

The school also faces issues related to introducing incoming freshmen students to the new instructional strategies; however, this issue will be diminished if the junior high school adopts the AS model in the 2007–08 academic year.

Another challenge that School 1 faces is to reconnect with the parents and the community. Although staff enthusiasm and commitment to redesign are evident, barriers may remain in building relationships with students and their parents so that they feel an outstanding education is available to them at the school. Because many new staff members commute to the school from other cities to work, finding time and strategies for teachers to build meaningful relationships with parents and community members is important.

Survey results indicated that staff saw insufficient time and lack of parent/community involvement as the two main barriers to HSRR implementation.

### **Sustainability**

The administration, TAP, and teachers talked about the district's commitment to maintaining the AS model and finding additional funds to continue the program. Several staff members also mentioned district plans to implement the model at junior high and elementary schools. The TAP said that plans are in place for School 1 administration

and teachers to serve as “guides” for the junior high staff when that school implements the model in the 2007–08 academic year. This district-level interest in the school's redesign effort could result in sustained progress at the school. Further, the efforts at shaping a school staff supportive of the model should pay off. Finally, the curriculum director is actively seeking additional funding to continue the program.

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## SCHOOL 2

## HIGH-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION

**HSRR PROGRAM: SCHOOLS FOR A NEW SOCIETY****AWARD DATE: CYCLE 1–AUGUST 2005****AWARD AMOUNT: \$400,000****SITE VISIT DATE: SEPTEMBER 27–28, 2006****IMPLEMENTATION SCORE: 37.25 (0–53)****I. LOCAL CONTEXT**

SCHOOL 2 IS LOCATED IN A LARGE urban school district in East-central Texas. Student enrollment at School 2 for the 2005–06 school year was 2,678 students. The school serves a predominately Hispanic student body (91%). Eighty-nine percent (89%) of the student population is considered economically disadvantaged, and 82% are considered at risk. Fifteen percent (15%) of students are identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP), and 12% receive special education services. (See Table 3.1 for more demographic information.)

**Starting Points**

The current principal arrived at School 2 in spring 2004 and implemented a series of measures to address challenges at the school, including low academic performance, as well

as serious safety, conduct, and discipline problems. In addition, the school developed a local plan to coordinate multiple ongoing programs that had overwhelmed staff. A theme-based academy structure was in place at that time that was, according to staff, “based on paper” with no real application.

In 2003–04 and again in 2004–05, School 2 received an Academically Unacceptable rating due to mathematics performance of African American students. In 2005–06, mathematics performance for this student group did not improve, and School 2 again received an Academically Unacceptable accountability rating. (See Table 3.2 for more accountability information.)

While the district recommended complete reconstitution for the school due to a history of low performance, the new principal

**Table 3.1. School 2: Demographic Profile, 2005–06**

African American	Latino/Hispanic	White	Other	Economically Disadvantaged	At Risk	Mobility (03–04)	Limited English Proficient	Special Education
6%	91%	3%	1%	89%	82%	24%	15%	12%

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

**Table 3.2. School 2: Accountability Rating and TAKS Performance History, 2003–04 to 2005–06**

Year	Campus Rating	TAKS Met Standard All Grades Tested (All Tests)	Reading	Math	Science	Social Studies
2003–04	Academically Unacceptable	29%	67%	41%	46%	82%
2004–05	Academically Unacceptable	27%	60%	43%	34%	76%
2005–06	Academically Unacceptable	30%	73%	40%	36%	77%

Source. Texas Education Agency, 2003–04 and 2004–05 AEIS, 2005–06 Accountability Ratings

negotiated a re-interview process for all teachers. With the assistance of a team of retired principals, each teacher was observed in the classroom twice, interviewed by a team of administrators, asked to write a short mission statement, and briefed on the changes that would be occurring at the school. As a result of this process, nearly 60 teachers (one third of the teaching staff) were replaced.

The principal characterized the previous administration as not taking action to address severe safety issues. She talked about drug deals, gang fights, and students having sex as common occurrences on campus and reported finding a cache of weapons that included guns, knives, and ammunition that the previous administration had confiscated and stored but not reported. To address these issues, the principal brought in police to restore order and control and implemented a dress code. She also dissolved the previous academy structure that, according to a veteran teacher, had not fulfilled its original intent and instead had created quasi-gangs based on academy membership.

The school also operates multiple grant programs, which have overwhelmed staff with

a “bombardment of programs,” according to one teacher. The new principal concurred that staff had “things thrown at them left and right.” The school’s grant application focuses heavily on the district’s A+ Challenge initiative with mention of the Carnegie Corporation’s Schools for a New Society (SNS) as the school’s High School Redesign and Restructuring (HSRR) model. Staff also mentioned a 21st Century Learning Center grant, a Texas High School Completion and Success Grant, and a Comprehensive School Reform (CSR/ITL) grant.

## II. MODEL ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

### *Selection Process*

When the current principal came to School 2 in 2004, she assembled a committee of approximately 20 stakeholders, including teachers, parents, counselors, and school leadership, to discuss a plan for change. The group met together on Saturdays. Improving the quality of instruction was identified as the most pressing area of need, according to the HSRR coordinator. The group developed a vision for change, which contains goals

for improving all facets of the school. The redesign model to be integrated into this plan was the SNS.

It should be noted that the grant application focuses heavily on an A+ Challenge initiative and mentions the SNS program as being a component of redesign efforts based on the A+ Challenge. However, the A+ Challenge program was not mentioned by name during site visits. This could be due to staff turnover and the fact that because there are multiple ongoing programs in the district. Also, data suggest that these are district-level initiatives, and there was considerable district-level input in the grant application (the grant application text was shared with other high schools in the district for their individual applications). The plan could be an outgrowth or product of the A+ Challenge and SNS strategies implemented by the district, but the connections between the redesign grant application and site visit data were not clear. The HSRR coordinator reported that the school “cherry picked” program elements, though the district encouraged the school to “buy” a “CSR” program. So, while SNS was mentioned during site visits by some staff, the campus-based plan seems to be the organizing structure for the school’s redesign efforts. (See Table 3.3 for more information on SNS.)

A range of specific programs was selected to align with key strategies of SNS and the campus-based plan. For example, Agile Mind was selected to improve teaching and learning in mathematics. The Agile Mind program includes curricular, instructional, and assessment materials; customizable lesson plans closely aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS); and access to computerized course material for students and teachers. In addition, the program emphasizes professional development for teachers, which

occurs both through online resources and in person with master teachers.<sup>3</sup>

To create individualized staff development programs, the school invested in Teachscape’s Classroom Walkthrough program as a way to collect systematic teacher-level data.

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***The goals of the advocacy groups are to connect to students by listening and communicating, to support students, and to instill a college-bound vision.***

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### ***Initial Implementation***

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) awarded funds to the district in August 2005, though data indicated that the implementation of School 2’s HSRR project was delayed by a period of negotiation between the district and TEA. Some primary redesign changes include a reconfiguration of the master schedule to create a more personalized environment, common planning time for teachers, a new approach to teaching mathematics, classroom walkthrough training, and increased professional development for teachers. Smaller learning communities were reconfigured to focus on grade-level clusters and smaller class sizes, especially in ninth and tenth grades. Further, stronger teachers in mathematics were moved to ninth grade because that was the area of concern.

Perhaps the most comprehensive redesign activity after “cleaning house” through the staff rehiring process has been the establishment of staff structures to support implementation, systematic monitoring, and evaluation of progress toward the goals of the redesign plan. A team-based infrastructure (which staff members call the “infrastructure of accountability”) was created to help staff

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<sup>3</sup> Source: <http://www.thinkfive.com>

**Table 3.3. Schools for a New Society Model Design**

<p><i>Background</i></p> <p>SNS is an initiative of the Carnegie Corporation of New York that began in 2000. The SNS model focuses on the idea that all students must have access to a quality education that will not only prepare them for college but for full participation in a democratic society. The program is centered on rigorous curriculum and high academic achievement for all students.</p> <p><i>Key Strategies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Promote reform of school district policies and practices</li><li>• Encourage and support partnerships with businesses, universities, parent and student groups, and community organizations</li><li>• Hold schools accountable for helping students meet high standards</li><li>• Prepare students for participation in higher education, in the workforce, and in confronting the challenges and opportunities of 21st century society</li><li>• Raise graduation requirements to ensure that all students take rigorous courses</li><li>• Transform large, impersonal high schools into small learning communities or small schools</li><li>• Provide intensive professional development</li><li>• Give teachers time for team planning</li></ul> <p><i>Key Components</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Building and utilizing a working partnership between the urban school district and a leading community nonprofit organization</li><li>• Redesigning the district</li><li>• Raising community support and demand for high quality education for students</li><li>• Creating a city-wide distribution of excellent high schools</li></ul>
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Source. Schools for a New Society website, <http://www.carnegie.org/sns/>

members feel personally responsible for improvement at School 2 and to increase use of data as evidence of student and school progress.

A learning team consists of the principal, the dean of instruction, a mentor teacher for new teachers, the school improvement facilitator, the literacy coach, and the executive principal (who oversees School 2 and its feeder middle and elementary schools). This team's broad goal is to support and monitor student learning through high-quality instruction. The leadership team includes the assistant principals who develop and implement plans

and report on progress in twelve areas of accountability: planning and budgeting; curriculum and instruction; student assessment; staff development; scheduling; hiring, evaluating, and terminating staff; teacher mentoring and support; special populations; student management; student connections; parental and community involvement; and buildings, grounds, maintenance, safety, and security.

The principal (with consultation from the learning team) changed the master schedule to accommodate clusters, curriculum teams, and advocacy groups, which are part of

the SNS goals of creating smaller learning communities and providing common planning time for same-subject teachers. Clusters are comprised of four core area teachers who are responsible for the same 130–150 students. Once a week, cluster teams meet to plan and discuss any specific concerns with students. Beginning in the 2006–2007 school year, advocacy groups meet twice per week. These advocacy groups consist of approximately 20 students who meet with a teacher other than their course instructors. The goals of the advocacy groups are to connect to students by listening and communicating, to support students, and to instill a college-bound vision. (Advocacy groups, which have been in existence at School 2 for several years, have received increased attention as part of redesign activities.) Curriculum teams also meet once a week for creating common assessments and examining student data. The goal is to create high-quality instruction through teaching that is engaging and aligned with curriculum and assessment that is rigorous, relevant, and consistent across all classrooms.

## ***Factors Impacting HSRR Implementation***

### ***SCHOOL CAPACITY***

#### ***Professional Development***

School 2 used part of the HSRR grant to purchase classroom walkthrough training for the learning team and personal digital assistants (PDAs) to record data during classroom observations in order to assist with evaluating teacher strengths and needs for development.

Three levels of professional development occur at School 2. Weekly professional development takes place each Wednesday afternoon when students have early dismissal. Topics for the

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***In fall 2006, additional teachers were hired to decrease class sizes in core subjects in ninth and tenth grades, though these positions do not appear to have been funded through the grant.***

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year include a campus-wide use of Working on the Work, which pertains to designing work that engages students, literacy strategies, and department meetings that include such topics as writing across the curriculum and Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) plans. With HSRR funds, teachers also reported increased opportunities to attend national and/or regional conferences. Some staff mentioned Breaking Ranks and other leadership training. The HSRR coordinator also noted that the cluster and curriculum teams provide a forum for staff development in small groups. For example, Agile Mind consultants meet with the mathematics curriculum teams. The principal said funds for substitute teachers to support this training come from Title I.

#### ***Materials***

Teachers reported both strengths and weaknesses related to materials. (Most also were unable to separate which materials were associated with which grant.) Overall, teachers said that resources were more available, such as materials for advocacy groups and access to television for the advocacy group meeting during which students sometimes watch a short television segment as a catalyst for discussion. Staff also noted that while resources were ordered and delivered, they were sometimes hard to locate once they arrived at the school. The special education teacher found a lack of materials for math and complained of having no discretionary funds, in contrast with another school at which he had taught at previously. Teachers agreed that technology, primarily computers and SMART

## Chapter 3

### School 2, High-Level Implementation

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Boards, were at the school, but that “it’s just a matter of getting it all up and running.” Other materials, specifically related to the HSRR grant, appeared to be available, such as the PDAs for classroom walkthroughs and various materials for weekly professional development.

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#### *Staffing and Planning Time*

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In fall 2006, additional teachers were hired to decrease class sizes in core subjects in ninth and tenth grades, though these positions do not appear to have been funded through the grant. Having smaller classes “...has definitely helped. It has helped with cooperative learning,” said one teacher. A science teacher said that it now was more possible to have lab work in groups, rather than relying solely on teacher-demonstrated instruction in science.

The grant application outlines funds for a learning facilitator for science and a program coordinator as well as a community development coordinator.

As mentioned earlier, the change in the master schedule accommodates both curriculum team and cluster team meetings. Teachers use part of these meetings for planning time, such as creating common assessments or learning how to incorporate writing across the curriculum. Lack of time was mentioned by nearly every teacher as a concern, and some connected these additional meetings to their perceived shortage of time.

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#### *Shared Leadership*

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Teacher opinions about shared leadership seem to vary by length of time at the school as well as leadership participation. One experienced teacher who is now a department chair said that “the principal is very good about that. We all share in commonality of

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***The principal described many teachers who had been recently hired (within the past year or two) as “overwhelmed.”***

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getting kids where they need to be. When we meet as leaders of school, data teams, curriculum teams, and clusters, everyone knows his or her part to play. We listen to comments, criticism, and take it back to our department, so it’s everybody.” Another teacher said, “I think everyone accepts responsibility, I think it is a team effort at this point.” However, several teachers who were starting their first or second year had contrasting views. They said there was not a mechanism for voicing concerns, and one said, “There is not a guiding knowledge of where this is going. I don’t think anyone really understands the initiatives.” The principal described many teachers who had been recently hired (within the past year or two) as “overwhelmed.”

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

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Although School 2 was awarded the HSRR grant in April 2005, delays in receiving funds affected the full implementation of several grant components. Both the principal and the HSRR coordinator said that because much of the professional development occurred “in-house” or through the district and that some trainings for teachers were implemented despite the delay. School 2 also reported making as many changes as possible, such as reconfiguring the master schedule and increasing the use of data for assessment.

The Technical Assistance Provider (TAP) did not complete a survey that included an implementation rating for the school.

According to School 2's grant application, the school budgeted 50% of funds for payroll costs and 24% of funds for capital outlay. Actual spending figures were not available.

Eighty-eight of the 156 teachers at School 2 completed surveys for a response rate of 56%. Only about half of respondents reported that staffing (52%) and technological resources (51%) were adequate at the school. About half of respondents (49%) strongly disagreed or disagreed that teachers had sufficient planning time and materials to implement the program. School 2's mean rating for the Capacity construct is 2.97 on a 5-point scale. (See Table 3.4 for more information on the Capacity construct.)

### EXTERNAL SUPPORT

#### *External Professional Development*

As mentioned previously, the HSRR grant supported professional development in multiple ways. The principal said that before she arrived at School 2 there had been several

grants in place and that there were "too many people trying to come in and do things." As a result, she tries as much as possible to conduct staff development "in-house," which most teachers said they appreciated. The district also occasionally provides professional development. In addition, School 2 has hired several external consultants for training of content-area teacher teams, especially in the areas of mathematics and science curriculum alignment, lesson plans, and assessments. For example, external training supported by HSRR funds includes consultants for a master teacher academy and a mathematics consultant to work with teachers using the Agile Mind program. HSRR funds also provided extra-duty pay for team training after school. Training through the regional Education Service Center (ESC) on the classroom walkthrough program was also obtained.

The principal reported that the Director of the Texas High School Redesign and Restructuring Project was at the school on a regular basis: "the entire time, even before

**Table 3.4. School 2: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Capacity**

Capacity	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Teachers are given sufficient planning time to implement our program.	33%	18%	49%	85
Materials (books and other resources) needed to implement our HSRR program are readily available.	36%	19%	45%	85
Our school has sufficient faculty and staff to fully implement this program.	52%	13%	35%	84
Technological resources have become more available.	51%	22%	27%	85

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

## Chapter 3

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the funding kicked in, he was here.” She also indicated receiving support from the Principal Emeritus for the R4 Group. She described the latter as “one of my mentors,” though no specific training was mentioned.

#### *Integrated District Assistance*

The school’s relationship with the district seems strained. The HSRR coordinator reported feeling pressured to “just pick a CSR program,” but members of the School 2 leadership felt strongly that they needed to devise a redesign plan and select the components that would work in their context. The HSRR coordinator also mentioned that nearly \$20,000 of the grant went to a district coordinator/evaluator who works in the district’s grants office rather than the evaluation office. The principal commented that she did not receive as much support with

funds and budget issues as she would have liked. As an example, she talked about the \$160,000 textbook debt that she inherited when she arrived at the school in fall 2004. She also would have liked assistance with completing audits in various areas, such as the budget, textbooks, and English language learning. She did receive some assistance with special education but not as much as she would have liked.

Although much of the ongoing professional development occurs in-house, the district has provided various professional development presentations for the entire staff on topics such as lesson cycles and Bloom’s taxonomy. In addition, department chairs at School 2 have district support in analyzing tests. These teachers then bring the information from those district meetings to the school curriculum teams.

**Table 3.5. School 2: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Support**

Support	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
I have a thorough understanding of this school’s HSRR program.	54%	17%	30%	84
I have received adequate initial and ongoing professional development/training for HSRR program implementation.	64%	14%	22%	85
Technical assistance provided by external trainers, model developers, and/or designers has been valuable.	48%	27%	25%	83
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.	48%	27%	25%	83
My school receives effective assistance from external partners (e.g., university, businesses, agencies).	28%	38%	34%	85

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

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***While there was consensus about teacher buy-in for the broad goals of campus improvement, support for specific aspects of the HSRR initiative varied.***

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In discussing authentic and alternative assessments, the principal related how district-mandated assessments are making assessment more difficult, rather than facilitating change. An administrator said teachers “were up in arms” because of the poor quality of district-mandated assessments. “Besides having no validity to them, [they] were also full of grammatical errors,” she said. After complaining to the district, School 2 created its own assessments to be given every three weeks. Six weeks into the school year, the district decided they wanted to create different assessments from within the curriculum department that were distributed to School 2 for use every six weeks. The principal hopes they will let the school use their own assessments at the 9-week marks. In interviews with teachers, several mentioned great frustration with the tests because they did not necessarily match the exact timing of the curricular plan at School 2. In addition, they thought that the district and school, in the quest for data-driven reform, are over-testing the students.

Despite some of these tensions, the principal commented that she did have contact with supportive individuals within the district, such as a principal at another district school who is a mentor as well as the new assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction and the new chief academic officer.

In terms of external support, just over half of survey respondents (54%) reported they had a thorough understanding of the school’s HSRR program. While 64% of teachers

indicated that the initial and ongoing professional development was adequate, only 48% of respondents felt external technical assistance was valuable and helped the school to implement its program. School 2’s mean for the Support construct is 3.26 on a 5-point scale. (See Table 3.5 for more information on the Support construct.)

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### *INTERNAL FOCUS*

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

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While there was consensus about teacher buy-in for the broad goals of campus improvement, support for specific aspects of the HSRR initiative varied. The principal spoke about complaints she received from teachers related to the burden of producing data, on top of regular instructional responsibilities. Teachers in the focus group (who were first- or second-year teachers at School 2) had a hard time talking about redesign activities because they were not familiar with the HSRR initiative. Another teacher estimated buy-in of the faculty at “half and half” and attributed that to the large teacher turnover, which occurred as part of restructuring. Opinions were mixed about the value of professional development.

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#### *Alignment and Integration with Existing Programs*

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The coordinator talked about the challenges of multiple grants, stating “they’ve all got to be the same. We can’t have three different grant plans and a separate district plan.” She explained that they began with an overall plan for improvement and have used the various grants to “plug in” components as appropriate. For example, the HSRR grant paid for the purchase of the Agile Mind mathematics site license, while another grant pays for Agile Mind science as well as additional training for teachers using the Agile Mind programs. Similarly, HSRR funds a science learning

## Chapter 3

### School 2, High-Level Implementation

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facilitator, and Title I and SNS fund learning facilitators and consultants in other core areas.

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#### *Monitoring*

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The principal considers herself fully responsible, saying, “If anything is not working, it’s me.” She makes a point daily, or as often as her frequent off-campus meetings allow, to visit at least two classrooms as well as the cafeteria to remain a visible presence to teachers and students. While her visibility is important, the bulk of monitoring occurs through the “infrastructure of accountability” mentioned earlier. Cluster and curriculum teams regularly assess student progress and make instructional alterations as necessary. Walkthroughs provide brief “snapshot” assessments of pedagogy. In addition, walkthroughs help assess if and how staff development topics translate to the classroom.

In terms of internal focus on redesign efforts, half of survey respondents at the school (51%) reported that teachers were supportive of the program, and 58% reported regular monitoring of program implementation. Very few respondents indicated satisfaction with the integration of resources being coordinated to support the HSRR program (25%); 31% were dissatisfied and 45% were neutral about this. School 2’s mean rating for the Focus construct was 3.25 on a 5–point scale. (See Table 3.6 for more information on the Focus construct.)

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***One student said, “[The teachers] are here for a reason, and they have come from where we have—our neighborhood, our community—and they want to give back something, so I feel it is a safe place because of the people.***

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#### *PEDAGOGICAL CHANGE*

According to some staff, pedagogical changes are starting to occur as a result of the restructuring of the schedule to allow for collaborative curriculum and cluster team meetings. This change in the schedule was mostly regarded positively. One teacher explained that the clusters lent themselves to interdisciplinary work, although this view did not seem to be widespread. Some teachers thought that the common assessments have helped teachers tailor their instruction to promote increased student mastery. Sometimes student work is shared in these meetings, which helps teachers reflect on their pedagogy. Other teachers in their first or second years at School 2 said that too many meetings detracted from their teaching.

Teachers in grades nine and ten thought that having smaller class sizes facilitated positive changes in the classroom, especially allowing for more cooperative learning. Staff members interviewed were consistently positive about writing across the curriculum and having objectives clearly posted in classrooms. While no mathematics teachers participated in site visit activities, the principal said the Agile Mind training had been used to complement direct instruction.

In part because there is so much professional development at School 2, change as a result of the many different kinds of training seems uneven. Training about using student data seems to be successfully implemented, as curriculum and cluster teams analyze this information to reflect on the success of their teaching approaches. Some teachers felt there needed to be more time to let the various programs “sink in” to their teaching practices. They noted a difference between receiving the training and implementing the training. One

**Table 3.6. School 2: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Focus**

Focus	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Teachers in this school are generally supportive of our HSRR program.	51%	27%	22%	85
The elements of our HSRR program are effectively integrated to help us meet school improvement goals.	41%	33%	27%	83
As a school staff, we regularly review implementation and outcome benchmarks to evaluate our progress.	58%	24%	19%	85
Our school has a plan for evaluating all components of our HSRR program.	51%	27%	21%	84
I am satisfied with the federal, state, local, and private resources that are being coordinated to support our HSRR program.	25%	45%	31%	85

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

said, “What I think would be useful would be to model a lesson and actually use it.” Another said, “I want highly successful examples—not just reading about a particular approach myself.”

In terms of pedagogical change, 64% of survey respondents said that students spend significant time working in cooperative learning teams. Half of the respondents indicated a great deal of change in classroom learning activities (50%) and that the use of textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets

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***The principal also said that “You wouldn’t have seen a kid carrying a book two years ago, but now they know the expectation is there.”***

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was less frequent (47%). Only about a third of respondents (32%) reported that student involvement in interdisciplinary or project-based work was occurring. The responses to this item were spread across the scale. School 2’s mean rating for the Pedagogy construct was 3.27 on a 5–point scale. (See Table 3.7 for more information on the Pedagogy construct.)

## **RESTRUCTURING OUTCOMES**

### ***Student Impacts***

***Achievement.*** Teachers noted a dramatic increase in reading/English language arts TAKS scores that occurred last year. “We are trying to hang onto that. We have super-intensive writing—a lot more writing practice than in the past in every subject, even PE.” The number of students passing TAKS

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increased slightly in social studies and science but declined in mathematics. The principal pointed out that out of 20 TAKS indicators, School 2 was Recognized in 10 areas, considered Acceptable in eight areas, did not have enough students for an assessment in one area, and scored in the Unacceptable range in only one area. Agile Mind training in mathematics did not begin until halfway through the 2005–06 school year, so it is too early to ascertain the influence of this approach.

#### *Academic engagement/motivation.*

Expectations are much higher than in the past according to administrators, teachers, and students. “We gave students new rules, and they recognize that this is the way it is, and we are not going backward,” according to the principal. The principal also said that “You wouldn’t have seen a kid carrying a book two years ago, but now they know the expectation is there.”

A teacher who had been at the school before HSRR efforts described significant changes in student engagement and motivation: “Students are more focused and get to class more frequently on time rather than hanging out in the hallways. They know they have to do all the work to get a passing grade.” She noted that “previously if a kid just tried, we passed them to the next grade. That’s changed. Students know now they have to get the work done.” She also thought that students felt empowered in the sense that they know “teachers are really trying to get them where they need to be.”

*Affective impacts.* Students felt they could talk with adults at the school. One student said, “[The teachers] are here for a reason, and they have come from where we have—our neighborhood, our community—and they want to give back something, so I feel it is a safe place because of the people. They show that they care for the students.” Another said,

**Table 3.7. School 2: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Pedagogy**

Pedagogy	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
I use textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets less than I used to for basic skills or content area instruction.	47%	33%	20%	81
Classroom learning activities have changed a great deal.	50%	35%	15%	84
Students in my class spend at least two hours per school day in interdisciplinary or project-based work.	32%	35%	33%	79
Students in my class spend much of their time working in cooperative learning teams.	64%	18%	18%	84
Students are using technology more effectively.	43%	25%	32%	84

*Source.* Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

*\*Note.* N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

“I think [students] have close relationships with teachers, so they know they can trust them.”

In terms of the impact of the advocacy groups, most agreed that they are largely dependent on the personality of the teacher. Teachers said that they were hopeful that the change to meeting twice per week in advocacy groups would help relationships develop. While students said there were people to talk to at the school, these people were not necessarily their advocacy teachers. Some students did not like that advocacy groups this year are mixed grade levels. She gave an example of a topic about “negative attitudes” and said that as a senior she would have preferred more practical help such as assistance with applying to colleges.

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***Decreases in discipline problems have created a climate much more amenable to learning.***

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*Special needs.* The principal explained that School 2 had moved to a total inclusion model for special education students in all of the core areas and that this change has been challenging. The special education teacher commented that this change occurred without enough preparation and that six weeks into the school year students were still being shifted around. Other teachers had differing responses to how they thought the new inclusion was going. Two teachers thought it was working well in their area (both taught social studies), while three teachers expressed doubt. One said, “I think it is the worst thing we could have done. Putting students with more acceleration with regular students—you’re trying to teach two lessons. For some it’s too hard. Others are bored, and then you have discipline problems.”

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### *Staff Impacts*

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Teachers who had experienced the previous administration were pleased with the general direction of restructuring. There was an increased sense of responsibility in the face of threats that the school might be closed. While teachers had different opinions about and experiences with various aspects of the restructuring, they agreed about the overall need for change.

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### *Community/Parental Involvement*

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Administrators, teachers, parents, and students agreed that parental and community involvement is low but improving at School 2. One part of the HSRR grant was allocated to a parent/community development coordinator. According to the HSRR coordinator, this idea was “sandbagged by the district,” so instead the principal designated one of the assistant principals to focus on increasing parental involvement. There are plans for parents to participate in advocacy groups, and a Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) was formed in spring 2006. Some improvement has occurred with parent participation at meetings and activities at the school, but all agree they would like to see more involvement. Because School 2 has received media attention regarding the possibility of school closure, there have been several well-attended meetings on campus, such as when the superintendent visited and the 1,000-seat auditorium was filled. Administrators interpreted this as a good sign that, while they may not visit the school on a regular basis, parents and community members are invested at some level in keeping the school open.

There was a great deal of variability in the responses on the Outcomes construct. Staff indicated in surveys that intermediate outcomes included more time for teacher

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collaboration (67%) and improved teacher student-teacher relationships (64%). Some teachers (41%) felt that community support had increased. Only around a quarter of respondents reported that students were enthusiastic about learning and had high standards for their work (28% agreed, while 54% strongly disagreed or disagreed). School 2's mean rating for the Outcomes construct is 3.01 on a 5-point scale. (See Table 3.8 for more information on the Outcomes construct.)

### III. IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

#### Key Points

Changes in “how school is done” at School 2 are bringing results, most notably in improved

safety and conduct on campus, enhanced school climate, and increased expectations for academic engagement and achievement associated with a locally designed plan for school improvement.

Decreases in discipline problems have created a climate much more amenable to learning. The principal noted a decline in discipline problems, especially fewer police reports. She attributes this in part to the ongoing police presence at the school. Similarly, students described the climate as “a lot more discipline, a lot more controlled.” Students mentioned wearing uniforms, having to wear a vest as a type of hall pass, the requirement to wear identification at all times, and increased presence of adults in the hallways. In the past

**Table 3.8. School 2: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Outcomes**

Outcomes	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Student achievement has been positively impacted.	49%	24%	27%	85
Students in this school are more enthusiastic about learning.	24%	32%	44%	83
Parents are more involved in the educational program of this school.	27%	20%	52%	84
Community support for our school has increased.	41%	27%	33%	83
Students have higher standards for their own work.	28%	18%	54%	85
Teachers are more involved in decision making.	36%	21%	43%	83
Our program adequately addresses the requirements of students with special needs.	41%	21%	38%	85
Teachers in this school spend more time working together to develop curriculum and plan instruction.	67%	15%	16%	85
Interactions between teachers and students are more positive.	64%	23%	13%	83

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

**Table 3.9. School 2: School Climate Inventory Perceived Instruction**

Instruction	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Teachers use a variety of teaching strategies.	88%	9%	4%	82
Teachers at each grade (course) level design learning activities to support both curriculum and student needs.	78%	14%	7%	83
Teachers often provide opportunities for students to develop higher-order skills.	81%	12%	7%	84
Teachers use curriculum guides to ensure that similar subject content is covered within each grade.	78%	16%	6%	83
Teachers use appropriate evaluation methods to determine student achievement.	76%	16%	9%	82
Pull-out programs do not interfere with basic skills instruction.	38%	33%	30%	80
Teachers use a wide range of teaching materials and media.	70%	13%	17%	83

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

“students basically did whatever they wanted, so this year is a lot better,” said one.

With the replacement of one third of the teaching staff, data suggest that new teachers especially are struggling to understand the focus of redesign efforts at the school and could be overwhelmed with the demand on teacher time associated with required meetings and professional development. However, it appears that some progress has been made in terms of finding organizing structures to support redesign work. The focus on smaller ninth- and tenth-grade class sizes, moving stronger teachers to areas of deficiency, and targeted professional development in mathematics are examples of strong elements of School 2’s redesign implementation plan.

### ***School Climate Inventory (SCI)***

The SCI was administered as part of the staff survey. The overall mean SCI rating for School 2 was 3.38 on a 5–point scale. Results from the SCI indicate an overall school climate that is lower than the national average for secondary schools of 3.73. The highest mean rating of 3.77 was given for the Instruction dimension (compared to a national norm of 4.06). The lowest mean rating was obtained for the Order dimension of 2.82 (compared to a national norm of 3.26). (See Tables 3.9 and 3.10 for more information on SCI high and low scales.)

Eighty-eight percent (88%) of respondents said teachers use a variety of strategies, and 81% said teachers provide opportunities for students to develop higher-order skills. The impact of pull-out programs on basic

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### School 2, High-Level Implementation

***As the HSRR coordinator summarized, “most of [school change] is not a question of money but a question of will.”***

skills instruction was the one area in which responses were mixed, with just over a third (38%) indicating that pull-out programs did not interfere with basic skills instruction, another third responding “neutral” (33%), and 30% responding that they disagreed that pull-out programs did not interfere.

The majority of respondents felt that the school was a safe place but that student behavior and attendance were problems. Less than half of respondents (46%) reported positive student behavior, and 51% felt that misbehavior interfered with the teaching process. Similarly, 75% of respondents reported that student tardiness and absences

were significant problems at School 2. Staff responses were mixed about who assumed responsibility for student discipline. The low scores for the Order construct are consistent with school reports indicating that student behavior has been a major problem as well as a focus for reform.

Figure 3.1 presents scale values for all School Climate Inventory scales.

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

Teachers were not able to distinguish which initiatives stemmed from HSRR, which is not surprising since programs are primarily framed by their connection to the locally designed plan rather than linked with a specific grant source. However, teachers were very familiar with key components related to personalizing the school environment

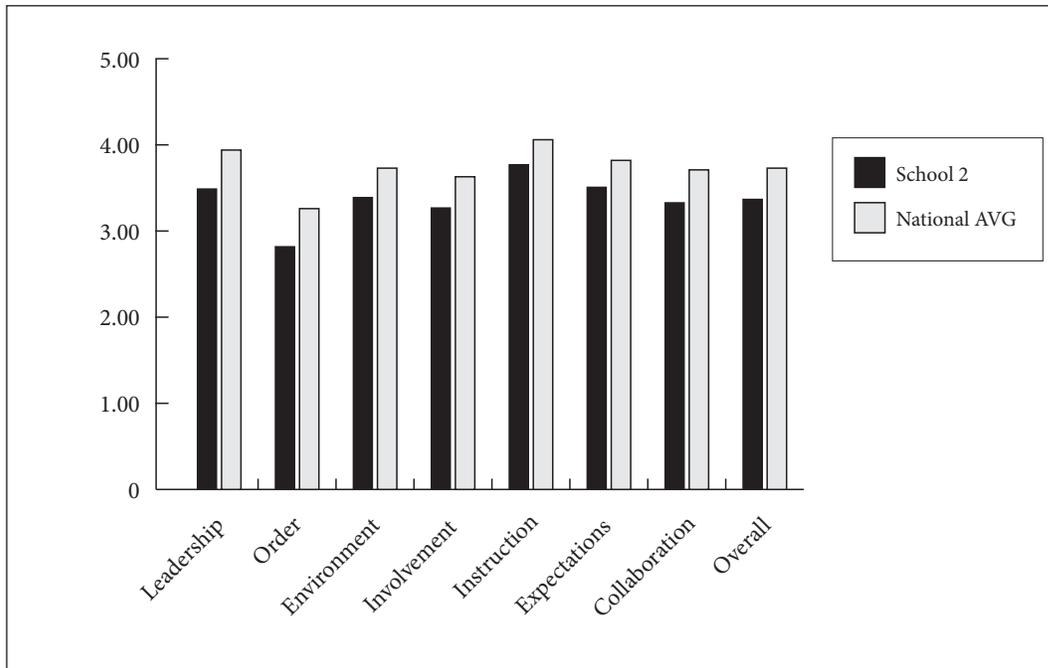
**Table 3.10. School 2: School Climate Inventory Perceived Order**

Order	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Rules for student behavior are consistently enforced.	49%	15%	37%	82
Student discipline is administered fairly and appropriately.	42%	20%	38%	81
Student misbehavior in this school does not interfere with the teaching process.	26%	23%	51%	84
Student tardiness or absence from school is not a major problem.	13%	12%	75%	83
This school is a safe place in which to work.	63%	19%	19%	81
Teachers, administrators, and parents assume joint responsibility for student discipline.	30%	25%	45%	84
Student behavior is generally positive in this school.	46%	21%	33%	82

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

**Figure 3.1. School 2: School Climate Inventory Scale Values (N=88)**

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

via clusters and advocacy groups. They also understood the increased efforts to use common assessments and other data to track student progress and identify areas for re-teaching. Intensive professional development was also implemented during weekly Wednesday meetings in addition to training that occurred in curriculum and cluster groups. Other professional development activities occurred at the regional or national level.

With an instrument designed to assess the strength of implementation based on the HSRR- required components, the school received a score of 37.25 out of a possible 53 points. The TAP did not complete a survey and therefore did not rate the school's overall redesign implementation level. The

school rates its own implementation level to be 2.00 out of a possible 5 points.

### ***Facilitators***

Facilitators of School 2's restructuring include the leadership of the principal, the reconfiguration of the schedule to allow for increased personalization, common planning time, professional development activities, and higher expectations for student achievement. There also is a greater sense of shared responsibility than in the past. In addition, the HSRR coordinator has been instrumental in helping various teams conduct effective meetings and in managing the multiple processes of the restructuring effort. The principal also mentioned the Director of the Texas High School Redesign

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### *School 2, High-Level Implementation*

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and Restructuring Project and the Principal Emeritus of the R4 group as particularly supportive as the restructuring process has unfolded.

Acknowledging the challenge of multiple ongoing and uncoordinated programs on a large campus, the administration seems focused on providing a structure that will help staff get a clearer picture of school improvement goals and minimize confusion about different programs.

Survey results indicated that staff found support from school administration and teachers as well as curriculum focus to be the three main facilitators for HSRR implementation.

### ***Barriers***

As a result of the “cleaning house” that occurred at the beginning of the principal’s tenure, a large segment of teachers are in their first or second year at School 2. The principal and other more senior teachers observed that this group seems to be overwhelmed. Teachers in this group described too much training and not enough time to let it permeate into pedagogy. This appears to be a contributing factor to what was described as “half and half buy-in” by teachers. Other pressures include the challenge of special education inclusion in the context of higher academic expectations.

Survey results indicated that staff listed insufficient time, lack of parent/community involvement, and lack of financial resources as the three main barriers to HSRR implementation.

### ***Sustainability***

Both the principal and HSRR coordinator spoke about continuing with the redesign

plan after funding ends. Certain activities, such as national professional development opportunities, will most likely not be possible without additional funds. Providing the same level of intensive training via external consultants may also be reduced. The principal and HSRR coordinator emphasized the importance of putting systems in place to embed redesign components in the school culture. As the HSRR coordinator summarized, “most of [school change] is not a question of money but a question of will.” She pointed out that, although funds from HSRR were delayed, the school began implementing as many changes as possible that did not require money.



## SCHOOL 3

## HIGH-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION

**HSRR PROGRAM: HIGH SCHOOLS THAT WORK****AWARD DATE: CYCLE 1–APRIL 2005****AWARD AMOUNT: \$400,000****SITE VISIT DATE: AUGUST 28–29, 2006****IMPLEMENTATION SCORE: 38.74 (0–53)****I. LOCAL CONTEXT**

SCHOOL 3 IS LOCATED IN CENTRAL TEXAS and is a part of a large urban school district. Student enrollment at School 3 for the 2005–06 school year was 735 students. The school is predominately Latino/Hispanic (81%), and the next largest racial/ethnic group is African American (18%). An overwhelming majority of the student body is considered to be economically disadvantaged (83%) and at risk (87%). Student mobility is an issue of concern at School 3 (40%). In addition, 19% of students are identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP), and another 22% require special education services. (See Table 4.1 for more demographic information.)

**Starting Points**

School 3 faces many challenges that are related to the cumulative effects of years of struggling

with low academic performance, negative media perceptions, and the “revolving door” of administrators and staff.

In its grant application, School 3 reported that all student groups performed below state and district requirements across all subject areas. The campus’s areas of identified deficiency in the Texas Accountability Ratings are reading/English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. Less than a quarter of students passed all Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests for the 2003–04 and 2004–05 school years (19% and 22%, respectively). Test scores have improved, especially in reading/ELA. Despite these gains, School 3 was classified as Academically Unacceptable for the third year in a row in 2006. (See Table 4.2 for more accountability information.)

Because of the school’s history of low academic performance, the school is under

**Table 4.1. School 3: Demographic Profile, 2005–06**

African American	Latino/Hispanic	White	Other	Economically Disadvantaged	At Risk	Mobility (03–04)	Limited English Proficient	Special Education
18%	81%	2%	0%	83%	87%	40%	19%	22%

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

**Table 4.2. School 3: Accountability Rating and TAKS Performance History, 2003-04 to 2005-06**

Year	Campus Rating	TAKS Met Standard All Grades Tested (All Tests)	Reading/ ELA	Math	Science	Social Studies
2003-04	Academically Unacceptable	19%	43%	30%	31%	60%
2004-05	Academically Unacceptable	22%	58%	32%	35%	65%
2005-06	Academically Unacceptable	27%	69%	31%	40%	70%

Source. Texas Education Agency, 2003-04 and 2004-05 AEIS, 2005-06 Accountability Ratings

district-ordered reconstitution in the areas of mathematics and science. To aid in these efforts, the district brought in a principal who had worked in a low-performing middle school that had also undergone reconstitution.

In 2005-06, almost half the staff left due to increased pressure to meet state accountability standards. “Some teachers...don’t like being under the magnifying glass,” stated the principal. The 2006-07 school year was the first year in 10 that the principal returned for a second year. The entire administrative staff also returned in 2006-07.

The school is currently implementing a Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) program and Project Advance, which provides a counselor funded by the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation to promote college readiness and career awareness.

## II. MODEL ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

### *Selection Process*

The redesign efforts implemented at School 3

are part of a larger district effort that began in spring 2005 to redesign the district’s comprehensive high schools into smaller learning communities. A major focus of this work has been to create career pathways by incorporating career and technology training. As part of a separate effort, in November 2004 the district worked with the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) to produce recommendations for how to improve student performance. SREB recommended using its High Schools That Work (HSTW) model because of its emphasis on career and technical training. (See Table 4.3 for more information on HSTW.) School 3’s CSR grant, which began in January 2005, was used to support HSTW. This emphasis continued with the district’s redesign efforts, and the school’s High School Redesign and Restructuring (HSRR) grant application indicates that HSTW is its redesign model. In addition to HSTW, the district used the 10 Features of Effective Design, developed by the School Redesign Network at Stanford University, as a framework to support the continuation of increasing smaller learning communities. (See Table 4.4 for more information on the School Redesign Network.)

**Table 4.3. High Schools That Work Model Design**

<p><i>Background</i></p> <p>HSTW is an initiative of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) State Vocational Education Consortium that began in 1987. 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 create 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 (HSTW 10 Key Practices)</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>

### ***Initial Implementation***

The principal described the school's approach to redesign as consisting of four components: academies, instructional improvement, seminars for building student-teacher relationships, and a positive behavior support system for student management.

As part of its efforts to reconstitute, the school was encouraged to move into an academy

structure, with each academy having a major focus of study. Some areas of study were designed to result in professional certification at the end of four years. Each student and teacher is assigned to one academy, thereby increasing the sense of community by having 20 teachers share the same 275 students. Ideally, students stay in the same academy all four years. In addition to creating closer relationships among students and between

**Table 4.4. School Redesign Network—10 Features of Effective Design**

<p><i>Background</i></p> <p>The School Redesign Network at Stanford University helps form and support schools of all grade levels with goals of rigorous curriculum and equal opportunities for all students. School leaders develop a better understanding of the values of redesign and apply that knowledge to their own academic surroundings. The School Redesign Network focuses on the idea that students and teachers benefit from involvement in a small school environment. Schools work to transform their large settings to small, personalized learning communities.</p> <p><i>Key Strategies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Personalization</li><li>• Continuous relationships</li><li>• Standards and performance assessment</li><li>• Authentic curriculum</li><li>• Adaptive pedagogy</li><li>• Anti-racist teaching</li><li>• Qualified teachers</li><li>• Collaboration and development</li><li>• Family/community connections</li><li>• Democratic decision-making</li></ul> <p><i>Key Components</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sustained relationships among teachers and students</li><li>• Curriculum and instructional practices that help all students achieve at high levels</li><li>• Approaches that ensure teachers are experts at their craft</li><li>• Strategies for involving families in schools and making decisions democratically</li></ul>
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Source. School Redesign Network website, <http://schoolredesign.net>

teachers and students, another purpose of the academy structure, as described by the principal, is to narrow responsibility for academic performance so that student learning can be attributed to fewer teachers. The school is considering applying to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to use individual Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) numbers for each academy so that student performance can be linked to a specific academy.

Beginning in 2005–06, students were organized into one of three academies. The

Academy of Scientific Inquiry and Design focuses on science and technology career pathways, such as automotive technology, health science technology, media technology, and engineering. The Academy of Global Enterprise and Information includes general business, baking and pastry arts, office technology, computer repairs, computer technical support, and computer programming. The Academy of Arts and Humanities focuses on foreign languages, journalism, performing arts, visual arts, and filmmaking and video. According to the HSRR grant application, students will be

placed into an academy in ninth grade. The student selection process is determined by student interest and academy capacity. Teacher placements in the academies are determined by interest and expertise.

To address the other key redesign components, the school uses the Professional Teaching Model (PTM) as its primary method for improving instruction. The school also began a daily seminar as part of its redesign efforts. The goal of the seminar is to create a class time focused on building personalized and continuous relationships between teachers and students. Finally, the school addressed behavior management through the Positive Behavior Support program that encourages positive reinforcement from teachers for positive student behavior. Staff members have had school-wide training in HSTW, 10 Features of Effective Design, PTM, and Positive Behavior Support.

### ***Factors Impacting HSRR Implementation***

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

Undergoing so many changes in such a short time required an extensive outlay of resources. School 3 used the majority of grant funds to build the infrastructure of its staff through intensive professional development activities. Staff members who were interviewed indicated that materials at the campus were sufficient in all areas except technology, with several requesting more access to computers in their classrooms. The structure of the academies presented some challenges in terms of staffing and planning time.

Staff reported that moving to the academy structure increased shared leadership as now staff worked with each academy director to make professional development and

curricular decisions. Staff described this as a “team process.” Additionally, a quarter of the redesign budget was used to send staff to visit demonstration schools in the School Redesign Network in Boston, Seattle, New York, and Florida. Over half the staff participated in these activities. Staff indicated these visits taught them about redesign and also increased their sense of professionalism and affirmed that the administration was sincere about sharing leadership. Grant funds were also used to support professional development activities, both in terms of hiring an outside consultant to work with teachers and paying teachers for time during out of school hours to participate in ongoing training. Additionally, grant funds support an instructional specialist for each academy. This person does not have a teaching load and is solely dedicated to assisting teachers with curricular and instructional choices.

In order to maintain the small academy size (currently 275 students per academy), teachers were required to increase the number of different classes they taught. This meant some teachers had preparations in several subjects; for example, a mathematics teacher had to prepare for Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II. The school also implemented block scheduling to increase the amount of continuous time students spent with teachers and to allow for more intensive blocks of instructional time in the school’s areas of deficiency. This change combined with the small number of teachers per academy introduced scheduling challenges. Academies either had to reduce the number of electives offered and/or send students to other

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***The structure of the academies presented some challenges in terms of staffing and planning time.***

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**Table 4.5. School 3: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Capacity**

Capacity	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Teachers are given sufficient planning time to implement our program.	29%	26%	46%	35
Materials (books and other resources) needed to implement our HSRR program are readily available.	47%	12%	41%	34
Our school has sufficient faculty and staff to fully implement this program.	43%	17%	40%	35
Technological resources have become more available.	35%	21%	44%	34

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

academies to have them enrolled in the classes necessary to meet graduation requirements.

Thirty-six out of 76 teachers at School 3 completed surveys, for a response rate of 47%. Respondents gave mixed answers related to the Capacity construct. Forty-seven percent (47%) of respondents believed that materials, such as books and other resources, were available to implement the HSRR program. However, 46% of respondents did not believe that sufficient planning time was available, while 40% said staffing was inadequate to implement the HSRR program. Furthermore, 35% of respondents said additional technological

resources were not available. School 3's overall mean rating on the Capacity construct was 3.00 on a 5-point scale. (See Table 4.5 for more information on the Capacity construct.)

#### *EXTERNAL SUPPORT*

The focus of professional development was on improving instruction using the PTM. The tenets of PTM emphasize changing the traditional approach to instruction. This process involves defining what students should know, creating criteria so that teachers know what students have learned, developing assessments to reflect criteria, and then developing lessons from this information. This process involved many hours of professional development during the 2005–06 school year. An independent Technical Assistance Provider (TAP) supported the staff during this lengthy process. This work was supported by HSRR grant funds, including pay for teachers to meet during non-school hours and pay for substitutes when staff met during school

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***As part of the activities generated from the PTM and development of the school's scope and sequence, the teachers spent much of their time looking at actual student work to identify patterns and instructional strategies.***

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hours. The same external TAP also aided the school in a district-funded professional development activity, developing a campus-specific scope and sequence during summer 2006. As part of the activities generated from the PTM and development of the school's scope and sequence, the teachers spent much of their time looking at actual student work to identify patterns and instructional strategies.

The TAP reported supplying 75 hours of support during the first year of the grant and 250 hours of support during the grant's second year. The same person provided this service throughout the grant period.

Of 36 respondents, 86% reported that they had a thorough understanding of School 3's HSRR program, while 66% said that the assistance provided by external trainers had been valuable. Seventy-six percent (76%) of respondents stated that the initial professional development, as well as ongoing professional development related to the HSRR program, had been adequate. Overall, the staff rated the Support construct at 3.75 on a 5-point scale. (See Table 4.6 for more information on the Support construct.)

### *INTERNAL FOCUS*

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

Teacher support for the school's overall redesign efforts was high. Staff expressed optimism about the direction the campus was heading as well as their new roles in the decision making that occurred within individual academies. When the school moved to the academy structure, teachers were interviewed to make sure their interests and expectations matched school goals. This process resulted in numerous teachers

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***The principal described teacher support as “extremely strong” but dependent on her and the other administrators’ ability to support them.***

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requesting another teaching placement in the district. The remaining teachers understood the challenges ahead of them and chose to stay. They attributed much of the support they felt to the new principal's leadership. Teachers unanimously commended her integrity and ability to bring the faculty together, especially under so much pressure from the district and state to improve academic performance. The principal described teacher support as “extremely strong” but dependent on her and the other administrators' ability to support them. She personally promised the teachers that they would not be given new reform material to implement in the upcoming school year; instead they would focus on implementing strategies promoted in the professional development that they already received.

Teacher support for specific reform activities was less enthusiastic. Staff described several areas of concern, including the amount of time spent in professional development, especially related to the PTM. Teachers were also concerned about issues related to the academy structure, specifically being asked to teach more subjects and, therefore, having more preparations, which limited their effectiveness. Additionally, staff members were also skeptical about the ability of the academies to narrow responsibility for student performance because there was still about 25% crossover between academies to accommodate students' schedules. It was difficult for each individual academy to offer enough courses

**Table 4.6. School 3: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Support**

Support	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
I have a thorough understanding of this school's HSRR program.	86%	9%	6%	35
I have received adequate initial and ongoing professional development/training for HSRR program implementation.	76%	15%	9%	34
Technical assistance provided by external trainers, model developers, and/or designers has been valuable.	66%	23%	11%	35
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.	54%	34%	11%	35
My school receives effective assistance from external partners (e.g., university, businesses, agencies).	43%	34%	23%	35

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

in different time slots to meet the needs of all the students within an academy. Academies had also diminished the diversity of electives available. One student stated that he could not take any Advanced Placement courses this year because he had to work in the afternoons and that was the only time the courses were offered.

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#### *Alignment and Integration with Existing Programs*

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Because of the pressure of poor academic performance, the leadership at School 3 carefully aligned existing programs to support the implementation and success of the academy model. The 10 tenets of HSTW overlap closely with the 10 Features of Effective Design. Project Advance, funded through the Dell Foundation, provides the campus with an advisor to build awareness

of post-secondary career and college opportunities.

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#### *Monitoring*

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Monitoring activities as they relate to reviewing student work to drive curricular and instructional choices are becoming embedded in daily instructional practices. The academy structure facilitated this process. A teacher commented, "Teachers work together to meet that goal [of improving student learning]. When a student doesn't learn something, you will have them again next year." Additionally, the academy structure was also advancing the school's efforts to create smaller learning communities where teachers bonded with their students: "These are my students. I don't want others making decisions for my students. You have true ownership of students." More comprehensive monitoring

activities occurred as related to reconstitution efforts. All staff members were keenly aware of how students were performing.

Thirty-five respondents provided feedback on all survey questions that were related to the Focus construct. Ninety-one percent (91%) said that the staff regularly reviewed data in order to evaluate the school's progress toward the HSRR goals. Seventy-four percent (74%) indicated that the school had a plan for evaluating all HSRR components at the school. Overall, the staff rated this construct at 3.73 on a 5-point scale. (See Table 4.7 for more information on the Focus construct.)

#### *PEDAGOGICAL CHANGE*

Pedagogical changes occurred as a result of the extensive professional development that teachers received and as a result of the move to the academy structure. The training led teachers to approach instruction from a team

***Pedagogical changes occurred as a result of the extensive professional development that teachers received and as a result of the move to the academy structure.***

perspective. Staff shared in identifying and correcting students' academic weaknesses. Since each academy teacher was responsible for knowing fewer students, this ambitious process was becoming easier. However, staff described obstacles to instructional improvements associated with several redesign changes. In addition to the preparations required by the academy structure, individual classes were "stacked," meaning that classes include a range of student ability levels from identified special education inclusion to pre-Advanced Placement (AP) students. Such a wide range of skill levels presented challenges to the staff. Numerous faculty members

**Table 4.7. School 3: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Focus**

Focus	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Teachers in this school are generally supportive of our HSRR program.	66%	31%	3%	35
The elements of our HSRR program are effectively integrated to help us meet school improvement goals.	54%	40%	6%	35
As a school staff, we regularly review implementation and outcome benchmarks to evaluate our progress.	91%	6%	3%	35
Our school has a plan for evaluating all components of our HSRR program.	74%	20%	6%	35
I am satisfied with the federal, state, local, and private resources that are being coordinated to support our HSRR program.	37%	34%	29%	35

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

**Table 4.8. School 3: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Pedagogy**

Pedagogy	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
I use textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets less than I used to for basic skills or content area instruction.	23%	40%	37%	35
Classroom learning activities have changed a great deal.	49%	26%	26%	35
Students in my class spend at least two hours per school day in interdisciplinary or project-based work.	29%	21%	50%	34
Students in my class spend much of their time working in cooperative learning teams.	68%	15%	18%	34
Students are using technology more effectively.	37%	31%	31%	35

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

reported attending individual training on differentiated instruction, but this area remained a challenge for many. Further, the school moved to a 90-minute block schedule. Few teachers had experience with extended periods of instruction, and many reported struggling in this area. The school arranged for training, but the presenter was unable to attend. Because the training had yet to occur, most faculty members were “learning as we go.” Some staff attributed the large turnover in teachers over the summer to the difficulty of teaching a block schedule with stacked classes on top of the pressures of reconstitution.

Respondents’ views varied on the Pedagogy construct. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of respondents indicated that students were more involved in cooperative learning teams. However, the respondents were fairly equally divided on whether students were using technology more effectively and whether the use of textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets in teaching basic skills and content areas had lessened. Overall, School 3 recorded an average of 3.19 on a 5–point scale on the

Pedagogy construct. (See Table 4.8 for more information on the Pedagogy construct.)

## RESTRUCTURING OUTCOMES

### *Student Impacts*

*Achievement.* While achievement has yet to be impacted, teachers report believing it will improve, especially because of the work they have done to develop a campus-specific scope and sequence. Students reported they were prepared in their coursework for TAKS. However, older students stated that they were not prepared for AP tests because of the focus on TAKS.

*Affective impacts.* Staff, parents, and community members very much supported the academy structure because of its affective impact on student-teacher relationships. Staff reported more awareness and understanding of their students. Staff also attributed positive teacher-student relations to the seminars. Students expressed less enthusiasm for academies and seminars. While they all liked the idea that the academies promoted, they felt

it was too early in the restructuring to notice the benefits. However, they all did feel like there was an adult at the school to whom they could talk about academic and non-academic concerns.

*Special needs.* As stated previously, students identified as special education were included in classrooms and aided by a resource person. Teachers were learning how to differentiate instruction across a broad range of skill levels. Additionally, other students identified as special education were provided a life skills curriculum each day.

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#### *Staff Impacts*

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Despite the severe pressure and changes they were facing, the staff seemed hopeful that the revolving door of administrators would end with the academy structure and current redesign efforts. They presented a cohesive unit, appreciative of the principal's commitment to supporting them. They also were ready to move beyond the PTM training and spend time in the classroom applying the training and the scope and sequence they developed. Teachers indicated feeling like a team with other academy colleagues and that this structure had helped them work together to improve student learning.

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#### *Community/Parental Involvement*

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Similar to many schools, there is limited parental and community involvement in school activities, especially academic activities. There is strong and passionate support from a small group of parents. These parents discussed the school's rich tradition and proud alumni and wanted to involve them more in the school. At the time of this report, however, redesign appeared to have little impact on parental and community involvement.

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***Teachers indicated feeling like a team with other academy colleagues and that this structure had helped them work together to improve student learning.***

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In responding to questions related to the Outcomes construct, respondents again expressed mixed feelings. Eighty-eight percent (88%) of respondents said that teachers were working together more to develop curriculum and plan instruction. Furthermore, 74% said that interactions had improved between teachers and students. This is an important positive finding. Yet 51% believed that parental involvement in the school's educational program was limited. Of those responding, 42% indicated that students were not more enthusiastic about learning. This is a significant finding in view of all of the efforts to reform pedagogy. Overall, on the Outcomes construct, School 3 had a mean rating of 3.31 on a 5-point scale. (See Table 4.9 for more information on the Outcomes construct.)

### III. IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

#### *Key Points*

Because of the leadership at the administrative and staff levels, School 3 has made great strides towards improving the climate of the school and creating an academic focus aimed at helping students graduate. Parents, community members, and staff unanimously credited the principal for the strides made at the campus and voiced hope that she would stay. While not all staff supported the long hours of training and time away from the classroom, they were optimistic that the shortcomings with the academy system, such as multiple preparations, stacked classes, and student crossover among academies, would be worked out with time.

**Table 4.9. School 3: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Outcomes**

Outcomes	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Student achievement has been positively impacted.	49%	31%	20%	35
Students in this school are more enthusiastic about learning.	25%	33%	42%	36
Parents are more involved in the educational program of this school.	14%	34%	51%	35
Community support for our school has increased.	43%	34%	23%	35
Students have higher standards for their own work.	25%	39%	36%	36
Teachers are more involved in decision making.	63%	23%	14%	35
Our program adequately addresses the requirements of students with special needs.	57%	23%	20%	35
Teachers in this school spend more time working together to develop curriculum and plan instruction.	88%	12%	0%	34
Interactions between teachers and students are more positive.	74%	20%	6%	35

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

### ***School Climate Inventory (SCI)***

Anecdotally the school climate at School 3 was surprisingly positive, given the tremendous pressure and scrutiny the school receives. Some attribute this to the fact that every staff member currently at the school is there by choice and understands the demands of the redesign effort. Parents and community members indicated their pride in the school and the new path it has taken, given where it came from only a year ago. One parent related an incident in which district personnel were visiting when the class period changed and were astounded at how quickly and quietly the halls cleared, remarking that the district had not seen this in the school in a decade. Students were also positive about the direction of the school; however, older students felt

they would not receive the full benefit of the changes since they were graduating soon.

The SCI was administered as part of the staff survey. The overall mean SCI rating for School 3 was 3.61 on a 5-point scale. Results from the SCI indicate an overall school climate that is lower than the national average for secondary schools (3.73). The highest mean rating of 4.14 was given for the Leadership dimension (compared to the national norm of 3.94). The lowest mean rating of 2.83 was obtained for the Order dimension (compared to a national norm of 3.26). This value is rather low, especially given the high level of implementation in the school. (See Tables 4.10 and 4.11 for more information on SCI high and low scales.)

Respondents to the SCI indicated that strong leadership was present at the school. Ninety-two percent (92%) of respondents indicated that the administration communicated the belief that all students could learn, and 81% said the administration encouraged them to be creative and to try new methods. Seventy-nine percent (79%) of respondents reported that the school's goals were reviewed and updated regularly. (See Table 4.10 for more information on the Leadership dimension.) In responding to survey questions related to Order, a significant portion of respondents (79%) described the school as being a safe place. Ninety-one percent (91%) believed that student tardiness and absences were major issues. Furthermore, 67% reported that student misbehavior was hindering the teaching process. (See Table 4.11 for more information on the Order dimension.)

Figure 4.1 presents scale values for all School Climate Inventory scales.

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

While teachers were less familiar with specifics of the HSTW and the 10 Features of Effective Design, they understood and supported the move to create smaller learning communities through the academy structure. They viewed this structure as improving relationships between students and teachers and among teachers. They also supported the goal of providing students with a career pathway that resulted in certification during high school. Teachers were even positive about narrowing responsibility for student learning.

**Table 4.10. School 3: School Climate Inventory Perceived Leadership**

Leadership	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
The administration communicates the belief that all students can learn.	92%	8%	0%	36
The administration encourages teachers to be creative and to try new methods.	81%	14%	6%	36
The principal (or administration) provides useful feedback on staff performance.	76%	21%	3%	34
The administration does a good job of protecting instructional time.	77%	14%	9%	35
The principal is an effective instructional leader.	76%	24%	0%	34
The goals of this school are reviewed and updated regularly.	79%	18%	3%	34
The principal is highly visible throughout the school.	76%	18%	6%	34

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

**Table 4.11. School 3: School Climate Inventory Perceived Order**

Order	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Rules for student behavior are consistently enforced.	44%	17%	39%	36
Student discipline is administered fairly and appropriately.	53%	28%	19%	36
Student misbehavior in this school does not interfere with the teaching process.	11%	22%	67%	36
Student tardiness or absence from school is not a major problem.	6%	3%	91%	35
This school is a safe place in which to work.	79%	12%	9%	34
Teachers, administrators, and parents assume joint responsibility for student discipline.	38%	18%	44%	34
Student behavior is generally positive in this school.	43%	23%	34%	35

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

The site visit information seemed in line with the results from an overall implementation instrument as well as survey responses of School 3 staff members. With an instrument designed to assess the strength of implementation based on the HSRR required components, the school received a score of 38.74 out of a possible 53 points. The TAP rated the school's overall redesign implementation level to be a 4.07 out of a possible 5 points. The school rated its own implementation level to be 3.67 out of a possible 5 points.

### **Facilitators**

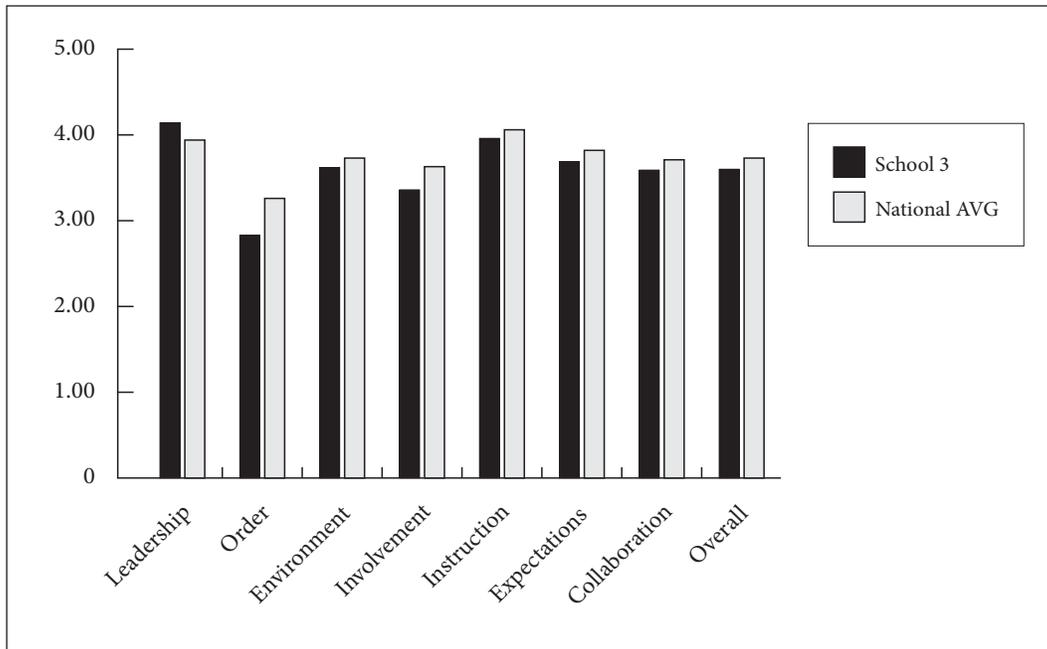
Facilitators behind the changes seen over the last year at School 3 include the principal, the move to academies, a supportive staff, and the school-wide academic focus. While all these factors are important, staff and

parents repeatedly commended the principal's leadership. Her goal is to transition herself out of a job so that the three academy directors are then responsible for the academic leadership of the school. As evidence of the success the school has had in the past year, three parents told us that their children requested transfer at the beginning of last year, but by the end of year all three chose to stay at the school because of the changes that were taking place.

Survey results indicated that staff listed support from teachers and school administration as well as professional development as the three main facilitators for HSRR implementation.

### **Barriers**

Barriers to continued improvement are numerous. The barrier weighing most

**Figure 4.1. School 3: School Climate Inventory Scale Values (N=36)**

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

heavily on staff's minds is public scrutiny over academic performance. They are all very aware that if their current efforts do not succeed, there is a possibility that the school may be placed under alternative management or closed. This pressure is tremendous and, as previously stated, has caused many teachers to leave. One parent stated that teachers at the school should receive compensation for working under such pressures. Additional barriers include the difficulty of teaching on a block schedule with stacked classes and finding pay to compensate teachers for the work they are asked to do during non-school hours.

### ***Sustainability***

Several key activities will be difficult to sustain beyond grant funding. Paying teachers for their time during non-school hours to

participate in professional development (especially around reviewing student work and planning instruction) will be very difficult to continue. Without outside support, paying the

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***Paying teachers for their time during non-school hours to participate in professional development (especially around reviewing student work and planning instruction) will be very difficult to continue.***

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instructional specialists will not be possible. Continuing the level and intensity of work with the external TAP will also cease without more support; however, the skills learned from this training should be self-sustaining and embedded in teachers' work. The principal stated that the district applied for a Smaller Learning Communities grant but does not

## Chapter 4

### *School 3, High-Level Implementation*

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yet know about receipt of award. Funds from this program would be used to continue the activities noted above. With or without additional funding, the school is committed: “We are going to continue with the model; we are determined to make it work.”

Survey results indicated that staff listed insufficient time, lack of parental/community involvement, and lack of human resources as the three main barriers to HSRR implementation.



## SCHOOL 4

## MIDDLE-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION

**HSRR PROGRAM: SCHOOLS FOR A NEW SOCIETY****AWARD DATE: CYCLE 1–APRIL 2005****AWARD AMOUNT: \$400,000****SITE VISIT DATE: SEPTEMBER 27–28, 2006****IMPLEMENTATION SCORE: 23.50 (0–53)****I. LOCAL CONTEXT**

SCHOOL 4 IS LOCATED IN EAST-CENTRAL Texas and is a part of a large urban school district. Student enrollment at School 4 for the 2005–06 school year was 668 students. School 4 is a predominately African American school (88%). The next largest racial/ethnic group is Latino/Hispanic (11%). An overwhelming majority of the student body is considered economically disadvantaged (85%) and at risk (85%). Student mobility is an issue of concern at School 4 (39%). In addition, 28% of students require special education services. (See Table 5.1 for more demographic information.)

**Starting Points**

School 4 has a proud history of academic success. This has not been the case in the past five years, however. Providing some historical perspective, a parent said the school first

became a magnet program for the performing arts in 1995–96, which is why her children came to the school. “Academics were great and tough back then; teachers were in contact with parents if their students were struggling,” she said. However, within a decade, the school’s academic program had declined. Another parent said, “My son came in 2002 as a 9th-grade student. There was no issuing of books then. The books were kept in the book room, and parents had to check them out.” Parents said that parental involvement also began to decline noticeably around 2002.

In response to continued low performance of School 4’s students on the state’s standardized tests, many changes occurred at the school over the past few years but without notable success. A teacher said, “They tried different strategies such as changing teachers and then changing administrators, and performance didn’t get that much better.”

**Table 5.1. School 4: Demographic Profile, 2005–06**

African American	Latino/Hispanic	White	Other	Economically Disadvantaged	At Risk	Mobility (03–04)	Limited English Proficient	Special Education
88%	11%	1%	0%	85%	85%	39%	3%	28%

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

**Table 5.2. School 4: Accountability Rating and TAKS Performance History, 2003-04 to 2005-06**

Year	Campus Rating	TAKS Met Standard All Grades Tested (All Tests)	Reading	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies
2003-04	Academically Unacceptable	20%	68%	28%	42%	82%
2004-05	Academically Unacceptable	22%	56%	36%	35%	82%
2005-06	Academically Unacceptable	23%	74%	32%	37%	78%

Source. Texas Education Agency, 2003-04 and 2004-05 AEIS, 2005-06 Accountability Ratings

Discipline at the school also was described as an issue. The parents felt many problems that came about were due to inconsistencies in setting, communicating, and enforcing policies by school administrators. An example that came up repeatedly was the dress code. Because “the school kept changing the policies and the enforcement of it, students rebelled and ‘dissed’ the whole system,” one parent said.

In 2003-04, all student subgroups at School 4 except Latinos/Hispanics performed below standard on the mathematics portion of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) test resulting in an Academically Unacceptable accountability rating. In 2004-05, performance for all tests improved except for reading/ELA which remained about the same using an adjusted standard. Reading/ELA performance for Latinos/Hispanics was below standard, thus the school received another Academically Unacceptable rating for 2004-05. In 2005-06, School 4 was again rated as Academically Unacceptable. All student groups performed below standard in mathematics. (See Table 5.2 for more accountability information.)

## II. MODEL ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

### *Selection Process*

The district grant coordinator stated that when the High School Redesign and Restructuring (HSRR) grant became available, rather than conducting an internal needs assessment to select a model, many schools just called one another to see what they were using. Therefore, the decisions were often based on networking. She expressed the desire for a grant overview session that would have presented and discussed the various models and how they operate so the schools could make more informed choices.

The redesign model School 4 selected was Schools for a New Society (SNS). (See Table 5.3 for more information about SNS.) This was a model already being implemented as part of an ongoing effort to redesign comprehensive high schools across the entire district. In 2000, the district and the Houston A+ Challenge brought together all stakeholders from the district’s large, comprehensive high schools under a grant funded by Carnegie

**Table 5.3. Schools for a New Society Model Design**

<p><i>Background</i></p> <p>SNS is an initiative of the Carnegie Corporation of New York that began in 2000. The SNS model focuses on the idea that all students must have access to a quality education that would not only prepare them for college but for full participation in a democratic society. The program is centered on rigorous curriculum and high academic achievement for all students.</p> <p><i>Key Strategies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote reform of school district policies and practices</li> <li>• Encourage and support partnerships between businesses, universities, parent and student groups, and community organizations</li> <li>• Hold schools accountable for helping students meet high standards</li> <li>• Prepare students for participation in higher education, in the workforce, and in confronting the challenges and opportunities of 21st century society</li> <li>• Raise graduation requirements to ensure that all students take rigorous courses</li> <li>• Transform large, impersonal high schools into small learning communities or small schools</li> <li>• Provide intensive professional development</li> <li>• Give teachers time for team planning</li> </ul> <p><i>Key Components</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A working partnership between the urban school district and a leading community nonprofit</li> <li>• Redesigning the district</li> <li>• Raising community support and demand for high quality education for students</li> <li>• Creating a citywide distribution of excellent high schools</li> </ul>
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Source. Schools for a New Society website, <http://www.carnegie.org/sns/>

Corporation to determine what attributes the 21st Century high school graduate should possess. The goal of that partnership was to redesign high schools into small, theme-based academies. A significant amount of money has been supporting this effort for over six years.

### ***Initial Implementation***

Initial implementation of School 4's redesign effort was slowed due to a negotiation process with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) about the HSRR budget that resulted in the delayed release of funds. School officials were

required to designate a Technical Assistance Provider (TAP); however, if one was not selected by the negotiation period, TEA then required that a provider be selected in order for the school to receive grant funds. "In those cases the schools tend to choose quickly and often have to learn the hard way if it doesn't fit the schools' needs," the district grant coordinator said.

The grant coordinator stated that the school "did not have a Technical Assistance Provider per se last year." The Director of the Texas High School Redesign and Restructuring

## Chapter 5

### School 4, Middle-Level Implementation

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Project provided a list of TAPs who had a track record of success. The school had the Principal Emeritus for the R4 Group and another unnamed individual come in as consultants. There was also an oversight committee, the Special Campus Intervention Team (SCIT), which was a team of people chosen by the district as required by law under the Texas Education Code for campuses that are Academically Unacceptable.

### **Factors Impacting HSRR Implementation**

#### *SCHOOL CAPACITY*

Parents believed that the expectation of the school being doomed over the past few years led to no resources being put into the school. One said, “If the media, some parents, and some teachers feel the school cannot get better, then it all snowballs into less effort being put into school.” A parent explained, “The situation at [School 4] has been almost like you are dying, and you aren’t getting enough oxygen, and then they say, ‘you aren’t doing any better so we are going to pull the plug.’”

However, the district is now very focused on providing adequate resources to School 4, most notably by bringing a principal who had been successful at a middle school to the school and providing her with staff, equipment, training, and materials to implement a locally designed reform model. The district’s superintendent recruited the new principal to come to School 4 in early September 2006. She has been a successful middle school principal in the district and is one year away from retirement. To convince her to take the assignment at School 4, the superintendent agreed that she would report directly to him, that she could bring whatever administrators and staff she needed, and that she would have any resources and materials she deemed necessary. As stated

by one teacher, “There’s a new sheriff in town, and she has a blank checkbook.”

Additional resources, especially basic materials and technology, were clearly needed. Until last year, the library was seriously understocked, and there were very few computers available at the school. When the principal walked through the school for the first time, she was appalled at the lack of materials that are simply expected to be present at other schools: “The disparity in terms of resources cannot exist. We must mitigate against this. I came from a school 8 miles away with 1,300 students that had sufficient resources—why didn’t [this school]?”

Although the SNS model described earlier was selected as part of the grant process, the model being implemented has been locally designed and consists of a variety of approaches to address the issues of concern at the school. The local initiative priorities included attention to increasing campus resources, reducing student-teacher ratios, improving student behavior, and adding three content specialists in mathematics, science, and English to support ongoing teacher professional development. Many other approaches to add capacity also have been conducted under the general umbrella of HSRR, including:

- full-time mentors for new teachers;
- reestablishment of the Communities in Schools program, with three social workers;
- professional development services support of targeted training through the district’s Professional Development unit;
- double-blocked support classes in mathematics and reading for students who experienced previous TAKS failures in these areas;
- implementation of a modified block schedule to allow time for teacher

- training, planning, and collaboration;
- implementation of a TAKS Power Period during the school day to target skill improvement;
  - implementation of co-teaching to reduce student-teacher ratios and provide support for special education students in science and social studies;
  - identification of students who are struggling to provide focused intervention;
  - training on Cambridge software, a student information system that allows teachers to document targeted strategies and submit daily lesson plans;
  - development of stronger Professional Learning Communities that focus on learning and results and create a strong collaborative culture;
  - implementation of a strong student mentor program; and
  - consistent communication with parents to ensure that students attend appropriate tutorials and intervention classes.

This year has seen a huge increase in the availability of materials. Providing the school with adequate resources and materials was of the highest priority and has made the largest impact with staff. Every teacher said there was a remarkable increase in the availability of materials. “Last year you couldn’t get a dictionary, and now we are getting funding for whatever we need,” one teacher said. Commenting on the availability of school supplies, another teacher said, “We are hearing, ‘Let us know if you do not have what you need.’”

Parents stated that last year the textbooks were issued a little late, but it has not been an issue this year. New resources include additional technology in the form of computers, SMARTBoards in the classroom, and software such as Agile Mind.

The grant funds also were being used to fund the content specialists and the materials and technology associated with their efforts to ensure that teachers are implementing the reform strategies.

The resource of time was cited as a big issue now as so many changes were being implemented during the 2006–07 academic year. Teachers indicated they were getting a lot of support while also being held accountable for their efforts. The modified block schedule, which allowed time each week for planning, collaboration, and training, was described as very positive, as were the smaller class sizes.

The school’s TAP did not respond to the TAP survey; therefore, no external feedback is available concerning the sufficiency of materials, staffing, planning time, and fiscal resources in supporting implementation.

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***Parents believed that the expectation of the school being doomed over the past few years led to no resources being put into the school.***

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School 4 originally budgeted 55% of grant funds for payroll costs and 30% of funds for professional and contracted services, according to their grant application. More recent expenditure reports were unavailable at the time of this report.

Thirty-eight of 47 teachers at School 4 completed surveys for a response rate of 81%. Thirty-seven of those respondents answered all questions related to capacity. A majority of those respondents to the survey believed that the school had adequate faculty and staff (70%), materials (68%), and technological resources (87%) in order to implement this program. However, the respondents’ answers

**Table 5.4. School 4: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Capacity**

Capacity	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Teachers are given sufficient planning time to implement our program.	30%	38%	32%	37
Materials (books and other resources) needed to implement our HSRR program are readily available.	68%	27%	5%	37
Our school has sufficient faculty and staff to fully implement this program.	70%	30%	0%	37
Technological resources have become more available.	87%	8%	5%	37

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

related to planning time were mixed; 30% agreed they were given sufficient planning time, while 32% disagreed with this statement. School 4's mean rating for the Capacity construct was 3.70 on a 5–point scale. (See Table 5.4 for more information on the Capacity construct.)

### EXTERNAL SUPPORT

#### *External Professional Development*

Although not included in the information provided by the principal and leadership team, the executive principal indicated that the R4 Principal Emeritus was used as a consultant last year and will be used again this year, paid from grant funds. He provided training during the summer on Brain-Based Learning. She stated that a member of R4, along with a representative of the TEA,<sup>4</sup> who is the state-level TAP, had meetings with the assistant principals from low-performing schools regarding the grant process and selection of TAPs. Additionally, she indicated that “[the R4 Principal Emeritus] wanted the school to

buy TRIAND software, but School 4 went with Cambridge instead.”

All teachers interviewed mentioned two staff development activities: Marzano High Engagement Strategy Training (also provided to the feeder pattern schools) and the Positive Behavior Support school-wide behavior management system. Some teachers also talked about attending co-teach training that was provided by the Regional Education Service Center as well as individualized trainings. Professional development also was offered to the Intervention Assistance Team during which staff learned how to help students before problems became out of control.

***A staff member reported that the atmosphere at the school this year “is not so much pushy as collaborative and encouraging—the whole feel of the school is different.”***

<sup>4</sup> This representative is actually not from TEA, but rather the Director of the High School Redesign and Restructuring Project.

The school staff rated the TAP a 1.00 on a 5–point scale, which is a very low score. It should be noted that the TAP for the school did not return a survey, so no additional information is available.

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### *Integrated District Assistance*

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Both the district grant coordinator and another high-level district employee are actively involved in the reform efforts at the school and were present for both days of the site visit. The principal has the full support of and direct access to the superintendent. The principal has been given extraordinary support from the district in exchange for her agreement to come to the school this year and implement reform. Half of the teachers at the school are veterans, and half are new. The new teachers are receiving a lot of support from the district, with one noting, “This year, the [district’s] professional development department is providing training specifically for the school’s novice teachers.”

A majority of the 36 respondents to the survey questions believed that they had a thorough understanding of the HSRR program (72%), received adequate initial and ongoing professional development (69%), and received valuable technical assistance provided by external trainers (69%). Half believed the school received effective assistance from external partners, while 73% of respondents to a question about guidance and support from external sources indicated that they received helpful guidance and support from the school’s external facilitator. Because there were many new staff members at the school and because many staff were familiar with the TAP for the school’s No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) efforts, it is possible that the respondents may have been

confused as to who the external facilitator was for the school’s HSRR efforts. School 4’s mean rating for the Support construct was 3.74 on a 5–point scale. (See Table 5.5 for more information on the Support construct.)

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### *INTERNAL FOCUS*

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

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Teachers described their support as positive and increasing during the 2006–07 school year, even though they reported putting in very long hours trying to keep up with all the changes and new requirements. One contributing factor to this supportive climate was that teachers were recruited to come to the school and knew the challenges they faced. “Most teachers new here have experience at other schools, and it is easy for them to buy into the reform effort—many were recruited to come here,” one teacher said. A staff member reported that the atmosphere at the school this year “is not so much pushy as collaborative and encouraging—the whole feel of the school is different.”

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#### *Alignment and Integration with Existing Programs*

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The whole focus of the school is on the activities described above—the grant is one piece of an extensive initiative that has essentially just begun this year. Everyone interviewed was puzzled as to why the district suddenly has begun to pour resources and assistance into the school, but they indicated that they are grateful, excited, and ready to do the work needed to support the improvement efforts.

The school also had supplemental funding due to not meeting AYP standards for a certain number of years under federal accountability

**Table 5.5. School 4: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Support**

Support	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
I have a thorough understanding of this school's HSRR program.	72%	17%	11%	36
I have received adequate initial and ongoing professional development/training for HSRR program implementation.	69%	28%	3%	36
Technical assistance provided by external trainers, model developers, and/or designers has been valuable.	69%	28%	3%	36
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.	73%	27%	0%	37
My school receives effective assistance from external partners (e.g., university, businesses, agencies).	50%	44%	6%	36

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

standards. Such schools receive funding supplements and are required to obtain a TAP. Staff reported that the efforts related to this funding were aligned with the HSRR grant. As part of the supplemental funding, the school utilized a TAP who focused her efforts on helping limited English proficient (LEP) students meet required achievement levels in English/language arts (ELA). She continued to work at the school during the 2006–07 academic year. Other programs that have been implemented at School 4 during the HSRR grant period include Wraparound and Communities in Schools.

### *Monitoring*

The previous principal was described as passive in nature. An executive principal stated that she spent a lot of time last year trying to enforce the improvement plan,

but, when it was not followed, there were no consequences. She stated that this year, a new leadership team was put in place since the new principal was named, the assistant principals were reconstituted, and a new magnet director was hired.

All interviewees were conversant with the changes being implemented this year at the school. Teachers were excited—albeit exhausted—about the scope of the changes, especially with regard to having clear guidelines and expectations and help from the content specialists. Additionally staff stated the principal “has made it easier for new people—she provides FYIs that she prints for everyone and provides updates. This year the content specialist actually gives us feedback that is helpful, not just critical. I feel I am not an island this year.” The teachers were unanimous in stating that they are all working

hard to submit daily lesson plans, adhere to the district's vertical alignment of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), work collaboratively with other teachers, and support their students at the tutorials held before and after school and on Saturdays.

The principal reviews the daily lesson plans to see that teachers are in compliance with the reform efforts and are teaching the required curriculum. The principal stated, "To whom much is given, much is required. A monitor will come to see that 60% of class time is spent in labs if that is what is in the plan." Teachers also commented about this monitoring of lesson plans. One teacher reported "hearing the principal on the speaker every day saying, 'I need your lesson plans every day.' There were teachers in the past who did not have lesson plans."

The content specialists also conducted 25 classroom walkthroughs each week in the core content areas to see that:

- objectives are written on the board and stated to the students;
- the daily agenda and required homework are indicated on the board;
- teachers use questions that focus on higher cognitive domains;
- word walls are present in every room to focus on vocabulary building;
- summative and formative assessments are conducted frequently; and
- students write in every core course.

Considering survey responses across all questions comprising the Focus construct, almost two thirds of respondents agreed the staff was focused on HSRR efforts, and the other third typically indicated neutrality concerning these items. The School 4 mean rating for the Focus construct was 3.83 on

a 5-point scale. (See Table 5.6 for more information on the Focus construct.)

### *PEDAGOGICAL CHANGE*

Teachers said this year was very different from years past in terms of classroom instruction. Staff shared that teachers who did not have high expectations for the students are no longer at the school. Changes were described in several areas, including curriculum, instructional practices, and technology.

There is an emphasis on every teacher being aware of the standards and designing daily lessons based on them. This focus is monitored through teachers turning in lesson plans via the Cambridge software. Content specialists review them to see that they are aligned with the district's TEKS program. A teacher said, "We always had [the TEKS program], but now it is mandated, and we do not deviate from it. The [content specialists] will note and document if you deviate from your lesson plan—they are not saying it is wrong, but noting it." Additionally content specialists produce 25 walkthrough summaries per week and provide feedback used to improve instruction. The content specialists use checklists and summaries showing areas in need of improvement. These expectations are then aligned with professional development opportunities.

Teachers also noted they no longer use only direct instruction. "We do not just stand and lecture but use a variety of methods. Engagement from the students is higher—from around 50% [of the time] last year to 90% this year," one teacher said.

Teachers indicated more availability and incorporation of technology. One interviewee stated, "I now have three computers in my room; we have lessons and websites online

**Table 5.6. School 4: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Focus**

Focus	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Teachers in this school are generally supportive of our HSRR program.	62%	38%	0%	37
The elements of our HSRR program are effectively integrated to help us meet school improvement goals.	65%	35%	0%	37
As a school staff, we regularly review implementation and outcome benchmarks to evaluate our progress.	64%	36%	0%	36
Our school has a plan for evaluating all components of our HSRR program.	73%	27%	0%	37
I am satisfied with the federal, state, local, and private resources that are being coordinated to support our HSRR program.	62%	32%	5%	37

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

and on CDs.” The teachers also utilize SMART Boards, which enable all members of a class to take an interactive quiz.

Students provided examples of higher expectations, such as how they are now required to maintain a lab composition book to keep track of their labs. Students also noted that class sizes are smaller this year, which allows for more “one-on-one” work with the teacher. They described the teachers as very helpful and willing to go over the work if it was wrong but not in an intimidating way. “They will teach you how to do it better,” one student said.

To sustain higher expectations, more resources and support are provided, especially in the form of tutoring. For example, students stated that there are “a lot of new special staff coming in to help us,” with “a lot of tutorials in place now and a lot more people coming.” This

year “you do not have a choice not to come to tutorials,” a student reported. “If you failed a section, you go to a special class—there is a TAKS Power Period with advocacy. If you go to tutorials on Saturday, you get to stay and dance with a DJ, get pizza and video games—a lot of students like that because they do not have many fun things to do at home.” Another student noted that “two days ago we were worrying about being behind and wondering how we were going to get all our work done for the six weeks. Our teacher held after-school tutorials, and we got it all done—he gave us a lot of time to get it done.”

Survey responses support that instructional changes have occurred on the campus. Three quarters (75%) of respondents indicated that students spent much of their time working in cooperative learning teams, and 69% reported that classroom learning activities had changed a great deal. Forty-three percent (43%) stated

that students spent at least two hours per school day in interdisciplinary or project-based work, while 57% either disagreed or were neutral concerning this question. The School 4 mean rating for the Pedagogy construct was 3.70 on a 5–point scale. (See Table 5.7 for more information on the Pedagogy construct.)

## RESTRUCTURING OUTCOMES

### Student Impacts

**Achievement.** Although a benchmark assessment was being given the week of the site visit, the results were not yet available. Everyone said it was “too soon to tell” if HSRR efforts were impacting student achievement. However, attention to monitoring progress had increased. One student said, “We are always going over the objectives to show where you are weak and strong on the TAKS. A lot more teachers are staying after school this year to help you—even though sometimes

the students do not show up, the teachers are still here.”

**Academic engagement/motivation.** Staff reported that attendance is up over last year and credit this change to raising the expectations. One teacher said, “When you expect more, the students will rise to those expectations; they want to please the teacher.” Describing the tutorials as fostering more student confidence, a teacher said, “Students feel more secure this year because we started tutorials earlier. If a student failed TAKS or State-Developed Alternative Assessment II (SDAA II) last year, then their parent must sign a contract early in the current year that the student will attend tutorials.”

Eliminating distractions such as dress code violations and discipline inconsistencies has led to an increased focus. A staff member said, “Students appear to be more responsible.

**Table 5.7. School 4: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Pedagogy**

Pedagogy	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
I use textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets less than I used to for basic skills or content area instruction.	54%	29%	17%	35
Classroom learning activities have changed a great deal.	69%	25%	6%	36
Students in my class spend at least two hours per school day in interdisciplinary or project-based work.	43%	34%	23%	35
Students in my class spend much of their time working in cooperative learning teams.	75%	19%	6%	36
Students are using technology more effectively.	67%	28%	6%	36

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

## Chapter 5

### School 4, Middle-Level Implementation

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They are being made to do things that were in place before but were not enforced, such as the dress code and tardy policy. We always had a school improvement plan, but implementation was spotty.” Additionally teachers reported improved student behavior due to the emphasis on consistency.

*Affective impacts.* Teachers described an increase in student respect due to the new student discipline system. Additionally teachers stated that the emphasis on tutoring has provided more opportunity for one-on-one time with students and improved teacher-student relationships. Students noticed this too. A student who participated in a focus group said, “If you spend more time with a teacher, you build up conversations and build up trust, and then you can get things off your chest, and the teachers push and encourage you.” Another student stated, “My counselor helps me if I have any problems at home, or with any teachers, or getting my work done. She makes sure I know what I need to know to graduate on time.”

*Special needs.* All teachers indicated that including students who have special needs in the reform effort is a major goal for the principal and the leadership team. Special needs students are placed in the least restrictive environments and are included in all activities on campus. Lesson plans for special needs students are included in the Cambridge software as well as the students’ Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Several teachers mentioned that co-teaching and inclusion are more prevalent this year.

The principal said that the records of all students in special education were reviewed to see if they are still appropriately placed. She believed that many students were just being

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***One teacher explained, “We have been inundated with so many new tools; we need to find time to learn how to use them all.”***

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carried forward from year to year, and she wanted to examine the possibility of over-referrals at School 4 since the percentage of students identified for special education services is high at 28%. The review included IEPs to see that they are still appropriate. The school had just completed the audit of these records, and results were unavailable at the time of this report.

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#### *Staff Impacts*

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Teachers reported that they are motivated to work hard to see the changes through at School 4. However, they also indicated that so many new trainings and materials have been provided that they need time to digest it all. One teacher explained, “We have been inundated with so many new tools; we need to find time to learn how to use them all.” Staff members were tired but enthusiastic about the work they were doing: “We are all motivated, even if exhausted at the end of the day, but every day the students motivate you to work hard.” Some suggested that the challenges they face have galvanized the staff. “These changes make each teacher step up—we are all working together,” a teacher said. “We are all accountable here.”

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#### *Community/Parental Involvement*

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All participants said that community involvement has increased but not to the level where it should be. This year the teachers made hundreds of phone calls to tell parents about the tutorials held on Saturdays and before and

after school. The alumni association has been newly re-activated this year, as has the Parent-Teacher-Student Association (PTSA).

One teacher commented that because of the low accountability ratings, parents can take their students to other schools with more diverse programs and electives. School 4 is a fine arts magnet with piano, dance, band, art, and choir. The school also offers a number of Career and Technology Education electives. However, there are generally not very many academic electives offered. For example, there is only one foreign language teacher, who teaches Spanish I and II. The lack of academic electives and resources causes some parents to want their children to go to other schools. “Parents should not have to move their children to an over-crowded school because that school has better technology; all schools in [the district] should have the same resources,” one parent said.

The city’s National Basketball Association team became a business adopter of the school, and all parties interviewed described that partnership in positive terms. One parent described her effort to become a business partner with the school but said “the school district made it hard to help—[the district] made it hard to buy cameras or help with the yearbook because they required the school to buy more expensive equipment through a specific vendor. I had to go to the central office to work on the issue. It was almost like they were setting it up to cause the school to not do well. Other schools seem to be able to get what they need more easily.”

This year the school hosted a Career Day, during which alumni of School 4 came to speak to the students. These business professionals, doctors, dentists, nurses, and lawyers told the students they could go to

college even if they have to borrow the money or get a scholarship. Both student and parent groups talked about the positive impact of Career Day.

Compared to responses across other survey constructs, more teachers either disagreed or answered neutral concerning questions related to the Outcomes construct, indicating this may still be an area of challenge for the school. A majority of teachers indicated they spent more time working together to develop curriculum and plan instruction (70%), and, as corroborated by site visit data, 65% stated interactions between teachers and students were more positive. However, only about a quarter of respondents reported that students in this school were more enthusiastic about learning (28%), and 24% agreed that parents were more involved in the educational program of this school. The School 4 mean rating for the Outcomes construct is 3.44 on a 5–point scale. (See Table 5.8 for more information on the Outcomes construct.)

### III. IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

#### *Key Points*

Changes this year include new leadership, a major investment in resources and materials, and a clearly specified structure for changes to which all parties are being held accountable. Monitoring is done daily and structured feedback is provided to teachers. Academic progress of students is evaluated frequently with standardized assessments. Follow-up tutorials are offered daily and are mandatory, with parents informed and commitment contracts signed. The dress code and behavioral model are being uniformly implemented, with rewards for compliance and consequences for noncompliance. A student

**Table 5.8. School 4: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Outcomes**

Outcomes	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Student achievement has been positively impacted.	58%	42%	0%	36
Students in this school are more enthusiastic about learning.	28%	53%	19%	36
Parents are more involved in the educational program of this school.	24%	41%	35%	37
Community support for our school has increased.	50%	42%	8%	36
Students have higher standards for their own work.	38%	49%	14%	37
Teachers are more involved in decision making.	35%	35%	30%	37
Our program adequately addresses the requirements of students with special needs.	54%	43%	6%	35
Teachers in this school spend more time working together to develop curriculum and plan instruction.	70%	19%	11%	37
Interactions between teachers and students are more positive.	65%	35%	0%	37

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

also noted this change: “Discipline problems interfered with learning at this school. It was part of the discussion and decision regarding block scheduling. By the time the teachers get the students settled down, the class period is over. This year I do see an improvement. If there is a disruption, then it is handled appropriately.”

### ***School Climate Inventory (SCI)***

The SCI was administered as part of the staff survey. The overall mean SCI rating for School 4 was 3.79 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). The highest mean rating of 4.14 was given for the Instruction dimension (compared to a national norm of 4.06). The lowest mean rating was obtained for the Order dimension of 3.35 (compared to a national norm of 3.26). (See Tables 5.9 and 5.10 for more information on SCI high and low scales.)

Instruction received the highest ratings by the School 4 staff. Eighty-nine percent (89%) of respondents indicated that teachers used curriculum guides to ensure that similar subject content was covered within each grade, and 89% reported that teachers used a wide range of teaching materials and media. Over two thirds (68%) reported that pull-out

programs were not interfering with basic skills instruction.

Thirty-seven respondents answered all portions of the survey related to Order. While 70% of these respondents indicated that the school was a safe place to work, only 19% agreed that student tardiness or absence from school was not a major problem. Furthermore 27% stated that student misbehavior in this school does not interfere with the teaching process. About half of the teachers (51%) reported that student behavior was generally positive.

Figure 5.1 presents scale values for all School Climate Inventory scales.

### Assessment of Implementation Level

Every group interviewed stated that there have been a lot of changes this year. These include clearer discipline standards leading to improved student behavior; an influx of technology, including supplies and materials that have not been available for the past five years; more staff; and a modified block schedule where the students leave at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesdays to allow time for the staff to meet and plan.

These changes have positively impacted students. A staff member said, “Students are more positive toward school, and the school environment looks better with flowers and

**Table 5.9. School 4: School Climate Inventory Perceived Instruction**

Instruction	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Teachers use a variety of teaching strategies.	87%	14%	0%	37
Teachers at each grade (course) level design learning activities to support both curriculum and student needs.	84%	16%	0%	37
Teachers often provide opportunities for students to develop higher-order skills.	84%	16%	0%	37
Teachers use curriculum guides to ensure that similar subject content is covered within each grade.	89%	11%	0%	36
Teachers use appropriate evaluation methods to determine student achievement.	86%	14%	0%	37
Pull-out programs do not interfere with basic skills instruction.	68%	30%	3%	37
Teachers use a wide range of teaching materials and media.	89%	11%	0%	35

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

**Table 5.10. School 4: School Climate Inventory Perceived Order**

Order	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Rules for student behavior are consistently enforced.	65%	24%	11%	37
Student discipline is administered fairly and appropriately.	65%	30%	5%	37
Student misbehavior in this school does not interfere with the teaching process.	27%	38%	35%	37
Student tardiness or absence from school is not a major problem.	19%	30%	51%	37
This school is a safe place in which to work.	70%	27%	3%	37
Teachers, administrators, and parents assume joint responsibility for student discipline.	54%	27%	19%	37
Student behavior is generally positive in this school.	51%	32%	16%	37

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

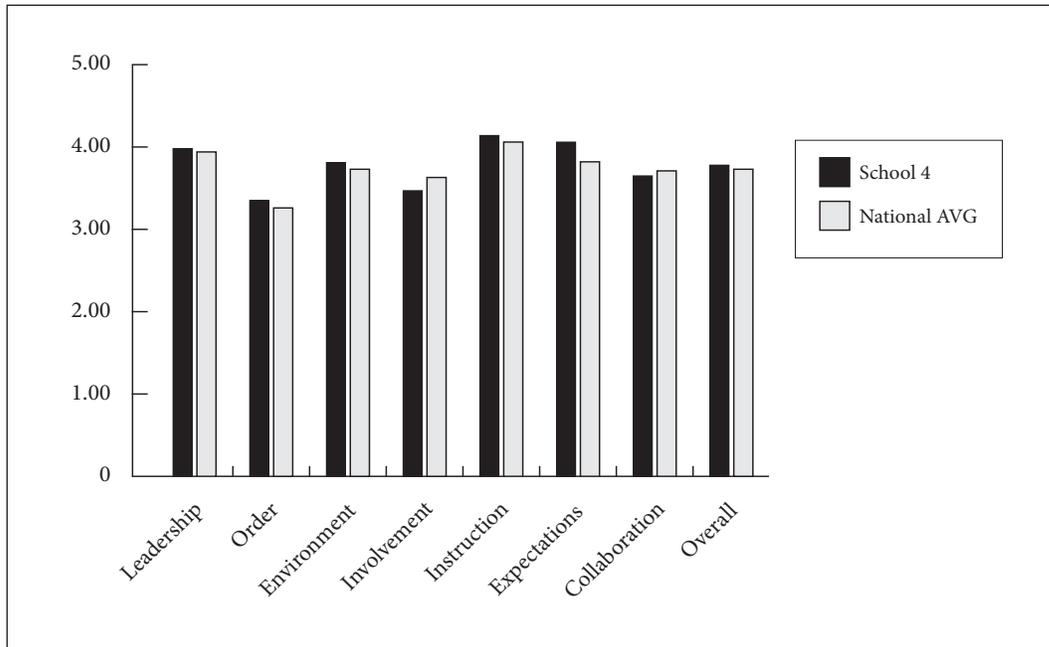
Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

more colorful classrooms. There are better attitudes and a more positive spirit among the students.” Additionally at the beginning of the school year, through the Positive Behavior Support behavior management system, clear expectations for student behavior were disseminated and enforced. Most importantly a plan for how to improve test scores is in place and being followed. A teacher reported, “We now have more details in terms of lesson plans. We are being assessed to see that we are implementing changes. Our lesson plans are reviewed, special education students are being included more, and there is more co-teaching with this new administration. The staff is more of a community—we have more group meetings.”

With an instrument designed to assess the strength of implementation based on the HSRR-required components, the school received a score of 23.50 out of a possible 53 points. The TAP did not complete a survey; therefore, there is no external rating for the school’s overall redesign implementation level. The school staff rated its own implementation level to be 2.50 out of a possible 5 points.

### **Facilitators**

Facilitators for implementing school change are numerous at School 4. The two most widely stated facilitators were the principal and injection of resources. Staff recognized the principal as a major facilitator. She views

**Figure 5.1. School 4: School Climate Inventory Scale Values (N=38)**

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

herself in that role as well, stating, “It is important for us to understand what is REAL. We are putting systems into place that can reform this school. We are working really hard, putting in a lot of time and energy and commitment to making this work.” This includes more resources, more technology in the classroom, and more teamwork and collaboration. The improved attitude of students, the enforcement of the dress and the behavior codes, and school beautification efforts are also helpful. Additionally the staff noted the ongoing support provided by the content specialists as a facilitator. “Last year

***“Last year we were stepping in the right direction; now we are moving,” one staff member said.***

we were stepping in the right direction; now we are moving,” one staff member said. “Last year there were a lot of evaluations from [the district], but this year they are not outsiders—they are in-house, campus-wide, and friendlier. [They are] there to assist you and remind you to put objectives on the wall, not to nail you.”

Survey results indicated that staff listed technology, adequate financial resources, and the curriculum focus as the three main facilitators for HSRR implementation.

### **Barriers**

School 4 still faces many barriers, including cumulative disadvantage from years of insufficient resources and lack of attention to student learning. The principal indicated that

## Chapter 5

### *School 4, Middle-Level Implementation*

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time was one of the largest barriers to reform at this point: “It’s a daily fight to change human beings—we are not just packaging soda bottles. We need to change attitudes and behavior in a year, when the environment has been like this for years. There is a lot of trial and error day to day.”

Additionally, the principal indicated that the history of insufficient resources continues to threaten sustainability without external funding. “[It is a shock] to see that schools like [School 4] did not have computers,” she said. “We need a minimum checklist of what is needed for a high school to function, and there has to be some equalization across districts as well as across the state.”

Survey results indicated that staff listed a lack of time, a lack of parent and community involvement, and insufficient financial resources as the three main barriers for HSRR implementation.

### ***Sustainability***

The principal said the question of how to sustain the grant effort is an issue. She felt that the district will need to invest in this school for at least three years to sustain improvement efforts. “We want the culture of [the] school to change and that takes time. The superintendent made a commitment to keep the school going beyond the current year even if results do not come up as high as they need to be. We must be passionate about what is required to make this school successful,” the principal said.

Staff members are very supportive of the direction the school is taking and are committed to the hard work ahead. One teacher said, “It will take all of us working

together to move the school forward. When we get to the ‘end of the rainbow’ [the end of school and testing], we will be able to measure not intent but outcomes.”



## SCHOOL 5

## MIDDLE-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION

**HSRR PROGRAM: HIGH SCHOOLS THAT WORK****AWARD DATE: CYCLE 1–APRIL 2005****AWARD AMOUNT: \$400,000****SITE VISIT DATE: SEPTEMBER 25–26, 2006****IMPLEMENTATION SCORE: 29.50 (0–53)****I. LOCAL CONTEXT**

SCHOOL 5 IS LOCATED IN SOUTH-CENTRAL Texas and is a part of a large urban school district. Student enrollment at School 5 for the 2005–06 school year was 1,408 students. The school serves a predominantly Latino/Hispanic student population (99%). Ninety-nine percent (99%) are economically disadvantaged, and 77% are considered at risk. Student mobility is an issue of concern at School 5 (34%). In addition, 19% of the student population requires special education services. (See Table 6.1 for more demographic information.) This school was funded through a non-competitive grant from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) as part of a multi-campus redesign project in collaboration with the Communities Foundation of Texas. The decision to fund this campus was based on the strategic priorities of the Texas High

School Project, a public-private partnership to improve the graduation rate and college readiness of Texas high school students.

**Starting Points**

The school has had eight principals in ten years, and parents were concerned about the high turnover rate for top administrators on the campus. An administrator, who was new in 2006–07, was well aware of the revolving door and commented, “I better show progress, or I’ll be out of here.”

Although students in the focus group reported personally experiencing incidents that left them feeling fearful and unsafe on campus, they were still upset and offended that the press consistently focused on the negative events that happened on campus and in the surrounding area.

**Table 6.1. School 5: Demographic Profile, 2005–06**

African American	Latino/Hispanic	White	Other	Economically Disadvantaged	At Risk	Mobility (03–04)	Limited English Proficient	Special Education
1%	99%	0%	0%	99%	77%	34%	9%	19%

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

**Table 6.2. School 5: Accountability Rating and TAKS Performance History, 2003-04 to 2005-06**

Year	Campus Rating	TAKS Met Standard All Grades Tested (All Tests)	Reading	Math	Science	Social Studies
2003-04	Academically Acceptable	38%	67%	55%	53%	83%
2004-05	Academically Acceptable	33%	69%	42%	40%	77%
2005-06	Academically Acceptable	32%	74%	42%	37%	76%

Source. Texas Education Agency, 2003-04 and 2004-05 AEIS, 2005-06 Accountability Ratings

Despite these challenges, School 5 received Academically Acceptable accountability ratings for the past three school years. (See Table 6.2 for more information on accountability.)

In addition to High School Redesign and Restructuring (HSRR), the school is currently implementing the Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) program through a Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) grant. The Cornell Note-Taking System component of AVID is used throughout the school. The Career and Technology Education (CTE) program includes coursework in criminal justice, automotive/body shop repair, cosmetology, and culinary arts. A magnet program on banking is offered at the School 5 campus as well.

## II. MODEL ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

### *Selection Process*

High Schools That Work (HSTW) was selected as the redesign model for the school before the current principal and associate principal were hired. According to a counselor who was on

staff at the time of selection, administrators chose the program because the campus wanted to develop small learning communities. Additionally HSTW was a natural fit for promoting the CTE program because of its emphasis on blending traditional college preparatory studies with quality vocational and technical training. (See Table 6.3 for more information on HSTW.)

### *Initial Implementation*

Since School 5 received TEA grant funds in August 31, 2005, the associate principal has functioned as the redesign coordinator according to several staff members. As a part of the redesign, School 5 divided into three small learning communities. An administrator/vice principal, a counselor, and a curriculum and instruction coordinator provide direction for each community. The principal, an associate principal, and a counselor are responsible for overseeing all operations and instruction. In 2006, a grant administrator was hired to coordinate across the three small learning communities. Students identified as special education, Limited English Proficient (LEP), and pre-Advanced Placement (AP)/AP were as

**Table 6.3. High Schools That Work Model Design**

<p><i>Background</i></p> <p>HSTW is an initiative of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) State Vocational Education Consortium that began in 1987. 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 create 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 (HSTW 10 Key Practices)</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>

evenly distributed as possible among the three communities.

A primary focus of the redesign effort is addressing the school's high dropout rate by better preparing freshmen, and a freshman preparatory initiative that includes a curriculum and freshman class has received the most attention according to staff. Teachers said the intent is to establish strong bonds with the students when they first enter high school

with the hope that student attendance will improve over the long run. According to site documents, freshmen who did not participate in the band or the magnet school were enrolled in a career-exploration course. Staff said that starting with the freshman prep course, CTE units, mathematics courses, and language arts courses are integrated so that students can see how the core subjects are relevant in their everyday life. Social studies will be integrated later. While some data indicate that the small

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### School 5, Middle-Level Implementation

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learning communities were to be theme based (academic and career/technical courses connected to post-secondary studies), it is not clear that this has yet taken place.

In addition, an activity to help freshman students develop four-year plans toward graduation under the recommended program appears to be in place. One staff member noted, “Students have degree plans in their notebooks.”

### **Factors Impacting HSRR Implementation**

#### *SCHOOL CAPACITY*

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##### *Professional Development*

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All members of the School 5 staff (100+) completed a day of professional development on promoting literacy across the curriculum, and a refresher course was offered for the entire staff in September 2006. Departments then determined which reading strategies would be integrated in delivering content, and those strategies were reflected in lesson plans.

Groups of teachers, counselors, and administrators also participated in a variety of other professional development offerings in 2006. For example, ninth- and 10th-grade mathematics teachers attended a numeracy workshop presented at the Regional Education Service Center (ESC). Department chairs and small learning community staff attended a workshop that focused on student work and teacher assignments. Based on this workshop, School 5 staff will develop a standard rubric across departments in order to analyze student work and grading.

Some teacher comments indicated that the same group of teachers participated in the bulk of the trainings, especially Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) trainings

held in other states. Teachers in the focus group said that elective teachers did not get any additional special training except for literacy training and that department chairs participated in comparably more training. The idea for redelivery was based on a trainer-of-trainers model, one teacher said, but much of the redelivery has not occurred because “we haven’t had time yet.” The counselor indicated that training for counselors was limited.

Because new staff was hired too late to receive training from SREB, the curriculum coordinators and their colleagues were coaching them.

##### *Materials*

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According to the new principal, grant funds were available for technology, tutoring, and professional development. She said specifically that laptop computers and liquid crystal display (LCD) projectors were purchased with grant funds for all core teachers in an effort to integrate technology into classrooms. However, teacher comments indicate that some of the equipment is not yet serviceable.

##### *Staffing and Planning Time*

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Teachers said they met more frequently and planned in groups. Counselors meet with the associate principal once a week and prepare calendars to keep him up to date. Teachers have a common meeting period by department.

##### *Shared Leadership*

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Shared leadership has been promoted through the organization of the three small learning communities. Working closely with the curriculum coordinators in their small learning communities, teachers are responsible for keeping students focused, collaborating

with their peers, providing feedback to administrators, and participating in site-based decision making. An important component of the new structure has been the active inclusion of counselors. In accordance with a district mandate, counselors have been taken out of testing coordination and are required to spend more time in classrooms. They have also organized lunch meetings with faculty to begin a dialogue. Counselors also now work directly and cooperatively with teachers and administrators, whereas, in the past, counselors were “left out.” The counselor said initially teachers were confused by efforts to bring counselors into the conversation; they “felt we were invading.”

Results from the Technical Assistance Provider (TAP) survey indicated that the school was judged to have adequate materials for implementing the HSRR program but lacked sufficient staffing, planning, or fiscal resources.

Seventy-four out of 105 teachers at School 5 completed surveys for a response rate of 70%.

In terms of the Capacity construct, responses were often split across the three response categories, indicating staff may be aware of the capacity needed to redesign the school but do not judge the school to be fully implementing yet. A majority of teacher respondents to the survey (55%) disagreed that teachers were given sufficient planning time to implement the HSRR program. Less than a quarter of respondents indicated that the school had sufficient materials (22%) and technology (21%) to implement the HSRR program fully. School 5 recorded a mean rating of 2.80 for the Capacity construct on a 5-point scale. (See Table 6.4 for more information on the Capacity construct.)

### EXTERNAL SUPPORT

#### *External Professional Development*

SREB has provided campus-wide HSTW and related professional development and made numerous site visits according to staff. The initial SREB consultant assigned to the campus

**Table 6.4. School 5: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Capacity**

Capacity	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Teachers are given sufficient planning time to implement our program.	14%	31%	55%	71
Materials (books and other resources) needed to implement our HSRR program are readily available.	22%	44%	33%	72
Our school has sufficient faculty and staff to fully implement this program.	38%	37%	25%	73
Technological resources have become more available.	21%	37%	42%	73

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

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relocated after the first year of the grant. A new consultant has been working extensively with the curriculum coordinators associated with each of the small learning communities to provide periodic campus visits and regular updates to administrators and faculty on training. The new principal also noted the SREB consultant provided resources and strategies for targeting weak subject areas.

Examples of the level of staff involvement in HSTW-related activities include the following. During the summer of 2006, ten teachers from the Career and Technology Education (CTE) department created career-themed lessons for the ninth-grade Freshmen Prep Program to help students select a career pathway. During a SREB summer institute in June, four teachers and one curriculum coordinator developed mathematics and English/language arts (ELA) units for the Freshmen Prep class. In August, the associate principal, five department chairs, and three curriculum coordinators attended the SREB workshop on evaluating teacher assignments and student work. One administrator and three teachers also made presentations at the national SREB summer conference.

The principal also noted that there were grant funds for a consultant to help with mathematics and science, but staff did not mention this specifically.

The TAP survey indicated that 500 hours of support were provided during year one and an additional 500 hours during year two. The school assigned the TAP a rating of 3.50 out of a 5-point scale for the services provided.

As for survey data related to the Support construct, again, it is important to notice the relatively even distribution of responses across categories. For example, in no item did a majority of respondents record that they

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***“It’s impossible to have a pure school within a school,” said one teacher.***

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agreed or disagreed with a statement. Forty-four percent (44%) of respondents reported that external assistance was helpful. About 40% agreed that they had a thorough understanding of the school’s HSRR program (42%), and 41% had received adequate training for HSRR implementation. The mean rating for the Support construct was 3.14 on a 5-point scale. (See Table 6.5 for more information on the Support construct.)

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### *INTERNAL FOCUS*

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

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Teacher support for the overall redesign effort appears to be quite high, and the principal said that teachers were supportive of the small learning communities. One experienced teacher described it as one of the most cohesive faculties with which she had worked. However, teachers pointed out several restrictions with the small learning communities as they are currently structured. Complaints were related to scheduling for both classes and teacher planning/meeting time. “It’s impossible to have a pure school within a school,” said one teacher. Students were taking electives (including some CTE courses) across academies. One counselor observed that while many teachers, especially younger teachers, are interested and working hard to contribute to the initiative, some teachers are still “not quite buying into it.”

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#### *Alignment and Integration with Existing Programs*

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The CSR-funded AVID program is ongoing, but no one mentioned any details about AVID and its integration with the HSRR effort

**Table 6.5. School 5: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Support**

Support	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
I have a thorough understanding of this school's HSRR program.	42%	32%	26%	73
I have received adequate initial and ongoing professional development/training for HSRR program implementation.	41%	37%	22%	73
Technical assistance provided by external trainers, model developers, and/or designers has been valuable.	33%	39%	28%	72
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.	44%	35%	21%	72
My school receives effective assistance from external partners (e.g., university, businesses, agencies).	30%	51%	20%	71

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

beyond one teacher's comment that there was some confusion about HSTW and other grants and programs, specifically AVID.

### *Monitoring*

According to the principal, the curriculum coordinators for each small learning community developed profiles of individual students that included special education status, LEP, and Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) scores. These profiles are used for weekly review and in nine-week planning sessions to report grades and analyze mastery of TAKS objectives. The new principal instituted this process, and she stressed that more monitoring procedures were necessary.

For the Focus construct, a majority of teachers responding to surveys chose "neutral" across all but one question. Over half the

staff responding to the survey were neutral about whether or not teachers were generally supportive of the HSRR program (55%), whether or not HSRR components were effectively integrated (59%), and whether or not the school has a plan for evaluating all components of HSRR program (54%). Less than a quarter of the respondents (22%) were satisfied with the federal, state, local, and private resources that are being coordinated to support the HSRR program. The School 5 mean rating for the Focus construct was 3.24 on a 5-point scale. (See Table 6.6 for more information on the Focus construct.)

### *PEDAGOGICAL CHANGE*

According to the HSRR coordinator, there is more use of technology in some classes, more student participation, and evidence of teachers analyzing student work. Most teachers

**Table 6.6. School 5: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Focus**

Focus	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Teachers in this school are generally supportive of our HSRR program.	35%	55%	10%	71
The elements of our HSRR program are effectively integrated to help us meet school improvement goals.	30%	59%	11%	73
As a school staff, we regularly review implementation and outcome benchmarks to evaluate our progress.	47%	43%	10%	72
Our school has a plan for evaluating all components of our HSRR program.	33%	54%	13%	70
I am satisfied with the federal, state, local, and private resources that are being coordinated to support our HSRR program.	22%	62%	16%	69

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

indicated that writing has increased in most subject areas.

In surveys, a majority of staff agreed on only one question in the Pedagogy construct: 62% agreed that students spend much of their time working in cooperative learning teams. Less than half of respondents (44%) agreed that classroom-learning activities had changed a great deal, and 42% agreed that students were using technology more effectively. The School 5 mean rating for the Pedagogy construct is 3.20 on a 5-point scale. (See Table 6.7 for more information on the Pedagogy construct.)

## RESTRUCTURING OUTCOMES

### *Student Impacts*

Because all of the students are divided among the three small learning communities, staff

estimate that all students at School 5 are impacted by the redesign effort.

*Achievement.* According to the new principal, gains in achievement to date have been minimal. She commented, “You’ve got to believe [in the students] and communicate with the students.” Students believed that administrators and teachers were working together for their benefit, although they sensed “disunity” among the departments at times. Teachers were optimistic that the small learning communities would allow them more time to meet a student’s individual needs.

### *Academic engagement and motivation.*

Although student behavior has shown some improvement, student attendance continues to be a problem. Teachers are trying to develop a stronger rapport with all students, but special efforts are being made to create bonds with

freshmen that they will carry forward through their high school years. After a student misses two school days, the counselor schedules a conference with the parents that the student is required to attend.

Because teachers and students get to know each other on a more personal basis in the small learning communities, students know that teachers expect them to be successful regardless of their individual circumstances. Students are expected to carry their degree plans in their notebooks as a constant reminder.

*Affective impacts.* Teachers and parents were enthusiastic about the small learning communities because of the positive impact they have had on the development of closer relationships between students and teachers. Several teachers observed “less teacher talk and more interaction” between teachers and

students. Teachers and students often meet on Saturdays for special projects or tutoring.

### *Staff Impacts*

The majority of teachers appear to be enthusiastic about the changes introduced through the redesign process. Teachers were just getting to know the new principal, and they hoped that she would be given a chance to make a difference at School 5 since there is constant turnover of top administrators at the school. Teachers felt that interactions among teachers were becoming more constructive. Teachers also commented that the small learning communities structure allowed them to keep better track of the students. The HSRR coordinator noted that there has been more dialogue and collaboration on campus.

Counselors have come to play a much more active role in student life, with more

**Table 6.7. School 5: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Pedagogy**

Pedagogy	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
I use textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets less than I used to for basic skills or content area instruction.	38%	35%	27%	71
Classroom learning activities have changed a great deal.	44%	34%	23%	71
Students in my class spend at least two hours per school day in interdisciplinary or project-based work.	21%	46%	33%	70
Students in my class spend much of their time working in cooperative learning teams.	62%	27%	11%	73
Students are using technology more effectively.	42%	38%	20%	71

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

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participation in the classroom and activities such as freshman preparatory career guidance. The counselor interviewed during site visits noted that counselors now “know students better and vice versa, especially the freshmen.”

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#### *Parent and Community Involvement*

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School 5 has a very enthusiastic parent/community liaison on staff. As a result, the school has the largest and strongest group of parent volunteers in the district according to staff. However, involvement is still low in terms of sheer numbers. Attendance at parent-teacher association (PTA) meetings in particular is quite low.

With the most recent change in administrators, parents sensed a change in the overall atmosphere of the school. Parents felt it was no longer as “homelike” and “cheerful” as in the past, and they did not always feel welcome. They reported that few parents attended the recent Open House. Those who did attend were disappointed that the activities were limited to the central mall area of the building and that they were unable to meet with teachers individually in their classrooms.

Parents in the focus group felt that the lines of communication could be improved, possibly through home visits, monthly newsletters, and calendars. The principal plans to host a Principal’s Coffee meeting once a month. Approximately 25 parents attended the last meeting.

In an effort to attract community members as well as parents to the school, teachers are paid by the district to extend library hours from 4:30–7:30 PM Monday through Thursday. Visitors can access the Internet, and teachers are available to help with the technology.

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***Parents felt it was no longer as “homelike” and “cheerful” as in the past, and they did not always feel welcome.***

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Parents can receive training on the iDataPortal system, allowing them access to their child’s grades, assignments, and attendance. Across the Outcomes construct, less than a majority agreed with any of the nine questions. Thirty-four percent (34%) agreed that student achievement had been positively impacted; less than a quarter agreed that students in the school were more enthusiastic about learning (24%). Few respondents thought parents were more involved in the educational program (15%), while less than a quarter felt community support for the school increased (21%). The mean rating for School 5 for the Outcomes construct is a 3.05 on a 5–point scale. (See Table 6.8 for more information on the Outcomes construct.)

### III. IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

#### ***Key Points***

Despite ongoing turnover in administration, School 5 has restructured the school into three small learning communities. Teachers and parents are hoping that the new principal will bring stability to the school, and many teachers commented that the new principal is more involved. A focus on freshman preparation has received the most attention to date with a curriculum and career exploration class targeting entering freshman already instituted.

With the considered staffing and structure of the small learning communities at School 5, a broad base of leadership and responsibility could be developed. The inclusion of

counselors has been successful with counselors taking a more active role in the operation of small learning communities. Scheduling conflicts and the orientation of the small learning communities need to be addressed.

### ***School Climate Inventory (SCI)***

The SCI was administered as part of the staff survey. The overall mean SCI rating for School 5 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, which is 3.73. The highest mean rating of 3.56 was given for the Instruction dimension (compared to a national norm of 4.06). The lowest mean rating was obtained for the Order dimension of 3.02

(compared to a national norm of 3.26). (See Tables 6.9 and 6.10 for more information on SCI data.)

The Instruction dimension received the highest ratings by the School 5 staff. Sixty-eight percent (68%) indicated that teachers use a variety of teaching strategies, and 65% stated that teachers are using a wide range of teaching materials and media. Sixty-two percent (62%) reported that teachers design learning activities to support both curriculum and student needs, and 61% indicated that teachers used curriculum guides to ensure that similar subject content was covered within each grade. Thirty percent (30%) reported that pull-out programs interfere with basic skills instruction.

**Table 6.8. School 5: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Outcomes**

<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Strongly Agree OR Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree OR Disagree</b>	<b>N*</b>
Student achievement has been positively impacted.	34%	52%	14%	71
Students in this school are more enthusiastic about learning.	24%	51%	25%	71
Parents are more involved in the educational program of this school.	15%	45%	39%	72
Community support for our school has increased.	21%	59%	20%	71
Students have higher standards for their own work.	22%	50%	28%	72
Teachers are more involved in decision-making.	28%	45%	27%	71
Our program adequately addresses the requirements of students with special needs.	36%	33%	31%	72
Teachers in this school spend more time working together to develop curriculum and plan instruction.	41%	36%	23%	70
Interactions between teachers and students are more positive.	46%	46%	9%	70

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

**Table 6.9. School 5: School Climate Inventory Perceived Instruction**

Instruction	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Teachers use a variety of teaching strategies.	68%	29%	3%	69
Teachers at each grade (course) level design learning activities to support both curriculum and student needs.	62%	32%	6%	68
Teachers often provide opportunities for students to develop higher-order skills.	55%	38%	6%	65
Teachers use curriculum guides to ensure that similar subject content is covered within each grade.	61%	34%	5%	64
Teachers use appropriate evaluation methods to determine student achievement.	59%	33%	8%	66
Pull-out programs do not interfere with basic skills instruction.	28%	42%	30%	67
Teachers use a wide range of teaching materials and media.	65%	30%	4%	69

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

Considering the Order dimension, while 60% of respondents indicated that the school was a safe place to work, 67% thought that student tardiness or absence from school were not major problems. Only 15% stated that student misbehavior in the school does not interfere with the teaching process, but 44% of teachers reported that student behavior was generally positive.

Figure 6.1 presents scale values for all School Climate Inventory scales.

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

Teachers have received training on the HSTW model, and most staff felt that redesign

changes would improve relationships between teachers and students and among teachers. Implementation progress may have slowed due to the need to bring the new leadership up to speed on past activities. Another factor is a possible shift in emphasis in the small learning communities toward a grade-level focus in line with the new principal's interests. The counselor said smaller learning community meetings that occurred last year have been discontinued. "I miss those meetings, but the new administration is still learning what we did.... I think the teachers at that point were working very hard with us and with their groups to make it work; leadership broadened." With an instrument designed to assess the strength of implementation based on the HSRR-required components, the school

**Table 6.10. School 5: School Climate Inventory Perceived Order**

Order	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Rules for student behavior are consistently enforced.	43%	30%	27%	67
Student discipline is administered fairly and appropriately.	36%	39%	24%	66
Student misbehavior in this school does not interfere with the teaching process.	15%	34%	51%	65
Student tardiness or absence from school is not a major problem.	12%	21%	67%	66
This school is a safe place in which to work.	60%	35%	4%	68
Teachers, administrators, and parents assume joint responsibility for student discipline.	42%	38%	20%	66
Student behavior is generally positive in this school.	44%	35%	21%	68

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

received a score of 29.50 out of a possible 53 points. The TAP did not rate the school's overall redesign implementation level. The school staff rated its own implementation level to be 3.50 out of a possible 5 points.

### **Facilitators**

The reform effort at School 5 has been facilitated by the reorganization of the student body into three manageable small learning communities. Despite turnover in leadership, the associate principal and staff have kept redesign efforts moving. Having three curriculum coordinators to oversee the small learning communities allows regular monitoring of student achievement and the ability to identify gaps in professional development. The counselor commented on the importance of bringing all staff together

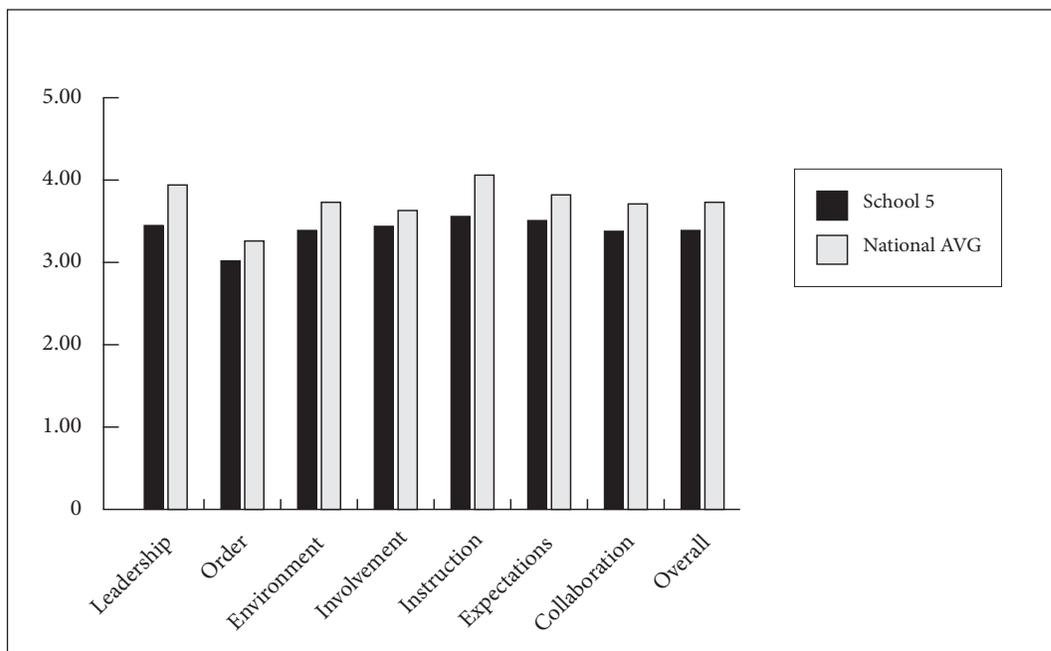
as a unit: "We all bring gifts to the table, and we are often too busy to see what others have to bring. When we meet, talk, and discuss as a group—that can make a big difference."

Survey results indicated that staff listed support from the school administration, support from teachers, and strong training and professional development as the three main facilitators for HSRR implementation.

### **Barriers**

Continued turnover of administration could present a barrier to the redesign of School 5. Data indicate a shift in the new leadership's direction for the redesign efforts toward a grade-level focus. Because staff have already invested in the current small learning community structure and began

**Figure 6.1. School 5: School Climate Inventory Scale Values (N=74)**



Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

implementation prior to the new principal’s arrival, a shift in focus could derail efforts and should be handled with care. On the other hand, staff is appreciative of the new principal’s level of involvement, and the freshman preparation activities already instituted lay the groundwork for a grade-level focus.

Survey results indicated that staff listed insufficient time, technology, and resources as the three main barriers to HSRR implementation.

**Sustainability**

When asked how reform efforts would be continued after the grant funding ends, one administrator said, “It doesn’t take a grant to make a school.” The school has developed “a critical mass” on which future improvements

can be built. The momentum for change and improvement would continue once teachers and parents could see significant improvements in test scores.

According to the principal, the school will be dependent upon the district for professional development funding once the grant ends and indicated that much of any continued work would have to rely on Title I funding as well. The HSRR coordinator mentioned that school staff members were working on long-term projections for program continuation.



## SCHOOL 6

## MIDDLE-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION

**HSRR PROGRAM: SCHOOLS FOR A NEW SOCIETY****AWARD DATE: CYCLE 1–APRIL 2005****AWARD AMOUNT: \$400,000****SITE VISIT DATE: SEPTEMBER 18-19, 2006****IMPLEMENTATION SCORE: 26.96 (0-53)****I. LOCAL CONTEXT**

SCHOOL 6 IS LOCATED IN A MAJOR URBAN school district in southeast Texas. Student enrollment at School 6 for the 2005–06 school year was 1,359 students. The student population is predominately African American (91%). The next largest racial/ethnic group is Latino/Hispanic (8%). A majority of the student body is considered to be economically disadvantaged (72%) and at risk (79%). Student mobility is an issue of concern at School 6 (35%). In addition, 22% of students receive special education services. (See Table 7.1 for more demographic information.)

**Starting Points**

School 6 recently has faced many challenges due to low academic performance, inadequate supplies and instructional resources, student

discipline issues, poor communication with the district, and a district-ordered reconstitution.

In 2003–04, School 6 was rated Academically Unacceptable based on performance for all student groups in mathematics. In 2004–05, the school was rated Academically Acceptable because all groups met the required improvement, though the Latino/Hispanic student group still scored below the standard in mathematics. For the 2005–06 school year, School 6 was Academically Unacceptable for performance by all student groups in mathematics and science. (See Table 7.2 for more accountability information.)

Data indicate that access to basic resources and technology (e.g., copiers, computers) has been restricted in past years. Science was one area of particular need at School 6. One staff member

**Table 7.1 School 6: Demographic Profile, 2005–06**

African American	Latino/Hispanic	White	Other	Economically Disadvantaged	At Risk	Mobility (03–04)	Limited English Proficient	Special Education
91%	8%	0%	1%	72%	79%	35%	2%	22%

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

**Table 7.2. School 6: Accountability Rating and TAKS Performance History, 2003-04 to 2005-06**

Year	Campus Rating	TAKS Met Standard All Grades Tested (All Tests)	Reading	Math	Science	Social Studies
2003-04	Academically Unacceptable	14%	66%	33%	44%	77%
2004-05	Academically Acceptable	28%	68%	37%	38%	76%
2005-06	Academically Unacceptable	26%	76%	36%	33%	79%

Source. Texas Education Agency, 2003-04 and 2004-05 AEIS, 2005-06 Accountability Ratings

described School 6 science facilities as “pitiful,” and several staff members in other disciplines recognized that a focus on building resources for science instruction was sorely needed. Staff members described how students were not able to participate in labs and existing equipment was assessed as “damaged or destroyed.”

Student discipline was another issue of note during site visits. Many staff mentioned that students come from “difficult situations” and that discipline was a problem. Some parents said some students were “bringing down the school.” Staff also noted attendance problems.

Another challenge is an apparent disconnect between the district, the school, and the community. Staff indicated that the mission seems to be shared by the school and the

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***As part of a district-mandated reconstitution in 2005, all School 6 faculty and staff were reviewed by a district committee, and 40% of teachers were not rehired in 2005-06.***

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district, but the communication between the school and the district is diluted due to the district’s large bureaucracy. One parent expressed concerns of “benign neglect” by the district, explaining how he wrote a letter that was delayed in getting to the proper person and by that time the problem had worsened. A counselor said the district tends to assume the school can attain resources elsewhere because of its low socio-economic status.

As part of a district-mandated reconstitution in 2005, all School 6 faculty and staff were reviewed by a district committee, and 40% of teachers were not rehired in 2005-06. Thus, according to the principal, a major focus of the redesign was about finding qualified teachers, especially in areas in which the school did not meet Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) accountability standards.

School 6 is home to a communications magnet program, which has been in existence since the late 1970s. Program students in grades 9-12 participate in a study program focused on media and journalism.

The school currently partners with a range of community groups and other organizations, including Project GRAD, which provides college scholarships to economically disadvantaged students; the Rice Institute; the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin; Kaplan, Inc.; a local community college; a local university; and Communities in Schools. School 6 also receives assistance from the R4 Group.

## II. MODEL ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

### *Selection Process*

The model identified for guiding redesign efforts at School 6 was Schools for a New Society (SNS). This was a model already being implemented as part of an ongoing district effort to redesign comprehensive high schools. The main focus of the SNS project is redesigning high schools into small, theme-based academies. A significant amount of money has been supporting this effort in the district for over six years. (See Table 7.3 for more information on SNS.)

Because this redesign is part of a larger district-wide effort, staff members had minimal input in actually planning their redesign efforts under the High School Redesign and Restructuring (HSRR) grant.

### *Initial Implementation*

School 6 began implementation of the HSRR grant during the summer of 2005, instituting several redesign changes focused on small learning communities. The principal stressed that the school's redesign was about raising

student achievement and redesigning the instructional program as well as improving the knowledge and skills of the faculty. Small learning communities were established as grade-level academies, and mathematics and science classes are smaller. Each academy was assigned a counselor, a teacher coach, and other support personnel.

The School 6 plan for redesign also focused on mathematics instruction. In summer 2005 core teachers from School 6 and two other high schools in the district participated in a Master Teacher Training Academy hosted by the R4 Group. Teachers then formed Master Teacher Academy Cohort Groups with teachers from other high schools. The Cohort Groups meet monthly to discuss strategies, best practices, and challenges. Teachers were also encouraged to incorporate more Bloom's Taxonomy and brain-based learning strategies into their lessons.

In addition, school staff engaged in a wide variety of external, internal, and district professional development, including a weekly professional development session led by campus staff and tailored to specific campus needs such as student management or demonstration of instructional strategies. Staff also worked with the R4 Group and said they had identified "essential administrative training."

During reconstitution, the principal stressed that he redesigned the process used to select teachers and that he was keenly sensitive about hiring experienced teachers who were focused on meeting the students' needs.

Block scheduling and a dual credit option with a local community college were also

**Table 7.3. Schools for a New Society Model Design**

<p><i>Background</i></p> <p>SNS is an initiative of the Carnegie Corporation of New York that began in 2000. The SNS model focuses on the idea that all students must have access to a quality education that would not only prepare them for college but also for full participation in a democratic society. The program is centered on rigorous curriculum and high academic achievement for all students.</p> <p><i>Key Strategies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Promote reform of school district policies and practices</li><li>• Encourage and support partnerships between businesses, universities, parent and student groups, and community organizations</li><li>• Hold schools accountable for helping students meet high standards</li><li>• Prepare students for participation in higher education, in the workforce, and in confronting the challenges and opportunities of 21st century society</li><li>• Raise graduation requirements to ensure that all students take rigorous courses</li><li>• Transform large, impersonal high schools into small learning communities or small schools</li><li>• Provide intensive professional development</li><li>• Give teachers time for team planning</li></ul> <p><i>Key Components</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A working partnership between the urban school district and a leading community nonprofit</li><li>• Redesigning the district</li><li>• Raising community support and demand for high quality education for students</li><li>• Creating a citywide distribution of excellent high schools</li></ul>
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Source. Schools for a New Society website, <http://www.carnegie.org/sns/>.

implemented as part of the redesign effort, and one staff member mentioned that a very detailed “student intervention” plan had been put into place to address student discipline issues. Another teacher described a homeroom structure that allows teachers to be responsible for and monitor the progress of small groups of students. The teacher also described a homeroom curriculum designed around character development and life skills. Another

effort was instituted to address attendance issues and build community involvement.

### ***Factors Impacting HSRR Implementation***

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

According to the grant coordinator, since there are so many ongoing grants and programs at the school, it is hard to keep track of what

funds were used on what resource. Many of the resources used for redesign could not be purchased from grant funds alone, and the school has combined additional support from other programs like Project Grad and Communities in Schools to build capacity at the school.

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### *Materials*

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A portion of grant funds has been used to address materials and equipment needs in mathematics and science. For example, a computer lab for the science and mathematics departments was created. Calculators were also purchased; previously School 6 shared calculators with another campus. In addition, a consultant from a local university evaluated the condition of science classroom laboratories and determined that much of the equipment was damaged or unusable. With grant funds, the school purchased new lab equipment for science, such as microscopes. Science classrooms also were equipped with LCD projectors, and the department purchased digital cameras.

Materials and equipment purchases also have benefited other departments and activities as well, though to a lesser extent. Several teachers mentioned the purchase of new videos and DVDs in many subject areas. One teacher mentioned increases in library resources. Other departments received new technology through the grant as well. An English/language arts (ELA) teacher mentioned the use of Turn

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***According to the grant coordinator, since there are so many ongoing grants and programs at the school, it is hard to keep track of what funds were used on what resource.***

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***The biggest staffing change occurred during the 2005 district-ordered reconstitution when 40% of the teaching staff was replaced.***

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It In software through which students' essays and writings can be evaluated via the Internet. English classes also use computer labs to assist in various activities, such as printing papers and vocabulary preparation. However, teachers, the counselor, and parents all expressed the need for more technology.

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### *Staffing and Planning Time*

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The biggest staffing change occurred during the 2005 district-ordered reconstitution when 40% of the teaching staff was replaced. The school was able to bring a third counselor on board, who was much needed according to staff interviews. Additionally, several new positions were staffed, including a school improvement facilitator and a literacy coach who was trained through a larger district program. The grant coordinator, who is also an English teacher, has one "off" period for program coordination, which she stated was not enough.

In terms of planning, weekly department meetings have been instituted and collaborative planning time for teachers (by grade level within disciplines) has been emphasized with the alignment of core teachers' conference periods. Further, the schedule was revised on Thursdays to provide time for 90-minute professional development sessions for the staff that are usually developed and delivered internally.

Two years ago, the school began pairing new teachers with experienced teachers in order to facilitate social and instructional adjustment.

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***The principal stated that a significant amount of the grant funds went towards professional development for administrators and staff, and staff described having more opportunities to attend professional development than they had in the past.***

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For example, mentors help with academic planning, the district's CLEAR curriculum, professional development opportunities, parent conferences, and follow up. New faculty can seek out information, mentoring, and training during Thursday meetings as well.

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#### *Shared Leadership*

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One teacher noted that the teaching staff had moved toward academic teams. Others mentioned a greatly increased emphasis on coordination and communication with more opportunities for teachers to share their concerns with department heads.

The School 6 principal meets with the instructional dean on a daily basis to identify areas of concern and review data. Key points from these meetings are shared with administrators and the campus improvement facilitator, and concerns along with their causes and potential solutions are discussed. The campus improvement facilitator determines professional development offerings that will address areas of concern. The HSRR Coordinator relays information from the staff to other stakeholders in the grant (e.g., the campus improvement facilitator, Project Grad, Communities in Schools, parents) to identify areas of concern. She is also responsible for preparing a monthly report as well as participating in the grant implementation committee. Teachers serve on various committees and are able to communicate

with the principal via recommendations and concerns. All teachers have been trained in data analysis and how to identify goals and objectives using a data software package. The counselor noted that the principal was very encouraging of new ideas and staff initiatives.

School 6 originally budgeted 38% of grant funds for payroll costs and 29% of grant funds for capital outlay. No progress report for the school, including current expenditures, had been submitted to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) as of the date of this report.

Thirty-two of 77 teachers at School 6 completed surveys for a response rate of 42%. Over two thirds of teacher respondents (65%) to the survey believed that technology had become more available. However, about the same amount agreed (43%) as disagreed (40%) that teachers were given sufficient planning time. The staff was almost evenly split across the three response categories with regard to having sufficient staff to implement HSRR programming fully. The School 6 mean rating for the Capacity construct is 3.10 on a 5-point scale. The Technical Assistance Provider (TAP), who was new to the school the second year of the grant, indicated that the school did not have sufficient materials to implement HSRR. The TAP did not know if the school had adequate staffing, planning time, and fiscal resources for implementing HSRR. (See Table 7.4 for more information on the Capacity construct.)

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#### *EXTERNAL SUPPORT*

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##### *External Professional Development*

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The principal stated that a significant amount of the grant funds went towards professional development for administrators and staff, and staff described having more opportunities to attend professional development than they had in the past. School 6 used a

**Table 7.4. School 6: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Capacity**

Capacity	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Teachers are given sufficient planning time to implement our program.	43%	17%	40%	30
Materials (books and other resources) needed to implement our HSRR program are readily available.	30%	33%	37%	30
Our school has sufficient faculty and staff to fully implement this program.	32%	35%	33%	31
Technological resources have become more available.	65%	19%	16%	31

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

variety of external and internal professional development approaches. All teachers attended Kaplan training on test preparation programs. All teachers also received training for DATA, the online attendance and grade reporting software. They also learned how to distinguish TAKS goals and objectives, while individualizing and modifying benchmark testing using DATA. Several teachers participated in Laying the Foundation, a program which provides Pre-Advanced Placement (AP) training. Counselors attended a Breaking Ranks training. R4 provided training for administrators, focusing on leadership development. The Regional Education Service Center (ESC) also provides occasional training.

Administrators, the school improvement facilitator, and teachers collaborate on selecting topics for the Thursday professional development meetings from a list. The campus improvement facilitator then conducts trainings, which include topics such as handling behavioral problems, teaching

techniques, addressing emotional and psychological needs of students, implementing redesign, or improving the school environment. Additional training for teachers is offered on Saturdays.

A TAP, through A+ Challenge, offered training to the literacy coach and department chairs. This TAP also supported a teacher support program, coordination of community ties, networking meetings, leadership trainings, and most importantly the focus on small learning communities.

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#### *Integrated District Assistance*

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The district provides Project CLEAR curriculum training for all teachers, and site visit participants mentioned a number of other district-provided trainings as well.

Because the TAP from the district program was new this year, the TAP had not yet provided any external assistance to the school for the second year of the grant. In the

**Table 7.5. School 6: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Support**

Support	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
I have a thorough understanding of this school's HSRR program.	75%	16%	9%	32
I have received adequate initial and ongoing professional development/training for HSRR program implementation.	84%	16%	0%	31
Technical assistance provided by external trainers, model developers, and/or designers has been valuable.	74%	13%	13%	31
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%	20%	3%	30
My school receives effective assistance from external partners (e.g., university, businesses, agencies).	63%	30%	7%	30

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

school's progress report to the TEA the school assigned the TAP a 1.00 out of a 5-point scale. Corroborating site visit data, an overwhelming majority of staff at School 6 indicated receiving adequate support in terms of understanding the school's HSRR program (75%), receiving adequate training (84%), receiving valuable TAP support (74%), and receiving sufficient assistance from partners (63%). The School 6 mean rating for the Support construct is 3.86 out of a possible 5 points. (See Table 7.5 for more information on the Support construct.)

### INTERNAL FOCUS

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

The reconstitution created some hostility from the remaining staff, but most eventually acknowledged that it was a positive change for the school. Some staff were also upset initially because most grant funding went to support the mathematics and science departments. However, teachers became

more enthusiastic with the arrival of new materials and training. The beginning of the 2005–06 school year garnered a more positive response from teachers, and in 2006–07 staff reported more overall enthusiasm compared to past years. One teacher noted that money was being put into areas where it could really make a difference with students. The feedback about trainings was extremely positive. Staff acknowledged that teachers felt more like team members with the implementation of small learning communities, Thursday meetings, and weekly department meetings. Many staff noted efforts of coordination and increased camaraderie between teachers and departments due to increased meeting time. The coordinator said the grant had helped

***The coordinator said the grant had helped school staff be more “unified and single-minded about what we want to accomplish.”***

school staff be more “unified and single-minded about what we want to accomplish.”

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### *Alignment and Integration with Existing Programs*

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The grant coordinator said that the HSRR grant helped her coordinate other grant programs. She said the grant “made us look at how we were conducting business and helped us figure out strategies [to improve].” However, the coordinator was clearly overwhelmed with the task of managing several resources simultaneously.

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### *Monitoring*

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Monitoring activities were a major focus of redesign efforts. With the additional department and grade-level meetings, teachers now had more time to discuss student

work with other staff. With the addition of Kaplan benchmark testing for core areas and individual student TAKS profiles from DATA, teachers demonstrated increased awareness of student performance. Also the principal noted that his goal was to get out of the office and into the classroom, to observe classes, and to assess instructional improvement. He encouraged other administrators, counselors, and teachers to do the same.

Corroborating site visit data, survey data indicated that 70% of the staff thought teachers were generally supportive of the HSRR program. Additionally, 77% indicated that the staff regularly reviewed implementation and outcome benchmarks to evaluate HSRR progress. However, two thirds of respondents were either neutral or dissatisfied with the level of federal, state, local, and private resources that were being coordinated to support HSRR

**Table 7.6. School 6: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Focus**

Focus	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Teachers in this school are generally supportive of our HSRR program.	70%	27%	3%	30
The elements of our HSRR program are effectively integrated to help us meet school improvement goals.	59%	38%	3%	29
As a school staff, we regularly review implementation and outcome benchmarks to evaluate our progress.	77%	16%	6%	31
Our school has a plan for evaluating all components of our HSRR program.	60%	37%	3%	30
I am satisfied with the federal, state, local, and private resources that are being coordinated to support our HSRR program.	33%	43%	23%	30

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

## Chapter 7

### School 6, Middle-Level Implementation

program efforts. The School 6 mean rating for the Focus construct is 3.58 on a 5–point scale. (See Table 7.6 for more information on the Focus construct.)

#### *PEDAGOGICAL CHANGE*

Teachers mentioned more incorporation of technology and Internet usage into lesson plans. The coordinator noticed more interdisciplinary lesson planning was occurring. For example, a history class was collaborating with the photography department for a historical project on the community. Science classes were able to incorporate labs into class time due to new material resources and the new block scheduling. Staff noticed a greatly increased effort to keep the students actively engaged. Teachers reported conducting more benchmark testing and individual assessment due to new Kaplan preparation testing and DATA programs. Overall, staff noticed increased emphasis on academics compared to previous years.

Over two thirds (68%) of survey respondents indicated that students spent much of their time working in cooperative learning teams, and 65% reported that classroom learning activities had changed a great deal. Forty-three percent (43%) stated students spent at least two hours per school day in interdisciplinary or project-based work, while 40% were neutral concerning this item. The School 6 mean rating for the Pedagogy construct is 3.49 out of a possible 5 points. (See Table 7.7 for more information on the Pedagogy construct.)

#### *RESTRUCTURING OUTCOMES*

##### *Student Impacts*

*Achievement.* Although it may be too early to observe tangible differences in achievement, teachers and administrators felt optimistic about the prospective impact of the grant in this area. Additionally, the principal seemed very pleased that the school had the highest percentage of seniors in the district passing the TAKS summer school program. A counselor

**Table 7.7. School 6: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Pedagogy**

Pedagogy	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
I use textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets less than I used to for basic skills or content area instruction.	42%	32%	26%	31
Classroom learning activities have changed a great deal.	65%	13%	23%	31
Students in my class spend at least two hours per school day in interdisciplinary or project-based work.	43%	40%	17%	30
Students in my class spend much of their time working in cooperative learning teams.	68%	23%	10%	31
Students are using technology more effectively.	59%	16%	25%	32

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

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***Staff indicated that students enjoyed the security and sense of belonging created by the small learning communities.***

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noted that smaller class sizes allowed for more individualized instruction and tutoring, which should help with achievement.

*Academic engagement.* Staff noticed that students are more engaged in classroom activities, such as science labs and writing essays. They said variation in lesson planning and the incorporation of visual materials motivate students. A counselor indicated that older students acknowledged that they are doing things in class that they have not done before. The principal believed that students noticed that classes are more challenging than in previous years. Students are also reporting positive changes; however, staff said it is difficult to determine if students attribute changes to the HSRR grant.

*Affective impacts.* Staff indicated that students enjoyed the security and sense of belonging created by the small learning communities. They felt they were part of a group with similar struggles and built special relationships with teachers and students in their learning community. The school began a program of “knocking on doors,” contacting the students’ families, to combat its attendance problem and to show students that the school community cares about them. The principal said it was a good way to start the year. Staff acknowledges that some students are coming from difficult circumstances and that it is important to show students that they genuinely care about them and their progress. No student focus group occurred during the site visit to corroborate this information.

The principal stressed that he wanted to hire teachers who were there for the students

and who were leaders and motivators, not necessarily their friends. Teachers accept that the population they serve has special discipline needs and realize that students may need extra support. “This is not just a 9 to 5 job,” stated one teacher. The principal and counselor also emphasized positive student-teacher relationships. Addressing the students’ needs is a recognized challenge, and the school has identified this as a weakness to be addressed during Thursday professional development as well as conferences and department meetings.

*Special needs.* School 6 has a large special needs population, and all staff agreed that the special needs department was an excellent resource. The department provides several trainings for other staff on modifications and is open to questions and concerns from teachers. Special needs students are put into “regular” classes as much as possible and can attend tutorials provided by two local universities. At the end of the 2004–05 school year, School 6 hired an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher who is available to discuss modifications for ESL students during a Thursday professional development meeting.

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***Staff Impacts***

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According to staff, the implementation of small learning communities reduced lines of demarcation between departments. Increased meeting time established camaraderie among the teachers. Collaboration among teachers in general is improving between grade levels and disciplines. Teachers are now doing similar benchmarks and individual student portfolios, so they have more common ground to discuss concerns and experiences. Further, attending more external professional development gave teachers new ideas that they passed on to other staff during weekly meetings. This motivated the staff to try new things in the classroom. Finally, there is more monitoring by the

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principal in order to determine if changes are being implemented at the classroom level. In general, the staff reported being much more organized and cohesive after the institution of redesign changes.

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#### *Community/Parental Involvement*

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Parental involvement is not as high as school staff would like, and they acknowledged obstacles to communicating with parents such as address changes, parents working multiple or evening jobs, or lack of Internet access. Grant funds have helped establish a parent center that sends out progress reports and information about students to parents. The center also offers computer technology classes for parents. The center is a liaison between the school and parents. However, many parents in the focus group were not aware that the center had been created. The coordinator recognized this concern and mentioned that she was working with the parent center coordinator to make parents more aware of the center. Parents felt that the school had communication problems and expressed a desire to hear from teachers and school administration more frequently. They suggested staff go door to door in order to reach out to families and students. The school has begun some outreach efforts and plans on developing this more. Both parents and staff suggested that a community night providing a free meal would be a useful communication tool. Also staff and parents would like to see more parental involvement in academics, not just extracurricular activities.

Alumni and community involvement are very high. Alumni and local businesses have made monetary donations to the school. School 6 partnered with Chevron's Black Employees Network, which provided tutors and mentors for students. Further, the school partners with several local colleges and universities. For

example, a partnership with a local community college has provided the option of dual credit classes as well as a tutorial program. A tutorial program with a local university was established this year. The communications magnet school has internships with the local newspaper. Compared to responses across other survey constructs, more teachers either disagreed or answered neutral concerning items related to the restructuring Outcomes construct, indicating this may still be an area of challenge for the school that will improve with more time. Seventy-six percent (76%) of respondents indicated that interactions between teachers and students were more positive due to HSRR efforts, and 74% reported that the program adequately addresses the requirements of students with special needs. However, only 32% agreed that parents were more involved in the educational program of this school, and 39% agreed that students had higher standards for their own work. The School 6 mean rating for the Outcomes construct is 3.35 on a 5-point scale. (See Table 7.8 for more information on the Outcomes construct.)

### III. IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

#### *Key Points*

With pressure to raise student achievement, staff and the community have rallied around School 6 and its students. There is strong enthusiasm behind the efforts to improve student achievement and strong leadership to guide these efforts. The principal understands the relationship between staff development and achievement: "We've been able to identify deficiencies, identify options, and take trainings to improve skills...it's about staff development, increasing proficiency for what they do, [their] capacity to impact kids, see it in the exchange between them and the kids; as we do that, we'll get stronger in the

**Table 7.8. School 6: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Outcomes**

Outcomes	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Student achievement has been positively impacted.	55%	35%	10%	31
Students in this school are more enthusiastic about learning.	45%	29%	26%	31
Parents are more involved in the educational program of this school.	32%	29%	39%	31
Community support for our school has increased.	45%	42%	13%	31
Students have higher standards for their own work.	39%	32%	29%	31
Teachers are more involved in decision making.	40%	30%	30%	30
Our program adequately addresses the requirements of students with special needs.	74%	19%	6%	31
Teachers in this school spend more time working together to develop curriculum and plan instruction.	58%	16%	26%	31
Interactions between teachers and students are more positive.	76%	21%	3%	29

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

school.” Teachers understood that redesign was focused on improving weak areas of mathematics and science as well as developing small learning communities. Although some teachers acknowledged that they received fewer resources from the grant, they agreed that it was providing materials and support to departments that needed it. All staff felt they were somehow impacted by the grant.

There are multiple ongoing grants and programs at the school, and some staff indicated that the HSRR grant had allowed the school to coordinate these efforts.

### ***School Climate Inventory (SCI)***

The SCI was administered as part of the staff survey. The overall mean SCI rating for School

6 was 3.58 on a 5–point scale. Results from the SCI indicate an overall school climate that is lower than the national average for secondary schools (3.73). The highest mean rating of 3.92 was given for the Instruction dimension (compared to a national norm of 4.06). The lowest mean rating was obtained for the Order dimension of 2.91 (compared to a national norm of 3.26). (See Tables 7.9 and 7.10 for more information on SCI high and low scales.)

Instruction received the highest ratings by the School 6 staff. Ninety percent (90%) of responding staff indicated using a variety of teaching strategies, and 87% reported using appropriate evaluation methods to determine student achievement. Fifty-three percent (53%) agreed that pull-out programs did not interfere with basic skills instruction.

**Table 7.9. School 6: School Climate Inventory Perceived Instruction**

Instruction	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Teachers use a variety of teaching strategies.	90%	10%	0%	30
Teachers at each grade (course) level design learning activities to support both curriculum and student needs.	83%	17%	0%	30
Teachers often provide opportunities for students to develop higher-order skills.	84%	10%	6%	31
Teachers use curriculum guides to ensure that similar subject content is covered within each grade.	81%	13%	6%	31
Teachers use appropriate evaluation methods to determine student achievement.	87%	13%	0%	31
Pull-out programs do not interfere with basic skills instruction.	53%	33%	13%	30
Teachers use a wide range of teaching materials and media.	61%	26%	13%	31

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

Considering the Order dimension, 74% of respondents indicated that student tardiness or absence from school was a major problem, and only 27% stated that student misbehavior in this school did not interfere with the teaching process. Less than half the teachers (48%) reported that student behavior was generally positive.

Figure 7.1 presents scale values for all School Climate Inventory scales.

### **Assessment of Implementation Level**

The main areas of focus of School 6's redesign effort have been improving teacher quality by hiring adequately trained and committed staff, providing extensive and ongoing teacher training, and increasing access to basic

instructional resources and technology. The school is making progress in these areas.

With an instrument designed to assess the strength of implementation based on the HSRR-required components, the school received a score of 26.96 out of a possible 53 points. The TAP rated the school's overall implementation to be 2.29 out of a possible 5 points. However, it is unclear how this rating was assessed given that the TAP is new and indicated having provided no support services as of yet. The school staff rated its own implementation level to be 2.67 out of

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***School 6 has used the HSRR grant to build basic capacity in critical areas of need.***

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**Table 7.10. School 6: School Climate Inventory Perceived Order**

Order	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Rules for student behavior are consistently enforced.	37%	23%	40%	30
Student discipline is administered fairly and appropriately.	47%	20%	33%	30
Student misbehavior in this school does not interfere with the teaching process.	27%	10%	63%	30
Student tardiness or absence from school is not a major problem.	16%	10%	74%	31
This school is a safe place in which to work.	61%	23%	16%	31
Teachers, administrators, and parents assume joint responsibility for student discipline.	53%	10%	37%	30
Student behavior is generally positive in this school.	48%	14%	38%	29

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

a possible 5 points, which is consistent with the score assigned by evaluators.

### **Facilitators**

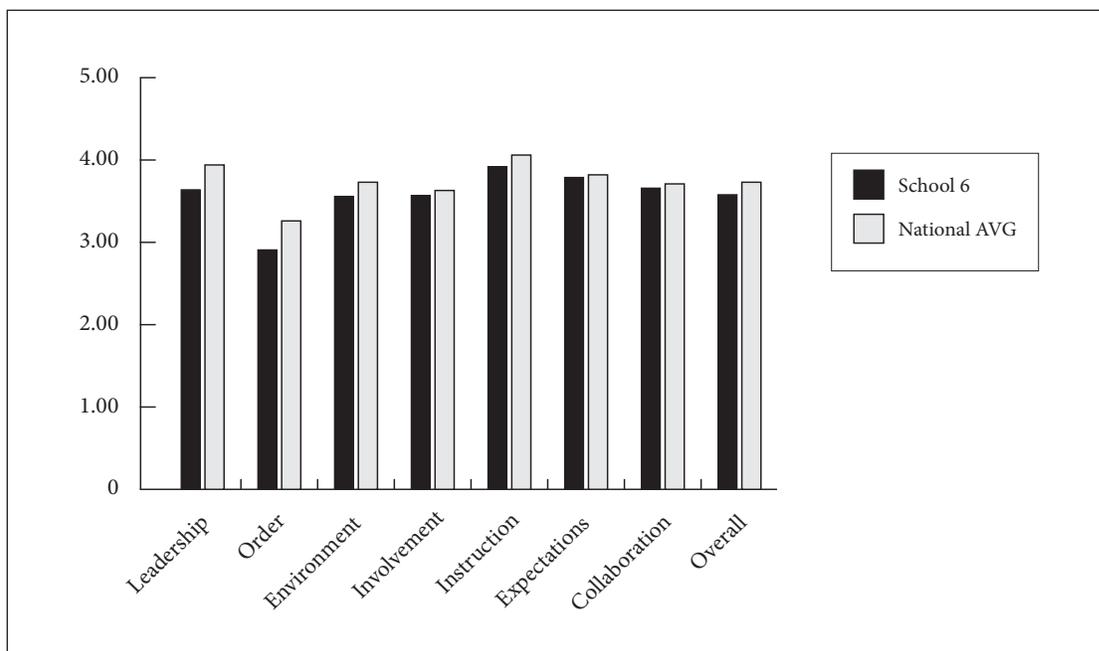
The principal and campus improvement facilitator provide strong leadership and a willingness to try new approaches. Community partnerships were another facilitator for implementation. The school's location near local universities benefited the school and students. Also, strong community ties to the school aided partnerships with other local businesses and alumni. The gain in materials was another facilitator for the school and boosted teacher morale and student engagement.

Survey results indicated that staff listed training or professional development,

curriculum focus, and support from school administration as the three main facilitators for HSRR implementation.

### **Barriers**

School 6 has used the HSRR grant to build basic capacity in critical areas of need. One staff member described the school as "starting from scratch." While acquiring materials and equipment was one of the most appreciated aspects of the grant, and some resources have longer-term benefits, finding funding sources to support ongoing needs for basic instructional materials should be paramount. The principal also described bringing 30 new teachers on board as they started the redesign process as a challenge. In addition, the principal noted that changing students'

**Figure 7.1. School 6: School Climate Inventory Scale Values (N=32)**

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

perspectives about education is a barrier: “How to change the attitude of the students and get them to value education, learning lessons for the future, that’s the most difficult thing in the world to change. At 9:30 I maybe start with five or six kids then more and more walk in—how to change those attitudes, that’s the most important thing.” One staff member commented that students are promoted to the high school without the necessary academic skills, especially in mathematics, and that this presented a barrier for School 6 staff. Finally, staff and parents perceived a district bias as a barrier for School 6. One parent said the district has “engaged in a position of benign neglect” for several years now, and communication is lacking between the school and the district.

Survey results indicated that staff listed a lack of financial resources, time, and

technology as the three main barriers to HSRR implementation.

### ***Sustainability***

While some of the resources purchased with grant funds, such as training and equipment, could have longer-term benefits, it is not clear how the school will sustain some grant-supported positions. However, because the school has so many programs going at once, the ability to integrate and continue efforts with other funding could help the school sustain improvement efforts until they are subsumed into the local budget. Further, the in-house professional development strategy seems to be successful and could sustain and drive ongoing progress of redesign efforts.

## SCHOOL 7

## LOW-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION

**HSRR PROGRAM: HIGH SCHOOLS THAT WORK***AWARD DATE: CYCLE 1–APRIL 2005**AWARD AMOUNT: \$288,720**SITE VISIT DATE: AUGUST 28–29, 2006**IMPLEMENTATION SCORE: 14.23 (0–53)***I. LOCAL CONTEXT**

SCHOOL 7 IS LOCATED IN EAST-CENTRAL Texas in a small rural town. Enrollment at School 7 for the 2005–06 school year was 76 students, predominately African American (90%). The next largest racial/ethnic group was Latino/Hispanic (7%). The majority of the student body was economically disadvantaged (93%) and considered at risk (86%). Student mobility was a concern at School 7 (18%). In addition, a large percentage of the students (32%) required special education services. (See Table 8.1 for more demographic information.)

**Starting Points**

School 7's restructuring effort has been undertaken in an organizational environment influenced by the cumulative effects related to

inconsistent leadership at both the district and campus levels, staff turnover, student discipline issues, and low student performance.

School 7 has been under the supervision of eight principals consecutively over the past eight years. In addition, three superintendents have served the district in the last four years. Also, teacher turnover has been a factor during this same time period due to the perceived lack of administrative support, student performance challenges in the classroom, and the remote location of the school district.

The school currently has nine total teachers. The principal noted that at the start of the 2006–07 academic year, four new teachers were hired. During their interviews, teachers indicated that the school had only four High School Redesign and Restructuring (HSRR)

**Table 8.1. School 7: Demographic Profile, 2005–06**

African American	Latino/Hispanic	White	Other	Economically Disadvantaged	At Risk	Mobility (03–04)	Limited English Proficient	Special Education
90%	7%	3%	0%	93%	86%	18%	0%	32%

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

**Table 8.2. School 7: Accountability Rating and TAKS Performance History, 2003-04 to 2005-06**

Year	Campus Rating	TAKS Met Standard All Grades Tested (All Tests)	Reading	Math	Science	Social Studies
2003-04	Academically Unacceptable	19%	81%	20%	45%	86%
2004-05	Academically Acceptable	16%	68%	37%	35%	81%
2005-06	Academically Unacceptable	30%	82%	44%	20%	67%

Source. Texas Education Agency, 2003-04 and 2004-05 AEIS, 2005-06 Accountability Ratings

teachers teaching core subjects in the school. Of those, only three were hired by School 7 when the program started.

The counselor indicated that during the 2005-06 academic year, students were often in the hallway instead of in classrooms. Additionally, the instructional staff said they believed that discipline issues were not dealt with in a timely manner. The students who participated in the focus group described some classmates' actions as intended to try to run off teachers.

All student groups at School 7 performed significantly lower than the state average in the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) mathematics and science in 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06. In 2003-04, School 7 received an Academically Unacceptable rating for performance of all student groups, African American students, and economically disadvantaged students in mathematics. In 2005-06, the campus's areas of identified deficiency in the Texas Accountability Rating

were mathematics (44%) and science (20%), which earned School 7 an Academically Unacceptable rating for 2006. Less than 20% of all students passed all TAKS tests for the 2003-04 and 2004-05 school years (19% and 16%, respectively). Although test scores have improved in reading and mathematics, scores dropped in science and social studies. (See Table 8.2 for more accountability information.)

## II. MODEL ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

### *Selection Process*

School 7's grant application identified High Schools That Work (HSTW) as the basis for the school's own local redesign program. The application said that the local program would serve as the hub of the school's efforts to restructure the campus design and operation. The grant application also indicated a partnership with KAPLAN education services, with the district joining "a pilot program, being the first and only district, to try their new Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)-based TAKS targeted software entitled Achievement Planner." (See Table 8.3 for more information on HSTW.)

***Teachers said the HSRR model had "stalled" due to teacher and administrative turnover.***

**Table 8.3. High Schools That Work Model Design**

<p><i>Background</i></p> <p>HSTW is an initiative of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) State Vocational Education Consortium that began in 1987. 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 create 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 (HSTW 10 Key Practices)</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>

The principal, who was hired to lead the high school in August 2006, said that he had looked through the district plan but had found few records on HSRR; furthermore, the records that he found were very limited. Faculty members, parents, and students did not know how the HSTW program was selected as a key feature of School 7's redesign effort. According to teacher interviews, the principal, two years removed, wrote the grant proposal and selected the model without involvement of faculty.

### ***Initial Implementation***

During early implementation, representatives from HSTW traveled to School 7 to stage three after-school professional development workshops. In the summer of 2005, most of the faculty attended the HSTW convention in Nashville, which provided some additional knowledge of the program. Attending teachers returned to School 7 and instituted "writing across the curriculum." In addition, the English teacher implemented "quick writing" in her class, a technique that focuses students

## Chapter 8

### *School 7, Low-Level Implementation*

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on improving their ability to communicate thoughts and concepts quickly and accurately through brief writing exercises. As of fall 2006, approximately 5 to 6 of the current staff had received some level of HSRR training. However, beyond participation in training, faculty, student, and parent groups could not provide basic information about the grant or the associated program.

Teachers said the HSRR model had “stalled” due to teacher and administrative turnover. The administrative changes have created a lag in developing a common campus vision built around HSTW. Although the lack of consistent leadership at School 7 appears to have impacted both implementation and maintenance of the effort, the faculty, parent, and student groups appeared to be supportive of the program. These groups supported additional training of new staff and coordination of effort by administration to revive the redesign effort.

### ***Factors Impacting HSRR Implementation***

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

In addition to teacher training, the grant application requested funds for additional technology and a teacher mentor coach. Staff members believed that additional materials, supplies, or financial resources were not needed to implement the program effectively. However, the general consensus of the teacher focus group was that more program and training support was needed due to the number of new administrators and faculty members. In addition, the teachers indicated that, due to the demands of working in a small school, it had been difficult for anyone to take on the additional task of program coordination; therefore, the teachers suggested

that a coordinator retained by the district would be of great benefit. This position was in the initial grant proposal, but was eliminated in negotiations between the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the applicant.

With regard to planning and shared leadership, the teachers have not met regularly to discuss progress on the objectives of the HSTW program or to collaborate on effective ways to adjust activities in the classroom to provide an environment conducive to successful restructuring. As of fall 2006, the teachers felt that they have not been a part of the decision making concerning the redesign and restructuring of the high school.

Seven of nine teachers at School 7 completed surveys for a response rate of 78%. Because of the small number of respondents, results in Tables 8.4 through 8.10 are presented as the number of respondents rather than the percent of respondents choosing each response. All seven answered questions related to the Capacity construct; their responses indicated varying perceptions about the availability of key resources. Although four respondents believed that enough technological resources were available, a similar number said additional faculty and staff were needed to implement the reform efforts. School 7's mean for the Capacity construct is 2.86 on a 5-point scale. (See Table 8.4 for more information on the Capacity construct.)

#### ***EXTERNAL SUPPORT***

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##### ***External Professional Development***

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The focus group described a variety of trainings including two conferences (in Tennessee and Dallas) and three internal professional development opportunities, which were led by the Technical Assistance Provider (TAP). Interviews with the teaching

**Table 8.4. School 7: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Capacity**

Capacity	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Teachers are given sufficient planning time to implement our program.	1	4	2	7
Materials (books and other resources) needed to implement our HSRR program are readily available.	2	3	2	7
Our school has sufficient faculty and staff to fully implement this program.	1	2	4	7
Technological resources have become more available.	4	2	1	7

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

staff indicated that HSTW training offered in the 2005–06 school year was well received by attendees because it focused on reading and writing across the curriculum and provided useful information for implementation in the classroom. The new principal noted that teachers spoke favorably about HSTW training received.

However, no training has been held or scheduled for the 2006–07 school year. New faculty members do not have buy-in to the HSTW model yet because they have not been exposed to the training nor briefed by an administrator. The consensus of the teacher focus group was that this initiative “started like gangbusters, but it stalled.” Teachers also noted that the TAP encouraged attendance at off-site trainings about the HSTW model, which last for several days. Teachers explained that this type of training design is problematic in a school as small as School 7. Thus, if all School 7 department heads attended the multi-day

off-site HSTW training, the school would not have any teachers left on campus to conduct classes.

The TAP indicated in the survey that the external facilitator had changed during the span of the grant. No information was provided about the type of support that was provided or the number of hours that the TAP worked with school staff.

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### *Integrated District Assistance*

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Integrated district assistance appeared to be limited during the implementation of HSRR, possibly due to the changing leadership at both the superintendent and principal levels. “I’ve been here eight years, and I’ve had eight different principals,” one teacher said. The counselor indicated that the previous superintendent had backed the program in order to help the school get off the Academically Unacceptable list. That

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### School 7, Low-Level Implementation

superintendent provided verbal and some monetary support.

In the interview, the current principal noted that he had been hired to lead both the high school and the elementary school. He indicated that he was going to place most of the initial efforts at the elementary level with the idea that improvement would work its way through the system. Thus, the possibility for an integrated effort may exist in the future.

All survey respondents also answered questions related to the Support construct. Their responses indicated mixed reactions to these questions. Three out of the seven respondents said they did not have a thorough understanding of School 7's HSRR program; however, three staff members found the technical assistance as well as guidance and support provided by external sources to be

valuable. Overall, School 7 staff rated the Support construct as 3.06 on a 5-point scale. (See Table 8.5 for more information on the Support construct.)

#### INTERNAL FOCUS

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

"A lot have bought into it; some thought the concepts were elementary, but if it works [we'll support it]," stated one teacher. This sentiment was shared by other faculty members. Yet the redesign efforts were at a standstill due to the newness of the principal and the lack of communication and knowledge transfer from one administration to the next. Interviews with the counselor and teachers also yielded the perception that the central office initially had supported the program at quite a high level. However, due to turnover in the superintendent's position, the importance of

**Table 8.5. School 7: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Support**

Support	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
I have a thorough understanding of this school's HSRR program.	1	3	3	7
I have received adequate initial and ongoing professional development/training for HSRR program implementation.	1	4	2	7
Technical assistance provided by external trainers, model developers, and/or designers has been valuable.	3	4	0	7
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.	3	3	1	7
My school receives effective assistance from external partners (e.g., university, businesses, agencies).	0	6	1	7

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

**Table 8.6. School 7: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Focus**

Focus	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Teachers in this school are generally supportive of our HSRR program.	4	3	0	7
The elements of our HSRR program are effectively integrated to help us meet school improvement goals.	2	4	1	7
As a school staff, we regularly review implementation and outcome benchmarks to evaluate our progress.	2	2	3	7
Our school has a plan for evaluating all components of our HSRR program.	0	7	0	7
I am satisfied with the federal, state, local, and private resources that are being coordinated to support our HSRR program.	3	3	1	7

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

continuing program implementation may have not been effectively communicated from the district level. However, one teacher estimated that of those veteran teachers who went through training and who are still teaching at the school, there is 80% buy-in for continuing the implementation of the HSTW model.

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#### *Alignment and Integration with Existing Programs*

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School 7 teachers are conscious of the issues related to TAKS and some attempt to incorporate HSTW programmatic strategies into classes every day. One teacher stated, “The [HSTW] staff came, observed, and gave feedback.” There is no evidence that it made a difference. The teachers did mention the grant with KAPLAN, but they did not provide any information on that program and how it meshed with the HSTW model. Thus, there is no evidence that suggests the HSTW program is significantly aligned with any other program or that it was significantly integrated into the

framework of daily activities of teaching and learning.

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#### *Monitoring*

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Monitoring of HSTW program activities at School 7 is nonexistent. Neither faculty nor administration could delineate the progress or stage of implementation of the program or the impact that it has made on student or teacher performance.

Four of the seven respondents indicated that teachers were generally supportive of the HSRR program; furthermore, three respondents indicated that they were neutral on this question. However, the monitoring process was identified as a weakness since three respondents indicated that the staff did not regularly review data to evaluate the school’s progress. For the Focus construct, School 7 reported an overall average of 3.17 on a 5–point scale. (See Table 8.6 for more information on the Focus construct.)

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### School 7, Low-Level Implementation

#### **PEDAGOGICAL CHANGE**

There is no evidence that significant pedagogical change has occurred at School 7 as a result of grant implementation. Other than the “quick writing” activities utilized by the English teacher and the manipulatives described by the special education teacher, teaching has remained rather static for the staff that initially received training. The counselor noted that technology is being utilized more often and that he has implemented a second computer course to encourage students to expand their knowledge in this area. However, there is a willingness among the teachers to “get behind” this program, provided that it becomes a priority with the campus principal.

Seven respondents answered all questions on the construct related to Pedagogy. Five of the respondents indicated that students were using technology more effectively. Four respondents believed that classroom learning activities had changed a great deal through the HSRR

***There is no evidence that significant pedagogical change has occurred at School 7 as a result of grant implementation.***

effort. Three respondents indicated using fewer textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets for instruction and incorporating interdisciplinary or cooperative learning in their classes. School 7 recorded an overall average for the Pedagogy construct of 3.31 on a 5–point scale. (See Table 8.7 for more information on the Pedagogy construct.)

#### **RESTRUCTURING OUTCOMES**

##### *Student Impacts*

***Achievement.*** The parents and staff unanimously agree that the new principal provides hope that educational processes will improve. Most parents feel that School 7 is a “good” school and that their children

**Table 8.7. School 7: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Pedagogy**

<b>Pedagogy</b>	<b>Strongly Agree OR Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree OR Disagree</b>	<b>N*</b>
I use textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets less than I used to for basic skills or content area instruction.	3	4	0	7
Classroom learning activities have changed a great deal.	4	2	1	7
Students in my class spend at least two hours per school day in interdisciplinary or project-based work.	3	3	1	7
Students in my class spend much of their time working in cooperative learning teams.	3	2	2	7
Students are using technology more effectively.	5	1	1	7

*Source.* Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\**Note.* N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

can receive a good education if parents will provide support at home. However, according to parent and teacher interviews, the majority of parents in the community fail to provide the necessary support and involvement required to cause their children to apply themselves fully. Although there is some evidence that teachers are knowledgeable of TAKS standards and plan TAKS-related activities in their classrooms, student achievement remains an issue at School 7.

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***Student interviews revealed a common hunger for good teaching.***

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*Affective Impacts.* Student interviews revealed a common hunger for good teaching. They indicated that they felt confident about passing state tests provided they had teachers who would use hands-on teaching approaches. When asked to expand, students cited examples such as one-on-one assistance and extra help before and after school. They also demonstrated a respect for order and discipline in the classroom by noting that teachers who promote fair and consistent discipline management practices are appreciated by students.

*Special needs.* School 7 contains a large population of special needs students. The special education teacher is a veteran with many years of experience. She indicated that the use of manipulatives, a strategy employed as a direct result of HSTW training, is having a positive impact on the performance of her students in the classroom.

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***Staff Impacts***

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Overall, the staff indicated a desire to continue the redesign program provided that ongoing professional development tailored to their

needs was offered. They also seemed hopeful that the revolving door of administrators would cease and redesign efforts would continue. They presented a cohesive unit, appreciative of the new principal's support. Teachers indicated that they worked together as a team and are willing to collaborate to improve student learning.

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***Community/Parental Involvement***

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Limited parental and community involvement in school activities exist, especially in academics. While there is strong and passionate support from a small group of parents, it is limited to the same few. These parents discussed the school's rich history, and most of them received their education through the city's public schools. They indicated that apathy from some community members presented a barrier to increasing parental involvement. However, they remain hopeful for their children and promote their children's dreams of entering higher education after graduation. They indicated that community members turn out in large numbers to support students at athletic events. However, at the time of this report, redesign efforts appeared to have little impact on parental and community involvement.

Of the seven respondents who answered all the questions in this section, five indicated that interactions between teachers and students had improved. However, the responses to the rest of the questions on the Outcomes construct indicated mixed feelings. Four respondents said that parents were not more involved in the academic program, and only one staff member noted an increase in community support. Overall, School 7 had a mean of 2.95 on a 5-point scale in the Outcomes construct. (See Table 8.8 for more information on the Outcomes construct.)

**Table 8.8. School 7: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Outcomes**

Outcomes	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Student achievement has been positively impacted.	2	4	1	7
Students in this school are more enthusiastic about learning.	2	3	2	7
Parents are more involved in the educational program of this school.	0	3	4	7
Community support for our school has increased.	1	2	4	7
Students have higher standards for their own work.	3	2	2	7
Teachers are more involved in decision making.	2	3	2	7
Our program adequately addresses the requirements of students with special needs.	2	5	0	7
Teachers in this school spend more time working together to develop curriculum and plan instruction.	0	5	2	7
Interactions between teachers and students are more positive.	5	1	1	7

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

### III. IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

#### *Key Points*

Because of leadership issues related to administrative and teacher turnover, School 7 has made few gains towards improving student achievement. Despite being rated by the TEA as Academically Unacceptable in two of the last three years, the climate of the school does not reflect a feeling of apathy, hopelessness, or defeatism. Instead, there is a renewed sense of hope fueled by the commitment and passion of the new principal and new staff. School 7 has the potential to increase student achievement, increase parental involvement, and maintain consistency provided that the district makes

strong attempts to retain key employees and engage the community in decisions regarding educational initiatives.

#### *School Climate Inventory (SCI)*

Anecdotally, the school climate at School 7 was surprisingly positive, given the student achievement record over the past several years. Interviews indicated that the positive school climate was attributable to committed teachers and new administration. Stakeholders were eager to resume the grant program and believed that it could improve student achievement. However, the teachers said that the key to success is consistency in leadership and reduced teacher turnover. Students were

also positive about the direction of the school and indicated that they could achieve at higher rates provided that the teachers challenged them more and provided additional support outside of the classroom. However, older students noted they would not receive the full benefit of any changes since they were graduating soon.

The SCI was administered as part of the staff survey. The overall mean SCI rating for School 7 was a 3.58 on a 5–point scale. Results from the SCI indicate an overall school climate that is lower than the national average for secondary schools (3.73). The highest mean rating of 3.96 was given for Leadership dimension (compared to a national norm of 3.94). The lowest mean rating was obtained for the Involvement dimension of 3.20 (compared to a national norm of 3.63). (See Tables 8.9 and 8.10 below for more information on SCI high and low scales.)

Staff members were asked about the school's leadership in relation to the HSRR initiative. Based on the history of administrative turnover, it can be suggested that these responses are based on staff members' perceptions of their new principal. All six of the respondents who answered Question 4 reported that the administration does a good job of protecting instructional time. Additionally, five out of six said the administration provides useful feedback on staff performance. Five respondents reported the administration communicates the belief that all students can learn.

Survey responses by School 7 staff members indicated mixed views about the level of parent and community involvement in the school through the HSRR efforts. Although six out of seven respondents believed that parents are treated courteously by school personnel and are invited to be involved on school advisory

**Table 8.9. School 7: School Climate Inventory Perceived Leadership**

Leadership	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
The administration communicates the belief that all students can learn.	5	2	0	7
The administration encourages teachers to be creative and to try new methods.	4	3	0	7
The principal (or administration) provides useful feedback on staff performance.	5	1	0	6
The administration does a good job of protecting instructional time.	6	0	0	6
The principal is an effective instructional leader.	4	2	0	6
The goals of this school are reviewed and updated regularly.	3	2	1	6
The principal is highly visible throughout the school.	4	2	0	6

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

**Table 8.10. School 7: School Climate Inventory Perceived Involvement**

Involvement	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Community businesses are active in this school.	0	1	6	7
Parents actively support school activities.	1	1	5	7
Parents are treated courteously when they call or visit the school.	6	1	0	7
Parents are invited to serve on school advisory committees.	6	1	0	7
Parent volunteers are used whenever possible.	2	3	2	7
Information about school activities is communicated to parents on a consistent basis.	3	3	0	6
Parents are often invited to visit classrooms.	3	2	1	6

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

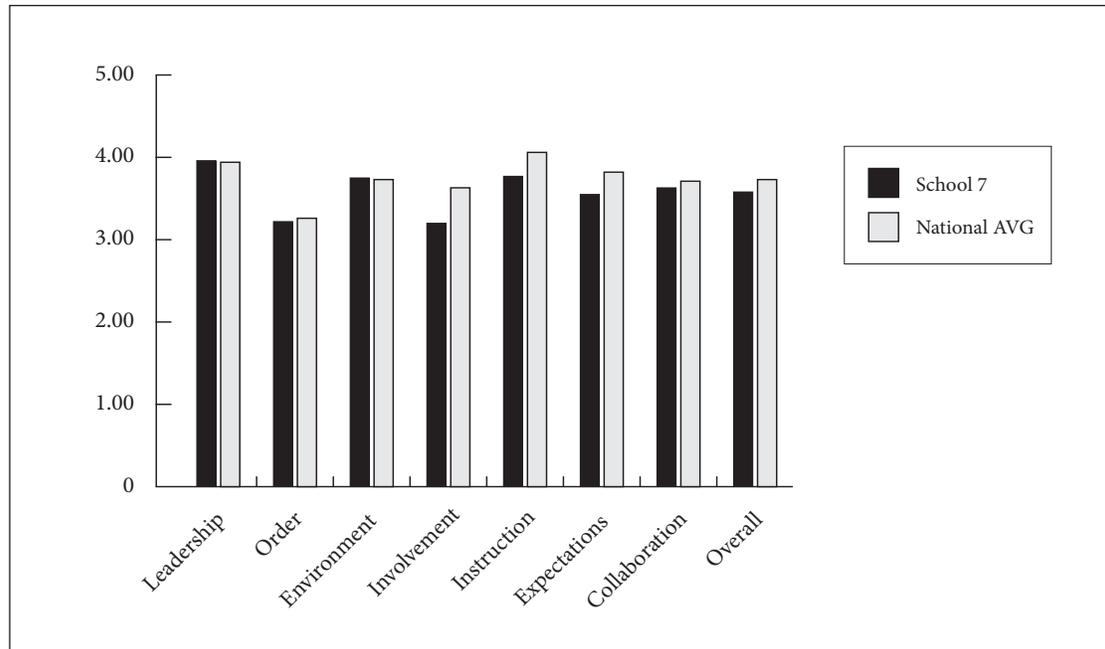
committees, five respondents believed that parents display limited active support for school activities. Additionally, six respondents reported that community businesses are not active in the school.

Figure 8.1 presents scale values for all School Climate Inventory scales.

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

While teachers were less familiar with specifics of the HSTW, they understood and supported the basic tenets of the program. There was general consensus from the faculty members who received the training that the model had promise if someone were available to

coordinate the program. The small number of faculty coupled with the burden of extra duties has limited the model's progress at School 7. The staff viewed HSTW as a possible structure to improve student achievement but, because of the already small faculty and class size, failed to see any connection between the program and improving relationships between students and teachers, and between teachers. The site visit information seemed to mirror the results from an overall implementation instrument as well as survey responses of School 7 staff members. With an instrument designed to assess the strength of implementation based on the HSRR-required components, the school received a score of 14.23 out of a possible 53 points. The TAP rated the school's overall redesign

**Figure 8.1. School 7: School Climate Inventory Scale Values (N=7)**

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

implementation level to be a 3.43 out of a possible 5.00 points. The school rated its own implementation level to be a 3.83 out of a possible 5.00 points, which is quite high compared to the score calculated by evaluators.

### ***Facilitators***

Because the new principal has responsibility over both the elementary and secondary schools, he may be able to bring a renewed sense of commitment to the faculty at the high school as well as spread age-appropriate HSTW tenets to the elementary school. Additionally, changes based on redesign efforts can be implemented quickly due to small school size and supportive faculty.

Survey results indicated that staff listed professional development, support from school administration, and support from

other teachers as the three main facilitators for HSRR implementation.

### ***Barriers***

Barriers to continued improvement are numerous. The history of teacher and administrative turnover has impacted student performance for years. Most high school students have never experienced consistency in leadership or teaching. Generational beliefs in the community reflect a “things will always be this way” attitude. To exacerbate the challenges further, the demographics of the school population are not representative of the community. Many parents have transferred their children to neighboring community schools in search of a better educational system. Those who remain lack the means to exercise educational choice for their children.

## Chapter 8

### *School 7, Low-Level Implementation*

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The feelings of educational abandonment are evident in interviews with parents, teachers, and students. However, with these deep-rooted challenges looming at every turn, the enthusiasm and hopeful attitudes exhibited by parents, teachers, students, and administrators are noteworthy and speak to the relentless courage and tenacity of these few community members and educators and their dream for a better education for their children.

Survey results indicated that staff listed lack of time, financial resources, human resources, and parent/community involvement as the four main barriers to HSRR implementation.

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***The new principal must quickly familiarize himself with grant objectives and reestablish the faculty's focus on implementation of the HSTW strategies in order to create any implementation that can be sustained after the grant ends.***

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### ***Sustainability***

It will be difficult for School 7 to sustain the program beyond grant funding. This is due largely to teacher and administrative turnover. The new principal must quickly familiarize himself with grant objectives and reestablish the faculty's focus on implementation of the HSTW strategies in order to create any implementation that can be sustained after the grant ends. Also, with few grant dollars remaining, it is doubtful that the district can afford the necessary training to bring the new teachers up to speed quickly enough to realize gains and create intrinsic sustainability by the end of the grant period.



## SCHOOL 8

## LOW-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION

*HSRR PROGRAM: DANA CENTER SUPPORT AND ODYSSEY COMPUTER PROGRAM*

*AWARD DATE: CYCLE 1–APRIL 2005*

*AWARD AMOUNT: \$245,580*

*SITE VISIT DATE: SEPTEMBER 13–14, 2006*

*IMPLEMENTATION SCORE: 21.70 (0–53)*

## I. LOCAL CONTEXT

SCHOOL 8 IS LOCATED IN CENTRAL TEXAS and is its own school district serving grades PK–12 due to the small size of the town and the school. Student enrollment in grades 9–12 for the 2005–06 school year was 69. The demographic data represents all grade levels. The student population is predominately White (38%). The next largest racial/ethnic groups are African American (31%) and Latino/Hispanic (31%). A majority of the student body is considered economically disadvantaged (66%), and half are considered at risk (53%). Approximately 9% of students are Limited English Proficient (LEP), and 19% require special education services. School 8's district is part of a cooperative exchange arrangement with a local community whereby the district offers educational services to

alternative education students, many of whom are from foster homes. (See Table 9.1 for more demographic information.)

### *Starting Points*

The superintendent of School 8 is leading the campus redesign efforts. During the seven years of his tenure, the high school staff has experienced significant turnover with only two teachers remaining from the previous administration. The superintendent considers this to be positive because teachers whom he described as unwilling to change left and teachers willing to try different approaches were hired. At the same time, staff turnover of recently hired teachers has been a challenge at School 8. A number of new teachers came for only one year, and recent staff changes in the English, mathematics, and science

**Table 9.1. School 8: Demographic Profile, 2005–06\***

African American	Latino/Hispanic	White	Other	Economically Disadvantaged	At Risk	Mobility (03–04)	Limited English Proficient	Special Education
31%	31%	38%	1%	66%	53%	20%	9%	19%

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

\*Reflects total school enrollment grades PK–12

**Table 9.2. School 8: Accountability Rating and TAKS Performance History, 2003-04 to 2005-06**

Year	Campus Rating	Grade	Reading	Math	Science	Social Studies	All Tests
2003-04	Academically Unacceptable	9	89%	53%	NA	NA	50%
		10	57%	36%	53%	87%	27%
		11	80%	87%	80%	99%	67%
2004-05	Academically Acceptable	9	81%	65%	NA	NA	65%
		10	79%	77%	36%	63%	38%
		11	80%	80%	70%	90%	60%
2005-06	Academically Acceptable	9	91%	78%	n/a	n/a	82%
		10	94%	59%	47%	81%	47%
		11	82%	82%	73%	>99%	73%

Source. Texas Education Agency, 2003-04 and 2004-05 AEIS, 2005-06 Accountability Ratings

departments created a challenging situation for this small school. A small teaching staff is common in small rural communities, and class offerings are primarily limited to core classes. Teachers are usually their own “department.” For example, the science teacher teaches six different courses. Due to the isolated location of the school, there are few substitute teachers available, which makes professional development during the school year difficult. The counselor shared how she and the superintendent taught classes to allow teachers to attend professional development activities.

Mathematics and science are targeted for improvement through the High School Redesign and Restructuring (HSRR) grant. The Academically Unacceptable rating the school received for the 2003-04 year was due to low mathematics scores for African American students. School 8 received an Academically Acceptable rating in 2004-05 prior to implementing any HSRR-related activities and was also rated Academically Acceptable for 2005-06. Overall, the level of achievement at

School 8 is fairly high, with low performance in isolated cases. (See Table 9.2 for more accountability information. Because School 8 serves more grades than just high school, it was not possible to gather data aggregated to the high school level from AEIS reports. Therefore, accountability data are reported by grade.)

## II. MODEL ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

### *Selection Process*

School 8’s restructuring efforts are part of a larger transformation that began years ago with the arrival of the current superintendent who described reforms at School 8 as “the home-grown variety.” He described holding a community forum in which he posed questions to 60-70 people from the community. Their concerns were grouped into themes that became the emphasis of the redesign plan. In response to low mathematics scores, the superintendent began trying to find

**Table 9.3. Dana Center Support Strategies Model Design***Background*

The Charles A. Dana Research Center provides technical assistance and services using delivery models based on school needs. The strategies include:

- ◆ Professional Teaching Model (PTM), which addresses improved instruction. The tenets of the model consist of changing the traditional approach to instruction. This process involves defining what students should know, creating criteria so that teachers know when students have learned, developing assessments to reflect criteria, and then developing lessons from this information.
- ◆ Classroom Walk Through Training.
- ◆ TEXTEAMS, which is a comprehensive system of professional development based on the mathematics and science Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). It is designed to offer quality professional development through a well-trained network of leaders. TEXTEAMS is based on the following philosophy and beliefs:
  - Teachers at all levels benefit from extending their own mathematical and scientific knowledge and understanding to include new content and new ways of conceptualizing the content they already possess.
  - Professional development experiences, much like the school mathematics and science curriculum itself, should focus on few activities in great depth.
  - Professional development experiences must provide opportunities for teachers to connect and apply what they have learned to their day-to-day teaching.

Source. Dana Center website, [www.utdanacenter.org](http://www.utdanacenter.org)

a program to help raise both mathematics and science scores. The Charles A. Dana Center was selected based on a recommendation from the Director of the Texas High School Redesign and Restructuring Project. The Dana Center provided a data-analysis and data-disaggregation workshop as well as training for the mathematics and science teachers with an emphasis on vertical teams. Additionally, the school brought in Odyssey, a credit-recovery computer program, and a computer lab that houses 20 computers. The Odyssey program allows students to make up courses they have previously failed, something important in a small school with limited course offerings and schedule flexibility. The Director of the High School Redesign and Restructuring Project also recommended the school purchase A+ programming, another credit recovery software, as part of its approach to high school

redesign. (See Table 9.3 for more information on Dana Center Support Strategies.)

***Initial Implementation***

School 8's HSRR goals were intended to support the following objectives as outlined in their grant application:

- 1) Substantially improving student achievement on the targeted high school campus.
- 2) Implementing a comprehensive school redesign and restructuring program based on reliable research and effective practices.
- 3) Emphasizing parental involvement and the foundation curricula, aligned with the TEKS and the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS).

## Chapter 9

### School 8, Low-Level Implementation

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School 8's approach to redesign centered on increasing student achievement through professional development activities designed to create better curricular alignment as well as the purchase of a computerized curriculum to assist those requiring credit recovery. The primary ongoing activity consisted of five one-day trainings from the Dana Center at the school for both mathematics and science teachers. This training was an opportunity for School 8 to work on vertical teams, building on their K-12 setting. Leadership training for the superintendent (who also served as the HSRR program coordinator) and principal was postponed and did not occur the first year of the grant.

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***The superintendent, principal, and counselor noted that the use of data has increased, with attention to TAKS benchmarks as one example.***

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The first HSRR activity was a three-day retreat for administrators and faculty. This was largely a team-building time, but the Dana Center also conducted a daylong data-disaggregation workshop. In addition to a few high school faculty members, teachers from the elementary and middle grades attended.

The superintendent, principal, and counselor noted that the use of data has increased, with attention to TAKS benchmarks as one example. In addition, the principal collects lesson plans each week, which ensures increased alignment both vertically and with the TEKS.

There was wide consensus that all high school students were beneficiaries of the grant because everyone takes mathematics and science. In addition, those students in need of credit recovery also directly benefit from the Odyssey curriculum and lab.

## ***Factors Impacting HSRR Implementation***

### ***SCHOOL CAPACITY***

The superintendent, principal, and counselor were in agreement that restructuring supported by the HSRR grant "fit into what the school was already doing." All agreed that there were ample monetary resources, especially to send teachers for professional development. One of the teachers said, "They practically beg us to find something we want to attend." Staffing and planning time presented the biggest challenges. Despite this, teachers had the opportunity to visit other schools to observe particular teaching approaches and programs as well as attend other training. The superintendent viewed this opportunity as a perk for teachers. One way School 8 worked around the lack of substitute teachers was to provide the bulk of training during the summer, using grant funds to pay teachers for their time.

In addition, due to a science grant School 8 received at the same time as HSRR, the science lab had been revamped, a SMART Board installed, and more resources for lab experiments are available. Teachers and administrators were pleased with the amount of technology at their school, especially the Odyssey lab and curriculum.

The Technical Assistance Provider (TAP) from the Dana Center indicated that the school had sufficient resources in terms of materials, staffing, planning time, and fiscal resources for implementing its redesign efforts.

Actual expenditures were unavailable for this school. The School 8 grant application indicated that 27% of the grant would be used for payroll costs. Interviews indicated this amount included paying teachers for time

to attend trainings. Almost half (49%) of the grant was devoted to technical assistance from the Dana Center. Another 14% of HSRR funds were to be used to purchase the Odyssey software and computers.

The greatest levels of shared leadership occurred between the superintendent, principal, and school counselor who met weekly. The principal described the superintendent as “the idea guy” and her own role as more of an implementer. There did not seem to be much shared leadership with the teachers. This may be because several of the teachers who received the bulk of the training had left the school.

Eight out of nine teachers at School 8 completed surveys for a response rate of 89%. Because of the small number of respondents, results in Tables 9.4 through 9.10 are presented as the number of respondents rather than the percent of respondents choosing each response. All of the respondents believed that the school had sufficient staff and technological resources to implement this

program. Seven respondents noted that sufficient material resources also were available to support the HSRR implementation. School 8’s mean for the Capacity construct is 3.75 on a 5–point scale. (See Table 9.4 for more information on the Capacity construct.)

### EXTERNAL SUPPORT

#### *External Professional Development*

The primary external professional development occurred during the vertical-team training provided by the Dana Center. Mathematics and science teachers spent five days each year in that training; because School 8 is so small, this meant that the mathematics teacher and science teacher vertically aligned their own high school courses. Due to its K–12 status, School 8 used this as an opportunity to work on vertical alignment throughout the elementary, middle, and high school programs.

Additional professional development occurred for the superintendent, principal, and two teachers at meetings for other HSRR grantees.

**Table 9.4. School 8: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Capacity**

Capacity	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Teachers are given sufficient planning time to implement our program.	6	2	0	8
Materials (books and other resources) needed to implement our HSRR program are readily available.	7	1	0	8
Our school has sufficient faculty and staff to fully implement this program.	8	0	0	8
Technological resources have become more available.	8	0	0	8

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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**Generally, school officials indicated that the services provided by their TAP were not commensurate with the 50% of the HSRR budget required for their services.**

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One teacher liked this conference because she was able to gain new ideas from other teachers as well as see the school from the vantage point of an administrator. She also came away from that meeting realizing the benefits of the small school size at School 8, which was something other schools were trying to manufacture via academies or “schools within a school.” Leadership training for the superintendent and principal had been planned for the first year of HSRR but was postponed.

While the superintendent thought that the Odyssey lab was the most effective part of the HSRR grant, he was less certain about the effectiveness of the Dana Center training, saying “it is hard to tell about staff development.” In short, the data-disaggregation workshop did not have “the precision intervention we were looking for.” He was already familiar with the data that was provided for a fee by the Dana Center because these same data were available for free on the Just for the Kids website; what he was hoping for were “clues, trends, and suggestions about particular strategies.” He mentioned wanting a diagnosis and very practical ideas about how to target specific weaknesses. Additionally, the vertical teams training did not result in the vertical curriculum, which the school expected. The school has independently sought a partnership with teachers from a nearby district to develop their own vertical curricula for the four core content areas. Generally, school officials indicated that the services provided by their TAP were not commensurate with the 50% of the HSRR budget required for their services.

A TAP survey completed by the Dana Center stated that Dana Center staff provided 66 hours of support during the first year of the grant and an additional 30 hours during year two of the grant. This service was provided by the same person across the grant. Additionally, the TAP provided support through whole-school training, conferences, and workshops.

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#### *Integrated District Assistance*

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School 8 comprises its own district. The superintendent, who is also the grant coordinator, is the leader of reform efforts and is, therefore, very supportive of reform at the school. According to teacher and self reports, he actively encourages teachers to take advantage of professional development opportunities that are available due to HSRR funds.

Of the eight respondents, seven said they had a thorough understanding of the selected HSRR program; the same number said they had received adequate initial and ongoing professional development related to the HSRR implementation. Respondents were most divided about the assistance provided by external partners with only three out of eight believing that this assistance was effective. Overall, staff rated the Support construct at 3.75 on a 5-point scale. (See Table 9.5 for more information on the Support construct.)

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#### *INTERNAL FOCUS*

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

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Although teachers were not well versed in the specifics of the HSRR grant, they were positive about the direction of the school and the changes they had seen over the last two years. This timeframe predates the first activities of the HSRR grant, which occurred in summer 2005, but speaks to the superintendent’s point that the HSRR grant allowed the school to

**Table 9.5. School 8: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Support**

Support	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
I have a thorough understanding of this school's HSRR program.	7	1	0	8
I have received adequate initial and ongoing professional development/training for HSRR program implementation.	7	1	0	8
Technical assistance provided by external trainers, model developers, and/or designers has been valuable.	5	3	0	8
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.	6	2	0	8
My school receives effective assistance from external partners (e.g., university, businesses, agencies).	3	4	1	8

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

pursue changes that were already in process. Teachers noted that scores on TAKS had improved, more students were graduating, and fewer students are requiring the Odyssey lab to make up failed courses. They commented about a higher expectation to pass standardized tests.

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***As the superintendent noted, the reforms at School 8 are mostly "homegrown."***

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Teachers were enthusiastic about the Odyssey lab and curriculum. This credit recovery program provides "another chance." Prior to Odyssey, if a student failed a course, he or she would have to do an independent study. Teachers felt this was not as effective as Odyssey because, due to the schedule constraints of a small school, students would often have to eliminate electives or physical education courses. Since the lab is open during

the summer, students can catch up, rather than have to take two mathematics or two English courses at the same time.

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#### *Alignment and Integration with Existing Programs*

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As the superintendent noted, the reforms at School 8 are mostly "homegrown." In addition to the HSRR grant, School 8 also received a mathematics grant and a science grant. During interviews with the superintendent, principal, and counselor, it was evident that the three grants support each other. As the superintendent said, "The grant has helped us plug in components to what we were already doing." It was hard for them to keep straight which grant money supported which component. All three addressed the specific TAKS weakness that occurred in mathematics and also a general weakness in science identified by school leadership.

## Chapter 9

### School 8, Low-Level Implementation

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#### *Monitoring*

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Multiple monitoring activities are integrated as a way to ensure increased attention to raising students' test scores. The principal collects lesson plans each week. In addition, the superintendent, counselor, and principal discussed the increased use of and attention to benchmarks for all students. One or two teachers also mentioned the increased use of benchmarks. They noted that this approach has paid off with increased TAKS scores as evidence. In addition, the Odyssey lab proctor provides frequent reports on students' progress and participation.

Besides these regularly scheduled activities, monitoring occurs via the principal's "walk-throughs" of the school. Teachers also noted that one of the strengths of being a small school was the ability to know each student's strengths and weaknesses. Teachers were made aware of struggling students at weekly staff meetings, and the entire staff was asked to encourage them. The sentiment that "it is hard to fall through the cracks" was expressed throughout conversations. For example, teachers were well aware that the school missed Recognized status by two students' performances in science. Being able to pinpoint student areas of weakness and provide very targeted support services for these students is possible because of the size of the school and awareness of the staff.

Seven out of eight respondents reported that teachers were generally supportive of the HSRR effort and that the reform elements were effectively integrated to meet the school's improvement goals. Furthermore, the same number of respondents indicated that a plan had been developed to evaluate all HSRR components. School 8's overall mean on the Focus construct was 3.80 on a 5-point scale.

(See Table 9.6 for more information on the Focus construct.)

#### *PEDAGOGICAL CHANGE*

Although it did not seem that a dramatic pedagogical change in use of specific instructional strategies had taken place, teachers and administrators noted that there was a marked difference in expectations. Both teachers and administrators linked the increase in TAKS scores to this new attitude. One staff member indicated the biggest instructional change to be the acceptance of multiple methods of delivery, such as more reliance on the Odyssey credit recovery program. Additionally, staff mentioned less reliance on worksheets and more staff collaboration. For example, staff described combining topics from a language arts class on Shakespeare with geometry material and applying it in an agricultural class when building a hog trap.

Each of the respondents indicated that students are using technology more effectively. Five out of eight respondents agreed that classroom learning activities had changed a great deal in the HSRR process and that there was less use of textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets. Additionally, five respondents reported that students were working more often in cooperative learning teams during class time. School 8 recorded an overall average for the Pedagogy construct of 3.73

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***One staff member indicated the biggest instructional change to be the acceptance of multiple methods of delivery, such as more reliance on the Odyssey credit recovery program.***

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**Table 9.6. School 8: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Focus**

Focus	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Teachers in this school are generally supportive of our HSRR program.	7	1	0	8
The elements of our HSRR program are effectively integrated to help us meet school improvement goals.	7	1	0	8
As a school staff, we regularly review implementation and outcome benchmarks to evaluate our progress.	6	1	1	8
Our school has a plan for evaluating all components of our HSRR program.	7	0	1	8
I am satisfied with the federal, state, local, and private resources that are being coordinated to support our HSRR program.	5	3	0	8

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

on a 5–point scale. (See Table 9.7 for more information on the Pedagogy construct.)

## RESTRUCTURING OUTCOMES

### *Student Impacts*

*Achievement.* The superintendent, principal, and counselor credited their existing activities and the HSRR grant to a small extent with improving student achievement. Leadership reported that TAKS scores had already increased prior to HSRR implementation. Students reported varying degrees of preparation for TAKS, with one saying, “This is the most confident I’ve been,” and another feeling weak in science because of the teacher turnover in that subject. Another student noted that the junior mathematics class is based on the TAKS with computer work for reinforcement. This reflects the school’s increased alignment with the TEKS, which

was part of the professional development made possible through the HSRR grant.

Another main component of the HSRR grant, the Odyssey credit-recovery program, was counted a success due to its decreased use in this capacity. The logic is that initially more students needed to use the program as a credit recovery model. As the school continues to improve, fewer students need to make up credits. Furthermore, students increasingly are using Odyssey to accelerate their courses in order to complete the high school requirements earlier and/or take courses that are not available at this small school.

*Affective impacts.* There was broad agreement that the small size of School 8 is a strength in that teachers and students know each other. Students reported that there were adults at the school they could talk to, and teachers reported that they saw students outside of the

**Table 9.7. School 8: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Pedagogy**

Pedagogy	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
I use textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets less than I used to for basic skills or content area instruction.	5	3	0	8
Classroom learning activities have changed a great deal.	5	2	1	8
Students in my class spend at least two hours per school day in interdisciplinary or project-based work.	3	4	1	8
Students in my class spend much of their time working in cooperative learning teams.	5	3	0	8
Students are using technology more effectively.	8	0	0	8

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

classroom whether at school sporting events or in the community. The HSRR grant did not seem to have a direct impact in this area.

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*Staff Impacts*

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Due to teacher turnover in the target areas of mathematics and science, most of the teachers were not very familiar with the grant. New teachers were introduced to the grant at a staff meeting, but teachers were on the whole unclear about the specific components of the HSRR grant. Two teachers spoke of their direct experience with the grant. One was a mathematics teacher who had participated in the staff team-building and data-disaggregation workshops as well as vertical-team training, and the other had attended the region-wide meeting for other HSRR grantees. In addition, she had received additional professional development that was paid for through funds from HSRR. They both spoke about feeling isolated at times because each was his/her own department,

since so few teachers comprise the teaching staff. They liked the opportunity to work with other teachers through the vertical team meetings as well as the exposure at outside professional development activities. Despite limited knowledge about related activities, staff members were generally excited about the continued improvement in scores and spoke multiple times about being focused on Recognized or Exemplary status, rather than Academically Acceptable.

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*Community/Parental Involvement*

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School 8 is a typical high school in that only a small group of parents actively supports it. The three parents in the focus group expressed that they wished more parents were involved. Parents mentioned two things they felt were particularly good: the forums that the school held during the first year of HSRR funding and the creation of a school website. Parents liked the forums because they were an opportunity for parents and other community members

to provide feedback and ideas to the school. They especially liked the website because it allowed them to check their children's grades, keep track of the schedule, and even peruse the lunch menu. Apart from the forums, which the superintendent mentioned had occurred in connection with the overall restructuring and the HSRR grant, there seemed to be little effect of the grant on parental and community involvement.

All eight survey respondents said that student achievement has been positively impacted. Furthermore, all respondents said that the program adequately addressed the requirements of students with special needs. Seven out of eight of these respondents said that interactions between teachers and students have become more positive, and

teachers were more involved in decision making. An issue remains about community support for the school; only two respondents said this support had increased. Overall on the Outcomes construct, School 8 had a mean of 3.79 on a 5-point scale. (See Table 9.8 for more information on the Outcomes construct.)

### III. IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

#### *Key Points*

Administrators and teachers agree that programs provided by the HSRR grant have contributed to higher expectations for students, increased attention to standards-based teaching, and created more options for students who need additional assistance to succeed at School 8.

**Table 9.8. School 8: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Outcomes**

Outcomes	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Student achievement has been positively impacted.	8	0	0	8
Students in this school are more enthusiastic about learning.	6	2	0	8
Parents are more involved in the educational program of this school.	3	4	1	8
Community support for our school has increased.	2	5	1	8
Students have higher standards for their own work.	5	3	0	8
Teachers are more involved in decision making.	7	0	1	8
Our program adequately addresses the requirements of students with special needs.	8	0	0	8
Teachers in this school spend more time working together to develop curriculum and plan instruction.	6	2	0	8
Interactions between teachers and students are more positive.	7	1	0	8

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

**Table 9.9. School 8: School Climate Inventory Perceived Expectations**

Expectations	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Low achieving students are given opportunity for success in this school.	8	0	0	8
School rules and expectations are clearly communicated.	8	0	0	8
Students share the responsibility for keeping the school environment attractive and clean.	6	2	0	8
Students are held responsible for their actions.	8	0	0	8
All students in this school are expected to master basic skills at each grade level.	8	0	0	8
Students participate in classroom activities regardless of their sex, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, or academic ability.	7	0	0	7
Teachers have high expectations for all students.	8	0	0	8

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

### **School Climate Inventory (SCI)**

Students expressed satisfaction with the school climate, which they attributed in part to the small size of the school. They noted that in addition to the individualized instruction that comes from small class sizes, teachers were also available for tutoring. In addition, they said that they could also turn to their peers for help. One parent said that “it’s clear the teachers have the kids’ best interests at heart.” Apart from minor discipline problems, students did not feel afraid at school and also felt that they were treated fairly. (Two parents disagreed with this assessment and felt that discipline was not consistent.)

The SCI was administered as part of the staff survey. The overall mean SCI rating for School 8 was 4.12 on a 5–point scale. It is

important to note that the small sample size limits interpretability of results. Results from the SCI indicate an overall school climate that is higher than the national average for secondary schools (3.73). The highest mean rating of 4.38 was given for the Expectations dimension (compared to a national norm of 3.82). The lowest mean rating was obtained for the Involvement dimension of 3.82 (compared to a national norm of 3.63). (See Tables 9.9 and 9.10 for more information on SCI high and low scales.)

Expectations received the highest ratings by the School 8 staff. All respondents indicated that school rules and expectations were clearly communicated and that teachers held high expectations for all students. All respondents also believed that low-achieving students

had opportunities to be successful and that students were held responsible for their actions. Additionally, all respondents agreed that all students were expected to master basic skills at each grade level, while seven out of eight said students find ways to meaningfully participate in classroom activities.

In the survey related to the Involvement dimension, all respondents indicated that parent volunteers were used whenever possible. Seven out of eight reported that parents were treated courteously when they call or visit the school and that information about school activities was communicated to parents on a consistent basis. However, only four out of eight believed that parents actively supported school activities.

Figure 9.1 presents scale values for all School Climate Inventory scales.

### **Assessment of Implementation Level**

There was not a sense from teachers of a coherent reform strategy, rather they described a collection of ways that administrators and teachers were working on improvement. Most teachers were not very knowledgeable about the professional development activities because these targeted mathematics and science and also because some of the teachers who received the training left the school. In contrast, there seemed to be much wider support for the school's efforts to improve TAKS scores. Teachers liked the school's new use of computerized offerings (such as the Odyssey program), finding that these were helpful for students needing additional review. There was consensus among teachers and administrators that there were higher levels of expectation than in past years.

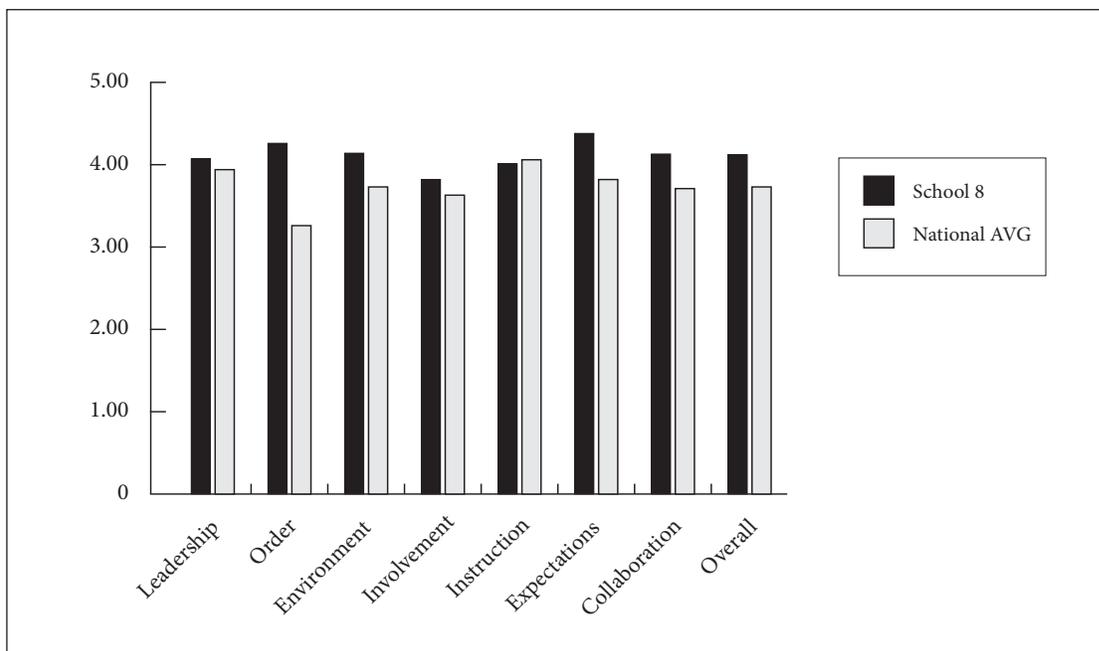
**Table 9.10. School 8: School Climate Inventory Perceived Involvement**

<b>Involvement</b>	<b>Strongly Agree OR Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree OR Disagree</b>	<b>N*</b>
Community businesses are active in this school.	5	2	1	8
Parents actively support school activities.	4	3	1	8
Parents are treated courteously when they call or visit the school.	7	1	0	8
Parents are invited to serve on school advisory committees.	6	2	0	8
Parent volunteers are used whenever possible.	8	0	0	8
Information about school activities is communicated to parents on a consistent basis.	7	1	0	8
Parents are often invited to visit classrooms.	6	2	0	8

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

**Figure 9.1. School 8: School Climate Inventory Scale Values (N=8)**



Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

The site visit information seemed to mirror the results from an overall implementation instrument as well as survey responses of School 8 staff members. With an instrument designed to assess the strength of implementation based on the HSRR-required components, the school received a score of 21.70 out of a possible 53 points. The TAP rated the school's overall redesign implementation level to be a 4.86 out of a possible 5 points. This rating by the TAP may be high due to the school's limited focus on improving mathematics and science instruction; the TAP did not have to provide support for a school-wide restructuring program that impacted all staff members. In comparison, the school staff rated its own implementation level to be a 3.67 out of a possible 5 points.

### **Facilitators**

Facilitators include administrative leadership and the strengths deriving from the small size of the school. The leadership of the superintendent has been particularly important. His plan is to become the "provider of resources," rather than being perceived as "the leader." Teachers are made aware of students who are in need of encouragement to do better in the academic realm. Due to the small size of the school and community, teachers see the students in the classroom as well as at other times. The counselor noted that the grant is easy to implement because they have a small staff and because teachers are willing to participate in the various efforts. "They knew they had to change," and those who didn't want to participate left the district.

Survey results indicated that staff listed support from the school administration, district administration, and strong training and professional development as the three main facilitators for HSRR implementation.

### **Barriers**

Teacher turnover has been a barrier to reform. For several years, School 8 hired graduates from a university's teacher education program. Unfortunately, several of these newly minted teachers stayed only one year. Hiring "locals" from School 8 or surrounding towns has been a recent strategy to try to increase teacher tenure. In addition, there are few substitute teachers available, which means the bulk of professional development has to occur in the summer.

Survey results indicated that staff listed a lack of time and a lack of parent and community involvement as the two main barriers to HSRR implementation.

### **Sustainability**

Sustainability was not perceived to be a major concern. The computer lab has been purchased, and the principal felt confident that it would be kept up to date. The principal noted that the school board has been financially supportive of the school, so she did not foresee a problem in finding funds for areas such as professional development. The vertical alignment training provided a foundation for the mathematics and science teachers, and the plan is to continue this approach so that a vertically aligned curriculum exists even if teacher turnover occurs. Again, this alignment process has occurred beyond the HSRR redesign through the independent efforts of the district

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***The principal noted that the school board has been financially supportive of the school, so she did not foresee a problem in finding funds for areas such as professional development.***

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administrators and faculty collaborating with a neighboring district. The school also plans to continue the use of benchmarks and other "hard data" in its evaluation.





## SCHOOL 9

## LOW-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION

**HSRR PROGRAM: LOCALLY DEVELOPED MODEL****AWARD DATE: CYCLE 1 – APRIL 2005****AWARD AMOUNT: \$400,000****SITE VISIT DATE: OCTOBER 3-4, 2006****IMPLEMENTATION SCORE: 17.67****I. LOCAL CONTEXT**

SCHOOL 9 IS LOCATED IN A LOW-INCOME area on the northeast side of a major urban city. Student enrollment at School 9 for the 2005–06 school year totaled 1,251 and was predominantly African American (73%). The next largest racial/ethnic group was Latino/Hispanic (26%). A majority of the student body was considered economically disadvantaged (96%). Slightly more than half of the student body was classified at risk (55%). Only 3% of the student enrollment was Limited-English Proficient, and 10% required special education services. (See Table 10.1 for more demographic information.)

**Starting Points**

School 9 first opened in 1953 and is the largest campus in the district. The school faces overwhelming challenges in implementing substantial reforms. For years, the school has

had the reputation of being out of control resulting from problems of vandalism, violence, truancy, and low academic performance.

The school has a tradition of struggling with inconsistent academic performance. The school was rated Acceptable on the state accountability system in 2000–01, but was rated Low Performing in 2001–02. No rating was awarded in 2002–03 as the Accountability Rating system changed tests and standards. Under the new system in 2003–04, the school was rated Academically Unacceptable, then Academically Acceptable in 2004–05, and Academically Unacceptable again in 2005–06. The school's deficiency areas over the past three years have been in the areas of science and mathematics. (See Table 10.2 for more accountability information.)

The school currently implements a redesign program that was locally developed. The High

**Table 10.1. School 9: Demographic Profile, 2005–06**

African American	Latino/ Hispanic	White	Other	Economically Disadvantaged	At Risk	Mobility	LEP	Special Education
73%	26%	1%	1%	96%	55%	28%	3%	10%

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

**Table 10.2. School 9: Accountability Rating and TAKS Performance History, 2003-04 to 2005-06**

Year	Campus Rating	TAKS Met Standard All Grades Tested (All Tests)	Reading	Math	Science	Social Studies
2003-04	Academically Unacceptable	19%	60%	27%	32%	74%
2004-05	Academically Acceptable	21%	55%	30%	43%	77%
2005-06	Academically Unacceptable	22%	72%	29%	35%	73%

Source. Texas Education Agency, 2003-04 and 2004-05 AEIS, 2005-06 Accountability Ratings

School Redesign and Restructuring (HSRR) grant is integrated with the 21st Century after-school tutoring program and a school improvement grant.

## II. MODEL ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

### *Selection Process*

After the Texas Accountability Rating System classified School 9 as Academically Unacceptable, district leaders reviewed the school's performance data and assessed the different areas of need. After evaluating reform models that had been produced by other educational organizations, the school decided to develop a model locally that would include upgrading curriculum and instruction by providing professional development for

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***In order for any reform effort to be effective, it was determined that all operational, management, and instructional programs should go through total reconstitution.***

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teachers, revamping the school organization through smaller learning communities organized by grade level, promoting parental involvement activities, and testing. In order for any reform effort to be effective, it was determined that all operational, management, and instructional programs should go through total reconstitution.

A Technical Assistance Provider (TAP) was required by statute because the campus had been rated Academically Unacceptable. The TAP was selected to provide instructional and administrative direction to the principal as well as to organize a summary of progress and challenges. The TAP's reports were to be communicated to the superintendent and principal on a monthly basis.

### *Initial Implementation*

After the reconstitution, the school leaders initiated the next steps in the redesign process. A new student management arrangement that placed students in small learning communities organized by grade level was implemented. Classrooms have been clustered by grade level to the extent possible. An assistant principal

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***Staff indicated that key positions, such as science and mathematics teachers, were filled by permanent substitute teachers, which contributed to the Academically Unacceptable accountability rating.***

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and a counselor were assigned to each group. Each grade was given its own wing of the building. The assigned assistant principal and counselor were responsible for developing relationships with the students as they moved from the 9th- to 12th-grades with their peers.

A concerted effort was made to focus on the special needs of the 300 incoming 9th-grade students in an effort to improve attendance and to address the dropout problem. Although the average class size ranged from 17 to 28 students, school leaders tried to limit class size to 15 students. Given the poor performance in mathematics, the school made two TAKS mathematics teachers available to work with these students.

The school also purchased an On-Campus Intervention (OCI) program to be used to provide interventions, instruction, and a basis for change for students with mild to moderate behavioral problems. The program provided an alternative to suspension, as well as an option to transition students in the alternative education program back to the regular campus. Student t-shirts and classroom posters were purchased to promote the program.

### ***Factors Impacting HSSR Implementation***

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

School 9's accountability status has resulted in staff turnover over the years. Staff indicated that key positions, such as science and mathematics teachers, were

filled by permanent substitute teachers, which contributed to the Academically Unacceptable accountability rating. Because of this rating, district leaders made the decision to informally reconstitute the school. The district's human resources department posted all positions, and the entire staff had to reapply and interview for the positions. A new principal took charge of the school beginning in the 2005–06 school year.

Professional staff included the principal, five assistant principals, and a dean of instruction. An assistant principal was added for the technical school located across the street from the regular high school. In addition to the counselors at the four grade levels, a counselor was added to staff a center where students could access information about scholarships and dual credit courses with a local community college.

Technology was an enormous focus at the school. The principal stated that every classroom had a new computer with a flat screen monitor and liquid crystal display (LCD) projectors will be added to each classroom soon. However, only 50% of the rooms had Internet access. The principal's goal was that School 9 would have the "best" technology in the district by 2007–08.

The principal also identified a gap in teacher knowledge about the lesson cycle as a targeted area for professional development and training. Part of the redesign focus has been to increase ongoing training through bi-monthly departmental meetings. The principal provides 90% of this internal training.

Impressively, 100% of the 85 teachers at School 9 responded to the survey. Survey results indicate that over three-quarters of the staff at School 9 who responded reported more technological resources have become available

## Chapter 10

### School 9, Low-Level Implementation

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due to HSRR efforts. Sixty-two percent indicated having sufficient faculty to fully implement redesign plans. Almost half (49%) of respondents reported adequate materials and 46% reported sufficient planning time to implement HSRR plans. The School 9 mean for the Capacity construct is 3.55 on a 5–point scale. (See Table 10.3 for more information on the Capacity construct.)

#### EXTERNAL SUPPORT

Because a primary focus of the redesign was to improve instruction, staff received extensive professional development from the Region Education Service Center (ESC), the County Department of Education (CDE), and a teachers' institute. For example, CDE provided training on Bloom's Taxonomy, the lesson cycle, and the integration of technology into all subject areas. As part of the training, there was follow-up with classroom observations. The teachers' institute provided training on Pre-AP high school math. The Region ESC training

focused on aligning curriculum with the TEKS and TAKS so that all teachers were aware of testing requirements and could base daily lessons on these requirements.

Because the TAP survey was not completed, there is no information regarding the number of hours of support provided. However, the school assigned a 2.00 on a 5–point scale to the services provided by the TAP.

A majority of staff at School 9 indicated having a thorough understanding of the school's HSRR program (74%), receiving adequate training (68%), receiving valuable TAP support (63%), receiving helpful guidance from external facilitators (69%), and receiving efficient assistance from partners (56%). The School 9 mean for the Support construct is 3.72 on a 5–point scale. Considering information collected during the site visit, it is surprising that the survey reflects high satisfaction with TAP services compared

**Table 10.3. School 9: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Capacity**

Capacity	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Teachers are given sufficient planning time to implement our program.	46%	32%	21%	84
Materials (books and other resources) needed to implement our HSRR program are readily available.	49%	31%	20%	84
Our school has sufficient faculty and staff to fully implement this program.	62%	17%	21%	84
Technological resources have become more available.	78%	13%	9%	82

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

**Table 10.4. School 9: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Support**

Support	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
I have a thorough understanding of this school's HSRR program.	74%	17%	10%	84
I have received adequate initial and ongoing professional development/training for HSRR program implementation.	68%	20%	12%	85
Technical assistance provided by external trainers, model developers, and/or designers has been valuable.	63%	27%	11%	83
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%	24%	7%	85
My school receives effective assistance from external partners (e.g., university, businesses, agencies).	56%	32%	12%	84

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

to data indicating the school rated this support 2.00 on a 5-point scale. One possible explanation may be that staff members have a limited understanding of the role of the Technical Assistance Provider and what services would be provided. (See Table 10.4 for more information on the Support construct.)

### INTERNAL FOCUS

#### *Staff Buy-in and Support*

Teacher support for the redesign appeared to be high and was attributed in large part to the strong leadership of the new principal who led by example. He provided a significant amount of the staff training during his weekly staff meetings and monthly departmental meetings. Staff reported that they were generally

supportive of the new direction the school was taking. Teachers who had been at the school for a long time also indicated there were many positive changes, such as better management of student discipline and more emphasis on teacher training.

#### *Alignment and Integration with Existing Programs*

The redesign grant was stated to be generally aligned with the 21st Century after-school program, which offers tutoring on a one-on-one basis in all subjects and provides an opportunity for teachers to know the specific areas where students need help. However, there were no explicit alignment efforts. Furthermore, because attendance is so poor

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### School 9, Low-Level Implementation

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(4–7 students) during the tutoring sessions, one teacher commented that it was difficult to justify the cost of continuing the sessions even though these were so desperately needed.

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#### *Monitoring*

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The principal and administrators, including the dean of instruction, monitor progress as they each conduct six walk-throughs every day. Progress is also monitored through the weekly faculty meetings and monthly departmental meetings with the principal. Benchmarks come from the Region ESC. Each teacher has to complete a form on failures. Additionally, TEA required TAP reports about school progress to be sent to both the principal and superintendent.

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***Teacher support for the redesign appeared to be high and was attributed in large part to the strong leadership of the new principal who led by example.***

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Again, the majority of staff viewed internal focus on redesign efforts to be strong. Almost three-quarters of respondents agreed that staff regularly reviewed implementation and outcome benchmarks to evaluate progress and that the school had a plan for evaluating all components of the HSRR program (73%). Sixty-nine percent of respondents stated they were generally supportive of the redesign program. The School 9 mean for the Focus construct is 3.71 on a 5–point scale. (See Table 10.5 for more information on the Focus construct.)

#### ***PEDAGOGICAL CHANGE***

Pedagogical changes resulted from the professional development that the teachers received. When teachers were asked how

their classrooms reflected the redesign efforts, teachers said that classrooms were very different this year. The new curriculum from the Region ESC ensured that teachers cover the TEKS. The curriculum is planned and paced for each class day, and is vertically aligned. In addition, professional development activities have helped to train faculty members to teach from the point of view of the learners, rather than from the point of view of the teachers. In the past, there was no focus in the classroom, and pure recitation was the model of choice for teachers. Now daily objectives are listed on the board in each classroom. Students work on starter activities to begin the class periods.

Teachers are required to have their desks in the back of the classrooms, so that they can observe students better. They are also required to get the clutter out of their classrooms.

Technology was added to the classrooms, and students had access to resources not previously available. For example, Questia Media in America was added as an online library and reference tool that provides subscriptions for students and teachers to use for reference materials. Teachers received training for the program and learned how to integrate the program into lesson plans in order to use Questia in all subject areas.

It is important to note that the district hired new full-time regular teachers to replace permanent substitute teachers in critical positions in the mathematics and science departments.

Corroborating site-visit data, 75% of survey respondents indicated that classroom learning activities had changed a great deal. Sixty-seven percent of respondents reported that students spent much of their time working in cooperative learning teams, and 65%

**Table 10.5. School 9: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Focus**

Focus	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Teachers in this school are generally supportive of our HSRR program.	69%	24%	7%	85
The elements of our HSRR program are effectively integrated to help us meet school improvement goals.	64%	26%	11%	85
As a school staff, we regularly review implementation and outcome benchmarks to evaluate our progress.	73%	18%	9%	85
Our school has a plan for evaluating all components of our HSRR program.	73%	21%	6%	84
I am satisfied with the federal, state, local, and private resources that are being coordinated to support our HSRR program.	59%	29%	12%	85

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

of respondents stated that students used technology more effectively. The School 9 mean for the Pedagogy construct was 3.60 on a 5–point scale. (See Table 10.6 for more information on the Pedagogy construct.)

### *RESTRUCTURING OUTCOMES*

The school was completely reconstituted as part of the restructuring effort. Teachers, parents, and students generally credited the new principal as being the driving force behind the improvements that were made. The implementation of the small learning communities by grade level provided an opportunity for better student management.

### *Student Impacts*

*Achievement.* While some improvements in achievement were already being attributed to the reform effort, the principal expressed

concern that only 44 seniors were ready to graduate. Approximately 112 seniors had not passed TAKS and had only two more opportunities to take the test. Students in the focus group felt that they were prepared for TAKS, but they represented the best and brightest students on campus.

Student management was at the top of the list of things to do when the current principal arrived. A major challenge was literally getting the students out of the hallways and into the classrooms. Once he was able to accomplish that, he stated that students seemed to come to the realization that they were going to be held accountable.

The principal also felt that students' attitudes had improved in part because they saw they were getting the same advantages, such as technology in the classrooms, as students in

**Table 10.6. School 9: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Pedagogy**

Pedagogy	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
I use textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets less than I used to for basic skills or content area instruction.	51%	31%	18%	84
Classroom learning activities have changed a great deal.	75%	14%	11%	83
Students in my class spend at least two hours per school day in interdisciplinary or project-based work.	43%	38%	20%	82
Students in my class spend much of their time working in cooperative learning teams.	67%	26%	7%	85
Students are using technology more effectively.	65%	20%	14%	84

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

other area schools. Since many students do not have computers at home, a program was introduced that made computers available to some students for a fee of \$10 per month or a \$100 flat fee.

*Affective Impacts.* Counselors and teachers believed that relationships among students and between students and teachers were steadily improving. Students seemed to trust the adults more because they felt that teachers really cared and wanted them to be successful.

The principal believed that students felt comfortable talking to him and letting him

***A major challenge was literally getting the students out of the hallways and into the classrooms.***

know when teachers were not doing their jobs. The principal said that if he “loved his students without standards, he was not helping them.”

One of the teachers reported that the students’ conduct had improved because teachers were literally presenting materials more effectively and students were actually absorbing more of the information. Students were tired of the old routines of pure recitation and needed something new and innovative, staff stated. However, another teacher was more pessimistic and felt that students remained unmotivated, regardless of what teachers tried to do. “In the beginning, it seemed to be working well, but the system is overwhelmed.”

*Special Needs.* Students with special needs are included in the regular classrooms. The school was trying to reduce the number of students

designated as special education. A computer lab is available for special education students. Several new programs, such as Purple Cows and Read 180, also were going to be made available for special education students.

In some cases, the more advanced students were tutoring low-performing students and that appeared to be working well. One teacher commented that with the redesign, most classes were small enough to allow teachers to work with students one-on-one.

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### *Staff Impacts*

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Teachers were excited about the emphasis on professional development that has been provided by the Region ESC and the County Department of Education. Teachers identified other sources for online training as well. For teachers who were hired too late to take advantage of the summer training sessions, the principal and department chairs provided orientation sessions. Other teachers also shared the information that they had received. Another workshop to update teachers was scheduled for October 2006. Teachers expressed a need for more training in areas such as using technology and authentic assessments.

In general, most teachers are receptive and excited about the changes brought on by the redesign. One teacher reported hearing positive comments like, “If we follow up, it will make a difference.” However, some teachers also said that “kids are just not showing interest.” Additionally, although most teachers were perceived to be pulling together, others were perceived as still being “cliquish” in their own disciplines.

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### *Community/Parental Involvement*

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Although parental involvement has increased, there is still much room for improvement.

The school provides a special orientation program for the parents of 9th-grade students. The school sends letters to all parents to alert them about rules, regulations, and upcoming events. Approximately 80–100 parents attended the Open House in September 2006 to hear the principal give his “state of the campus” address and update on school redesign efforts.

The most notable effort for promoting parental involvement is the Parent Engagement Program (PEP) that meets twice a month. Sixty-seven charter members have signed up for the program, and approximately 30 attend meetings on a consistent basis. One assistant principal has been assigned to support the group, and five or six teachers are also actively involved. The principal tries to attend at least once a month.

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### ***The most notable effort for promoting parental involvement is the Parent Engagement Program (PEP) that meets twice a month.***

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PEP members appeared at the September school board meeting to encourage the district to implement the PEP program at the middle-school level to get those parents involved before students get to high school. The school board was so impressed with their proposal that they joined PEP members recently for a walk through the neighborhoods to gain community support for the program. A block party followed at the administration building. If PEP members can document the success of the current PEP program, the board has agreed to pilot PEP programs on other campuses in the district.

A parent center has been set up near the testing center on campus to make computers available for parents if they do not have computer access elsewhere.

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In an effort to encourage parents to come to the school and meet with teachers about their child's academic progress, classes are dismissed at 11 a.m. on report card days. Teachers also offer incentives, such as crediting students with 10 extra points when their parents come to the school. One teacher mentioned offering 15 extra points for students who accompanied their parents to the meeting. When parents do not come by the campus to pick up report cards, the students are responsible for taking the reports home, having parents sign the report cards, and returning them to teachers.

The school will host a Scholars' Night in October 2006. Counselors will be available to meet with parents to advise them about college requirements and share information about dual-credit programs.

Parents suggested that the school seek sponsors from the community for technical programs. They also hoped that successful role models from the business sponsors would speak to students. The dual-credit program has been expanded to include the careers school. One parent said that her son was in the auto-body tech program and could go on to be a journeyman at Chrysler.

Compared to responses across other survey constructs, more teachers either disagreed or had a neutral answer concerning questions related to the restructuring outcomes construct, indicating this may still be an area of improvement for the school. Sixty-eight percent of respondents agreed that student achievement had been positively impacted. Sixty-three percent of respondents indicated that interactions between teachers and students were more positive due to HSRR efforts. However, only 28% of staff members agreed that parents were more involved in the educational program of this school, and 46% of respondents agreed that students had higher

standards for their own work. The School 9 mean for the Outcomes construct is 3.29 on a 5-point scale. (See Table 10.7 for more information on the Outcomes construct.)

### III. IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

#### *Key Points*

The school went through a district-ordered reconstitution as part of the restructuring and redesign effort. Staff and students are optimistic due to the leadership of the new principal and the training that teachers received. Student management has improved through a new discipline program as well as numerous hall monitors to ensure that transitions between classes are quick and trouble free.

Because so many teachers were new to the school, many of them were not familiar with the redesign process. However, they seemed to know what was expected of them in their individual classrooms.

Although the emphasis is on the extensive use of technology throughout the campus, there are clear obstacles in using it effectively because the school was built in 1980 and has not been rewired to meet the current demands for utilizing technology.

Teachers described the principal as being very visible and involved with every program offered on campus. Although some students have remained troublesome, for the most part, students have become more interested in learning with the recent innovations in the classrooms.

#### *School Climate Inventory (SCI)*

The SCI was administered as part of the staff survey. The overall mean SCI rating for School

**Table 10.7. School 9: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Outcomes**

Outcomes	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Student achievement has been positively impacted.	68%	20%	12%	85
Students in this school are more enthusiastic about learning.	44%	31%	25%	84
Parents are more involved in the educational program of this school.	28%	29%	43%	83
Community support for our school has increased.	46%	25%	29%	83
Students have higher standards for their own work.	46%	25%	29%	85
Teachers are more involved in decision making.	60%	20%	21%	82
Our program adequately addresses the requirements of students with special needs.	57%	25%	19%	85
Teachers in this school spend more time working together to develop curriculum and plan instruction.	54%	30%	17%	84
Interactions between teachers and students are more positive.	63%	24%	13%	84

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

9 was 3.64 on a 5–point scale. Results from the SCI indicate an overall school climate that is lower than the national average for secondary schools (3.73). The highest mean rating of 4.10 was given for the Leadership dimension (compared to a national norm of 3.94). The lowest mean rating was obtained for the Order dimension of 3.02 (compared to a national norm of 3.26). These ratings corroborate site visit data reinforcing the positive leadership of the principal as well as the continuing need to improve student discipline. (See Tables 10.8 and 10.9 for more information on SCI high and low scales.)

Leadership received the highest ratings by the School 9 staff. Ninety-two percent of 85

staff members indicated that administration communicated the belief that all students can learn, and 89% of respondents agreed the principal was highly visible throughout the school. Eighty-six percent viewed the principal as an effective instructional leader.

Considering the Order dimension, responses were more divided across response categories. For example, 39% of respondents agreed that student behavior was generally positive, but the rest of the staff members were split between disagreeing or indicating a neutral response to this item. Additionally, only 19% of respondents indicated that student tardiness or absence from school was not a major problem, and 21% of staff members stated that

**Table 10.8. School 9: School Climate Inventory Perceived Leadership**

Leadership	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
The administration communicates the belief that all students can learn.	92%	6%	2%	85
The administration encourages teachers to be creative and to try new methods.	79%	14%	7%	84
The principal (or administration) provides useful feedback on staff performance.	83%	17%	0%	83
The administration does a good job of protecting instructional time.	69%	16%	14%	85
The principal is an effective instructional leader.	86%	12%	2%	85
The goals of this school are reviewed and updated regularly.	83%	17%	0%	84
The principal is highly visible throughout the school.	89%	8%	2%	84

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

student misbehavior did not interfere with the teaching process. Alarming, less than half (49%) reported that the school was a safe place in which to work.

Figure 10.1 presents scale values for all School Climate Inventory scales.

### **Assessment of Implementation Level**

It is difficult to assess the level of HSRR implementation because the school developed its own model locally by implementing strategies from a variety of other models, such as the small learning communities.

However, with an instrument designed to assess the strength of implementation based on the HSRR-required components, the school received a score of 17.67 out of a possible 53 points. The TAP did not complete a survey; therefore, no TAP-assigned implementation score is available. The school staff rated its own implementation level to be 2.17 out of a possible 5 points.

### **Facilitators**

The success of the redesign effort to date has been facilitated by reconstitution of the school staff where all employees were required to reapply for their positions. Some individuals chose to leave, and many other contracts were

**Table 10.9. School 9: School Climate Inventory Perceived Order**

Order	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Rules for student behavior are consistently enforced.	57%	19%	24%	84
Student discipline is administered fairly and appropriately.	54%	20%	26%	85
Student misbehavior in this school does not interfere with the teaching process.	21%	17%	62%	84
Student tardiness or absence from school is not a major problem.	19%	16%	65%	83
This school is a safe place in which to work.	49%	26%	25%	84
Teachers, administrators, and parents assume joint responsibility for student discipline.	60%	20%	20%	85
Student behavior is generally positive in this school.	39%	31%	31%	85

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

not renewed. The current principal was hired as part of the reconstitution process. Important positions in the critical areas of science and mathematics were filled to replace permanent substitutes.

Attitudes of administrators and teachers improved as a result of the extensive professional development opportunities provided by the grant. Teachers were confident

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***Attitudes of administrators and teachers improved as a result of the extensive professional development opportunities provided by the grant.***

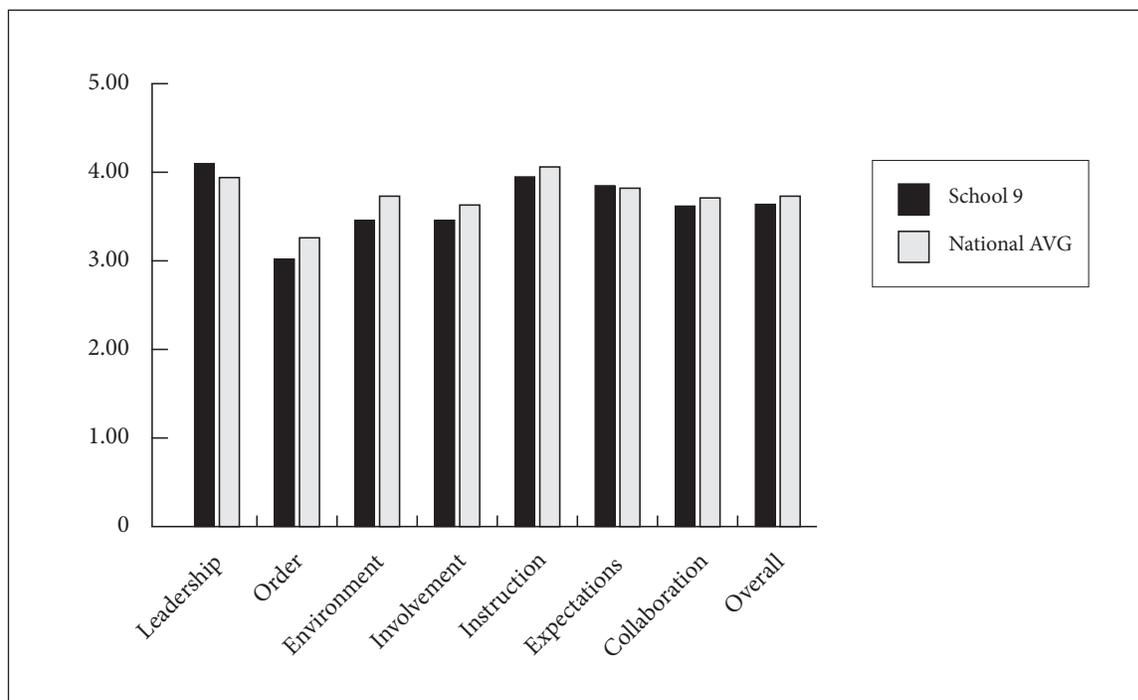
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as they implemented new strategies and new curriculum that was aligned with TEKS and TAKS.

New technology in the library, the classrooms, and the computer labs generated excitement, and students felt that they were being given the same advantages as other students in the city. For example, students had the opportunity to use online books.

Survey results indicated that staff listed support from school administration, curriculum focus, and training and professional development as the three main facilitators for HSRR implementation.

**Figure 10.1. School 9: School Climate Inventory Scale Values (N=85)**



Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

### Barriers

Although the grant provided substantial funding for the redesign process, numerous barriers to school improvement remain. The introduction of technology in the classrooms has generated a new set of problems. Current demands require that the wiring in the building be updated to support technology and allow Internet access in all of the classrooms. Additional printers need to be added in the classrooms so that teachers can print classroom materials as needed. Procedures for purchasing and securing equipment and materials through the central office frequently result in extended delays and need to be streamlined. Training needs to be provided in a timely manner after new software and equipment is delivered.

Campus security remains a major concern. The school must provide a safe environment for students and overcome its negative reputation for violence, vandalism, and truancy. The principal is hiring two off-duty police officers to support the school resource officers on campus.

Teacher turnover was also identified as a significant problem, especially in mathematics. Given the school's poor performance in mathematics, one teacher suggested adding another class of TAKS mathematics in which to place disruptive students.

Survey results indicated that staff listed a lack of parent and community involvement,

financial resources, and time as the three main barriers to HSRR implementation.

### ***Sustainability***

According to the grant application, all of the elements of the reform model were planned for the long term. The principal's biggest fear was that the reform would suffer if he were to leave the school because he believed that his efforts were responsible for about 95% of the changes. He felt that his job was for the school not to need him. He had hired all of the assistant principals except one, as well as the dean of instruction and the counselor.

The principal felt that the school district as a whole was finally embracing the reform efforts. High schools were starting to be aligned with middle schools, principals were being replaced at the middle schools, and key district leaders, such as a director of secondary education, were being hired in the central office.





## SCHOOL 10

## MIDDLE-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION

**HSRR PROGRAM: EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING OUTWARD BOUND***AWARD DATE: CYCLE 1 – APRIL 2005**AWARD AMOUNT: \$226,900**SITE VISIT DATE: AUGUST 22-23, 2006**IMPLEMENTATION SCORE: 27.67 (0-53)***I. LOCAL CONTEXT**

SCHOOL 10 IS A RESIDENTIAL FACILITY located in east Texas for at-risk male students assigned by courts. During the 2005–06 school year, the facility housed 91 students, and the average stay for students was 90 to 120 days. Fifty-two percent of the student population is White, 35% is African American, and 12% is Latino/Hispanic. All students are considered economically disadvantaged, and 93% are considered at risk. In most cases, students have been removed from their homes by the courts because of abuse. Also, boys were sent to School 10 because of behavior issues in schools. Approximately 21 teachers worked at the school in 2004–05; however, there are 11 in the high school. (See Table 11.1 for more demographic information.)

***Starting Points***

School 10 runs a number of residential facilities across the state. This facility is the

first of this organization's schools and focuses on students who need more academic and emotional support prior to attending public schools. In past years, staff and students reported that discipline infractions and fights were a common occurrence. While the average stay is a few months, some students have been there for a number of years. After two years of low performance, a new principal was hired, with the stipulation of improving scores within two years or the school would be closed by the state. At that time, in addition to the new principal, School 10 hired certified teachers to fill positions vacated by uncertified staff. Teachers reported that both higher salaries and small class sizes were the deciding factors in choosing to come to School 10. As of August 2006, there is a new superintendent who is working at School 10 in a part-time capacity. The move to a certified, more experienced teaching staff reportedly made significant impacts in many areas of the school, including discipline, instructional practices, student motivation, and student performance.

**Table 11.1. School 10: Demographic Profile, 2005–06**

African American	Latino/Hispanic	White	Other	Economically Disadvantaged	At Risk	Mobility (03–04)	Limited English Proficient	Special Education
35%	12%	52%	1%	100%	93%	80%	0%	78%

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

At this site, there are two School 10 campuses where students live in cottages with other students and house parents. One, referred to as the “main campus,” has eight teachers and five aides. The other, referred to as “campus two,” has three teachers and two aides. On that campus, many of the students are in a drug and alcohol rehabilitation program, which means that they attend classes (credit recovery, via computer) in the morning and receive counseling services in the afternoon.

***While the staff liked the training, they expected to receive more help developing interdisciplinary, project-based lessons.***

In terms of academic performance, 28% of the students at the school passed all TAKS tests in 2004–05, though this was an increase from passing rates on all tests in 2003–04 (14%). The school was rated Academically Unacceptable in 2003–04 due to reading, writing and mathematics performance. The rating improved to Academically Acceptable in 2004–05 prior to receiving the HSRR grant. (See Table 11.2 for more accountability information.)

## II. MODEL ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

### *Selection Process*

The school’s grant application described partnering with a university to conduct “a feasibility study on current staff and instruction.” Recommendations will be generated by the university team. Once needs are identified, the university “will provide intensive staff development in those critical areas.” The application projected fees of \$20,000 associated with these services. The application also describes in one sentence a partnership with Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound (ELOB). This program was chosen by persons who are no longer at the school. No one who participated in this selection process remained. Supporting application documents indicate ELOB agreed to provide 22 days of services, as well as several conference and training spots for \$42,000. In practice, however, staff perceived ELOB as the model being used for restructuring at School 10. Teachers report that the previous principal selected ELOB after some discussion and brainstorming among the staff. ELOB was chosen because of the school’s unique setting,

**Table 11.2. School 10: Accountability Rating and TAKS Performance History, 2003-04 to 2005-06**

Year	Campus Rating	TAKS Met Standard All Grades Tested (All Tests)	Reading	Math	Science*	Social Studies*	Alternative Accountability Progress Measure
2003–04	Academically Unacceptable	14%	38%	23%	--	--	47%
2004–05	Academically Acceptable	28%	64%	38%	--	33%	45%
2005–06	AEA: Academically Acceptable	35%	62%	33%	--	--	61%

Source. Texas Education Agency, 2003–04 and 2004–05 AEIS, 2005–06 Accountability Ratings

\*TAKS test participant numbers are too small to report and are masked.

and the program seemed to address the needs of the students. ELOB encourages students to be actively involved in the learning process and promotes teaching all subject areas across the curriculum. The hands-on learning and cooperative group learning processes were appealing because of the type of students who attend the school. (See Table 11.3 for more information on Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound.)

The school was already implementing interdisciplinary learning prior to adopting ELOB and thought this program would strengthen the school's approach. For example,

the teachers worked together to teach an interdisciplinary unit on flight.

### ***Initial Implementation***

Teachers and administrators report that they first learned about the program in June 2005, when two representatives from ELOB provided training at the school. Subsequently, groups of teachers attended training sessions in Portland, Maine, Boston, and San Francisco, as well as the ELOB national convention where more of the program was described.

Training was described as “long, vigorous, and hard. It took me way out of my comfort zone.

**Table 11.3. Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound Model Design**

#### ***Background***

Formed in 1992, Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound (ELOB) is based on the principles of Outward Bound, which educator Kurt Hahn established in 1941. There were 125 ELOB schools as of December 2003.

Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound focuses teaching and learning on enabling all students to meet rigorous academic standards and character goals. Curriculum, instruction, assessment, school culture, and school structures are organized around producing high-quality student work in learning expeditions — long term, in-depth investigations of themes or topics that engage students in the classroom and in the wider world.

Learning expeditions are designed with clear learning goals that are aligned with district and state standards. Ongoing assessment is woven throughout each learning expedition.

In Expeditionary Learning schools, teachers, students, and school leaders build a culture of high expectations for all students. Teachers work collaboratively in teams, with regularly scheduled common time to plan interdisciplinary expeditions, critique each others' expedition plans, and reflect on student work and teacher practices to improve curriculum and instruction. To strengthen relationships in the classroom, students stay with the same teacher or team of teachers for more than one year. Teachers and school leaders participate in a sequence of on-site and national professional development activities, including planning institutes, workshops on using data on student achievement to improve curriculum and instruction, and seminars on incorporating state-of-the-art literacy practices. They also participate in intensive learning expeditions for teachers, Outward Bound courses for educators, and conferences that bring together Expeditionary Learning practitioners throughout the country.

Expeditionary Learning staff assist the schools each year in using the Expeditionary Learning core practice benchmarks to assess progress, develop plans, and drive continuous improvement.

Source. Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound website, <http://www.sreb.org/programs/hstw/hstwindex.asp>

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It put me in the position where the kids are.” Training consists of a model lesson that would take students 4-6 weeks, and in the training session the staff does the lesson in a week. Different staff members attended training sessions in other states and then were expected to share the lesson when they returned to the school. Many expressed frustration with the lack of assistance from ELOB; one teacher stated, “We saw examples across curriculum, but we didn’t get a lot of help from them. They gave a broad and general outline as to how we could cross the curriculum, horizontally and vertically, but we are to design it ourselves basically.”

While the staff liked the training, they expected to receive more help developing interdisciplinary, project-based lessons. It is unclear if this was an agreement between the two organizations, but staff certainly felt the ELOB organization was going to provide more hands-on support to them, or provide them with ready-made curricula.

ELOB training did not focus on restructuring. That information was learned at a conference hosted by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) last summer. Staff felt that the conference was directed more toward schools like School 10 and allowed them to establish relationships with staff from similar schools that were also low-performing.

Staff used the ELOB training to fortify what they were already doing and to refocus their

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***The grant coordinator reported, “Technical assistance [for ELOB] is the biggest resource that is missing. We’re good with personnel, materials; I think just technical support.”***

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efforts. Because the school now has teachers with certifications and teaching experience, the application of interdisciplinary, project-based learning is a staff-wide priority. In fact, they report that the approach was so effective with high school students that they use it at the elementary school as well. However, staff members were reluctant to attribute the curricular and instructional choices to ELOB; rather, they credited the new staff’s commitment and professionalism for making the changes.

Campus two teachers report that project-based learning occurs in the afternoon classes with students. The drug and alcohol rehabilitation students are not in the afternoon classes, as they attend counseling sessions during that time. A teacher reported that she has used some of those strategies with individual drug and alcohol students at different times. Implementation ideas and project ideas are shared at staff meetings within and across campuses.

### ***Factors Impacting HSRR Implementation***

*\*Note: Two teachers filled out surveys, so survey results will not be reported.*

#### **SCHOOL CAPACITY**

All staff reported that the School 10 Board of Directors has been very generous and responsive with resources of all types. No one appeared to know where money for specific requests came from, including the principal. When staff has asked for supplies/resources, they always received what they requested. Grant funds appear to have been spent on new books and new computers, as well as other resource materials. A new van was purchased allowing the possibility of field trips. Classrooms are also being remodeled and/or

built, with much of the work being done by students in shop class.

The grant coordinator reported, “Technical assistance [for ELOB] is the biggest resource that is missing. We’re good with personnel, materials; I think just technical support.” Another teacher, when asked if their needs were being met, replied, “Nothing we need we haven’t gotten.”

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***Because of its charter status, School 10 does not have any district administration to provide support.***

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Because the school is a residential facility with a small student population, teachers report a lot of interaction, much of it informal. Every teacher has every student in class. The ELOB coordinator set up meetings after the initial training for teachers to plan together. “We had several meetings together last year; we came up with ideas... build a nature trail/arboretum for English classes to go out and write poems about nature, to tie it into TEKS, to learn about the outdoors.” Teachers continue to meet and plan in order to coordinate the curriculum. Teachers from the two campuses meet approximately every six weeks. The principal is reported to be “responsive, supportive...helped us all work together as a team.”

Perhaps partly because of the lack of ongoing technical assistance from ELOB, teachers have learned to work together and make the program work for School 10. The coordinator is described as a “humble person” who would rather not lead anything and who has assumed a “non-threatening leadership role.” Staff indicated feeling very comfortable going to him for ideas and support. Because of the small staff size, and despite an apparent lack

of collaboration in previous years, teachers now talk about how much they work together, sharing information during team-teaching lessons and reaching out to each other to get classes working together.

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***EXTERNAL SUPPORT***

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***External Professional Development***

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The application defined a partnership with the university. A staff person has visited the school four times providing training on Bloom’s Taxonomy and higher order thinking skills. He also helped School 10’s staff develop a school mission statement, and “things we had never really thought about and gave us ownership in our school.” However, the staff rarely referenced this training nor recognized it as part of their redesign efforts. Instead, staff focused on ELOB as the primary model. All teachers employed at School 10 at the time were given the opportunity to go to ELOB training during the summer of 2005. All teachers took advantage of this training. Some teachers attended training in Boston and some in Portland, Maine. Unfortunately, several of these teachers have since left. Another ELOB training was offered in March 2006 in San Francisco.

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***The principal stated, “My teachers aren’t hung up on formal testing; [instead we use] lots of informal testing and observation.”***

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Staff expressed frustration with the limited amount of on-site help from ELOB staff. “I think my teachers got disillusioned because we didn’t have the people come in, but they have done it themselves and done a good job of revamping it for our program. There are good ideas; we’re not sure how to implement them in our setting.” Despite frustration over a lack

## Chapter 11

### School 10, Middle-Level Implementation

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of technical assistance from ELOB, in general, the staff found the training sessions that ELOB did provide to be very beneficial. A Technical Assistance Provider (TAP) survey was sent to the school to be completed by the school's TAP; no response was received.

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#### *Integrated District Assistance*

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Because of its charter status, School 10 does not have any district administration to provide support. However, the school's Board of Directors was reported to be supportive and complimentary of staff. Staff reports that board members are accessible and available by email. Board members would attend basketball games when the school had its first basketball team last year. One teacher said, "The board is here for the boys. As long as the boys are happy, they are pretty much okay with whatever we do." Another teacher reported, "The board is on fire. I was working on a building and went to a board meeting, and they asked what I needed. I said money and three board members wrote personal checks that night. They couldn't pull it from the budget, but they wrote checks." Staff members on campus two reported, "Support here is excellent. Any time we need anything from the main campus, they help us."

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#### *INTERNAL FOCUS*

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

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All the staff members were enthusiastic about project-based, interdisciplinary lessons. Staff generally associated the school's new focus on this teaching approach, combined with efforts to hire certified experienced staff, as their "reform." Typical comments were, "The reform itself is very, very positive." "Everybody's excited." Some faculty reported that they had already been using the hands-on techniques, but even they agreed that the ELOB training made them more focused. Many were hired last year and were told they "had two years to raise

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***A teacher at campus two reported, "[The new focus] made the teachers change their way of teaching, instead of just [using] a red ink pen and marking things right and wrong. It made it more interactive."***

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TAKS scores or find another job." All agreed that the "different world" in which they are trying to teach means that staff must be very dedicated or they will not last long. When many of them started, discipline was a big problem. Now, there are rarely discipline problems; the staff unequivocally attributed this change to the focus on hands-on strategies and getting students away from their desks. It "makes you teach in a different format; more hands-on, trying to help the kids in every way possible," one teacher said. "You try to bring art into math and English into math, and bring all subjects together." Another teacher said, "I think it made us look at the kids in a different way, and brings us to their level and see what they needed. I think it filled a gap, understanding students better, communication. I think it's because of the way we started teaching our classes differently because of ELOB."

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##### *Alignment and Integration with Existing Monitoring Programs*

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Staff reported that the only other program on campus was the PLATO credit recovery software. School 10 teachers monitor student academic progress through the use of benchmark tests every six weeks. The principal reports that the reading teacher tests every 2-3 weeks. They also report that TAKS and SDAA scores are ways that they monitor student progress. However, due to the mobility of the population and the special needs of the students, much of the monitoring occurs informally through observations. The principal stated, "My

teachers aren't hung up on formal testing; [instead we use] lots of informal testing and observation." The principal also stated that, "lack of referrals is a way I can measure if something is working. If the boys are interested and you're not having behavioral problems, they are learning."

### *PEDAGOGICAL CHANGE*

Staff reported that, until last year, there was a lot of instruction during which students were sitting at desks and listening to lectures, even during summer school. The HSRR grant has helped the teachers focus more on using project-based learning and observing students informally as a way of assessment, as well as finding different avenues for teaching subjects. One teacher said, "[We] look at teaching the kids in a different way." The project-based approach has helped the teachers look at teaching in terms of creating a finished product from their efforts; however, this can be challenging, given the high level of student mobility. For example, one project is to develop a nature trail. In addition to working on the trail, students were able to create a taxonomy of

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***A student said, "There used to be 15 fights a day here. There used to be a cop here every single time."***

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leaves found along the trail last year. Staff described working on other similar projects to be conducted school-wide. Additionally, the ELOB training taught them to work together more to plan lessons and ways to cover the TEKS across the entire teaching team. As a result of more interdisciplinary, project-based lessons, several staff members mentioned that students now take ownership of what they're doing and take responsibility for their learning. As a consequence of having experienced, certified, caring teachers, the

lessons were described as more engaging, and student interest was reported to have increased, possibly leading to a decrease in behavioral distractions. Because students are more focused, teachers felt more comfortable using more cooperative learning strategies. A teacher at campus two reported, "[The new focus] made the teachers change their way of teaching, instead of just [using] a red ink pen and marking things right and wrong. It made it more interactive."

Students report teachers are spending time helping them individually. Teachers are helping students get caught up and understand the material. One student reported, "She makes work fun, like you want to go to math." Another student agreed, saying, "The teachers use hands-on activities. We do experiments in science, and he (teacher) takes us outside a lot. We work in groups, and we sometimes work as a whole class."

### *RESTRUCTURING OUTCOMES*

#### *Student Impacts*

*Achievement.* All of the teachers agreed that the new focus resulting from new staff and new attention to interdisciplinary, project-based learning has made a difference in student achievement, with statements that the ELOB "got us started" or "pointed us in the right direction." However, the timing of hiring a certified staff coincided with the school earning an Academically Acceptable rating; this occurred prior to the grant award and ELOB training.

*Academic engagement.* Staff attributed increased student interest in academics to the focus on hands-on learning. The principal stated that while ELOB might have contributed to some of the overall improvement, good, experienced (certified) teachers were a bigger factor. One teacher said, "Last year it would

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take me until the end of the class to get us to do some work. Now I have to redo my lesson plans because we go through things so fast. I have to go back and do some work to move them [students] along faster.” Another teacher summed it up as, “I think [hands-on learning] gave kids confidence and improved their self-esteem, which helped their grades.”

While it is still difficult for students to work in groups, especially with classmates from other cottages, “Now we see them encourage others to behave. [Students are] more team-oriented through the projects. More dependent on somebody else. More accountable to each other. Hold each other accountable. They realize that one bad apple can spoil the bunch, and they want to move on, move forward. Peer tutoring is big in my room; it helps with their self-esteem so much. I have a senior who helps as a peer mentor in my 7th-grade class.”

Students concurred that they were more interested in what they were doing than they used to be.

One student said, “I used to never like reading, now I do. I can read what I want, I can choose it. When you finish a book you get a snack.” Other students said, “We have way better programs” and “I don’t feel like it’s school here.”

Discipline used to be a big problem at the school. The principal reported that, “Behavior out here is pretty erratic, (and) will depend on what’s going on in their cottage, if they got their medication, whether they went home over the weekend.” A student said, “There used to be 15 fights a day here. There used to be a cop here every single time.” A teacher agreed, “Discipline-wise we were talking about how much more quiet it is.... From last year, we’re not used to this quiet. It’s been great, though. It’s been awesome. I have a kid repeating my class, and I got more

out of him in the first five days than I got all last year.” Another teacher stated, “First year I was here we had someone cut their arms in my classroom, had a fight where 2 boys went to jail. [Hands-on learning] got them more involved, more engaged in something they are interested in, (and) we haven’t had any incidents like that.” A student mentioned that the shop teacher even showed them ways to use construction activities to express anger through creating and building.

Student attitudes have changed, as evidenced by the students’ desire to share what they are doing with cottage staff and others. Staff members see “a big raise in self-esteem because they are succeeding. It’s like a tangible project at the end. They are seeing this tangible thing. The hands-on gives them ownership.”

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***A student said, “There used to be 15 fights a day here. There used to be a cop here every single time.”***

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*Special needs.* Staff reported that “All children here are special needs. Them participating, putting hands on (activities in the lessons) really does the trick.” They volunteered that interdisciplinary, project-based learning is wonderful for special needs kids. Creating projects lends itself to each child contributing something different.

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#### *Staff Impacts*

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Staff reported a big change in the climate of the school, both in students and themselves. One teacher commented, “When I first came, we didn’t do anything together as a group of teachers. Now we go to lunch. We want to do things together and be a part of each other’s life. I know about other people’s kids. You didn’t know that before. It’s a family.” The teamwork required to implement interdisciplinary,

project-based learning, along with the bonding that happens when they (teachers) traveled to training sessions, has helped to build a team. In discussing the difference over the past two years, one teacher said, “I think the biggest thing overall was when we became a charter school; the biggest thing I have seen is that we have come closer as a unit.”

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### *Community/Parental Involvement*

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School 10 is very different from most public schools. Because it is a residential facility, there are no biological parents on the grounds or in contact with students. Some parents are not allowed to know where their child is living. There is some sense that the house parents play that role for some students. However, house parents are very poorly paid, and turnover is high. Teachers this year are required to spend time after school one day a week in a cottage, helping students with homework. In addition, they have created a blog, and the cottage staff writes daily about their students, as do teachers. This has become a method for communication between the adults to pass on information about students’ daily lives.

Teachers acknowledge that the changes made in the charter school are helpful to the house parents as well. Better conduct in the school means fewer suspensions of the boys. When the boys are in school, house parents are able to fulfill other responsibilities. Communication and relations between the school and the cottage staff have improved, according to school staff.

Charitable organizations help with food and clothing for the students, as well as

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***Teachers felt that the methods taught by ELOB were very powerful with the group of students at their school.***

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contributions for construction of classrooms and the outdoor classroom. Community members donate time to the boys, come to the school to demonstrate skills, and let the house parents use their property for activities, such as camping and hunting.

## III. IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

### *Key Points*

Although the staff had little input into the model that was chosen for redesign, ELOB was aligned with what they were already experimenting with, and the staff has initiated more focus on continuing to develop projects across disciplines. Everyone spoke enthusiastically about the changes they have seen in the past year. Staff was also enthusiastic about the materials that have been purchased recently, but other than science equipment, they did not know if those materials had been purchased with grant funds. Overall, they agreed that it was the hard work put in by the teaching team to implement the ideas that were initiated by ELOB that made the biggest difference for the students.

### *Assessment of Implementation Level*

Staff reported a high level of implementation in the school. Staff indicated that they associate high implementation with the fact that they are trying to introduce more interdisciplinary learning projects into the curriculum. In interviews, they reported that they have taken the information given to them by ELOB training and implemented it throughout the school.

With an instrument designed to assess the strength of implementation based on the HSRR required components, the school received

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### School 10, Middle-Level Implementation

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a score of 27.67 out of a possible 53 points. The TAP did not complete an evaluation survey; therefore, more information about implementation from this source is unavailable.

#### **Facilitators**

Teachers felt that the methods taught by ELOB were very powerful with the group of students at their school. The coordinator stated that the most effective part of the program was to “get these kids’ attention.” The school’s setting in the woods of East Texas allowed for on-site outdoor activities and helped ease implementation. The Board of Directors has been extremely supportive of the staff and has helped them implement the model. Grant monies were used for technology and books, which has helped.

Survey results indicated that staff listed support from the school administration, teachers, and the Texas Education Agency as the three main facilitators for HSRR implementation.

#### **Barriers**

The biggest barrier at School 10 is a perceived lack of support from ELOB as the program was implemented. Whether or not it was an accurate perception, there were expectations that there would be more on-site support; instead, teachers felt abandoned by the redesign team at ELOB.

Another barrier is the special needs of the students being served at School 10. Because the students have all been removed from troubled homes and are living in a cottage setting away from their families, they bring unique challenges to the classroom. Teachers cited the difficulties in getting students to work together as a problem.

A barrier related to outcomes at School 10 is the high turnover of cottage staff who serve as

houseparents for students. Teachers spoke of cottage staff turnover as a source of disruption in the lives of their students.

#### **Sustainability**

At this point, administrators have decided that the direction they received from ELOB was helpful because it got them started on a good course. However, they thought they were “left on our own” and did not feel it was worth continuing a relationship with ELOB. Since most teachers have been trained in the ELOB methods, they feel comfortable continuing with the program, but do not want to invest more money in the program, since they do not feel they have received any support since their initial training. The comment was, “I don’t know why we would change what we’re doing just because we’re not in the grant anymore.”



## SCHOOL 11

## HIGH-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION

*HSRR PROGRAM: INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION/  
AGILE MIND/CAPTURING KIDS' HEARTS*

*AWARD DATE: CYCLE 1 - APRIL 2005*

*AWARD AMOUNT: \$234,141*

*SITE VISIT DATE: SEPTEMBER 19-20, 2006*

*IMPLEMENTATION SCORE: 41.44 (0-53)*

## I. LOCAL CONTEXT

SCHOOL 11 IS AN OPEN ENROLLMENT charter school, in operation since 2000–01, located in the southeastern region of a major urban city. Total student enrollment at School 11 in 2005–06 was around 329 for grades PreK–12; for the 2006–07 school year staff reported the school is “full” for the first time, with enrollment of 500 students. The high school served 78 students in grades 9–12 in 2005–06 according to the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS). Staff reported current high school enrollment to be 64. Most of the high school classes are conducted in a converted residential building. This structure is located on the grounds of a church across the street from the main campus, which includes an administration

building and a cluster of converted houses containing PreK–8 classrooms. (See Table 12.1 for more demographic information.)

*Starting Points*

School 11 is one of two campuses in the area operated under a corporation, charter school system. It is in its fifth year of operation. The school previously operated for 17 years under another name. Specific admissions policies in School 11’s charter include the right to deny admission to students with a “history of criminal offense, juvenile court adjudication, or discipline problems under TEC, Chapter 37, Subchapter A, on a case-by-case basis” (School 11 charter application, page 83). This policy allows the school to keep discipline and behavioral issues at a minimum. In addition,

**Table 12.1. School 11: Demographic Profile, 2005–06\***

African American	Latino/ Hispanic	White	Other	Economically Disadvantaged	At Risk	Mobility (03–04)	Limited English Proficient	Special Education
12%	78%	10%	0%	79%	58%	22%	4%	10%

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

\*Reflects total school enrollment grades PreK–12

## Chapter 12

### School 11, High-Level Implementation

other policies implemented by the school—the dress code and an extended instructional day—have impacted high school enrollment and retention. For example, AEIS data indicate that in 2003–04 and 2004–05, School 11 lost about half of its high school enrollment each year. Between 2005–06 and 2006–07, students reported that about 7 of 15 juniors returned to finish their senior year at School 11.

***Staff reported a lack of curriculum, poor teacher quality, and administrative and teacher turnover as major challenges that School 11 has been trying to overcome.***

Key administrative staff include a director, a superintendent who also serves as PreK–8 principal, a high school principal, another principal who serves both of the corporation’s high schools (School 11 and another location), and an assistant administrator who functions as an assistant principal, with significant day-to-day involvement in the high school. The high school teaching staff includes six full-time and two part-time teachers. All high school teaching staff teach

grades 9–12 and reported teaching up to seven different classes daily.

Staff reported a lack of curriculum, poor teacher quality, and administrative and teacher turnover as major challenges that School 11 has been trying to overcome. A lack of curricular and instructional resources was acute when the school first opened. “We had nothing,” the teaching staff reported in interviews. “I had no curriculum, just a couple of books,” said one teacher. One staff member reported being given \$20 the first year she began teaching at the school to buy classroom materials. The special education teacher said she searched the Internet for a curriculum. Also, when the school opened, very few teaching staff had college degrees and turnover was rampant. In its first year of operation alone, the school had four principals. Since then, even with stable and committed leadership, the school has experienced significant teacher turnover, especially in mathematics.

Mathematics performance was identified as the area of deficiency and the reason for the school’s 2003–04 Unacceptable accountability

**Table 12.2. School 11: Accountability Rating and TAKS Performance History, 2003–04 to 2005–06**

Year	Campus Rating	Grade	Reading	Math	Science	Social Studies	All Tests
2003–04	Academically Unacceptable	9	61%	9%	n/a	n/a	8%
		10	43%	25%	19%	73%	5%
		11	83%	55%	75%	75%	58%
2004–05	Academically Acceptable	9	92%	29%	n/a	n/a	33%
		10	87%	46%	43%	93%	27%
		11	99%	29%	71%	99%	29%
2005–06	AEA: Academically Acceptable	9	79%	<1%	n/a	n/a	<1%
		10	87%	27%	39%	61%	16%
		11	68%	28%	40%	80%	10%

Source. Texas Education Agency, 2003–04 and 2004–05 AEIS, 2005–06 Accountability Ratings

rating. However, it should be noted that the school improved and received an Academically Acceptable rating in 2004–05 prior to receiving the HSRR grant. Science is another area of concern according to staff. Grants in mathematics and science received prior to the HSRR grant have allowed the school to begin building capacity in these subjects. In 2005–06, School 11 registered as an Alternative Education campus and received an Academically Acceptable rating in that accountability system. Grade-level TAKS data was not available at the time of this report. (See Table 12.2 for more accountability information. Because School 11 serves more grades than just high school, it was not possible to gather data aggregated to the high school level from AEIS reports. Therefore, accountability data are reported by grade.)

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***An administrator described the redesign process as “a mind set change...what we wanted to do and needed to do to get kids to understand the importance of TAKS and how to pass TAKS.”***

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Since the school opened, staff, parents, and students indicated that the school has been steadily improving its academic programs, with increasing focus on college preparation, such as offering a dual-credit program and sending teachers to Advanced Placement (AP) trainings. The school is also trying to establish extracurricular activities, such as sports teams, to build community around the school, and offer some activities provided by traditional high schools. Staff reported that there were no violence, drug, or major disciplinary issues on campus. In addition to admissions policies, data indicate that the small size of the school, strict enforcement of school policies, including a dress code, and other measures have helped

the school, as one parent put it, “to weed out the bad kids.” Parent involvement has been growing recently, but is not at the level staff would like.

## II. MODEL ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

### *Selection Process*

A portion of School 11’s redesign effort has been based on the International Center for Leadership in Education’s (ICLE) Rigor/Relevance Framework. Additionally, the school chose to use Capturing Kids’ Hearts,<sup>5</sup> (CKH) as a classroom management model focused on teen leadership. The HSRR grant also supported continuation of an existing mathematics program called Agile Mind.<sup>6</sup> This program provides a mathematics curriculum, as well as face-to-face and online support. (See Table 12.3 & 12.4 for more information on ICLE and CKH.)

The school superintendent, who also serves as the principal for grades PreK–8, heard about the HSRR program at a conference. Initially, School 11 was not going to apply for the grant, but was encouraged to pursue it by a Texas Education Agency (TEA) staff member. The superintendent said he looked at a number of models and chose the ICLE model after attending a TEA-sponsored school improvement conference in Austin where ICLE President Dr. William Daggett gave a presentation on the Rigor/Relevance model. The superintendent said School 11 also decided to continue working with the Agile Mind consultant for the area, Dr. Amy Gaskins, for curricular and instructional improvement in mathematics, and have used HSRR funds to support this activity. The superintendent indicated that the

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.flippengroup.com/educ\\_ckh.html](http://www.flippengroup.com/educ_ckh.html)

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.thinkfive.com/index\\_flash.html](http://www.thinkfive.com/index_flash.html)

selection process was led by administrators, though there was also some initial additional involvement—a lead teacher and the Director of the Texas High School Redesign and Restructuring Project participated in some of the initial planning meetings. He indicated that he'd had some differences of opinion with the Director of the High School Redesign and Restructuring Project about leadership issues and said there was a suggestion that School 11 change its model. He said he felt quite strongly,

however, that leadership at charter schools was a “different animal” and believed that looking at data was a more critical element for reform.

### ***Initial Implementation***

An administrator described the redesign process as “a mind-set change...what we wanted to do and needed to do to get kids to understand the importance of TAKS and how to pass TAKS.”

**Table 12.3. ICLE Model Design**

#### *Background*

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.

#### *Key Strategies*

- A focus on the application of knowledge in relevant contexts
- Four quadrants to categorize the level of rigor and relevance of teacher instruction and student work
  - Quadrant A—Acquisition: Students gather facts and recall the knowledge.
  - Quadrant B—Application: Students solve problems and develop solutions with acquired knowledge.
  - Quadrant C—Assimilation: Students refine knowledge through analysis to solve problems.
  - Quadrant D—Adaptation: Students manipulate knowledge in complex ways to create solutions and take further actions.

#### *Key Components*

- Teachers implement rigorous standards and hold students to high expectations.
- Teachers choose instructional strategies to meet student needs and achieve goals.
- Teachers examine curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
- Students analyze, synthesize, and evaluate knowledge in relevant ways.
- Students solve complex, real-world problems.
- A guidebook includes information on using the framework, planning instruction, assessment, interdisciplinary instruction, suggestions for administrators, and professional development activities.

Source. International Center for Leadership in Education website, <http://www.daggett.com/>

School 11 staff reported that timing of the grant award delayed implementation because targeted trainings were already filled. Though funds were received in April 2005, staff were not able to begin professional development associated with the ICLE framework and CKH until fall 2005, requiring teachers to be out of the classroom frequently. The Agile Mind mathematics professional development continued on a regular monthly schedule beginning in summer 2005. Staff was not able to attend the CKH training together, as initially designed, but rather have gone individually or in small groups when openings have occurred over the course of the grant.

In 2006–07, professional development continued and a number of new activities were implemented. For example, an extended school day was implemented to allow for additional instructional time, with class periods expanded from 45 minutes to an hour. Also, a dual-credit program was organized at a local community college.

## ***Factors Impacting HSRR Implementation***

### ***SCHOOL CAPACITY***

About one quarter (28%) of the HSRR budget was directed to payroll costs to pay teachers for extra-duty hours for attending professional development related to HSRR, as well as paying for teachers to provide tutoring services after hours. School 11's administration used HSRR and other funding to support professional development activities.

Almost half of the budget (44%) was used to purchase and support professional development providers. Much of the professional development provided through HSRR funds has focused on either pedagogical goals through the Rigor/ Relevance Framework or the specific content area of mathematics

for the mathematics and special education teachers. One professional development activity focused on building reading skills across the curriculum. Specifically, professional development activities included: Agile Mind training and technical support, ICLE training, and CKH training.

While there is indication that staff are stretched to capacity—fulfilling multiple roles and teaching up to seven classes per day in their subject areas—the superintendent said the HSRR grant allowed School 11 to “purchase things we would not have been able to afford: materials, computers, fiscal resources, paying teachers for professional development on Saturday, stipends, and library books. We supported AP training, AP materials for our kids, special education materials for the students. It was a change because most of the staff used to think ‘we can’t do that, we don’t have the money to do that,’ so it’s a mind-set change.”

Seven out of seven high school teachers at School 11 completed surveys for a response rate of 100%. Because of the small number of respondents, results in Tables 12.5 through 12.11 are presented as the number of respondents rather than the percent of respondents choosing each response. Reflecting site visit data, all seven were satisfied with capacity in terms of materials and technology. In contrast to site visit data, however, most teachers (six out of seven) reported the school had sufficient staff to implement the program. Overall, staff rated the Capacity construct at 4.11 on a 5–point scale. (See Table 12.5 for more information on the Capacity construct.)

### ***EXTERNAL SUPPORT***

An ICLE consultant will have presented approximately five sessions at the school by the conclusion of the grant, including Rigor/Relevance, content-area reading,

**Table 12.4. Capturing Kids' Hearts Model Design**

<p><i>Background</i></p> <p>Capturing Kids' Hearts is a three-day training provided by the Flippen Group that helps schools develop. Teachers from diverse teaching backgrounds conduct trainings in which schools are provided with customized implementation plans. Capturing Kids' Hearts believes that teacher buy-in and support is the foundation for successful school development.</p> <p><i>Key Strategies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementing self-managing classrooms through new techniques, such as social contracts</li> <li>• Decreasing discipline problems</li> <li>• Using the Excel Teaching Model to instill emotional intelligence in the classroom</li> <li>• Building classroom relationships and cooperation</li> <li>• Developing students' knowledge of different cultures and backgrounds</li> <li>• Building students' sense of responsibility in order to increase attendance</li> </ul> <p><i>Key Components</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least one administrator and one teacher attend the Capturing Kids' Hearts training.</li> <li>• Participants in the training are provided with an interactive training guide to aid with continued development.</li> <li>• Flippen Group staff is willing to create customized implementation plans for campuses.</li> </ul>
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Source. The Flippen Group website, [http://www.flippengroup.com/educ\\_ckh.html](http://www.flippengroup.com/educ_ckh.html)

characteristics of effective high schools, best practices of effective high schools (for leadership team), and a model school conference. The only complaint about the external support provided by ICLE was that, because the consultant was not local, some trainings had to be consolidated over several days during the school year, which was not ideal for staff. The grant also supported the

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***Teachers reported limited impact in implementing Rigor/Relevance strategies, as there is no opportunity for joint planning time, and said that the recommended Rigor/Relevance lesson plan framework is too detailed given their teaching load and other campus responsibilities.***

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continuation of monthly sessions by the Agile Mind consultant for mathematics and special education teachers. Staff indicated a high level of satisfaction with this external provider. Some additional well-received training on reading across the curriculum was provided by a consultant. Administrators and some teachers attended additional conferences (Breaking Ranks II and the HSRR Leadership Conference) offered by TEA.

The Technical Assistance Provider (TAP) survey completed by ICLE indicates that School 11 received 35 hours of technical assistance support in year 1 of the grant and an additional 8 hours in year 2 of the grant. This service was provided by the same person across the grant. All seven teachers said they understood the HSRR program and that all technical assistance had been valuable. Six out of seven

**Table 12.5. School 11: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Capacity**

Capacity	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Teachers are given sufficient planning time to implement our program.	5	1	1	7
Materials (books and other resources) needed to implement our HSRR program are readily available.	7	0	0	7
Our school has sufficient faculty and staff to fully implement this program.	6	1	0	7
Technological resources have become more available.	7	0	0	7

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

said that additional support from the TAP and professional development (six out of seven) had been sufficient. Overall, staff rated the Support construct at 4.20 on a 5–point scale. (See Table 12.6 for more information on the Support construct.)

### *INTERNAL FOCUS*

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

The administration said there had been some initial staff resistance to the Rigor/Relevance Framework: “We have some teachers that really jumped in there, some teachers that hesitated.... we have pockets of strength, pockets of people that still don’t get it. It’s a mind change....it’s a different way of thinking about writing lesson plans; it’s different from the way we were taught.” Staff reactions to the Rigor/Relevance approach were indeed mixed. Teachers felt they did not have the time to implement it the way it was intended, but that they had internalized some of the basic concepts of the approach. Teachers reported limited impact in implementing

Rigor/Relevance strategies, as there is no opportunity for joint planning time, and said that the recommended Rigor/Relevance lesson plan framework is too detailed given their teaching load and other campus responsibilities. One staff member indicated that there had not been any focused follow-up to support implementation. They spoke most enthusiastically about the CKH training (specifically about the “social contracts” they post in their rooms and other features of this classroom management model) as having the most impact. Both the mathematics and special education teachers indicated that the Agile Mind training had helped them build capacity.

Primarily, staff reported being overwhelmed with the volume of required professional development over a very short time period and unhappy with the amount of time they were out of the classroom to participate. They reported that students regularly asked them if they were going to be out again and that this was especially problematic for the

**Table 12.6. School 11: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Support**

Support	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
I have a thorough understanding of this school's HSRR program.	7	0	0	7
I have received adequate initial and ongoing professional development/training for HSRR program implementation.	6	1	0	7
Technical assistance provided by external trainers, model developers, and/or designers has been valuable.	7	0	0	7
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.	6	1	0	7
My school receives effective assistance from external partners (e.g., university, businesses, agencies).	6	1	0	7

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

special education teacher who said that her students required more routine and familiar faces. Staff also said that, because most of the professional development was delivered after the school year started, while they had ongoing responsibilities for teaching, their time to reflect on and ability to apply new strategies was fairly limited. While teachers were appreciative of the opportunities brought by the grant, the general consensus was that they needed more time to comprehend, reflect, plan, and apply what they were being asked to do.

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#### *Alignment and Integration with Existing Programs*

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HSRR grant activities have been integrated into existing initiatives at the school focused on building capacity in mathematics (Improving Student Achievement Through Professional Development Partnerships,) and science (Texas Accelerated Science

Achievement Program). The Rigor/Relevance framework was described as a philosophy that did not compete with existing programs. The superintendent described the integration of funding: "We coordinated our science grant with our HSRR grant to bring in Saturday science camps for kids [and] bring in parent groups, and the HSRR supports that."

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#### *Monitoring*

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School 11 uses the Formative Evaluation Process for School Improvement (FEPSI), designed by the Center for Research in Educational Policy (CREP), as an ongoing process and used the results to reflect on general school progress. The superintendent used this process at prior schools and found it helpful. It involves several surveys to measure school climate, as well as staff support and progress with school-change efforts. It also includes benchmarking and

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***School 11 uses the Formative Evaluation Process for School Improvement (FEPSI), designed by the Center for Research in Educational Policy (CREP), as an ongoing process and used the results to reflect on general school progress.***

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other guidelines for monitoring student achievement. The superintendent stated that teacher teams compile some of the data (such as observations), in addition to interview and write-up services provided by an external consultant. The 2005–06 formative evaluation reports that no benchmarking is taking place, and a lack of time for reviewing data remains a challenge.

Other monitoring activities include the assistant administrator who meets regularly with teachers, “reminding them we are in restructuring mode.” The Director of the Texas High School Redesign and Restructuring Project has met with teachers several times also. While the Director does not monitor grantees, he does provide technical assistance to schools and supports the work of their grant program.

All teachers (seven out of seven) reported being supportive of the program and satisfied with the resources dedicated to the program. Most staff (five out of seven) felt that the program had been effectively integrated and monitoring processes were in place. Overall staff rated the Focus construct at 4.30 on a 5–point scale. (See Table 12.7 for more information on the Focus construct.)

### ***PEDAGOGICAL CHANGE***

The superintendent said of school staff: “Now they speak the language, talk about curricular issues, know what a school wide program is, know terms like AEIS, benchmarks.” He indicated that there is

more focus on instruction. The assistant administrator said teachers are trying some of the recommendations, that they have “implemented the idea of increasing the rigor, but are not completely using the Rigor & Relevance model.” He said there has been more emphasis on diversifying instruction, using hands-on learning manipulatives, and incorporating technology, especially in math. A strong indicator of change in the classroom was student reports of having teachers who were knowledgeable in their subject areas. Teachers reported that the focus on higher order thinking processes and higher expectations was the aspect of the training they had incorporated the most.

Staff reported the most pedagogical change in terms of a shift from traditional teaching activities, such as workbooks and worksheets (seven out of seven) and effective use of technology (six out of seven.) Project-based and interdisciplinary (three out of seven) and cooperative instructional approaches (four out of seven) were less frequent. Overall staff rated the Pedagogy construct at 3.90 on a 5–point scale. (See Table 12.8 for more information on the Pedagogy construct.)

### ***RESTRUCTURING OUTCOMES***

Parents, students, administrators, and staff spoke about a close-knit and caring school community focused on student achievement that has developed at School 11. The increased focus on providing a more rigorous curriculum, the implementation of the CKH teen leadership strategies, the provision of adequate instructional resources, and the recent stability in high school staffing have all contributed to an improved school climate. Staff and student attitudes reflected more of a commitment to academics. Staff indicated that the new focus on college preparation at the campus and participation in the dual-credit courses were good indicators of the mind-set change that had taken place at the campus.

# Chapter 12

## School 11, High-Level Implementation

The teachers said that the CKH model had changed the culture of the school.

### *Student Impacts*

The assistant administrator said School 11 students were taking education more seriously. The school is now emphasizing college in the eighth grade to provide students with an early college focus. He also felt the school was building a consistent student body, “students see us putting money where our mouth is. They want to stay here because of what we’re doing. They see that something’s happening.” Staff, as well as students and parents, alluded to the fact that students who were not focused on academics had left the school because of new policies, such as the dress code and the extended school day. They indicated that this was positive, that the students who remained were committed to the educational mission.

Students said the efforts to offer elective and extracurricular opportunities are encouraging and could keep some students from opting to attend traditional high schools.

### *Staff Impacts*

The assistant administrator indicated that teacher retention and teacher willingness to do more and take initiative for academic and extra services was a key impact. This is keenly felt at School 11 because teachers could generally get about \$10,000 more per year if they worked in a public school district. The teachers concurred that staff morale had really improved, “Wow, we’re on our way there.” Students also indicated that teachers were more focused on the students, noting that all the high school teachers stayed for the current year. One student commented on teachers’ growth and experience from

**Table 12.7. School 11: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Focus**

Focus	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Teachers in this school are generally supportive of our HSRR program.	7	0	0	7
The elements of our HSRR program are effectively integrated to help us meet school improvement goals.	5	2	0	7
As a school staff, we regularly review implementation and outcome benchmarks to evaluate our progress.	5	2	0	7
Our school has a plan for evaluating all components of our HSRR program.	5	2	0	7
I am satisfied with the federal, state, local, and private resources that are being coordinated to support our HSRR program.	7	0	0	7

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

**Table 12.8. School 11: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Pedagogy**

Pedagogy	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
I use textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets less than I used to for basic skills or content area instruction.	7	0	0	7
Classroom learning activities have changed a great deal.	6	1	0	7
Students in my class spend at least two hours per school day in interdisciplinary or project-based work.	3	2	2	7
Students in my class spend much of their time working in cooperative learning teams.	4	3	0	7
Students are using technology more effectively.	6	1	0	7

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

staying at the school: “They are just starting to mature as teachers; you can see it in their classroom management.”

### *Community/Parental Involvement*

The superintendent indicated that the least effective HSRR activity at School 11 was parental involvement. However, he feels that School 11 parents participate more than parents at other schools, not just by attending meetings, but through phone calls and e-mails. In particular, he felt there was more parental involvement at the high school because of the grant and the tangible ways in which the school has focused on postsecondary education, for example, the dual-credit program. Parents in the focus group also mentioned college-focused activities in which they had been involved at the school, such as a college awareness night.

All staff (seven out of seven) reported that the program had resulted in improved relationships between teachers and students, and addressed the needs of special needs students. Parental (four out of seven) and community involvement (three out of seven) and cooperative time for teachers to work on curriculum planning (four out of seven) were indicated as possible areas of need. Overall, staff rated the Outcomes construct at 4.05 on a 5-point scale. (See Table 12.9 for more information on the Outcomes construct.)

## III. IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

### *Key Points*

Recent improvements at School 11, both through HSRR grant funded activities and previously implemented programs, have

**Table 12.9. School 11: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Outcomes**

Outcomes	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Student achievement has been positively impacted.	6	1	0	7
Students in this school are more enthusiastic about learning.	6	1	0	7
Parents are more involved in the educational program of this school.	4	3	0	7
Community support for our school has increased.	3	4	0	7
Students have higher standards for their own work.	6	1	0	7
Teachers are more involved in decision making.	6	1	0	7
Our program adequately addresses the requirements of students with special needs.	7	0	0	7
Teachers in this school spend more time working together to develop curriculum and plan instruction.	4	2	1	7
Interactions between teachers and students are more positive.	7	0	0	7

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

contributed to an optimistic outlook for continued growth and progress. From “playing school” as described by a consultant from the charter school association in its first year of operation, School 11 staff and students are increasingly focused on teacher quality and student achievement, with an emphasis on postsecondary education. Because School 11 improved its accountability rating in mathematics before ever receiving grant funds, it is difficult to attribute improvements in student achievement to the HSRR effort. However, despite staff inexperience, low salaries, and multiple demands on teachers’ time, recent improvements at School 11 have resulted in increased staff and student morale and more stability in the high school staffing than the school has experienced

since it first opened five years ago. In fact, the 2006–07 school year was the first year in which all high school staff remained at the school. Further, teacher qualifications now meet NCLB requirements. The considerable investment School 11 has made in teacher professional development is necessary but risky, as teachers may not be able to stay at the school in the long term because of salary issues

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***The considerable investment School 11 has made in teacher professional development is necessary but risky, as teachers may not be able to stay at the school in the long term because of salary issues and overextension of staff capacity as a whole.***

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and overextension of staff capacity as a whole. The investment in curricular and instructional resources could have a long-term benefit and has contributed greatly to staff and student morale. The implementation of a classroom management model has also contributed to improved school culture.

School 11 has extended its capacity to offer expanded academic and extracurricular opportunities for students, mainly through teachers just taking on more responsibilities: “We wear multiple hats,” was a phrase often repeated by staff. These extra duties and time commitments are stretching staff capacity.

Additionally, because of declining enrollment, the overall number of students impacted by the school’s programs decreases each year. However, as students have left because of a variety of changes at the school, staff did not express concern. They feel their efforts are

going “to build a different caliber of student and a different caliber of school.”

### **School Climate Inventory (SCI)**

The SCI was administered as part of the staff survey. The overall mean SCI rating for School 11 was 4.33 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 of 4.61 was given for the Expectations dimension (compared to a national norm of 3.82). The lowest mean rating was obtained for the Involvement dimension of 3.96 (compared to a national norm of 3.63). (See Tables 12.10 and 12.11 for more information on SCI high and low scales.)

Respondents generally reported high expectations at the school. Every respondent reported that all students are held responsible

**Table 12.10. School 11: School Climate Inventory Perceived Expectations**

Expectations	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Low achieving students are given opportunity for success in this school.	7	0	0	7
School rules and expectations are clearly communicated.	7	0	0	7
Students share the responsibility for keeping the school environment attractive and clean.	6	0	1	7
Students are held responsible for their actions.	7	0	0	7
All students in this school are expected to master basic skills at each grade level.	7	0	0	7
Students participate in classroom activities regardless of their sex, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, or academic ability.	7	0	0	7
Teachers have high expectations for all students.	7	0	0	7

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

**Table 12.11. School 11: School Climate Inventory Perceived Involvement**

Involvement	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Community businesses are active in this school.	1	5	1	7
Parents actively support school activities.	3	3	1	7
Parents are treated courteously when they call or visit the school.	7	0	0	7
Parents are invited to serve on school advisory committees.	5	2	0	7
Parent volunteers are used whenever possible.	6	1	0	7
Information about school activities is communicated to parents on a consistent basis.	7	0	0	7
Parents are often invited to visit classrooms.	5	1	1	7

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

for their actions and are expected to master basic skills at each grade level. The respondents universally believe that students participate

***The small size of the school, high level of staff commitment, and growing parental involvement have created a strong school community.***

in classroom activities, and low-achieving students are given opportunities to be successful. Additionally, all respondents expressed the belief that all teachers have high expectations for all students, and school rules and expectations are clearly communicated.

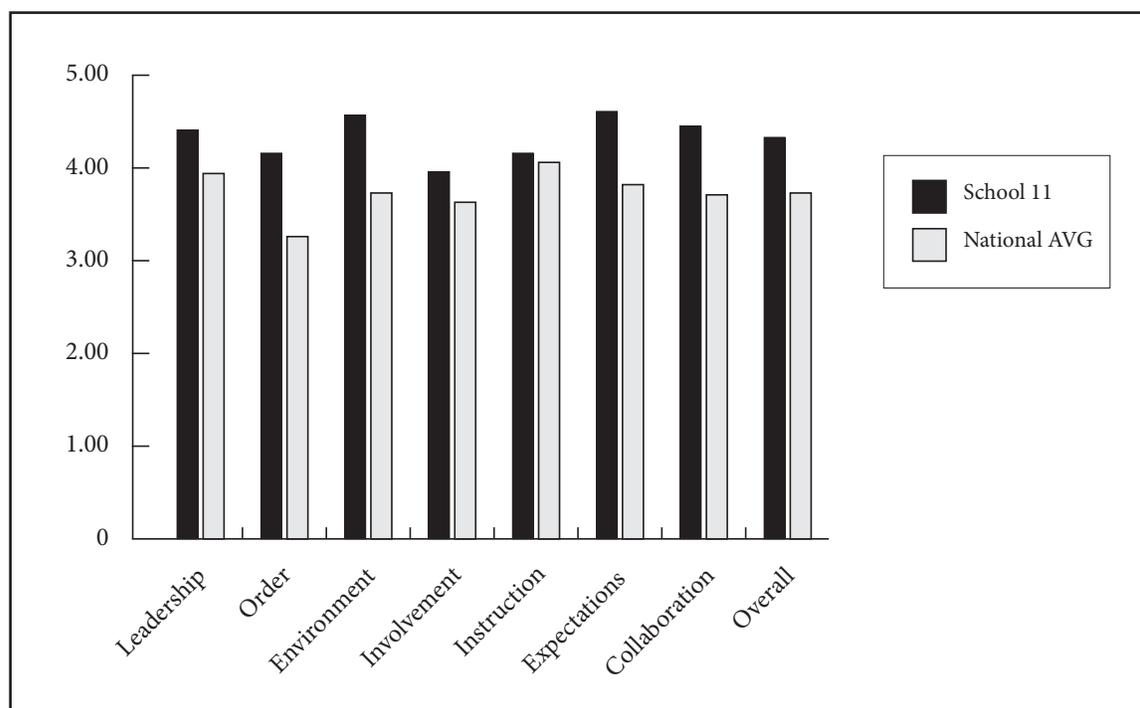
Respondents indicated areas of strengths and weaknesses related to parent/community involvement. Each of the respondents indicated

that parents are treated courteously by school personnel and receive regular communication about school activities. However, only three out of seven believed that parents are actively supporting school activities, while only one out of seven said that community businesses are actively involved in the school.

Figure 12.1 presents scale values for all School Climate Inventory scales.

***Assessment of Implementation Level***

Late delivery of professional development and several barriers (lack of collaborative planning time, little follow-up or monitoring of use of strategies in the classroom, overextended teachers) have contributed to a low level of

**Figure 12.1. School 11: School Climate Inventory Scale Values (N=7)**

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

implementation of the ICLE model. Other activities, the Agile Mind work in mathematics and the classroom management model, are further along in implementation.

With an instrument designed to assess the strength of implementation based on the HSRR required components, the school received a score of 41.44 out of a possible 53 points. The TAP rated the school's overall redesign implementation level to be a 4.36 out of a possible 5 points. The school rated its own implementation level to be a 2.83 out of a possible 5 points.

### **Facilitators**

A core team of dynamic, committed, and skillful leaders at School 11 are driving

improvement efforts with coordinated, goal-focused improvement activities. The climate at the school is positive despite limited financial resources and minimal services. The small size of the school, high level of staff commitment, and growing parental involvement have created a strong school community. Continuity in staff, though tenuous, will certainly contribute to future progress.

Students said success is possible at the school not only because of the small class size and individualized attention, but because of the lack of distraction: "I don't have to worry about trauma or fights," one student said. The school's charter, dress code, and other policies, as well as strong student-teacher and student-student relationships, have contributed to the lack of behavioral problems. School staff also seem

## Chapter 12

### School 11, High-Level Implementation

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satisfied that students who are not committed to the academic program leave the school.

Survey results indicated that staff listed professional development as the main facilitator for HSRR implementation.

#### **Barriers**

Survey results indicated that staff listed insufficient time, lack of parental/community involvement, and lack of human resources as the three main barriers to HSRR implementation.

In analyzing site visit data, limited financial resources and the potential for staff burnout and turnover appear to present challenges for long-term school improvement at School 11. Further, the high school program serves so few students, especially by the later grades, that any growth in enrollment due to the success of the programs being implemented could push staff past their already stretched capacity. With such a small staff, if even one or two teachers leave, the momentum and possibly a significant level of School 11's investment in redesign and restructuring could be lost.

#### **Sustainability**

School 11 used the HSRR grant funds to build capacity through providing professional development, establish curricula in the subject areas, especially mathematics, adopt a classroom management approach, and purchase durable instructional resources, such as the mathematics laboratory and the school library. These improvements will likely have lasting impact, especially if the school can maintain a stable teaching staff. However, the current wave of improvement has relied on the commitment and charisma of several key administrators (the superintendent and the assistant administrator). The assistant administrator has been particularly critical as

a galvanizing force in the school improvement process. Teachers emotionally described his level of commitment to them and the students. Further, while teachers were optimistic about additional future improvements because of the growth that they have seen as a result of the HSRR and other recent school grant programs, they indicated that the pressure presented by the low pay and extreme time commitment was not something they could sustain.

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## SCHOOL 12

## HIGH-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION

**HSRR PROGRAM: ACCELERATED SCHOOLS****AWARD DATE: CYCLE 1 - APRIL 2005****AWARD AMOUNT: \$295,950****SITE VISIT DATE: OCTOBER 3-4, 2006****IMPLEMENTATION SCORE: 32.62****I. LOCAL CONTEXT**

SCHOOL 12 IS A CHARTER SCHOOL SERVING grades K–12. School 12 is located in a major urban area in Central Texas, but staff reported that students come from all over the city and from towns as far as 30 miles away. Enrollment in grades 9–12 in 2005–06 was 111 students. According to AEIS, in 2005–06, 78% of the total student population was Latino/Hispanic, 6% was African American, and 16% was White. Also in 2005–06, 96% of the total enrolled population was considered economically disadvantaged and at risk. Campus data indicate that no students are considered Limited English Proficient, and 20% of students require special education services. (See Table 13.1 for more demographic information.)

According to School 12 staff, in 2006–07 the school has 10 full-time teaching staff at the

high school level, including a foreign language teacher, an art teacher, and two music teachers.

**Starting Points**

School 12 is in its sixth year of operation. According to the school's grant application, School 12 is "a school that has struggled to meet students' academic needs." Low student performance and Unacceptable accountability ratings two years running have threatened the school's existence. In 2003–04, too few students were enrolled in the upper high school grades for scores to be reported in AEIS, but in 2004–05, reading performance for some grade levels and math performance in all grade levels was below standard. Grade 11 science was also below standard in 2004–05. In 2005–06, School 12 registered as an alternative education school and received an Acceptable accountability rating in the Alternative

**Table 13.1. School 12: Demographic Profile, 2005–06\***

African American	Latino/Hispanic	White	Other	Economically Disadvantaged	At Risk	Mobility (03–04)	Limited English Proficient	Special Education
6%	78%	16%	0%	96%	96%	56%	0%	20%

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

\*Demographic data include PreK–12 students.

Education Accountability system. (See Table 13.2 for more accountability information.)

Staff indicated that most students come from non-traditional, stressed families and broken homes, with parents in jail, and high incidences of student pregnancy. Staff characterized the principal's approach to the school as providing a safe place for extremely "at-risk" students and data indicate that students do indeed see School 12 as a haven. The principal recently bought gym equipment and music-recording equipment for students who regularly hang out at the school after hours. Students confirmed that they come to

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***A significant portion of HSRR grant funds has been used for AS professional development and technical assistance.***

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the school and help out (painting during the summer, assisting teachers) because they "don't have anything better to do." Many said they feel the school is their "home," a place where they will not be judged.

Staff also said the teacher turnover rate at the school had been high, with many teachers leaving after a year.

Staff indicated that the school does not operate any other programs at this time, though they did mention a Junior Achievement project that will start in 2006-07.

## II. MODEL ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

### *Selection Process*

The principal said she researched several models that she characterized as "community-based" high school programs, but chose Accelerated Schools (AS) because the others weren't comprehensive enough, the model was aligned with her vision for the school, and it focused on bringing staff together, which she characterized as an issue at School 12. She also said that the orientation of the model towards providing gifted and talented instruction instead of remedial instruction to students was key in the decision. Staff indicated that

**Table 13.2. School 12: Accountability Rating and TAKS Performance History, 2003-04 to 2005-06**

Year	Campus Rating	Grade	Reading	Math	Science	Social Studies	All Tests
2003-04	Academically Unacceptable	9 (N=19)	93%	71%	n/a	n/a	73%
		10 (N=6)	*	<1%	*	80%	<1%
		11 (N=7)	*	*	*	*	*
2004-05	Academically Acceptable	9	58%	22%	n/a	n/a	25%
		10	11%	33%	44%	67%	<1%
		11	55%	29%	14%	71%	36%
2005-06	AEA: Academically Acceptable	9	70%	<1%	n/a	n/a	20%
		10	68%	25%	35%	88%	19%
		11	50%	29%	43%	86%	22%

Source. Texas Education Agency, 2003-04 and 2004-05 AEIS, 2005-06 Accountability Ratings

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

they did not have input in model selection. (See Table 13.3 for more information on Accelerated Schools.)

### ***Initial Implementation***

Implementation of the AS program began with the start of the 2005–06 school year. A leadership team was established consisting of the principal, two assistant principals who are also high school teachers, and another teacher. The coach assigned to the school by the Southwest Center for Accelerated Schools provided most of the professional development to teaching staff on Saturdays or in-service days, according to staff.

Because of the small size of the school, staff was organized into three committees, instead of the recommended six to complete the Taking Stock process central to the AS model.

Committee reports were completed in August 2006. Throughout this process, the role of the principal was to facilitate the leadership team, and she reported that model design excluded her from the staff process. Instead, the leadership team guided the staff-led cadres with the primary purpose of empowering teachers to have some control over change.

The principal reported that the school followed the AS model for the most part but had to accelerate some decision making and “step over” the staff research and consensus process to focus on TAKS and extra tutoring in 2005–06. This was because the school was in a “crisis situation” and threatened with closure due to low performance.

Staff reported that they are now moving to stage 2 (development), and committees are formulating strategic action plans aligned with

**Table 13.3. Accelerated Schools Model Design**

<p><i>Background</i></p> <p>Established in 1986, Accelerated Schools serves around 1,300 schools, levels K–12. Accelerated Schools provides gifted and talented instruction 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 encompassing the school community’s vision of learning.</p> <p><i>Key Strategies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “At risk” students are provided with high expectations and a gifted and talented type of curriculum in order to stimulate academic growth</li> <li>• Identify students’ strengths</li> <li>• Create a unified school-wide sense of purpose</li> <li>• Incorporate the staff into 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 one- to three-month exploration of the accelerated school philosophy</li> <li>• Members of the school community take a formal vote, with 90% agreement on the adoption of the program</li> <li>• Off-site coaches</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/>

findings from the Taking Stock process to be implemented in January 2007.

### **Factors Impacting HSRR Implementation**

#### **SCHOOL CAPACITY**

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##### *Professional Development*

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A significant portion of HSRR grant funds has been used for AS professional development and technical assistance. The principal said “the process itself was very expensive.” It should be noted that all the school’s teachers (elementary, middle, and high school) have participated in the AS training, though the coach assigned to the school appears to work with the high school teachers only. While the grant application specifically mentioned *Breaking the Ranks* as an important component of leadership training for School 12’s redesign, no staff mentioned it during the site visit. The principal noted that she wished there had been more leadership training and leadership support associated with the AS model.

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##### *Staffing and Planning Time*

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An additional staff position in mathematics was also funded with HSRR funds. In terms of planning, according to the principal, the most effective element of the redesign process affecting capacity was the teaming of teachers, though this is “still a struggle.” In addition to weekly whole school meetings, high school teachers meet for 45 minutes each Wednesday.

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##### *Materials*

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In addition to professional development, the principal said that technology to enhance the computer lab, calculators for mathematics,

computers for teachers, and big screen televisions and VCRs for every classroom have been much appreciated by staff and students.

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

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The principal stressed that HSRR funds were not used exclusively for most purchases but rather that the HSRR funds “freed up” other monies and were used to supplement Title 1 funds.

Eight out of nine high school teachers at School 12 completed surveys, for a response rate of 89%. (It should be noted that across the survey questions, most respondents answered either strongly agree, agree, or neutral. In very few cases did respondents indicate strong disagreement or disagreement with a survey statement.) Because of the small number of respondents, results in Tables 13.4 through 13.10 are presented as the number of respondents rather than the percent of respondents choosing each response. In terms of capacity, most of the teachers (six out of eight) reported that teachers had sufficient planning time to implement HSRR and that more technological resources had become available. Five out of eight respondents indicated that materials and staffing were sufficient for program implementation, and one of these respondents strongly disagreed that staffing was adequate. Overall the staff rated the Capacity construct at 3.91 on a 5–point scale. (See Table 13.4 for more information on the Capacity construct.)

#### **EXTERNAL SUPPORT**

School 12 received external support from a coach assigned by the Southwest Center for Accelerated Schools. In addition to providing AS campus-wide training, the AS coach is also on campus twice a week to observe

***The principal and staff reported that it took them some time to come to an understanding of the AS model and that many initially resisted or resented it.***

classroom teaching and to provide feedback. The principal characterized the coach's role as a mentor to teachers, a confidante. She also said, however, that teachers felt that the coach's presence sometimes "gets in the way," though she suggested that might be an individual coach issue. Teaching staff confirmed that it took them some time to get used to the coach and that he often interrupted their classes, but that they understood his passion and that they had gradually come to accept him. They said he regularly provided related research and was extremely committed. A staff member reported that the coach said he would provide approximately 2,000 hours of support over the course of the contract.

Site visit data indicate that the Technical Assistance Provider (TAP) survey was not completed by the AS representative, but

rather by an individual consultant. This consultant (a former educator) conducts classroom observations and provides feedback to the principal. Teachers reported that the consultant had observed them last year and another observation was scheduled in 2006–07. Survey responses indicated that this consultant provided 250 hours of service to School 12 in year 2 of the grant.

Another assistance provider was mentioned during the site visit as providing external formative evaluation with funding from another source, but no further details were provided.

In staff survey questions about external support answered by eight respondents, most teachers (seven out of eight) reported receiving adequate initial and ongoing professional development and technical assistance from external trainings. Only four out of eight respondents reported receiving effective assistance from other external partners. Overall, staff rated the Support construct at 3.98 on a 5–point scale. (See Table 13.5 for more information on the Support construct.)

**Table 13.4. School 12: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Capacity**

Capacity	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Teachers are given sufficient planning time to implement our program.	6	2	0	8
Materials (books and other resources) needed to implement our HSRR program are readily available.	5	3	0	8
Our school has sufficient faculty and staff to fully implement this program.	5	2	1	8
Technological resources have become more available.	6	2	0	8

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

# Chapter 13

## School 12, High-Level Implementation

### INTERNAL FOCUS

#### Staff Buy-In and Support

The principal and staff reported that it took them some time to come to an understanding of the AS model and that many initially resisted or resented it. In particular, the work and time involved with the “Taking Stock” process was disconcerting to some staff, as was the AS approach of gradual and step-by-step implementation. “It requires a lot of research,” the principal said, and staff wanted to move faster. She said she might have considered another model in retrospect because “it’s a lot of extra work. They [the teachers] teach a lot of trying kids...they are tired. I really do hate to give them anything extra.”

One teacher reported that staff had been “frustrated with the paperwork” associated with the Taking Stock surveys and reporting, but that teachers were connecting with each other as a result of the process. She said staff

members who really resisted the program are no longer at the school and that support is now increasing substantially. Teachers in the focus groups said the most frustrating part was trying to understand the goals and objectives of the process they were being asked to implement. Teachers wanted to see “the big picture,” and that if everybody knew what was going on “it would have come together quicker.” They reported, however, that now that they’ve been through the process together, a core group of staff are “on task.”

The principal also said that the time it takes to unfold all the pieces of the model was a problem with AS. It might also be important to note that the principal felt somewhat alienated by the AS process: “I feel like an outsider....AS sort of takes the principal out of the process.” However, she continually stressed during the visit that she wanted to give teachers autonomy. Several staff comments supported this.

**Table 13.5. School 12: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Support**

Support	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
I have a thorough understanding of this school’s HSRR program.	6	2	0	8
I have received adequate initial and ongoing professional development/training for HSRR program implementation.	7	1	0	8
Technical assistance provided by external trainers, model developers, and/or designers has been valuable.	7	1	0	8
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.	6	2	0	8
My school receives effective assistance from external partners (e.g., university, businesses, agencies).	4	4	0	8

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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### *Alignment and Integration with Existing Programs*

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Staff reported that there were no existing programs with which to integrate. One teacher mentioned some internship opportunities that would be available in December 2006.

Interestingly, though no staff mentioned it, students talked with obvious pride about a program for “accelerated” students trying to earn credits for graduation under the Distinguished Achievement Program. Participation involves bi-weekly trips to a rented facility at a church where students were able to take dual-credit courses online and conduct research. There is also a community outreach component to participation. Students prepare and serve lunch to the elderly as part of the program.

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### *Monitoring*

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Data indicate that School 12 is beginning to implement activities for monitoring student performance and instruction and that the weekly leadership team meetings provide a forum for monitoring AS implementation.

The principal said that the school bought benchmark tests and analyzed student results to create mastering/not mastering lists aligned with TEKS objectives. She said she realized that teachers previously did not know why students failed TAKS and that teachers didn’t know the TAKS objectives. Teachers are provided with a tutoring objectives list for each student, and teachers are expected to provide extra tutoring to students in these specific areas, usually during class time.

In addition, monitoring is provided through feedback to the principal from classroom observations conducted by an external consultant, as well as the ongoing monitoring of instruction provided by the AS coach.

Survey data on internal focus indicated that only half of respondents (four out of eight) felt the program had been effectively integrated to meet school improvement goals. Very few staff members (two out of eight) reported satisfaction with the other resources being used to supplement the program, but most (six out of eight) were neutral about the question. Overall, the staff rated the Focus construct at 3.63 on a 5–point scale. (See Table 13.6 for more information on the Focus construct.)

### *PEDAGOGICAL CHANGE*

Across the board, staff reported that there is more student-directed learning going on in the high school classes as a result of AS. The principal said: “There’s more good noise.” According to staff reports, students are interacting, working with peers, and teachers are not standing in front of the room lecturing. Data indicate that most teachers, though not mathematics teachers,

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***Across the board, staff reported  
that there is more student-directed  
learning going on in the high school  
classes as a result of AS.***

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are implementing new techniques, such as alternative assessment. Staff also reported that the coach emphasizes, in addition to authentic assessments, interdisciplinary teaching. Teachers feel that the school is beginning to implement “inquiry-based” instruction in alignment with its mission. They also indicated that training on differentiated instruction provided by an Education Service Center (ESC) had made a significant impact on instruction in the high school grades. A number of participants did indicate that the one subject in which change was taking place more slowly was in mathematics instruction.

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Half of the survey respondents indicated that classroom learning activities have changed a great deal and many (five out of eight) indicated they used textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets less. Students were using technology more effectively in the majority of respondents' classrooms (seven out of eight). While four of the respondents reported utilizing student learning teams, only three respondents indicated that students were engaged in interdisciplinary or project-based work for a substantive portion of the school day. Overall the staff rated the Pedagogy construct at 3.58 on a 5-point scale. (See Table 13.7 for more information on the Pedagogy construct.)

#### RESTRUCTURING OUTCOMES

*Achievement.* The principal reported that in 2004–05, when the school faced closure due to performance issues, the staff brought the kids together and told them “what was going on and what we needed to do.” As a result she said, “though TAKS scores aren’t the greatest,

they’ve really improved.” She felt that the new climate at the school because of the AS model helped to bring everybody together around the issues. She said achievement in general and what she heard from teachers indicated marked improvement and that this year’s TAKS performance would be the “telling year.” Teachers were more circumspect about achievement. A teacher in the focus group said: “Fifty percent (50%) of the kids are on a 4th-grade level in math. That they are actually in the class is a big accomplishment.”

#### Student Impacts

A focus on high expectations for students and changes in teacher attitudes about student potential have had positive impacts on student self-esteem and conduct. Said one teacher: “I think that they believe in themselves more. They have their self-confidence. Last year I saw a lot of children who just didn’t think they could do it.... Their self-esteem has come up... all these things have fallen into order because

**Table 13.6. School 12: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Focus**

Focus	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Teachers in this school are generally supportive of our HSRR program.	5	3	0	8
The elements of our HSRR program are effectively integrated to help us meet school improvement goals.	4	4	0	8
As a school staff, we regularly review implementation and outcome benchmarks to evaluate our progress.	5	3	0	8
Our school has a plan for evaluating all components of our HSRR program.	5	3	0	8
I am satisfied with the federal, state, local, and private resources that are being coordinated to support our HSRR program.	2	6	0	8

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

***Students in the focus group spoke with great affection of the school, the staff, and their classmates. “Nobody judges you here... say, ‘oh, you’re poor.’”***

they believe they can succeed.” Staff also reported that student-to-student relationships were improved. “Students are smiling and laughing...there seems to be a unity” despite the fact that they are all “different types of students.” Students verified this feeling of unity and community.

Staff also reported that students have responded to individual attention and the introduction of new opportunities. In particular, a program designed to target students for graduation under the Distinguished Achievement Program has excited students and the focus on higher expectations is growing. Student motivation and attendance have also improved. Teachers noted that a new procedure helps teachers monitor more closely student absences and “helps keep people in the classroom.” One teacher said: “We have a tremendous percentage of at-risk kids....

If we can get them to come to school, that’s an achievement. And then, if we can get them to be in their classes....”

Students in the focus group spoke with great affection for the school, the staff, and their classmates. “Nobody judges you here... say, ‘oh, you’re poor.” “I love this school.” “Since I’ve been in this school, I’ve never had a fight; in public school, I had fights every other day.” “I feel safe here. It’s the teachers. It’s so small and you know everybody. If anybody came on campus, you’d know it.” “We treat it like it’s our house. If somebody tags, we say, ‘are you going to clean that?’” “This year and last year are the best years we’ve had at [School 12].” It should be noted that a significant number of 11th- and 12th-graders from the school’s overall enrollment attended the student focus group, instead of just a hand-picked group of the “best” students.

#### *Staff Impacts*

One teacher reported that staff members are “connecting through identifying and trying

**Table 13.7. School 12: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Pedagogy**

Pedagogy	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
I use textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets less than I used to for basic skills or content area instruction.	5	2	1	8
Classroom learning activities have changed a great deal.	4	3	1	8
Students in my class spend at least two hours per school day in interdisciplinary or project-based work.	3	4	1	8
Students in my class spend much of their time working in cooperative learning teams.	4	3	1	8
Students are using technology more effectively.	7	0	1	8

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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to fix problems” highlighted in the “Taking Stock” data. “Teachers used to just shut the door, [but] when survey data came in, it was the reality of it.” One teacher said, “I’m feeling more like a teacher now.... Students are actually learning now.”

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***Teachers’ attitudes about students have improved as they have become more aware of student participation, engagement, and needs.***

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Teachers reported that the focus and unity of vision and the resulting stability of the teaching staff has impacted students. “Now we have a vision; the kids know we are all together on it. It gives them more of a sense of stability in their otherwise...unstable lives. We can provide that for them here.”

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#### *Community/Parental Involvement*

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The principal felt strategies for engaging parents were the least successful part of the AS model, and all staff indicated that parent input was not sought as part of the Taking Stock process, though some schools implementing the process have sought parent input.

A teacher in his third year at School 12 said: “I’d say overall it’s increasing, but not by leaps and bounds. There is very little parent support at this school... however, probably the concept is changing...the group of teachers we have now are calling. It’s slowly changing...but coming out to do festivals...these aren’t those types of parents we have.”

Site visit data indicate that organization of parent outreach is an area needing improvement at the school. Historically, there appears to have been little parental involvement at the school. Parents in the focus group indicated that there were serious

communication problems and that there was no information coming home with the students. One parent who recently enrolled her children in the school came to the meeting reported there was no orientation for new students, and no information about programs.

Survey responses on outcomes-related questions indicated that the majority of respondents (six out of eight) thought that School 12 students are enthusiastic about learning and that the program addresses requirements for special needs students. Similarly, six respondents reported that teachers were involved in decision making and now spend more time working collaboratively on curriculum and instructional planning. Parent involvement and community support were the weakest outcomes areas indicated in the survey data. Overall the staff rated the Outcomes construct at 3.53 on a 5–point scale. (See Table 13.8 for more information on the Outcomes construct.)

## III. IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

### *Key Points*

Data indicate that involvement in the Accelerated Schools process is beginning to create staff cohesion and commitment. Data also indicate that a core group of high school teachers has stayed, and all school staff felt the biggest area of immediate impact has been on the climate of the school, especially for students. The principal said that getting the grant itself made a difference and brought staff and students together: “I see hope. I just think it’s brought students together...I think it’s a whole attitude...the vision of ‘You won’t be left behind.’” A teacher reported that teachers working together and meeting regularly around school improvement issues is something that is communicated to the

students, which overall has improved the climate. Teachers' attitudes about students have improved as they have become more aware of student participation, engagement, and needs.

### ***School Climate Inventory (SCI)***

The SCI was administered as part of the staff survey. The overall mean SCI rating for School 12 was 3.86 on of a 5–point scale. Results from the SCI indicate an overall school climate rating that is higher than the national average of 3.73 for secondary schools. The highest mean rating of 4.05 was given for the Leadership dimension (compared to a national norm of 3.94).

The lowest mean rating of 3.31 was obtained for the Order dimension (compared to a national norm of 3.26). (See Tables 13.9 and 13.10 below for more information on SCI high and low scales.)

All staff members were in agreement that school leaders encourage creativity and new approaches. Most of these seven staff members (71%) had positive beliefs about administrators' effectiveness in protecting instructional time, serving as an instructional leader, and visibility school-wide. Most of the respondents (five out of seven) agreed that School 12 was a safe place to work and that student behavior was generally

**Table 13.8. School 12: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Outcomes**

<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Strongly Agree OR Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree OR Disagree</b>	<b>N*</b>
Student achievement has been positively impacted.	5	2	1	8
Students in this school are more enthusiastic about learning.	6	0	2	8
Parents are more involved in the educational program of this school.	2	4	2	8
Community support for our school has increased.	4	2	2	8
Students have higher standards for their own work.	5	2	1	8
Teachers are more involved in decision making.	6	2	0	8
Our program adequately addresses the requirements of students with special needs.	6	2	0	8
Teachers in this school spend more time working together to develop curriculum and plan instruction.	6	2	0	8
Interactions between teachers and students are more positive.	4	2	1	7

*Source.* Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

*\*Note.* N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

positive. Similarly, five staff members reported that a joint responsibility for student discipline existed and there was consistency in enforcement of school rules. Staff members were divided in their perceptions about the impacts of student misbehavior, with three respondents reporting that it did and three respondents reporting that it did not interfere with the teaching process.

Figure 13.1 presents scale values for all School Climate Inventory scales.

### Assessment of Implementation Level

The Accelerated Schools model is designed as an intensive three-year process. School 12 staff have implemented the AS model with fidelity to the model process overall. After completing the “Taking Stock” process, staff members have begun the

process of developing Action Plans. Staff comments indicate that they are aware of and understand the AS model and seem committed to moving into the third stage of implementation, even though grant funds will be expended by then.

With an instrument designed to assess the strength of implementation based on the HSRR required components, the school received a score of 32.62 out of a possible 53 points. The TAP rated the school’s overall redesign implementation level to be a 4.29 out of a possible 5 points. The school rated its own implementation level to be a 3.33 out of a possible 5 points.

### Facilitators

In surveys, staff listed support from school administration, support from teachers, and professional development as the three main facilitators for HSRR implementation.

**Table 13.9. School 12: School Climate Inventory Perceived Leadership**

Leadership	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
The administration communicates the belief that all students can learn.	6	1	0	7
The administration encourages teachers to be creative and to try new methods.	7	0	0	7
The principal (or administration) provides useful feedback on staff performance.	4	3	0	7
The administration does a good job of protecting instructional time.	5	2	0	7
The principal is an effective instructional leader.	5	2	0	7
The goals of this school are reviewed and updated regularly.	4	2	0	6
The principal is highly visible throughout the school.	5	2	0	7

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

**Table 13.10. School 12: School Climate Inventory Perceived Order**

Order	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Rules for student behavior are consistently enforced.	5	0	2	7
Student discipline is administered fairly and appropriately.	4	1	2	7
Student misbehavior in this school does not interfere with the teaching process.	3	1	3	7
Student tardiness or absence from school is not a major problem.	3	0	4	7
This school is a safe place in which to work.	5	1	1	7
Teachers, administrators, and parents assume joint responsibility for student discipline.	5	2	0	7
Student behavior is generally positive in this school.	5	1	1	7

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

Site visit data indicate that the enhanced communication and collaboration required for the AS process have facilitated staff engagement with each other and in the articulation of a common vision for the school. Their increased engagement has been communicated to the students, and an overall improvement in the climate is opening the door for improvement at the school.

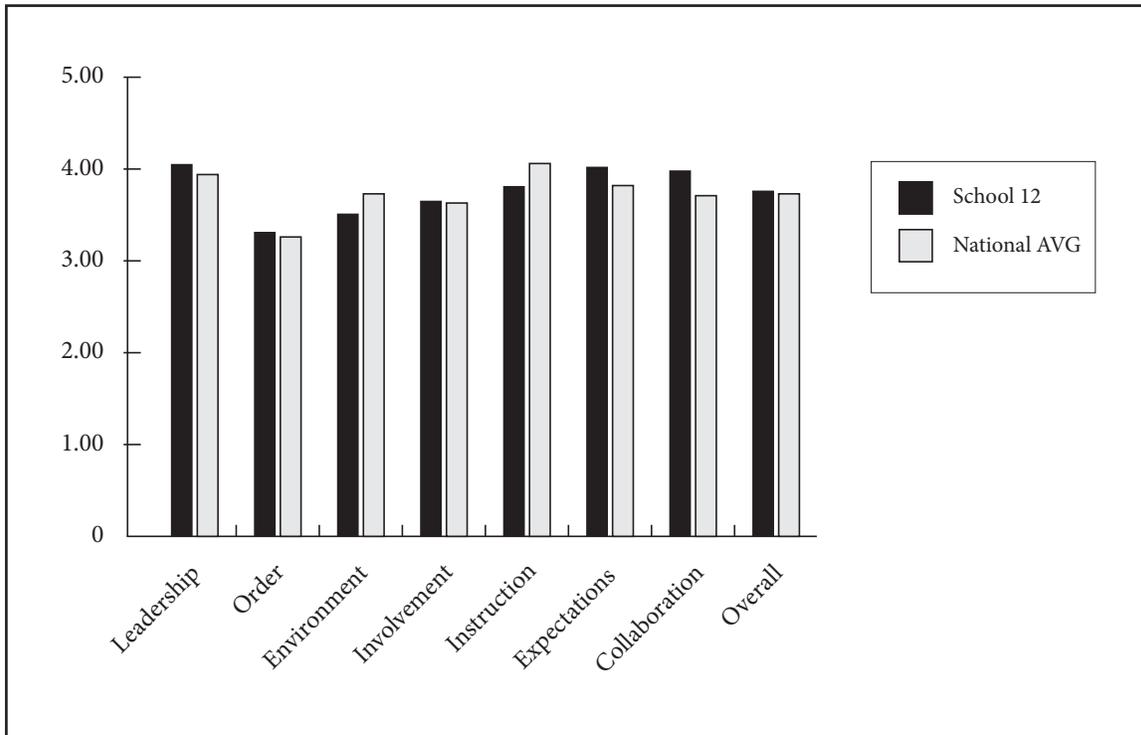
### **Barriers**

The principal's sense that AS has created a "disconnect" between leadership and teachers at the school could present a barrier to full implementation. While staff appreciates the autonomy the principal allows them, some

level of support from the leadership could help to accelerate and sustain progress. Data suggest that the new level of collaboration that has occurred among teachers, while an improvement, could be tenuous. Therefore, it is important that action plans currently being developed by staff include a structure or plan for continuing and refining group vision, as well as a clear path to improvement that will help them sustain and build from the effort expended in implementing the AS model, including a thoughtful professional development plan.

Survey results indicated that staff listed insufficient time, lack of financial resources, and poor parent/community involvement as the three main barriers to HSRR implementation.

Figure 13.1. School 12: School Climate Inventory Scale Values (N=8)



Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

### Sustainability

The principal indicated that the staff member who was brought on with grant funds will be supported by the local budget once grant funds are expended. While she said the school is looking at other grants, she thought the improved attitude and changes brought about by the grant participation in the AS process

it's working for us." Staff indicated that as long as a core group of teachers stay, bringing new teachers in shouldn't be a problem.

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***The principal stated, "We have all the equipment. I think the big thing is the attitude, and that doesn't cost anything."***

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would not be difficult to sustain. The principal stated, "We have all the equipment. I think the big thing is the attitude, and that doesn't cost anything." Teachers in the focus group communicated a commitment to continuing the process and said, "It's a slow process and

## SCHOOL 13

## MIDDLE-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION

**HSRR PROGRAM: HIGH SCHOOLS THAT WORK****AWARD DATE: CYCLE 1 - APRIL 2005****AWARD AMOUNT: \$309,913****SITE VISIT DATE: SEPTEMBER 11-12, 2006****IMPLEMENTATION SCORE: 26.26 (0-53)****I. LOCAL CONTEXT**

SCHOOL 13 IS LOCATED IN NORTH TEXAS and is a part of a large urban school district. Student enrollment at School 13 for the 2005–06 school year was 223. The student population is predominantly Latino/Hispanic (73%). The next largest racial/ethnic group is African American (19%). All of the student body is considered to be at risk (100%). Student mobility is an issue of concern at School 13 (71%). In addition, 36% of students are Limited-English Proficient (LEP), and 40% of students are economically disadvantaged, although all students are given a Free/Reduced Lunch application. (See Table 14.1 for more demographic information.)

**Starting Points**

According to the grant application, School 13 opened in 1997 as a non-traditional option to

address the increasing number of dropouts in the school district. The school currently offers an alternative education program during the day for recent immigrants and an evening academic program for students who had previously dropped out of traditional high schools, and is attempting to create a shared vision for both programs. The school shares part of a campus with a traditional high school. This arrangement is very challenging because School 13 staff “borrow” classrooms and space from the traditional school’s teachers and, therefore, have no place of their own and cannot post materials or leave items in classrooms.

Student demographics between the daytime and evening programs differ in several ways. The daytime program, referred to as the Newcomer Career Academy (NCA), serves immigrant/LEP students, ages 17–21, with instruction provided by ESL-certified teachers. Because many of the students are undocumented,

**Table 14.1. School 13: Demographic Profile, 2005–06**

African American	Latino/Hispanic	White	Other	Economically Disadvantaged	At Risk	Mobility (03–04)	Limited English Proficient	Special Education
19%	73%	7%	1%	40%	100%	71%	36%	2%

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

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### School 13, Middle-Level Implementation

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***Evening students at School 13 have left regular programs of study because they did not function well in traditional school settings.***

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they are often difficult to place in work-based training situations or certification programs. Most students in the program are in the United States to work and send money back to their home country. The Academy serves newcomers based on the level of education they received in their home countries. Because these students are often older and perceived by staff members as being highly motivated, teachers believed that “if they have had some school, they can probably make it here.”

Evening students at School 13 have left regular programs of study because they did not function well in traditional school settings. Most are 17 or 18 years old and have been out of school for a year or more and have decided to come back and earn their diplomas. Sixteen and 17-year old students come to the school with fewer than ten high school credits, and 18-year olds bring fewer than 15 credits. Many of these students are living away from their parents. Although it is preferred that parents attend orientation, students are allowed to come to orientation and sign themselves into the school. The evening program is geared toward reengaging these students. One approach is to involve them in vocational programs. Many students at School 13 may be classified as 9th-graders, but often have repeated the 9th-grade once already at their home schools. Additionally, attendance is a problem with night students in particular because so many have family obligations, including children of their own, and have limited childcare and transportation options.

Another challenge for the evening program that staff described is that other area schools tended to send students with discipline and attendance problems to School 13.<sup>7</sup>

Approximately 50% of the students in the evening program and probably more students in the daytime classes are new on campus this year. Staff estimated that the typical student remained on campus about a year and a half.

Across both programs, about 25% of the staff is new this year, including the principal. This change was described by the staff as part of a larger transition to bring in teachers who were supportive of the new direction the school wants to take. Since her arrival from a more traditional campus, the new principal closed the campus and implemented in-school suspension. This has helped to solve the problems of students skipping classes after meal breaks. She also required students to follow a dress code that some students resented. Generally, School 13 students are not discipline problems because they are at the school by choice and are a small cohesive group.

To accommodate both programs, the school day has nine periods. The daytime program consists of four 90-minute blocks. The last five periods for evening students are 70 minutes each. Every student at School 13 is there voluntarily, including students who have been in jail or in the juvenile justice system. Students can be ordered to the General Equivalency Diploma (GED) program that operates under the School 13 umbrella but is housed elsewhere.

Based on 2003–04 TAKS results, School 13 reported that only 20% of all students, 20%

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<sup>7</sup> SREB Technical Assistance Visit Report, November, 2005.

of economically disadvantaged students, and 16% of Latino/Hispanic students passed the TAKS science test. The standard for meeting Academically Acceptable criteria was 25%. The campus' area of identified deficiency in the Texas Accountability Rating System for the 2004–05 school year was reading, with only 48% of all students meeting the passing standards (50% were required to meet the passing standard for the Academically Acceptable rating). Less than a third of all students passed all TAKS tests for the 2003–04 and 2004–05 school years (26% and 25%, respectively).

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***The school staff was very aware of the HSTW program and able to articulate related trainings and areas of emphasis, especially the literacy focus.***

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In the past, School 13 was not classified as an alternative campus, and academic performance on TAKS was very low. In 2005–06, the school was designated as an alternative school. The unique structure and population attending School 13 make it more appropriate for governance and monitoring under the Alternative Education system. Under this accountability rating system, the

school was rated Academically Acceptable for 2005–06. (See Table 14.2 for more accountability information.)

In addition to the HSRR grant, other formal efforts being implemented at the school are Project OWLS (Other Ways of Learning Successfully) and the High School Completion and Success Grant. The school also has several software programs, such as PLATO Pathways and Multimedia and the Sleek Science Program (Incredible Tutor), as well as summer academies at a local university. The software and academies were listed as services provided as part of the school's HSRR grant application.

## II. MODEL ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

### ***Selection Process***

The previous principal, who retired at the end of the 2005–06 school year, worked with the district to secure the grant for school redesign. Three other campuses in the district are using the High Schools That Work (HSTW) redesign model that was developed by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). The staff

**Table 14.2. School 13: Accountability Rating and TAKS Performance History, 2003-04 to 2005-06**

Year	Campus Rating	TAKS Met Standard All Grades Tested (All Tests)	Reading	Math	Science	Social Studies
2003–04	Academically Unacceptable	26%	64%	40%	20%	58%
2004–05	Academically Unacceptable	25%	48%	38%	29%	86%
2005–06	AEA:Academically Acceptable	30%	64%	27%	28%	61%

Source. Texas Education Agency, 2003–04 and 2004–05 AEIS, 2005–06 Accountability Ratings

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perceived that School 13 was brought into the HSTW district plan “as an afterthought” because money was left over. The previous principal had identified the HSTW model and encouraged faculty members to conduct their own online investigations about the program. HSTW staff members visited the campus, conducted a survey of needs, made recommendations, and left the staff favorably impressed. Although it was unlike any other school that HSTW staff members had encountered, they felt that the model could have a positive impact on student achievement at

School 13. The staff credits the HSTW program with providing an element of stability for the school while the transition is being made with new administrators, new counselors, and new teachers. (See Table 14.3 for more information on High Schools That Work.)

### ***Initial Implementation***

A HSTW Technical Assistance Provider (TAP) visited School 13 in November 2005 to assess the school’s current status, provide next steps, and identify barriers to implementing

**Table 14.3. High Schools That Work Model Design**

<p><i>Background</i></p> <p>HSTW is an initiative of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) State Vocational Education Consortium that began in 1987. 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 (HSTW 10 Key Practices)</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>

the HSTW design plan. The resulting report provided detailed documentation of current practices that supported learning, as well as detailed observations about gaps in services. Part of the recommendations from this visit was for staff to attend numerous trainings, including two two-day numeracy workshops for six people, a two-day workshop for six people on designing curriculum to include rigor and relevance, a two-day on-site workshop on literacy for the whole staff, and seven days of on-site coaching by the HSTW TAP.

The school staff was very aware of the HSTW program and able to articulate related trainings and areas of emphasis, especially the literacy focus. While the prior principal “picked” the model, staff were open and excited about the tools it provided, such as linking programs of study to careers. For example, through the HSTW efforts, School 13 started a strand for nursing aides and pharmacy technicians for its 11th- and 12th-grade students.

## ***Factors Impacting HSRR Implementation***

### ***SCHOOL CAPACITY***

#### ***Materials***

Because test scores in science were low, the science and mathematics departments received equipment and a complete library of books to send out with students. In an effort to get them motivated to read, reading teachers received classroom sets of magazines that students liked, reinforcing the new emphasis on literacy.

A PLATO lab is available for students to work independently for credit recovery for mathematics and science. PLATO provides self-paced, individualized instruction aligned to state standards and TAKS. In many cases, students attending School 13 did not receive

credit in classes not because of academic performance, but because of the district’s policy stating that students cannot receive credit if they have five unexcused absences.

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

The faculty for School 13 includes approximately 25 teachers and 12 support staff. Limited staffing makes it impossible for teachers to monitor the halls between classes that are spread throughout the large campus. This is a concern because there are so many distractions as students move between classes throughout the large building that is shared with a traditional high school campus.

***The program has created a sense of shared leadership and responsibility for reform efforts because teachers see that “it cannot be just one person” behind a reform effort.***

A part-time counselor has been added through the grant to work evenings and be responsible for registering and preparing students for the SAT. The full-time counselor splits her day between the day and evening programs. The HSRR grant coordinator also teaches career preparation classes and helps both daytime and evening students with job placements. Students in his class are required to work a minimum of 15 hours per week, but many students work as many as 40 hours per week to support their families. Other staff funded by the grant are pharmacy technician and nurse’s aide teachers, a Stay-in-School Coordinator and after-school tutoring/ Saturday tutors.

#### ***Shared Leadership***

The program has created a sense of shared leadership and responsibility for reform efforts because teachers see that “it cannot be just

# Chapter 14

## School 13, Middle-Level Implementation

one person” behind a reform effort. Teachers know that the principal cannot act as the change agent alone, and they see themselves as an integral part of the “final outcome.” Teachers have become a more cohesive group with both formal and informal interactions. Now every department has a leader that meets with and is responsible for all of the teachers within the department. Department leaders and experienced teachers introduce new hires to the HSTW program. Lead content teachers get an extra period off, as well as a stipend. According to one teacher, “we are all working together—big time.” Teachers who were not enthusiastic about the reform effort were encouraged to leave last year.

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

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Funds were used primarily for staff development and contracted services. Additional resources were used to purchase books and computers, and equipment has been added to the science and mathematics departments.

Twenty-four out of 25 teachers at School 13 completed surveys for an impressive response

rate of 96%. Over two-thirds of teacher respondents (67%) to the survey believed that technology had become more available, and 62% agreed to having sufficient staff to fully implement HSRR programming. However, less than half (43%) agreed that teachers were given sufficient planning time, while 38% responded neutrally to this item. The School 13 mean for the Capacity construct is 3.43 out of a possible 5 points. The TAP indicated that the school had sufficient materials and planning time to implement HSRR. The TAP did not know if the school had adequate staffing or fiscal resources for implementing HSRR. Interestingly, 29% of the staff also disagreed that the school had sufficient staff to fully implement HSRR plans. (See Table 14.4 for more information on the Capacity construct.)

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### *EXTERNAL SUPPORT*

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#### *External Professional Development*

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HSTW served as the TAP for the grant and was responsible for orchestrating and delivering training for HSTW. Department chairs and representatives from each content area attended the national HSTW training

**Table 14.4. School 13: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Capacity**

Capacity	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Teachers are given sufficient planning time to implement our program.	43%	38%	19%	21
Materials (books and other resources) needed to implement our HSRR program are readily available.	57%	24%	19%	21
Our school has sufficient faculty and staff to fully implement this program.	62%	10%	29%	21
Technological resources have become more available.	67%	19%	14%	21

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

conferences in Orlando and Nashville. Most of the additional training was conducted on campus during the summer before the current school year. Administrators did not indicate that they had received any specific administrative training in restructuring the school.

Literacy has become the focus school wide. In addition to sending a team to HSTW literacy training in a nearby city, a literacy trainer was brought on site to model strategies and work with the entire staff. Most staff were very conversant about the literacy focus, as well as new strategies they learned through the HSTW literacy focus.

The HSTW TAPs also visited the school numerous times to assess and observe the staff, and then returned to provide training. Based on the training, staff were to split into groups to meet. However, teachers reported that group meetings stalled because they were unclear about what to do. HSTW assigned a new TAP to work with the school, and this person is credited with working more closely and directly with teachers. New teams are scheduled to begin meeting, and the new TAP will be providing training on what groups need to accomplish during this time.

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### *Integrated District Assistance*

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With the exception of the grants department that helped to secure the grant funding, administrators and staff felt that support from the district was very limited. Further, School 13 staff members perceive that many in the district consider School 13 to be a “dumping ground” for problem students who have failed to pass the TAKS. Staff have the perception that the campus and its students always seem to be overlooked. As an example, a teacher described the attendance improvement program that the district started two years ago. School 13 was not invited to participate in the

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***Current teachers appear optimistic about the school’s overall redesign efforts and believe that HSTW provides an excellent framework for those teachers who like “structure.”***

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contest where students could win a new truck for attendance. The principal fought to get School 13 students included in the contest, and it was an ironic twist of fate that the winner of the drawing was a School 13 student who had been riding his bicycle to work.

Results from the technical assistance survey indicated that the TAP had provided 82 hours of external assistance to the school across the two years of the grant. This only includes the on-site work, and not the conferences staff attended through HSTW. The school assigned the TAP a 1.17 out of a possible five points. The low score may be due to the previous TAP who staff perceived to have not worked as closely or directly with them as the new TAP has worked.

A majority of staff at School 13 indicated having a thorough understanding of the school’s HSRR program (67%), receiving adequate training (71%), and receiving valuable TAP support (62%). However, only 29% agreed that the school received effective assistance from external partners. The School 13 mean for the Support construct is 3.40 on a 5–point scale. (See Table 14.5 for more information on the Support construct.)

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### *INTERNAL FOCUS*

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

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Current teachers appear optimistic about the school’s overall redesign efforts and believe that HSTW provides an excellent framework for those teachers who like “structure.” Individuals who were not receptive to such changes tended to leave the school last year.

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### School 13, Middle-Level Implementation

Now that six or seven new teachers have been hired for the current year, it is important that administrators, department leaders, and peers work together to instill the kind of “fire” they need to encourage and excite them to implement the program in their classrooms without their having had the benefit of the HSTW training.

#### *Alignment and Integration with Existing Programs*

Little explicit alignment occurred across grant programs. The school implements numerous grants and projects as listed earlier, but the efforts lack cohesion and coordination. Some broadly fall under the umbrella of college preparation and others as high school completion.

#### *Monitoring*

Monitoring is primarily done by the principal and the three vice-principals who divide the faculty among them for completing observations and evaluations. Because classes are so small, teachers are able to monitor students’ progress more closely than they would be able to do in larger settings.

Seventy-one percent of the staff reported teachers were generally supportive of the HSRR program. Fifty-two percent agreed that elements of the HSRR program were effectively integrated. Half of the respondents indicated that the school had a plan for evaluating all components of our program, and only 33% were satisfied with federal, state, local and private resources that were being coordinated

**Table 14.5. School 13: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Support**

Support	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
I have a thorough understanding of this school’s HSRR program.	67%	19%	14%	21
I have received adequate initial and ongoing professional development/training for HSRR program implementation.	71%	14%	14%	21
Technical assistance provided by external trainers, model developers, and/or designers has been valuable.	62%	24%	14%	21
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.	67%	24%	10%	21
My school receives effective assistance from external partners (e.g., university, businesses, agencies).	29%	24%	48%	21

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

to support the HSRR program. The School 13 mean for the Focus construct is 3.35 on a 5–point scale. (See Table 14.6 for more information on the Focus construct.)

### *PEDAGOGICAL CHANGE*

Because School 13 teachers literally have to share classrooms with the traditional campus' faculty, teachers cannot post many of their classroom materials on the walls because the regular teachers are “very territorial.” Teachers repeatedly commented on how advantageous it would be for the school to have its own facility. Having their own campus was perceived to be a way to improve instruction by reducing confusion, transitions, and the general chaos of not having assigned classrooms.

According to the teachers, a casual observation of the current classrooms would show that

teachers have much higher expectations for students than in the past. Students are using special learning strategies that HSTW staff members introduced through the training. Because classes are so small, with 5–10 students, it is easier to keep all of the students engaged. Attempts to promote cooperative group work have not been very successful because of attendance problems. Some classes are so small that the class as a whole constitutes a small group.

Teachers list daily objectives on the board. Students are no longer working on meaningless papers or watching movies as in the past. Now, before a teacher can actually show a movie, she/he has to go to the department leader and explain the rationale behind showing the movie. This example was a departure from the past. Additionally, the PLATO lab has been used to integrate technology.

**Table 14.6. School 13: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Focus**

Focus	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Teachers in this school are generally supportive of our HSRR program.	71%	19%	10%	21
The elements of our HSRR program are effectively integrated to help us meet school improvement goals.	52%	38%	10%	21
As a school staff, we regularly review implementation and outcome benchmarks to evaluate our progress.	43%	33%	24%	21
Our school has a plan for evaluating all components of our HSRR program.	50%	25%	25%	20
I am satisfied with the federal, state, local, and private resources that are being coordinated to support our HSRR program.	33%	33%	33%	21

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

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Historically, there has not been a push to offer honors, Advanced Placement (AP), or college preparation classes. The new principal pushed for AP Spanish and pre-calculus classes which started in October 2006. Calculus and physics will be offered in January 2007 for the first time.

Corroborating site visit data, survey results indicated that over three-quarters (76%) of survey respondents agreed that students used technology more effectively. While 62% stated that students spent much of their time working in cooperative learning teams, site visit data indicated that most classes were already quite small. Over half (57%) agreed that classroom learning activities had changed a great deal. The School 13 mean for the Pedagogy construct is 3.34 out of a possible 5 points. (See Table 14.7 for more information on the Pedagogy construct.)

### RESTRUCTURING OUTCOMES

#### Student Impacts

*Achievement.* Although TAKS scores have improved slightly, much room for improvement remains. Teachers believed that one of the reasons the school was able to get an Acceptable rating was a result of the HSTW strategies. They did not necessarily assign credit to the change in accountability rating systems. TAKS tutoring is being offered by teachers during lunch periods. Tutoring on Saturdays began in September 2006. An additional indicator of more focus on student achievement is that students recently began taking college entrance exams.

*Academic engagement.* Attendance is a major issue that teachers discuss with students on a regular basis, and HSTW has had little impact on attendance. Students often

**Table 14.7. School 13: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Pedagogy**

Pedagogy	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
I use textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets less than I used to for basic skills or content area instruction.	43%	29%	29%	21
Classroom learning activities have changed a great deal.	57%	24%	19%	21
Students in my class spend at least two hours per school day in interdisciplinary or project-based work.	40%	15%	45%	20
Students in my class spend much of their time working in cooperative learning teams.	62%	19%	19%	21
Students are using technology more effectively.	76%	10%	14%	21

*Source.* Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

*\*Note.* N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

have overwhelming family demands and employment obligations that take precedence over school. When students are absent, the teachers are supposed to call the student or parents and document the reason for the absence. Every Thursday, the attendance team looks at all students' attendance records and talks about whether to work with them or drop them from a class. One teacher said that he had better success by calling students' employers, rather than parents.

*Affective impacts.* Teachers who have remained on staff are dedicated to their students' success and have the "luxury" of giving them the individual attention they need because of small class sizes. One teacher stated that "if the students are willing to accept the help, they will get it." HSTW documented one of the strengths of the school was its committed and caring staff who are willing to invest in students. To formalize teacher-student relationships, the school began an advisory program. It has helped teachers develop stronger relationships with students because it meant that one more adult was taking a special interest in the success of an individual student. Staff described the program as being like "homeroom" where teachers followed five to seven students to monitor attendance and build relationships.

*Special needs.* A content mastery teacher works part time to help the three or four students classified as special education students. The diagnostician comes to campus as needed for meetings or testing.

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### *Staff Impacts*

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Because the remaining teachers were already a cohesive group and were "like a family," they were not sure that HSTW had made much of a difference in their relationships with each

other. Staff who stayed communicated that they preferred the setting and students and were committed to the school. However, they did indicate that because of the grant, teachers now communicate more with each other across departmental lines and share more about teaching strategies.

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### *Community/Parental Involvement*

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For the first time, the school held an Open House on the first day of school. Faculty members were pleasantly surprised at the number of families who responded to the invitations. Overall, however, parental involvement at School 13 was very limited because students were older and many lived on their own. In theory, parents of 16- and 17-year old students are required to come to an orientation meeting during which students are registered, but in practice that rarely happens.

Students had mixed emotions about parental involvement. Some felt that the school should do more to get parents involved, while other students felt that they were adults and did not need or want family members involved with their education at this point.

The new principal was intent on bolstering community support, which had been lacking in the past. She was attempting to foster relationships with the local African American and Hispanic Chambers of Commerce and with the local zoo. She also hoped to implement an advisory program with local businesses. One business representative served on the site-based decision making committee to help teachers "think outside the box." With his background in business, the grant coordinator had a knack for interacting with business community members. He approached potential employers and introduced them to the school while telling

them about students they could hire. He also asked employers to come to the school as role models and talk to students.

Compared to responses across other survey constructs, more teachers either disagreed or answered neutral concerning statements related to the Outcomes construct, indicating this may still be an area of challenge for the school that will improve with more time. Seventy-six percent of respondents indicated that interactions between teachers and students were more positive due to HSRR efforts. Over half stated student achievement had been positively impacted (57%), that students were more enthusiastic about learning (52%), and that the program

adequately addressed the requirements of students with special needs (57%). However, only 19% agreed that parents were more involved in the educational program of this school. The School 13 mean for the Outcomes construct is 3.19 on a 5-point scale. (See Table 14.8 for more information on the Outcomes construct.)

### III. IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

#### Key Points

School 13 teachers were remarkably upbeat, and it was clear that they were there by choice, given the challenges that they face on a daily

**Table 14.8. School 13: School-Wide Program Teacher Questionnaire Perceived Outcomes**

Outcomes	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Student achievement has been positively impacted.	57%	33%	10%	21
Students in this school are more enthusiastic about learning.	52%	38%	10%	21
Parents are more involved in the educational program of this school.	19%	29%	52%	21
Community support for our school has increased.	29%	14%	57%	21
Students have higher standards for their own work.	38%	48%	14%	21
Teachers are more involved in decision making.	43%	24%	33%	21
Our program adequately addresses the requirements of students with special needs.	57%	14%	29%	21
Teachers in this school spend more time working together to develop curriculum and plan instruction.	38%	33%	29%	21
Interactions between teachers and students are more positive.	76%	10%	14%	21

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

basis with such a diverse student body and unique setting. Students noted a substantial change since the new principal transferred to the school. Students stated that administrators were cracking down on students who were wasting time at School 13 and who were not “here to take care of business.” Students wished that School 13 and the traditional campus could be merged into one school under the banner of School 13.

The new principal was also concerned that students really get something out of their diploma, rather than just graduating as quickly as possible. That was a shift in attitude that some teachers had resisted. In order to better prepare students, many more students have been placed in science and mathematics classes.

### **School Climate Inventory (SCI)**

The SCI was administered as part of the staff survey. The overall mean SCI rating for School 13 was 3.81 out of 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). The highest mean rating of 4.13 was given for the Expectations dimension (compared to a national norm of 3.82). The lowest mean rating was obtained for the Involvement dimension of 3.25 (compared to a national norm of 3.63). (See Tables 14.9 and 14.10 for more information on SCI high and low scales.)

Items across this school climate dimension were rated positively by most school staff members. Ninety-five percent of respondents

**Table 14.9. School 13: School Climate Inventory Perceived Expectations**

<b>Expectations</b>	<b>Strongly Agree OR Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree OR Disagree</b>	<b>N*</b>
Low achieving students are given opportunity for success in this school.	91%	5%	5%	22
School rules and expectations are clearly communicated.	86%	5%	9%	22
Students share the responsibility for keeping the school environment attractive and clean.	64%	14%	23%	22
Students are held responsible for their actions.	90%	5%	5%	21
All students in this school are expected to master basic skills at each grade level.	86%	10%	5%	21
Students participate in classroom activities regardless of their sex, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, or academic ability.	95%	0%	5%	22
Teachers have high expectations for all students.	82%	14%	5%	22

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

**Table 14.10. School 13: School Climate Inventory Perceived Involvement**

Involvement	Strongly Agree OR Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree OR Disagree	N*
Community businesses are active in this school.	34%	14%	52%	21
Parents actively support school activities.	14%	41%	45%	22
Parents are treated courteously when they call or visit the school.	77%	18%	5%	22
Parents are invited to serve on school advisory committees.	67%	24%	9%	21
Parent volunteers are used whenever possible.	24%	48%	29%	21
Information about school activities is communicated to parents on a consistent basis.	59%	27%	14%	22
Parents are often invited to visit classrooms.	57%	14%	29%	21

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

\*Note. N is the number of staff with valid responses to the question.

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

said that all students participated in classroom activities, while 91% indicated that low-achieving students are given opportunities for success in this school. In addition, 90% of respondents believed that students are held responsible for their actions. Staff members agreed that school rules are clearly communicated (86%), students are expected to master basic skills (86%), and teachers have high expectations of students (82%).

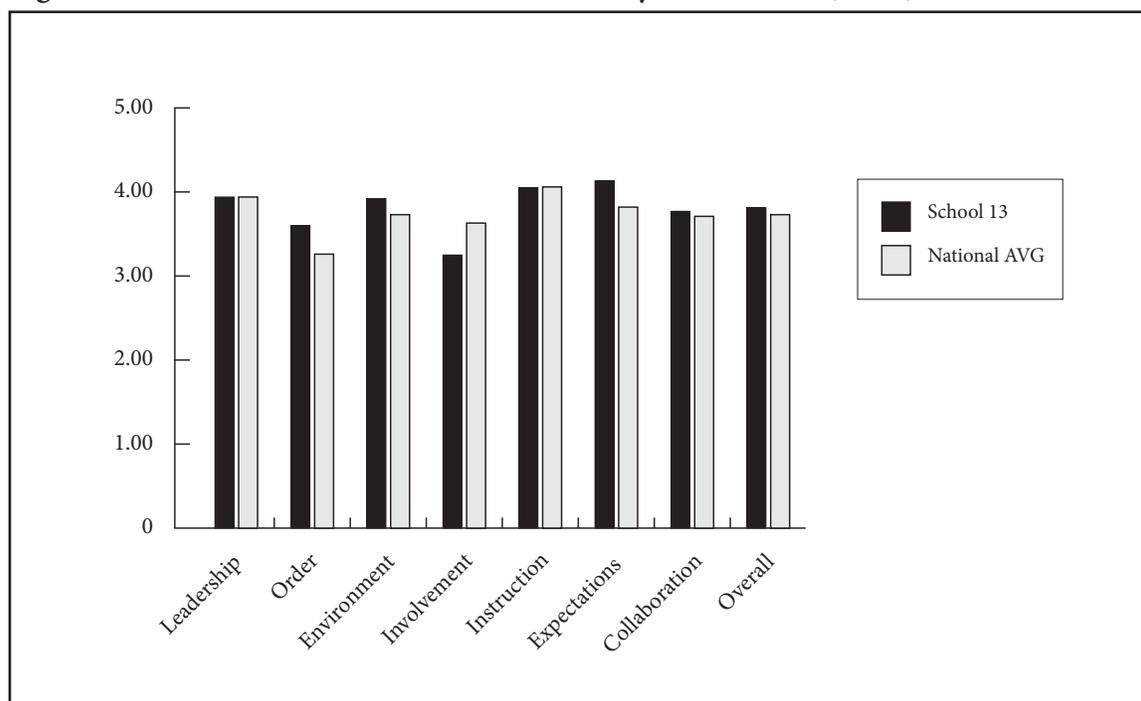
Responses on the involvement dimension show concerns about the level of parent and community involvement. Seventy-seven percent of respondents indicated that parents are treated courteously by school staff; in addition 67% said parents are invited to serve on school advisory committees. However, gaps in communication and active support of the school were evident. Less than two-thirds reported that information about school

activities is communicated regularly, while 45% said parents do not actively support the school. Additionally, 52% of staff members said community businesses are not active in the school.

Figure 14.1 presents scale values for all School Climate Inventory scales.

### **Assessment of Implementation Level**

Despite the numerous changes in administration and staffing, it appears that the redesign effort remains on track. Because teachers had already been campaigning for many of the components provided through HSTW (especially professional development and technology), teachers who stayed were very receptive to the redesign efforts. Teachers generally felt that they were trying to implement

**Figure 14.1. School 13: School Climate Inventory Scale Values (N=24)**

Source. Staff Surveys. See Appendix A for teacher and principal survey protocols.

changes as instructed. They had discussed the issues raised and recommendations made by HSTW in November 2005 following an interim site visit.

Implementation has involved much training, much reading, and much more emphasis on literacy. All of the 200 students (approximately 100 in each of the daytime and evening programs) are being impacted. Because no two classes are ever alike and there is constant turnover in students, it is a continuing challenge to find what works in individual classrooms. One teacher said, “We don’t have the luxury of looking at helping a kid over four years. We have a year or two. We have to be very flexible and be prepared to jump in a different direction with a class each quarter.” Expectations and instructional methods have been identified for every class. However, one might observe differences between classes because much

depends on the individual teachers’ experiences and how fast they can adopt the changes.

With an instrument designed to assess the strength of implementation based on the HSRR-required components, the school received a score of 26.26 out of a possible 53 points. The TAP rated the school’s overall implementation to be a 3.93 out of a possible 5 points. The school staff rated its own implementation level to be a 2.33 out of a possible 5 points.

### **Facilitators**

The positive changes that have taken place at School 13 have been facilitated by several factors. First, the teachers and staff have had very positive attitudes toward the reform effort because a successful reform is literally seen as the key to keeping the school open. Teachers who were not interested in the reform have left

## Chapter 14

### School 13, Middle-Level Implementation

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the faculty. Second, the strategies introduced through HSTW appear to have been effective with the diverse group of students and have opened up the lines of communication between students and faculty. The program emphasizes rigor by adding homework and relationships through advisory committees. Advisory groups have been effective because they have given students an opportunity to interact with “one more adult” who has a positive impact on their lives.

Survey results indicated that staff listed support from school administration and teacher support as the two main facilitators for HSRR implementation.

### **Barriers**

Several barriers to the long-term success of the redesign effort exist. First, the school must build district support, which many perceive as being minimal at this point in time. Academic performance must continue to show marked improvements, and student enrollment must be increased so that the expense of maintaining such a unique school operation can be justified.

Second, another impediment to efficient operations is the actual facility in which the school operates. School 13 literally shares the physical school structure with another campus. As one teacher noted, “[The other school] does not like us being here, so they make it hard. If the district could ever give us a building that would be a huge accomplishment.”

Because teachers have no classrooms to call their own, it is difficult or impossible for them to set up classrooms that maximize strategies promoted by HSTW. Also, classes for the relatively small group of School 13 students are spread throughout the very large building, making it difficult for teachers to monitor students as they move between

classes and tempting for students to leave between classes.

Third, it will be important to reduce staff turnover in the teaching ranks and maintain the level of enthusiasm for reform with new hires that have not had the advantage of formal training from HSTW.

Survey results indicated that staff listed a lack of time, poor parental/community involvement, and a lack of technology as the three main barriers to HSRR implementation.

### **Sustainability**

School 13 administrators and staff obviously hope to maintain the program after the grant ends. However, the level of funding that will be available from the district is unknown, and no other source of grant funding has been identified at this time.

Establishing the health career strands (pharmacy and nursing) demonstrates expectations of program continuation. The principal has authorized the use of grant money to order books and materials for both programs. There are currently eight students in the pharmacy program and six in the nursing program. A nurse plans to place and monitor students in appropriate settings so that they can earn nursing aide certificates in two quarters.

The grant application stated that the district is committed to continuing the program with the equipment, software, and curriculum in place. Sustainability would focus on funding for payroll and acquiring resources from active community participants.



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## EVALUATION FINDINGS

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### INTRODUCTION

THE CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS WAS GUIDED BY THE FOLLOWING RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

- *Define where schools started*
- *Define school capacity to implement reform in terms of materials, staff, planning time, and resources*
- *Measure the external support provided by an external Technical Assistance Provider (TAP) 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 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, this 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.

#### ***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. Brief descriptions of each school are provided below (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 the factors influencing High School Redesign and Restructuring (HSRR) implementation (capacity, external support, internal focus, change in pedagogy, and restructuring outcomes). Throughout the discussion, schools are referred to by number and HSRR model chosen.

#### ***Implementation Level***

Evaluators used all data points available to assess the strength of implementation with a 53–point overall scale that covers

important HSRR components by breaking each component into sections that focus on measurable standards. After reviewing grant applications, budgets, school documents, progress reports submitted to TEA by the schools, site visit data, and survey data, evaluators assigned an implementation score to each school on each of the implementation components (USDE, 2003b). (See Appendix A for protocol.) Scores on each of the components were then summed, and an overall implementation score was assigned to each school that corresponds with one of five school reform implementation levels (Bodilly, 1998). Schools were then categorized into three implementation-level groups. Clear differences arose for one group of schools, which included the three charter schools and which served student populations very unlike the students in the other nine schools. This group included a residential facility and three other schools that are assessed under TEA Alternative Education Accountability. Although their implementation scores are

quite high, the circumstances at these schools, such as small number of teachers needing to be trained, make them difficult to compare to the regular public schools.

The implementation level and type of school are listed in Table 15.1 for each of the sites.

For the five schools identified for inclusion in the high implementation category, the overall implementation score on the strength of implementation scale described above averaged 37 out of a possible 53 points. The five middle-level implementation category schools had a mean of 27 out of 53 points, while the three low-level implementation category schools averaged 16 out of 53 possible points.

It should be noted that data gathered during the site visit to School 8 did not align with data gathered on staff surveys. For example, HSRR money was used for two teachers to attend one five day workshop each. No other professional development was reported.

**Table 15.1. School Implementation Score and Type**

School	Implementation Score (0-53)	Implementation Level (Low-High)	Type (Regular/Alternative)
School 1	33.12	High	Regular
School 2	37.25	High	Regular
School 3	38.74	High	Regular
School 4	23.50	Mid	Regular
School 5	29.50	Mid	Regular
School 6	26.96	Mid	Regular
School 7	14.23	Low	Regular
School 8	21.70	Low	Regular
School 9	17.67	Low	Regular
School 10	27.67	Mid	Alternative
School 11	41.44	High	Alternative
School 12	32.62	High	Alternative
School 13	26.26	Mid	Alternative

Overall data indicated that the school was a low-implementing school, despite self-reported high implementation ratings. Because of the inconsistencies, the survey data were not included in the calculation of any low-level implementation averages. The school was discussed with the low-level implementation group. (See Table 15.2 for mean overall implementation score by group.)

**Table 15.2. Mean Overall and Self-Assessed Implementation Scores by Group**

Overall Implementation		Self-Assessed Implementation Score**
Level	Score*	
High-Level Implementation	37	2.83
Middle-Level Implementation	27	3.04
Low-Level Implementation	16	3.14

\*Note. 1-53 scale

\*\*Note. 1-5 scale

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. Alternative education schools demonstrated evidence of being in the high- or middle-level implementing phase but with a very different set of students and school circumstances from the high- or middle-level implementation schools. The low-level implementation group includes those schools that are still in the planning

phase of program implementation or that demonstrated little evidence of implementing a model. Five schools were labeled high level, five middle level, and three were categorized as demonstrating a low level of implementation.

Self-assessed implementation levels from school progress reports were then compared to the overall implementation categories assigned by evaluators. Results from the self-reported implementation levels contradicted the implementation category scores. Schools with high levels of implementation on the 53-point scale used by evaluators averaged 2.83 on a scale of 5 for the self-assessed school implementation score. Schools with middle-level implementation had an average score of 3.04, while schools with low levels of implementation rated this construct an average of 3.14. (See Table 15.2 for mean self-assessed implementation score by group.)

The discrepancy between overall implementation score calculated by evaluators and the self-assessed implementation score may result from low-implementing schools lacking a thorough understanding of the HSRR grant requirements, and therefore not fully comprehending what high levels of implementation should look like. Rather the influx of money is used to fill badly needed gaps in basic services and supplies, which is greatly appreciated by staff.

## PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Case studies for each of the Cycle 1 schools were summarized and compared across each of the components of successful school reform for each of the levels of implementation. The discussion that follows will help identify intermediate points of reform, including facilitators and barriers, at Cycle 1 schools. Each of the factors of a successful reform, including local context,

model selection and adoption process, school capacity, external support, internal focus, pedagogical change, and restructuring outcomes, will be discussed for high-, medium-, and low-implementation schools.

The link between redesign models and student achievement may be more affected by local implementation process than by specific model choices or by a model's components. It is important to remember that it may take up to five years for reforms to impact student outcomes (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). Accordingly, student outcomes are not discussed in this interim report. Early changes to student outcomes will be addressed in the final report in December 2007.

### ***High-Level Implementation Schools***

#### *SCHOOL DESCRIPTIONS*

School 1 is part of a rural school district in East-central Texas. Student enrollment in 2005–06 was 330 students. Sixty-two percent of students are African American, 29% Latino/Hispanic, and nine percent White. Seventy-six percent of students are economically disadvantaged, and 63% are at risk. Student mobility is 15%. The school has adopted Accelerated Schools (AS) as its HSRR program.

School 2 is part of a large urban school district in East-central Texas. Student enrollment in 2005–06 was 2,678 students. Ninety-one percent of students are Latino/Hispanic, six percent African American, three percent White, and one percent Other. Eighty-nine percent of students are economically disadvantaged, and 82% are considered at risk. Student mobility is 24%. The school has adopted Schools for a New Society (SNS) as its HSRR program.

School 3 is part of a large urban school district in Central Texas. Student enrollment in 2005–06 was 735 students. Eighty-one percent of students are Latino/Hispanic, 18% African American, two percent White, and one percent Other. Eighty-three percent of students are economically disadvantaged, and 87% are at risk. Student mobility is 40%. The school has adopted High Schools That Work (HSTW) as its HSRR program.

School 11 is a charter school in a major urban area in Central Texas. The school serves 329 students in grades PreK–12. Seventy-eight percent of students are Latino/Hispanic, 12% African American, and 10% White. Seventy-nine percent of students are economically disadvantaged and 58% at risk. Mobility is relatively low at 22%. The school has adopted International Center for Leadership in Education/Agile Mind/Capturing Kids' Hearts as its HSRR program.

School 12 is a charter school in a major urban area in Central Texas serving 111 students in grades 9–12. The majority (78%) of students are Latino/Hispanic, with 16% White and six percent African American. Ninety-six percent of students are economically disadvantaged and 96% at risk. Student mobility is a concern at 56%. The school has adopted Accelerated Schools (AS) as its HSRR program. This is the smallest school in the high-implementing group.

#### *LOCAL CONTEXT*

Implementation issues that contribute to differences in the effectiveness of HSRR may involve specific barriers or facilitators present at individual sites, such as level of staff turnover or buy-in. Understanding the context and starting points for reform efforts is critical to understanding the process and level of HSRR implementation across schools.

The high-implementing schools chose very different paths. Two of the schools, School 3 and School 2, redesigned their large schools into small learning communities. Prior to grant award, School 3 implemented the Professional Teaching Model (PTM), a professional development model based on using student work to identify gaps in instruction, as its primary method of improving instruction. It instituted a daily seminar to create a setting where students and teachers could build more personal, ongoing relationships. The school addressed behavioral issues with the Positive Behavior Support program that emphasizes positive teacher reinforcement of positive student behavior. School 2 faced serious disciplinary and safety issues, so it developed a vision for change, a locally developed redesign plan, to improve these and all facets of the school. In order to improve instruction, the school selected Agile Mind and also invested in Teachscape's Classroom Walk-Through program to collect systematic teacher-level data to create individualized professional development programs. School 1, in contrast to the above-described regular education schools, is a small rural high school, and in that sense more like Schools 11 and 12. Like School 2, it had a negative school climate that included being unsupportive of students. The school surveyed the students, teachers, and community members to identify an area of greatest need, which turned out to be improving instruction. School 1 implemented the AS program to provide gifted and talented instruction for all students. A sizable number of veteran teachers were opposed to the AS program, and many of them were replaced with new teachers who supported the program.

Schools 11 and 12 are alternative education schools. As of the 2005–06 school year, both of these schools are rated under the

Alternative Education Accountability System. Both schools are charters and tend to pay teachers less than regular school districts in the same area. School 11 received an accountability rating of Unacceptable in 2004 because of problems with mathematics performance, but earned a rating of Acceptable in 2005, although HSRR funds were not received until late in the school year. School 11 is able to include a phrase in the school's charter that allows administrators to deny admission to students with discipline problems. Lack of curricular and instructional resources was the bigger issue at this small charter school. School 12 also struggled to meet the academic needs of students based on the extremely high (96%) percentage of students at risk of dropping out of school.

The local context of the high-implementing school varies from large, urban schools to small, alternative education charter schools. Initial needs varied from disciplinary problems to a lack of instructional resources. Two of the smaller schools adopted the AS program. The two largest schools focused on building personal relationships between students and teachers, including creating small learning communities. Discipline was discussed as a problem at the high-level implementation schools, although less so than at the middle-level implementation schools.

### *MODEL ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION*

This section addresses selection, adoption, and implementation of the redesign program. The role of the district is also included, when appropriate.

School 3 implemented a redesign that was part of the district's larger efforts to divide the comprehensive high schools into small

learning academies with each academy having a major focus of study. An important part of this work has been creating career and technology training. In a separate effort, the school used the High Schools that Work (HSTW) model because of its emphasis on career and technical training. To address other key redesign components, the school uses the Professional Teaching Model (PTM) to improve instruction. At School 2, the current principal came to the school in 2004 and assembled a committee of approximately 20 stakeholders to discuss a plan for change. The committee developed a local redesign plan which contained goals for improving all aspects of the school, and integrated the Carnegie Corporation's Schools for a New Society (SNS) redesign model into that plan. At School 1, a former curriculum director at the district level (who completed the grant application) decided to use the AS model. Teachers were not involved in the model selection process, and, while there was some initial resentment, School 1 administrators and teachers have since focused a great deal of energy toward changing the negative climate of the school.

In the two alternative education schools, the administration that chose the HSRR program is no longer at the school. The School 12 principal chose the AS model, and staff indicated that they did not have input into the program selection. At School 11, which uses a variety of models to create a redesign program, administrators and a lead teacher were involved in the selection process.

Teachers reported being involved in model selection at only one of the high-implementing schools. It could be that the School 1 experience was common, and that subsequent willingness to implement the model is more important than initial involvement. However, in School 1 this meant a great deal of teacher turnover, which involves additional turmoil in the schools.

### CAPACITY

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

Based on campus survey results, high-implementation schools averaged 3.58 on a scale of 5 for this construct compared to schools with middle-level implementation, which scored an average of 3.46, and schools with lower implementation, which rated this construct an average of 3.60. (See Table 15.3 for more information on the Capacity construct.)

**Table 15.3. Mean Capacity by Group**

CAPACITY	
High-Level Implementation	3.58
Middle-Level Implementation	3.46
Low-Level Implementation	3.60

All of the high-implementing schools budgeted the majority of their grant funds to build infrastructure in staff through extensive professional development. They allocated about 80% of their grant funds for professional and contracted services and payroll costs. School 2 experienced a delay in receiving funds that affected the implementation of several grant components. Schools 1 and 3 allocated about 10% of their grant funds for supplies and materials. Alternative education schools also planned for the largest proportion of their budget to be spent on payroll or professional and contracted services to pay for training and professional development in the program chosen for redesign.

High-implementing schools allocated large portions of their grant funds for services, either

professional and contracted, or payroll. Small portions of the funds were allocated for supplies and materials, which is logical given that the needs of the schools tended to be disciplinary or instructional. In most of the schools time was seen as an important factor, with teachers in smaller schools filling multiple roles.

### *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) and 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 an HSRR model at the school level (Borman et al., 2004).

Survey results show schools with high levels of implementation averaged 3.92 on a scale of 5 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 3.49. (See Table 15.4 for more information on the Support construct.)

**Table 15.4. Mean External Support by Group**

EXTERNAL SUPPORT	
High-Level Implementation	3.92
Middle-Level Implementation	3.58
Low-Level Implementation	3.49

All five schools with high-level implementation had extensive support from an external TAP and found this service to be valuable. Such a provider supported School

3 during the lengthy process of PTM. The consultant played an integral part in School 1's AS program implementation process over a two-year period. Almost all staff reported that the guidance and support of the Technical Assistance Provider had helped the school implement its program. These schools averaged 3.92 on a 5-point scale for the Support construct, indicating regular and extensive support from TAPs.

### *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. Several factors 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 et al., 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 how completely implementation could begin.

Schools with high levels of implementation averaged 3.84 on a scale of 5 for the Focus construct. Schools with middle levels of implementation scored an average of 3.61, and those with low levels of implementation had an average construct of 3.57. The average score for high-implementing schools differed more from the middle- and low-implementing schools than scores on any of the other constructs. It also was the highest of the scale scores for the high-implementing schools. (See Table 15.5 for more information on the Focus construct.)

**Table 15.5. Mean Internal Focus by Group**

INTERNAL FOCUS	
High-Level Implementation	3.84
Middle-Level Implementation	3.61
Low-Level Implementation	3.57

School 1 had high teacher support for both the general concept and specific components. Staff members at School 3 reported optimism about the campus reform and their new roles in the decision-making process in the academies. Teachers said they felt supported by the administration, and the principal also said that teacher support was strong. However, there were issues with the academy structure, mainly teachers being asked to teach more subjects and having more class preparations. Staff members are not sure that academies will increase accountability for student performance, as there is still about 25% crossover between academies to accommodate student schedules. At School 2, there was a similar pattern. There is broad support for overall reform goals, and teacher buy-in is high for that. However, support for specific aspects of the program varied. There was a large amount of teacher turnover due to restructuring. The lack of familiarity with initiatives affects the level of buy-in. About half of the staff surveyed said that teachers were supportive of the program, but satisfaction is low with the integration of resources to support the program. At School 1, teacher buy-in and support for redesign efforts has grown substantially since the widespread personnel changes. Staff described the positive impact of the AS shared leadership strategy. Most programs are in alignment on a daily basis with the AS model. The model's monitoring process is embedded in the daily routine of the school.

Perhaps because of the nature of the grant, teachers in the alternative education implementation schools felt that their options were either to get on board with the HSRR

program or to leave the campus. Teachers who stayed tend to be positive about the program, although at these schools, especially School 12 using the AS model, teachers and administrators were concerned about the amount of work necessary to implement the program.

Overall, school personnel indicated support for the goals of the reform, whether or not they supported specific components. In some schools, it was reported that teachers who did not support the reform left the school.

### PEDAGOGY

This construct refers to the degree to which instructional practices align with the goals of the chosen reform strategy. While various reform models advocate different instructional approaches, some reform 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.

Combining survey results, high-implementing schools averaged 3.62 on a scale of 5 for the Pedagogy construct compared to schools in the middle category and the low category that scored an average of 3.56 and 3.51. The average Pedagogy score for the high-implementing schools was virtually the same as that for the middle- and low-level implementation schools. (See Table 15.6 for more information on the Pedagogy construct.)

**Table 15.6. Mean Pedagogy by Group**

PEDAGOGY	
High-Level Implementation	3.62
Middle-Level Implementation	3.56
Low-Level Implementation	3.51

All five schools with high-level implementation have experienced pedagogical changes on campus related to extensive professional development. All say that students now spend more time in cooperative learning teams, although only one school said that students spend significant time on project-based learning or interdisciplinary coursework. At Schools 2 and 3, changing the schedule and creating smaller learning communities also resulted in positive pedagogical changes. Overall the respondents at School 3 were evenly divided on whether students were using technology more effectively or whether the use of textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets in teaching basic skills and core content had been reduced. At School 2, the new schedule allows for collaborative curriculum and cluster team meetings. Teachers also appreciate the smaller class sizes in grades nine and ten and said that this facilitated cooperative learning. Because there is so much professional development at the school, changes as a result of the many different kinds of training are uneven. Training on using student data has been implemented successfully, but some teachers said there needed to be more time to let the various other trainings be incorporated into their teaching practices. A majority of staff said that use of workbooks, worksheets, and textbooks was less frequent. School 1 staff and students described an environment that has changed from traditional approaches to a more active learning environment with teachers grouping students, facilitating lessons, and displaying student work. Teachers frequently use differentiated instruction and grouping. Most staff members who were surveyed reported that classroom learning activities had changed a great deal with more effective use of technology. Only about half of respondents said that students were engaged in interdisciplinary or project-

based work during the school day. An advantage at the alternative education schools is the tendency for class sizes to be very small. In one school, staff stated that the classes were so small that group projects often involved the entire class.

Teachers at all schools talked about changes to classroom activities. Cooperative learning teams were the most common new activity, especially for the regular education schools. Alternative education schools reported less dependency on worksheets. Learning teams in the smallest schools could mean an entire class of students.

### *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 (USDE, 2002).

Based on survey results, high-implementation schools averaged 3.59 on a scale of 5 for the Outcomes construct compared to middle-implementation schools that scored a mean of 3.47 and low-implementation schools that rated this construct an average of 3.33. (See Table 15.7 for more information on the Outcomes construct.)

All of the high-implementation schools reported an actual or anticipated increase in academic achievement and improved quality of student-teacher relationships. At School 3, reform has yet to impact academic achievement. Teachers report that they believe it will improve because of the work they have done to develop a campus-specific instructional sequence. Teachers at School 2 said there had been a dramatic increase in reading/English language arts (ELA)

Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) scores last year, and the number of students passing TAKS increased slightly in social studies and science but declined in mathematics. Teachers describe significant changes for the better in student engagement and motivation and approve of the overall direction of restructuring. School 2 has moved to a total-inclusion model for special education students in all of the core areas, and this has been challenging. School 1 has experienced a dramatic, positive change in school climate due to having stable leadership and teachers who support the AS model. The current teaching staff has embraced its role in implementing the AS initiatives. Because of the recent staff turnover and the subsequent intensive focus on training, several staff members said it was too early to see the impact on student achievement. Teachers are trying to identify student strengths and teach to them, and teachers have time during weekly meetings to discuss issues that special needs students are encountering.

**Table 15.7. Mean Outcomes by Group**

OUTCOMES	
High-Level Implementation	3.59
Middle-Level Implementation	3.47
Low-Level Implementation	3.33

Teachers at alternative schools acknowledge that while TAKS scores have increased, there is still room for improvement. Both of the high-implementation alternative schools applied for and received an accountability rating under the Alternative Education Accountability System, in which increases in TAKS scores can be used to determine the accountability rating. Teachers at alternative schools pointed out that only teachers who are really dedicated tend to teach at these schools, and they tended to attribute change

in student outcomes more to the teaching staff and their attitudes than the reform programs themselves.

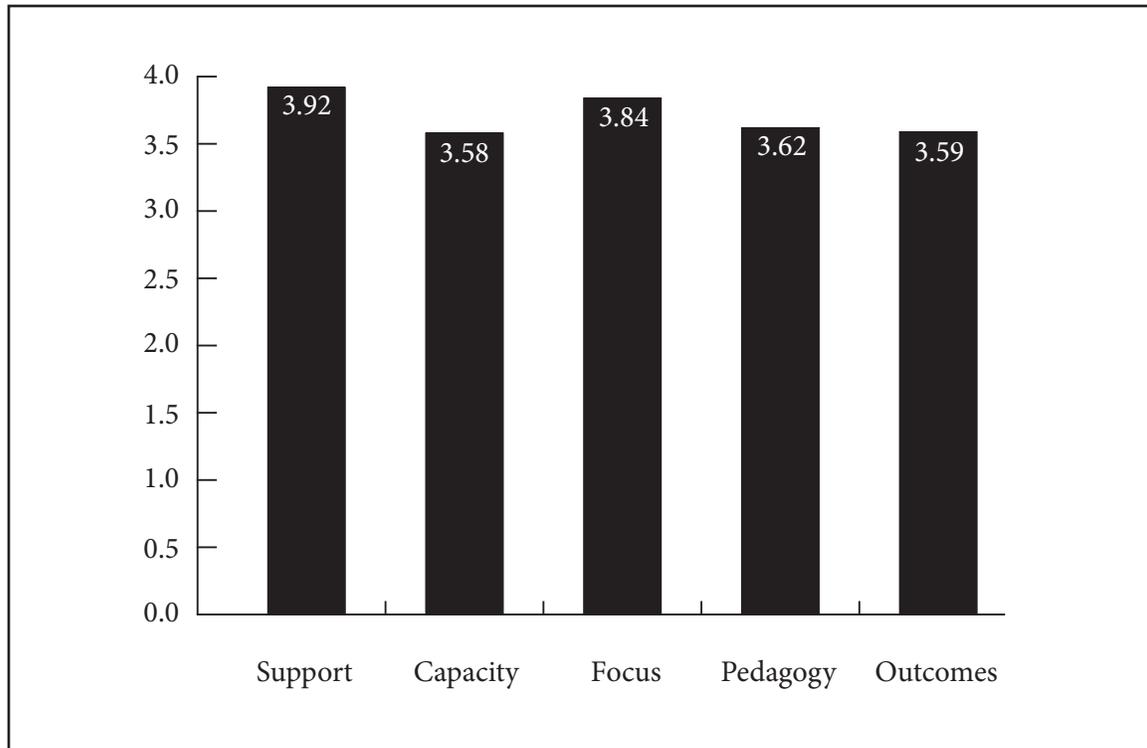
At all schools, teachers seemed to understand that changes in student achievement would lag behind all of the other changes that were being made, but all were positive about either early achievement outcomes or anticipated outcomes in addition to the positive changes in relationships and climate.

**IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY**

This section summarizes factors that describe why HSRR efforts may 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 reform impacts.

Each of the high-level implementation schools reported a more positive school climate since beginning its HSRR program. The school climate at School 3 has dramatically improved. School 3 has made progress in creating an academic focus aimed at helping students graduate. Parents, community members, and staff credited the principal for this progress. They reported that the climate was surprisingly positive given the level of pressure and scrutiny the school receives. Students are also positive about the direction the school is taking. The climate at School 2 has also improved greatly, most noticeably in improved safety and conduct on campus, which had previously been a problem. The decrease in discipline problems has created a climate more amenable to learning, and expectations for academic engagement and achievement have increased. At School 1, the administration and teaching staff have undertaken a major effort to address substantial challenges, such as an initially unsupportive faculty, and are making great strides at implementing the AS model.

**Figure 15.1. Mean Score on Restructuring Constructs for High-Level Implementation Schools**



The school climate has changed for the better, and all parties expect it to continue to improve.

Teachers in alternative education implementation schools acknowledge that their students are different from students in regular high schools and that teachers face special challenges because of the nature of the students who attend. However, they also acknowledge that the small class sizes at their schools allow them to implement the reform strategies more easily.

A summary of the scores on all restructuring constructs for high-implementing schools is presented in Figure 15.1.

### *SCHOOL CLIMATE*

The school climates across the implementation categories indicate that the highest

implementing schools have the highest overall school climate scores. It is of note, however, that this score is still reflective of schools that are developing their HSRR programs and in the implementing stage rather than in the fulfilling stage.

Staff survey results show schools with high levels of implementation averaged 3.86 on a scale of 5 for the school climate score. Schools with middle-level implementation had an average score of 3.80, while schools with low levels of implementation averaged 3.78 for the school climate score. This pattern, with a relative lack of difference between middle-level and low-level implementation schools, may be a result of how staff at low-implementing schools are reflecting the attention to the school provided by the grant funding, without a true recognition of the challenges involved in

whole-school reform. (See Table 15.8 for more information on school climate.)

**Table 15.8. Mean School Climate Score by Group\***

SCHOOL CLIMATE	
High-Level Implementation	3.86
Middle-Level Implementation	3.80
Low-Level Implementation	3.78

\*Note. 1-5 scale

At three of the high-implementing schools, the highest rating was on the leadership scale. At School 2, the highest rating was on the instruction scale, and the expectations scale was the highest at the School 11. At all but one school the lowest rating was on the order dimension. This is a common pattern nationally, as order tends to be a difficult construct. At School 11 the lowest rating was on the involvement dimension. This school is an alternative school and the nature of the type of students who attend probably affects the differences in scale values compared to the other schools.

### **Middle-Level Implementation Schools**

#### *SCHOOL DESCRIPTIONS*

School 4 is part of a large urban school district in East-central Texas. Student enrollment in 2005–06 was 668 students. Eighty-eight percent of students are African American, 11% Latino/Hispanic, and one percent White. Eighty-five percent of students are economically disadvantaged, and 85% are at risk. Student mobility is 39%. Twenty-eight percent of students require special education services. The school has adopted SNS as its HSRR program.

School 5 is part of a large urban school district in South-central Texas. Student enrollment in 2005–06 was 1,408 students. Ninety-nine percent of students are Latino/Hispanic and one percent African American. Ninety-nine percent of students are economically disadvantaged, and 77% are at risk. Student mobility is 34%. The school has adopted HSTW as its HSRR program.

School 6 is part of a large urban school district in East-central Texas. Student enrollment in 2005–06 was 1,359 students. Ninety-one percent of students are African American, eight percent Latino/Hispanic, 0.2% White, and 0.7% Other. Seventy-two percent of students are economically disadvantaged, and 79% are at risk. Student mobility is 35%. The school has adopted SNS as its HSRR program.

School 10 is a charter school residential facility located in eastern Texas. The 91 students live in cottages with other students and house parents. Fifty-two percent of students are White, 35% are African American and 12% Latino/Hispanic. One hundred percent of students are economically disadvantaged and 93% at risk. Student mobility is very high at 80%. The school has adopted Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound (ELOB) as its HSRR program. This is the smallest of the schools in the middle-level implementation group, and the nature of the school makes it quite different from the other schools.

School 13 is part of a large urban school district in North Texas. Student enrollment in 2005–06 was 223 students. Seventy-three percent of students are Latino/Hispanic, 19% African American, and seven percent White. Forty percent of students are economically disadvantaged, and 100% are at risk. Student mobility is very high at 71%. The school is a non-traditional option for students who

are English language learners or who have previously dropped out of high school and has adopted HSTW as its HSRR program.

### *LOCAL CONTEXT*

Implementation issues that contribute to differences in the effectiveness of HSRR may involve specific barriers or facilitators present at individual sites, such as level of staff turnover or buy-in. Understanding the context and starting points for reform efforts is critical to understanding the process and level of HSRR implementation across schools.

Schools with middle-level implementation faced some of the same challenges as schools with high-level implementation, but the magnitude of the issues was greater. Student discipline was an issue that all but one of the middle-level implementation schools had in common, along with academic achievement that was generally not where it needed to be. School 4 had been academically successful, serving as a magnet program for the performing arts. However, academic achievement has significantly declined in recent years. In response to continued low performance on state standardized tests, many changes occurred at the school recently but without much success. The school has had issues with discipline, possibly resulting from inconsistency in the administration in enforcing school policies. School 5 has had eight principals in ten years. Students reported feeling fearful and unsafe on campus but were upset that the community consistently focused on negative events on campus. Despite these challenges, School 5 has received Academically Acceptable accountability ratings for the past three school years. School 6 has recently faced many challenges due to low academic performance, inadequate supplies and instructional

resources, student discipline issues, poor student attendance, poor communication with and possible neglect by the district, and a district-ordered reconstitution. School 10 is a residential facility, and School 13 a non-traditional school with a day program focused on English language learners and a night program for adult students who have previously dropped out of school. Both of these schools have very high mobility rates due to the nature of the program. An additional complicating factor is that charter schools tend to pay teachers less than regular school districts in the same area do.

The middle-level implementation schools, like the high-level implementation schools, range from very small to very large. Two of the schools adopted SNS, two HSTW, and one ELOB. Discipline tends to be a problem at these schools, and high staff turnover at all schools may interfere with implementation of the HSRR program.

### *MODEL ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION*

This section addresses selection, adoption, and implementation of the redesign program. The role of the district is also included, when appropriate.

The three larger middle-level implementation schools chose to redesign their schools into small learning academies with an emphasis on professional development. School 4 selected the SNS redesign model. Key strategies include team planning and intensive professional development. Initial implementation was slowed due to a prolonged negotiation process with TEA that resulted in a delayed release of funds. Such prolonged processes typically occur due to delays in the receipt of required

documentation from grantees. The school has also had problems designating a TAP. At School 5, HSTW was selected as the redesign model before the current principal was hired. A primary focus of the redesign effort is addressing the school's high dropout rate by better preparing freshmen and establishing strong bonds with them as they enter the school. School 6 adopted SNS as its reform model. School 6 began implementing the HSRR grant during the summer of 2005 with several redesign changes. The School 6 redesign program also focuses on mathematics instruction.

In the two alternative schools, the administration that chose the HSRR program is no longer at the school. At School 13, although a previous administrator selected the HSTW program, staff felt the program provides an element of stability for the school while transitions are being made with new teachers and administrators. School 10 also has a program, ELOB, which was chosen by staff no longer at the school.

Staff at the middle-level implementation schools spoke of not being involved in the selection of the redesign program, just as high-level implementation school staff did. However, in the middle-level schools there was not as much discussion of teachers getting on board once the program was implemented. There was a focus in all three larger schools on small learning academies, which makes them somewhat more similar to the small schools in this category and, as noted earlier, tends to ease implementation.

**CAPACITY**

School capacity refers to the infrastructure schools need to implement and maintain a restructuring effort. Infrastructure includes access to appropriate materials, sufficient staffing and planning time, and adequate fiscal resources to support staff, materials, and technical

assistance (Datnow & Stringfield, 2000). Middle-level implementation schools averaged 3.46 on a scale of 5 for this construct compared to schools with high-level implementation, which scored an average of 3.58, and schools with lower implementation, which rated this construct an average of 3.60. Middle-level implementation schools had the lowest scale scores on the Capacity construct of the three implementation level groups. This is also the lowest of the scale scores for this group. (See Table 15.9 for more information on the Capacity construct.)

**Table 15.9. Mean Capacity by Group**

CAPACITY	
High-Level Implementation	3.58
Middle-Level Implementation	3.46
Low-Level Implementation	3.60

In schools with middle-level implementation, there were significant resource barriers to school capacity. One of the middle-level implementation schools, School 5, was partially funded by private sources, and no budgeting data were available to evaluators. Schools 4 and 6 budgeted between 54% and 85% of their grant funds for payroll costs and professional and contracted services, and between 12% and 29% of their funds for capital outlay, possibly to alleviate resource issues.

Alternative education implementation schools generally planned for the largest proportion of their budget to be spent on payroll or professional and contracted services to pay for training and professional development in the program chosen for redesign. Schools 10 and 13 budgeted around one third of their funds for supplies and materials.

While middle-level implementation schools were similar to the high-level implementation group in that they budgeted the greatest proportion of their funds for payroll or

professional and contracted services, they tended to budget higher proportions of funds to categories such as capital outlay or supplies.

### 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) and 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 an HSRR model at the school level (Borman et al., 2004).

Survey results show schools with middle levels of implementation averaged 3.58 on a scale of 5 for the Support construct, compared to 3.92 for high-level implementation schools and 3.49 for low-level implementation schools. The level reported for this group of schools is much closer to the level reported by the low-level implementation schools than the high-level implementation schools. (See Table 15.10 for more information on the Support construct.)

**Table 15.10. Mean External Support by Group**

EXTERNAL SUPPORT	
High-Level Implementation	3.92
Middle-Level Implementation	3.58
Low-Level Implementation	3.49

The five schools with middle-level implementation had varied levels of support from external TAPs and the district. Schools 4

and 6 rated their technical assistance 1.00 on a 5–point scale, so there were issues with poor service at those schools. Staff and materials at all schools seemed adequate, but responses were mixed on whether planning time was sufficient, which is possible given the many new activities and requirements related to the program. School 4 used an external consultant who provided training on Brain-Based Learning, and there have been trainings by the regional Education Service Center. School 5 received extensive professional development through a consultant from the Southern Regional Education Board who provided resources and strategies for tackling weak subject areas. The school also had a TAP whose services were rated 3.50 on a 5–point scale. School 6 vastly increased its opportunities for staff to attend external professional development and received adequate support from the district.

AS provided the highest level of on-campus support according to school staff. School 10 staff members were disappointed in the lack of support from ELOB. Both of the alternative education schools are charters and do not have district staff to provide support.

Overall, the middle-level implementation schools report weak levels of assistance from external TAPs, and two of the five do not have district staff to provide support in addition to what is provided at the school level.

### 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. Several factors 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 et al., 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 how completely implementation could begin.

Based on survey results, schools with middle levels of implementation averaged 3.61 on a scale of 5 for the Focus construct, compared to 3.84 for high-level implementation schools and 3.57 for low-level implementation schools. Middle-level implementation schools scored much closer to the low-level implementation schools than the high-level implementation schools. (See Table 15.11 for more information on the Focus construct.)

**Table 15.11. Mean Internal Focus by Group**

INTERNAL FOCUS	
High-Level Implementation	3.84
Middle-Level Implementation	3.61
Low-Level Implementation	3.57

Schools with middle-level implementation reported moderately high overall levels of staff buy-in and support for their HSRR programs, although they were more tentative than staff at high-level implementation schools and there was initial resistance at School 6. The HSRR grant program in Schools 4 and 6 features a variety of initiatives and efforts that are showing mixed results. School 5 is coordinating HSRR's HSTW with an Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) program, and some staff are confused about which is which. Perhaps because of the nature of the grant, teachers in the alternative

education implementation schools felt that their options were either to get on board with the HSRR program or to leave the campus. The level of internal focus for middle-level implementation schools was more mixed than the high-level implementation schools, with more mixed input on the level of teacher buy-in. The middle level of implementation is reflected in the level of internal focus.

**PEDAGOGY**

This construct refers to the degree to which instructional practices align with the goals of the chosen reform strategy. While various reform models advocate different instructional approaches, some reform 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.

Middle-implementing schools averaged 3.56 on a scale of 5 for the Pedagogy construct. This is similar to the score for the low-level implementation group (3.51). The score for the high-level implementation group is 3.62, which is not much different from the other groups, indicating that overall pedagogy does not differ widely among the schools. (See Table 15.12 for more information on the Pedagogy construct.)

**Table 15.12. Mean Pedagogy by Group**

PEDAGOGY	
High-Level Implementation	3.62
Middle-Level Implementation	3.56
Low-Level Implementation	3.51

Students in all schools with middle-level implementation are spending more time in cooperative learning teams, and Schools 4 and 5 report increased use of technology. Only at School 4 does a majority of staff agree that they are using textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets less than they had in the past. At Schools 4 and 6, classroom learning activities seem to have changed a great deal but less so at School 5. An advantage at the alternative education implementation schools is the tendency for class sizes to be very small. In one school, staff stated that the classes were so small that group projects often involved the entire class. Staff at all of the schools talked about increased interdisciplinary teaching, fewer worksheets, and more project-based work. In all of the schools, a majority of teachers stated that classroom learning activities have changed a great deal.

Classroom learning activities have changed in the middle-level implementation groups, but instructional practices are still being aligned with the reform strategies. Like the high-implementing schools, a focus on learning teams is the most-reported activity in the middle-level 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 (USDE, 2002).

Based on survey results, middle-implementation schools averaged 3.47 on a scale of 5 for the Outcomes construct compared to high-implementation schools

that scored a mean of 3.59 and low-implementation schools that rated this construct an average of 3.33. This average rating was midway between the scores of the high- and low-level implementation schools. (See Table 15.13 for more information on the Outcomes construct.)

**Table 15.13. Mean Outcomes by Group**

OUTCOMES	
High-Level Implementation	3.59
Middle-Level Implementation	3.47
Low-Level Implementation	3.33

The biggest perceived changes in Schools 4 and 6 have been in increased teacher collaboration and improved student-teacher relationships, and at those two schools a majority of respondents said that student achievement had been positively impacted. Outcomes appears to be a continued area of challenge for School 5, with relatively low percentages of teachers agreeing with the statements regarding the Outcomes construct, although 41% agreed that teachers are collaborating more than they had in the past, and 46% agreed that interactions between students and teachers are now more positive.

In the alternative schools, teachers acknowledge that while TAKS scores have increased, there was still room for improvement. School 10 reports greatly improved relationships among students, at least in the form of lower levels of violence. One of the two schools applied for and received an accountability rating under the Alternative Education Accountability System, in which increases in TAKS scores can be used to determine the accountability rating. This area appears to continue to be an area of challenge for School 13, with low percentages

of teachers agreeing with the statements in the Outcomes construct.

Schools 5 and 13 reported ongoing problems with student outcomes. Across schools the biggest growth is in the area of relationships, both among teachers and between students and teachers.

**IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY**

This section summarizes factors that describe why HSRR efforts may 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 reform impacts.

All five schools with middle-level implementation have had issues with student discipline, and School 4, School 5 and School 13 have had high administrative turnover. This year School 4 has seen a major investment in resources and materials and a clearly specified structure for change to which all parties are being held accountable. Discipline problems are being addressed with both rewards and consequences. The appearance of the school has improved, and students seem to feel more positive about the school. School 5 has restructured into three smaller learning communities. Teachers and parents say they hope that the new principal will bring more stability to the school. Scheduling conflicts and whether to structure the learning communities by themes or grade levels need to be addressed. The staff and community have rallied around School 6 in response to the pressure to raise student achievement. There is strong enthusiasm for the effort to improve student achievement and provide strong leadership to guide that effort. Some staff noted that there

were multiple grants and programs at the school and that the HSRR grant had allowed the school to coordinate all of those initiatives. Teachers in Schools 10 and 13 acknowledge that their students are different from students in regular high schools and that teachers face special challenges because of the nature of the students who attend. However, they also acknowledge that the small class sizes at their schools allow them to implement the reform strategies more easily. Teachers also pointed out that only teachers who are really dedicated tend to teach at these schools, and they tended to attribute change in student outcomes more to the teaching staff and their attitudes than the reform programs themselves.

A summary of the scores on all restructuring constructs for middle-implementing schools is presented in Figure 15.2.

**SCHOOL CLIMATE**

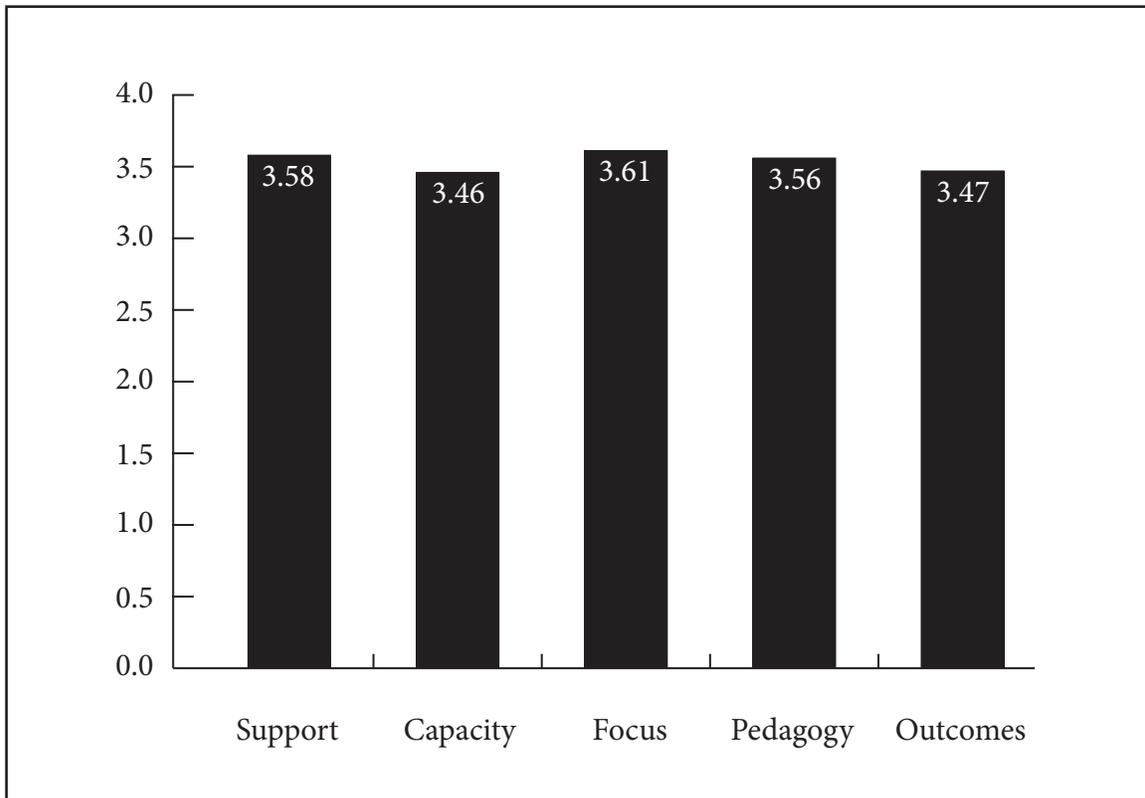
Staff survey results show schools with middle levels of implementation averaged 3.80 on a scale of 5 for the school climate score. Schools with high-level implementation had an average score of 3.86, while schools with low levels of implementation averaged 3.78 for the school climate score. This pattern is similar to that in several of the constructs discussed above, in that middle-level implementation schools are more similar to low-level than high-level implementation schools. (See Table 15.14 for more information on school climate.)

**Table 15.14. Mean School Climate Score by Group\***

SCHOOL CLIMATE	
High-Level Implementation	3.86
Middle-Level Implementation	3.80
Low-Level Implementation	3.78

\*Note. 1-5 scale

**Figure 15.2 Mean Score on Restructuring Constructs for Middle-Level Implementation Schools**



Schools with middle-level implementation showed medium levels of school climate, compared to high- and low-level implementation schools. At four of the five schools, the highest rating was on the instruction scale. At three of the five schools, the lowest rating was on the order scale, which is understandable given the increased focus on instruction and the continued issues with discipline at these schools. At the other two schools, the lowest rating was on the involvement scale, which is related to the structure of the schools. Both are alternative schools, one being a residential facility and the other serving adult students wishing to finish a diploma. Order would not be an issue at the latter, because all students are there by choice.

### ***Low-Level Implementation Schools***

#### ***SCHOOL DESCRIPTIONS***

School 7 is located in East-central Texas in a small rural town. Student enrollment in 2005–06 was 76 students. Ninety percent of students are African American, seven percent Latino/Hispanic, and three percent White. Ninety-three percent of students are economically disadvantaged, and 86% are at risk. Student mobility is 18%. Twenty-nine percent of students require special education services. The school has adopted HSTW as its HSRR program.

School 8 is located in Central Texas and is its own school district. Student enrollment in

2005–06 was 69 students. The school serves grades PreK–12, and the demographic data represents all grade levels. Thirty-eight percent of students are White, 31% African American, 31% Latino/Hispanic, and one percent Other. Sixty-six percent of students are economically disadvantaged, and 53% are at risk. Student mobility is 20%. The school has adopted the Dana Center Support and Odyssey Computer Program as its HSRR programs.

School 9 is located in East-central Texas and is part of a district that is adjacent to a large urban school district. Student enrollment in 2005–06 was 1,251 students. Seventy-three percent of students are African American, 26% Latino/Hispanic, 0.6% White, and 0.4% Other. Ninety-six percent of students are economically disadvantaged, and 55% are at risk. Student mobility is 28%. The school has adopted a locally-developed HSRR program.

#### *LOCAL CONTEXT*

Implementation issues that contribute to differences in the effectiveness of HSRR may involve specific barriers or facilitators present at individual sites, such as level of staff turnover or buy-in. Understanding the context and starting points for reform efforts is critical to understanding the process and level of HSRR implementation across schools.

Schools with low levels of implementation face overwhelming challenges that may impede their HSRR program implementation. All three schools have serious issues with very low academic performance. School 9 has a reputation of being out of control due to vandalism, violence, and truancy. School 7 has struggled with the cumulative effects of inconsistent leadership at both the district and campus levels, including staff turnover and discipline issues. School 8 has experienced significant staff turnover, which is a substantial

challenge for a small school. While most of these factors can also be found at the higher-level implementation schools, in the low-level implementation schools they appear to have stronger consequences, perhaps due to other factors such as the overall school environment.

Like the middle-level implementation schools, these low-level implementation schools report high teacher turnover. The three schools, two small and one large, each adopted a different HSRR program, only one of which was also used by high- or middle- level implementation schools. One school reports a very high percentage of students utilizing special education services.

#### *MODEL ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION*

This section addresses selection, adoption, and implementation of the redesign program across the implementation levels. The role of the district is also included, when appropriate.

In these schools, varied procedures were used in adoption and implementation of their HSRR models. District leaders reconstituted School 9 following its Academically Unacceptable rating. The district reviewed the school's performance and assessed the different areas of need. After the reconstitution, school leaders initiated the next steps in the redesign process. Students were placed in small learning communities organized by grade levels, and classrooms were clustered by grade levels to the extent possible. The school also purchased an On Campus Intervention (OCI) program to be used to provide interventions, instruction, and a basis for change for students with mild to moderate behavioral problems. School 7's principal of two years ago wrote the grant and selected the model without faculty involvement. During early implementation,

representatives from HSTW traveled to School 7 to stage three after-school professional development workshops, and most of the staff attended a summer HSTW convention. However, beyond participating in training, faculty, student, and parent groups could not provide basic information about the grant or the program, which has stalled due to teacher and administrative turnover. School 8's restructuring efforts are part of a larger transformation that began years ago with the arrival of the current superintendent. Reforms at this school are locally designed, with their model being the product of a community forum. School 8 selected the Dana Center as the program provider as a result of that forum. The school also brought in Odyssey, a credit recovery computer program and a computer lab that houses 20 computers. School 8 also engaged in professional development activities designed to raise student achievement through curricular alignment and staff team building.

### *CAPACITY*

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

Based on survey results, low-implementation schools averaged 3.60 on a scale of 5 for this construct compared to schools with high-level implementation, which scored an average of 3.58, and schools with middle-level implementation, which rated this construct an average of 3.46. The low-level implementation schools had a higher score on the Capacity construct than either of the other two groups of schools. (See Table 15.15 for more information on the Capacity construct.)

**Table 15.15. Mean Capacity by Group**

<b>CAPACITY</b>	
High-Level Implementation	3.58
Middle-Level Implementation	3.46
Low-Level Implementation	3.60

Schools with low-level implementation, like schools with middle-level implementation, had significant issues with school capacity. Schools with low levels of implementation allocated significant portions of their grant funds for payroll costs and professional and contracted services, as did the higher implementing schools. At School 7, teachers reported that due to the small size of the school there was no one to take on the coordination of the program. Teachers there also reported they had not been a part of decision-making concerning the redesign program. School 8 also reported little shared leadership, and reported ample monetary resources. The issues at School 9 were different, perhaps because it is a large school. Turnover and lack of qualified teachers was reported as more of an issue there.

The low-level implementation schools had a higher score on the capacity construct than either of the other two groups of schools. These results seem contradictory to the implementation scores, but it may be that staff at low-level implementation schools is pleased with the influx of money into the school, without a true understanding of the requirements of the redesign programs.

### *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) and 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 an HSRR model at the school level (Borman et al., 2004).

Survey results show schools with low levels of implementation averaged 3.49 on a scale of 5 for the Support construct. Schools with high-level implementation had an average score of 3.92, while schools with middle levels of implementation rated this construct an average of 3.58. (See Table 15.16 for more information on the Support construct.)

**Table 15.16. Mean External Support by Group**

EXTERNAL SUPPORT	
High-Level Implementation	3.92
Middle-Level Implementation	3.58
Low-Level Implementation	3.49

Low-level implementation schools received extensive professional development from various external sources, but the trainings' effectiveness varied. School 9 received a great deal of professional development from their Education Service Center, the county Department of Education, and a local Teachers Institute. The school received some technical assistance and rated this service 2.00 on a 5-point scale. A majority of staff at School 9 indicated that they thoroughly understood the school's HSRR program. School 7 has participated in a variety of trainings, including two out-of-state conferences this year, but no training has been scheduled or held in 2006–07. New staff members have not been exposed to the training nor briefed on the model. District assistance appears to be

limited, and the program has stalled. School 8 had professional development provided by the Dana Center, but some staff members questioned its effectiveness. Additional professional development occurred with the superintendent, principal, and two teachers at meetings in another city for HSRR grantees. School 8 comprises its own district, so it does not have an external district as an assistance provider; however, the superintendent is the leader of reform efforts and is very supportive of reform at the school.

Similarly to the other constructs, the low-level implementation schools were the least consistent of the three groups of schools in their description of the External Support construct. They report varying levels of support and varying quality of support received.

*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. Several factors 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 et al., 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 how completely implementation could begin.

Schools with low levels of implementation averaged 3.57 on a scale of 5 for the Focus construct. Schools with high levels of implementation scored an average of 3.84, and those with middle levels of implementation had

an average construct of 3.61. (See Table 15.17 for more information on the Focus construct.)

Schools with low-level implementation ranged from having very high to very low levels of staff buy-in and support for their HSRR programs. Support for the program was high at School 9, which was attributed to the strong leadership of the new principal. Teachers indicated that many positive changes were occurring at the school. At School 7 the program was largely at a standstill due to high staff turnover. At School 8, teachers were not well versed in the specifics of the HSRR grant, but they were positive about the direction of the school and the changes they had seen over the last two years.

The average score on the 5-point Focus scale was 3.57 for this group of schools. Staff in these schools still seemed in a “wait and see” mode, compared to the high-implementation schools in which teachers, although not involved in the selection of the program, bought into it. While teachers reported positive response to the redesign programs, they were not as well-versed in the model as teachers in other schools.

**Table 15.17. Mean Internal Focus by Group**

INTERNAL FOCUS	
High-Level Implementation	3.84
Middle-Level Implementation	3.61
Low-Level Implementation	3.57

### *PEDAGOGY*

This construct refers to the degree to which instructional practices align with the goals of the chosen reform strategy. While various reform models advocate different instructional approaches, some reform 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.

Based on survey results, low-implementing schools averaged 3.51 on a scale of 5 for the Pedagogy construct compared to schools in the high category that scored an average 3.62 and schools in the middle category that rated this construct a mean of 3.56. (See Table 15.18 for more information on the Pedagogy construct.)

**Table 15.18. Mean Pedagogy by Group**

PEDAGOGY	
High-Level Implementation	3.62
Middle-Level Implementation	3.56
Low-Level Implementation	3.51

Pedagogical changes resulting from the HSRR program ranged from many to very few at these schools. School 9 reported a large number of pedagogical changes that resulted from the professional development that teachers received. Teachers now teach from the perspective of the learners. There was little evidence that significant pedagogical change has occurred at School 7 as a result of grant implementation. At School 8, it did not seem that any dramatic pedagogical change had occurred in terms of specific techniques, but teachers and administrators noted that there is a marked difference in terms of higher expectations of students that they link to increases in TAKS scores. The biggest changes seem to be the reliance on multiple methods of instruction and the Odyssey credit-recovery program.

The average Pedagogy score for this group was 3.51. There was little pedagogical change

at two of the three schools. Unlike the other two implementation groups, this group scored highest on the use of technology in the classroom. Turnover in staff appears to have affected adoption of methods learned in training.

**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 (USDE, 2002).

Combining survey results, low-implementation schools averaged 3.33 on a scale of 5 for the Outcomes construct compared to high-implementation schools that scored a mean of 3.59 and middle-implementation schools that rated this construct an average of 3.47. The average rating on the Outcomes scale was the lowest of the scale values for the low-implementing schools and the value that was the furthest from the scores of the middle-implementing schools. (See Table 15.19 for more information on the Outcomes construct.)

**Table 15.19. Mean Outcomes by Group**

OUTCOMES	
High-Level Implementation	3.59
Middle-Level Implementation	3.47
Low-Level Implementation	3.33

The three schools with low-level implementation indicated that teacher-student relationships are now more positive, and Schools 8 and 9 reported that student achievement had been positively impacted as well. At School 9, special needs students are

included in the regular classrooms; at School 7 they are in their own classrooms with the teacher using manipulatives more frequently than before HSRR. At School 8 no information was available, but all respondents agreed that the needs of such students were adequately addressed. Restructuring Outcomes appears to be an area of challenge for School 7, with relatively low percentages of teachers agreeing with the statements regarding this construct.

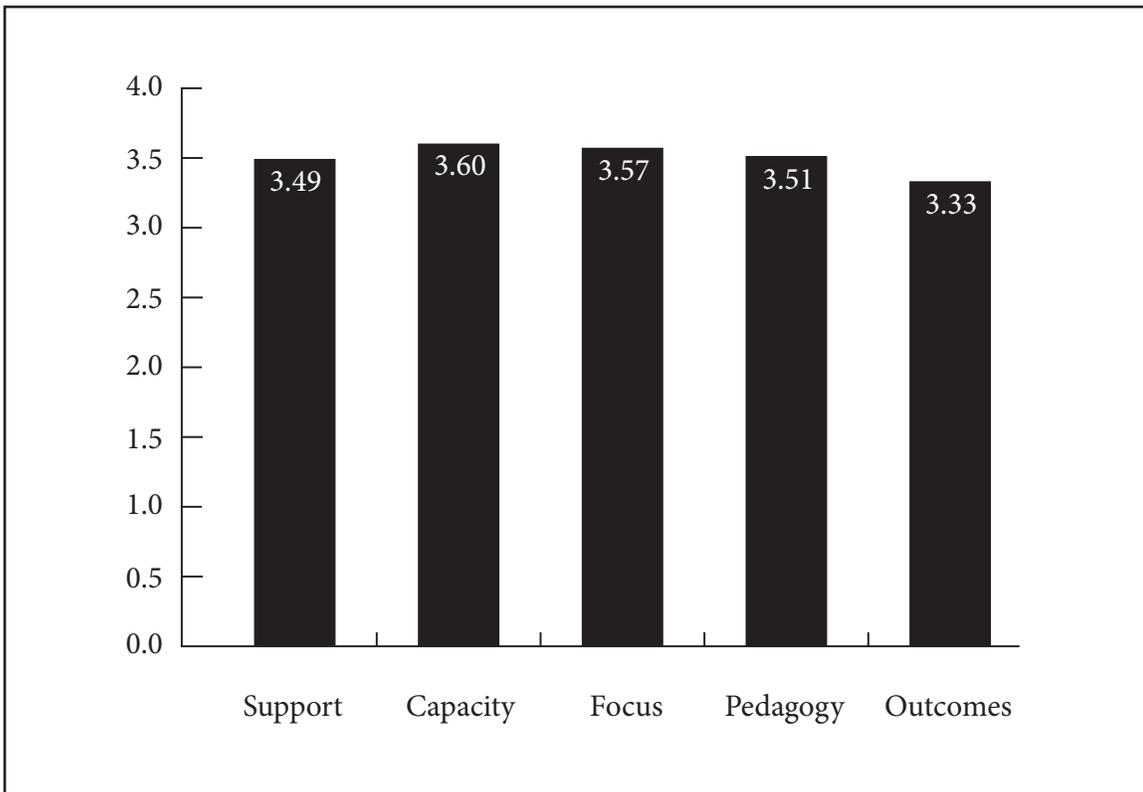
While survey respondents reported being hopeful about outcomes of the redesign programs, there was little evidence at this early stage of improved outcomes.

**IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY**

This section summarizes factors that describe why HSRR efforts may 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 reform impacts.

All of the schools with low-level implementation have had exceptionally high staff and administrative turnover. Having so many new teachers and administrative staff meant that familiarity with the reform initiative was not as extensive as in schools with higher levels of implementation. School 9 reported improved leadership and student discipline. School 8 reported higher expectations for students, increased attention to standards, and more options for students who need additional assistance. School 7 has made few gains toward improving student achievement, but the climate of the school reportedly features a renewed sense of hope linked to the commitment and passion of the new principal and new staff, leading to the potential for significant change in the future. All three schools have high levels of

**Figure 15.3. Mean Score on Restructuring Constructs for Low-Level Implementation Schools**



expectation and hope for future results, but little evidence at this stage of implementation.

A summary of the scores on all restructuring constructs for low-implementing schools is presented in Figure 15.3.

**SCHOOL CLIMATE**

The school climates for the low implementing schools is lower than the other two groups, but not remarkably so. Staff survey results show schools with low levels of implementation averaged 3.78 on a scale of 5 for the school climate score. Schools with high-level implementation had an average score of 3.86, while schools with medium levels of implementation averaged 3.80 for the school

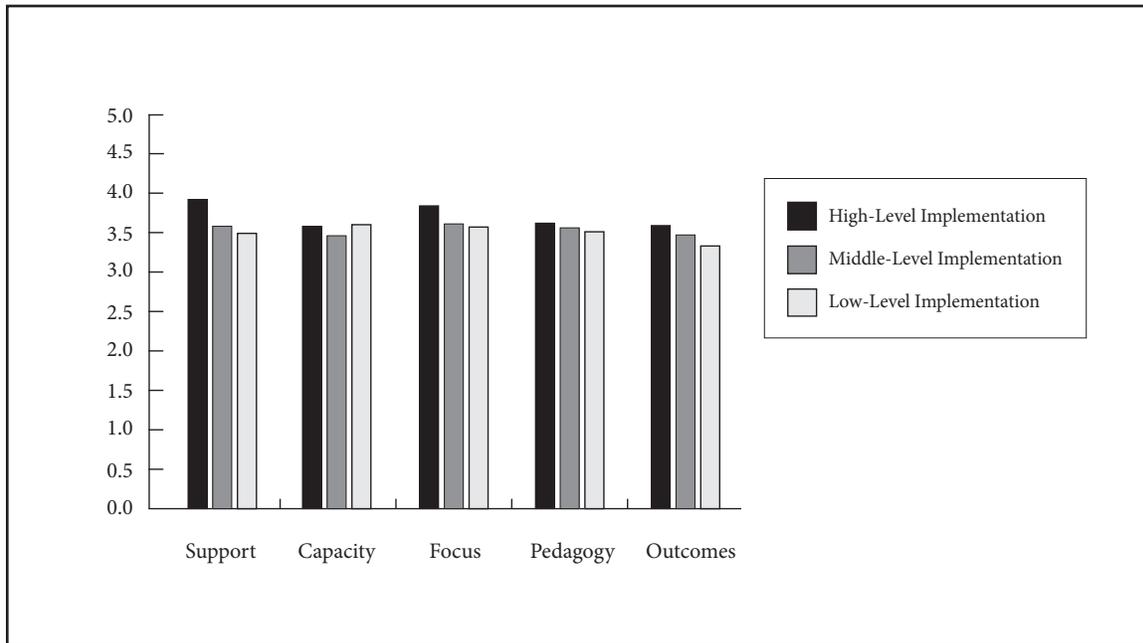
climate score. This pattern may be a result of how staff at low-implementing schools may be reflecting the attention to the school provided by the grant funding, without a true recognition of the challenges involved in whole-school reform. (See Table 15.20 for more information on school climate.)

**Table 15.20. Mean School Climate Score by Group\***

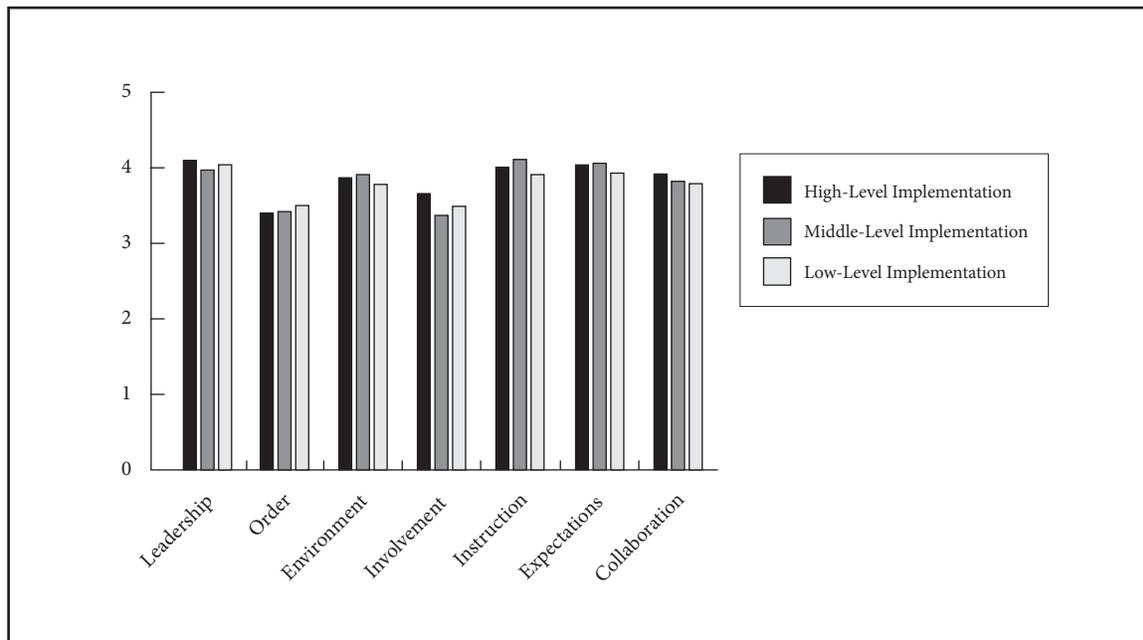
SCHOOL CLIMATE	
High-Level Implementation	3.86
Middle-Level Implementation	3.80
Low-Level Implementation	3.78

\*Note. 1-5 scale

**Figure 15.4. Mean Score on Restructuring Constructs for Three Implementation Groups**



**Figure 15.5. Mean Score on SCI Dimensions for Three Implementation Groups**



Schools with low-level implementation showed the lowest levels of school climate. School 9's highest rating was on the leadership scale and its lowest rating on the order scale, which is typical of large urban high schools. School 7's highest rating was on the leadership scale and its lowest rating on the involvement scale, which may be due to having so many new staff members this year. School 8's highest rating was on the expectations scale and its lowest rating on the involvement scale, again possibly due to higher expectations due to the grant and having many new staff members.

As seen on the earlier constructs, the low-level implementation schools are the least similar of the groups.

### ***Summary of Scale Scores***

High-level implementation schools reported the highest scores of the three implementation groups on all of the restructuring constructs except Capacity. High-level implementation schools scored the highest on the External Support construct, and the lowest on the Outcomes construct. For most constructs middle-level implementation schools had scores that were more similar to low-level implementation schools than they were to high-level implementation schools. This group had its highest scores on the Internal Focus construct and lowest on the Capacity construct. Low-level implementation schools had their highest values on the Capacity construct, and in fact scored higher than either of the other two groups, perhaps in reaction to the influx of funds provided by the grant. The lowest scores for this group, like the high-level implementation schools, were on the Outcomes construct. Mean scores for the three groups are reported on Figure 15.4 for all five of the restructuring constructs.

On average, the high-level implementation schools had their highest scores on the Leadership dimension of the SCI, and the lowest scores on the Order dimension. Middle-level implementation schools had their highest scores on the Instruction dimension, and also on average had the lowest scores on the Order dimension. Low-level implementation schools on average had their highest scores on the Leadership dimension with the lowest scores on the Order and Involvement dimensions. Mean scores for the three groups are reported on Figure 15.5 for all seven of the SCI dimensions.





## CONCLUSIONS

**B**ECAUSE THIS IS AN INTERIM ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS, DRAWING conclusions may be premature. However, based on the data collected, common relevant points emerged across schools and may be useful to similar schools engaging in complex school reform efforts. Thus, comments are focused on facilitators and barriers to implementation of school redesign and restructuring learned across the participating schools. This chapter will discuss qualitative conclusions based on varying levels of implementation across schools.

Most of the schools faced some common barriers associated with having limited resources and serving high-poverty student populations. For some schools, these barriers caused a delay in implementation. At others, the barriers seriously threatened the investment made in HSRR efforts. For example, schools often cited a lack of time as a barrier; however, schools across the implementation levels responded differently to the challenge of creating a different time structure to facilitate HSRR efforts. Some schools were able to create additional time for the HSRR initiatives through implementing a different class schedule, establishing small learning communities, organizing common planning periods. In other cases, more immediate challenges such as safety concerns took priority over creating opportunities for additional time for HSRR efforts.

Many of the schools eligible for HSRR grants faced challenges such as an entrenched dysfunctional culture, history of failure and low expectations, staff resistance to change, safety and security issues, and multiple, ongoing programs that were fragmented and uncoordinated. Some schools in the low-implementation category are still struggling with these issues. Yet other case study schools found ways around these obstacles. Some of these approaches and components associated with HSRR facilitators at the schools with high implementation are definable, tangible, and replicable while other efforts are nuanced, site-specific, and difficult to replicate. Several middle-implementation level schools – several of which were large high schools in large urban districts – were able to pilot their HSRR programs successfully and have viable plans to expand from the piloting stage to the implementation stage. The sites implementing HSRR at a higher level capitalized on their local context and viewed HSRR as an opportunity. The schools overcame a number of barriers still challenging schools in lower implementation categories.

## Chapter 16

### Conclusions

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Self-reported implementation levels from school progress reports were compared to the implementation categories assigned by evaluators. Results from the self-reported implementation levels contradicted the implementation category scores, perhaps because low-implementing schools lack a thorough understanding of the HSRR grant requirements, and therefore do not fully comprehend what high levels of implementation should look like. Rather the influx of money is used to fill badly needed gaps in basic services and supplies, which is greatly appreciated by staff.

Schools with high levels of implementation as assigned by evaluators tended to vary widely in their local context. They all reported high levels of External Support. These schools had the highest scores on Internal Focus, and reported high levels of buy-in from teachers, whether or not they had been involved in choosing the program being used for restructuring. The school climate was reported to be the most positive at these schools, with the highest scores on the leadership scale and the lowest scores on the order scale, in general.

Schools with middle-level implementation scores as assigned by evaluators in general reported scores more similar to low-level implementation schools than high-level implementation schools. In general, like high-level implementation schools, teachers were not involved in choosing the program for redesign. However, in these schools, there was not the level of reported enthusiasm and support once the program began that there was in the high-level implementation schools. Scores on the Capacity construct were lowest for this group of schools. The school climate scores were highest on the instruction scale and lowest on the order or involvement scale for the middle-level implementation schools. Results on the scales in general were more mixed than those for the high-level implementation schools.

Low-level implementation schools had the least in common. In general, they reported high expectations but low levels of evidence for any of the five constructs related to school reform, other than Capacity. This is likely due to the influx of resources related to redesign and lack of understanding among the many new staff members of the requirements of the redesign program. This group of schools had their lowest average score on the Restructuring Outcomes construct, probably because their implementation was not yet at the stage of being reflected in outcomes.

In general, small schools were seen to have benefits in regard to class size and ability to implement in areas such as training teachers, but small schools also had capacity issues related to staff being required to fill many roles.



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***APPENDIX A***





## HIGH SCHOOL REDESIGN AND RESTRUCTURING TEACHER/STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is part of an evaluation of the Texas High School Redesign and Restructuring grants the Texas Education Agency awarded to 29 schools, including your school. The High School Redesign and Restructuring 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***

1. 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

2. What content areas do you teach? (**SELECT ALL THAT APPLY**)

- 1 Reading/Language Arts
- 2 Mathematics
- 3 Science
- 4 Social Studies
- 5 Other: (**DESCRIBE**) \_\_\_\_\_

3. 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		

4. 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		

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## Appendix A

### HSRR Teacher/Staff Questionnaire

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5. How did you become a teacher at this school?

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6. 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**) \_\_\_\_\_

## II. High School Redesigns and Restructuring

Your district received the Texas High School Redesign and Restructuring (HSRR) grant on [date district received grant]. The grant is intended to 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. The questions in this section relate to your school's implementation of a redesign program since [date district received grant].

Using a 5-point scale ranging from 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4-agree, to 5-strongly agree, 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 have no basis on which to respond, leave the item blank.

Since your school began implementing its redesign program [date district received grant]...

	1- Strongly Disagree	2- Disagree	3- Neutral	4- Agree	5- Strongly Agree
1. I have a thorough understanding of this school's High School Redesign and Restructuring (HSRR) 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 Disagree	2- Disagree	3- Neutral	4- Agree	5- Strongly Agree
2. I have received adequate initial and ongoing professional development/training for HSRR program implementation.					
3. Technical assistance provided by external trainers, model developers, and/or designers has been valuable.					
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.					
5. Teachers are given sufficient planning time to implement our program.					
6. Materials (books and other resources) needed to implement our HSRR program are readily available.					
7. Our school has sufficient faculty and staff to fully implement this program.					
8. Technological resources have become more available.					
9. I use textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets less than I used to for basic skills or content area instruction.					

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## Appendix A

### HSRR Teacher/Staff Questionnaire

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	1- Strongly Disagree	2- Disagree	3- Neutral	4- Agree	5- Strongly Agree
10. Classroom learning activities have changed a great deal.					
11. Students in my class spend at least two hours per school day in interdisciplinary or project-based work.					
12. Students in my class spend much of their time working in cooperative learning teams.					
13. Students are using technology more effectively.					
14. Student achievement has been positively impacted.					
15. Students in this school are more enthusiastic about learning.					
16. Parents are more involved in the educational program of this school.					
17. Community support for our school has increased.					
18. Students have higher standards for their own work.					
19. Teachers are more involved in decision making.					
20. Our program adequately addresses the requirements of students with special needs.					

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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 Disagree	2- Disagree	3- Neutral	4- Agree	5- Strongly Agree
21. Teachers in this school spend more time working together to develop curriculum and plan instruction.					
22. Teachers in this school are generally supportive of our HSRR program.					
23. Interactions between teachers and students are more positive.					
24. The elements of our HSRR program are effectively integrated to help us meet school improvement goals.					
25. As a school staff, we regularly review implementation and outcome benchmarks to evaluate our progress.					
26. Our school has a plan for evaluating all components of our High School Redesign and Restructuring program.					
27. My school receives effective assistance from external partners (e.g., university, businesses, agencies, etc.).					
28. I am satisfied with the Federal, State, local and private resources that are being coordinated to support our HSRR program.					

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## Appendix A

### HSRR Teacher/Staff Questionnaire

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29. Think of your experience with your school's High School Redesign and Restructuring program; which of the following helped facilitate program implementation?  
(SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)

- 1 Support from district administration
- 2 Support from school administration
- 3 Support (buy-in) from teachers
- 4 Support from TEA
- 5 Adequate human resources
- 6 Adequate financial resources
- 7 Adequate time resources
- 8 Training/professional development
- 9 Technical assistance from ESCs
- 10 Technical assistance from LEA-selected provider
- 11 Technology
- 12 Whole school focus
- 13 Reform focus
- 14 Curriculum focus
- 15 Academic standards
- 16 Assessment/use of data
- 17 Evaluation of progress
- 18 Parent/community involvement
- 19 Other: (DESCRIBE) \_\_\_\_\_

- 29a. Which three of these do you consider the main facilitators of your school's High School Redesign and Restructuring program implementation?  
(RECORD NUMBERS FROM Q.29)

— — —

30. Again, think of your experience with your school's High School Redesign and Restructuring program; what barriers did you and other teachers or administrators experience in implementing the program? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)

- 1 Lack of or insufficient support from district administration
- 2 Lack of or insufficient support from school administration
- 3 Lack of or insufficient support from teachers
- 4 Lack of or insufficient support from TEA
- 5 Lack of or insufficient human resources
- 6 Lack of or insufficient financial resources
- 7 Lack of or insufficient time
- 8 Lack of or insufficient training/professional development

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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.

- 9 Lack of or insufficient technical assistance from ESCs
- 10 Lack of or insufficient technical assistance from LEA-selected provider
- 11 Lack of or insufficient technology
- 12 Lack of whole school focus
- 13 Lack of reform focus
- 14 Lack of curriculum focus
- 15 Lack of assessment/use of data
- 16 Lack of evaluation of progress
- 17 Lack of or poor parent/community involvement
- 18 Other: (DESCRIBE) \_\_\_\_\_

30a. Which three of these are the biggest barriers? (RECORD NUMBERS FROM Q.30)

\_\_\_\_\_

### ***III. School Climate***

Using a 5-point scale ranging from 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4-agree, to 5-strongly agree, 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 have no basis on which to respond, leave the item blank.

	1- Strongly Disagree	2- Disagree	3- Neutral	4- Agree	5- Strongly Agree
1. The faculty and staff share a sense of commitment to the school goals.					
2. Low achieving students are given opportunity for success in this school.					
3. School rules and expectations are clearly communicated.					
4. Teachers use a variety of teaching strategies.					
5. Community businesses are active in this school.					
6. Students are encouraged to help others with problems.					

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## Appendix A

### HSRR Teacher/Staff Questionnaire

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		1- Strongly Disagree	2- Disagree	3- Neutral	4- Agree	5- Strongly Agree
7.	Faculty and staff feel that they make important contributions to this school.					
8.	The administration communicates the belief that all students can learn.					
9.	Varied learning environments are provided to accommodate diverse teaching and learning styles.					
10.	The school building is neat, bright, clean, and comfortable.					
11.	Parents actively support school activities.					
12.	Parents are treated courteously when they call or visit the school.					
13.	Rules for student behavior are consistently enforced.					
14.	School employees and students show respect for each other's individual differences.					
15.	Teachers at each grade (course) level design learning activities to support both curriculum and student needs.					
16.	Teachers are encouraged to communicate concerns, questions, and constructive ideas.					
17.	Students share the responsibility for keeping the school environment attractive and clean.					
18.	Parents are invited to serve on school advisory committees.					

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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 Disagree	2- Disagree	3- Neutral	4- Agree	5- Strongly Agree
19. Parent volunteers are used whenever possible.					
20. The administration encourages teachers to be creative and to try new methods.					
21. Students are held responsible for their actions.					
22. All students in this school are expected to master basic skills at each grade level.					
23. Student discipline is administered fairly and appropriately.					
24. Teachers often provide opportunities for students to develop higher-order skills.					
25. Student misbehavior in this school does not interfere with the teaching process.					
26. Students participate in solving school-related problems.					
27. Students participate in classroom activities regardless of their sex, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, or academic ability.					
28. Faculty and staff cooperate a great deal in trying to achieve school goals.					
29. An atmosphere of trust exists among the administration, faculty, staff, students, and parents.					
30. Student tardiness or absence from school is not a major problem.					

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## Appendix A

### HSRR Teacher/Staff Questionnaire

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	1- Strongly Disagree	2- Disagree	3- Neutral	4- Agree	5- Strongly Agree
31. Teachers are active participants in the decision making at this school.					
32. Information about school activities is communicated to parents on a consistent basis.					
33. Teachers use curriculum guides to ensure that similar subject content is covered within each grade.					
34. The principal (or administration) provides useful feedback on staff performance.					
35. Teachers use appropriate evaluation methods to determine student achievement.					
36. The administration does a good job of protecting instructional time.					
37. Parents are often invited to visit classrooms.					
38. Teachers are proud of this school and its students.					
39. This school is a safe place in which to work.					
40. Most problems facing this school can be solved by the principal and faculty.					
41. Pull-out programs do not interfere with basic skills instruction.					
42. The principal is an effective instructional leader.					
43. Teachers have high expectations for all students.					

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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 Disagree	2- Disagree	3- Neutral	4- Agree	5- Strongly Agree
44. Teachers, administrators, and parents assume joint responsibility for student discipline.					
45. The goals of this school are reviewed and updated regularly.					
46. Student behavior is generally positive in this school.					
47. The principal is highly visible throughout the school.					
48. Teachers use a wide range of teaching materials and media.					
49. People in this school really care about each other.					

50. Please provide any additional comments you may have pertaining to your school's climate:

**THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRE!**

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## HIGH SCHOOL REDESIGN AND RESTRUCTURING PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is part of an evaluation of the Texas High School Redesign and Restructuring grants the Texas Education Agency awarded to 29 schools, including your school. The High School Redesign and Restructuring 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***

1. How many years of experience do you have as a school principal? (**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		

2. How many years of experience do you have as a principal 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		

3. How did you become principal of this school?

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4. Do you have any teaching experience?

1	Yes	2	No
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5. How many years did you teach? (**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 |   |            |
6. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (**SELECT ONE ONLY**)
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 4 | Bachelor's Degree   |
| 5 | Master's Degree   |
| 6 | Law Degree, Doctoral Degree, Other: ( <b>PLEASE SPECIFY</b> ) _____ |

## ***II. High School Redesigns and Restructuring***

Your district received the Texas High School Redesign and Restructuring (HSRR) grant on [date district received grant]. The grant is intended to 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. The questions in this section relate to your school's implementation of a redesign program since [date district received grant].

Using a 5-point scale ranging from 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4-agree, to 5-strongly agree, 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 have no basis on which to respond, leave the item blank.*

Since your school began implementing its redesign program [date district received grant]...

		1- Strongly Disagree	2- Disagree	3- Neutral	4- Agree	5- Strongly Agree
1. I have a thorough understanding of this school's High School Redesign and Restructuring (HSRR) program.						
2. I have received adequate initial and ongoing professional development/training for HSRR program implementation.						
3. Technical assistance provided by external trainers, model developers, and/or designers has been valuable.						

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# Appendix A

## HSRR Principal Questionnaire

	1- Strongly Disagree	2- Disagree	3- Neutral	4- Agree	5- Strongly Agree
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.					
5. Teachers are given sufficient planning time to implement our program.					
6. Materials (books and other resources) needed to implement our HSRR program are readily available.					
7. Our school has sufficient faculty and staff to fully implement this program.					
8. Technological resources have become more available.					
9. Teachers use textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets less than they used to for basic skills or content area instruction.					
10. Classroom learning activities have changed a great deal.					
11. Students in most classes spend at least two hours per school day in interdisciplinary or project-based work.					
12. Students in most classes spend much of their time working in cooperative learning teams.					
13. Students are using technology more effectively.					
14. Student achievement has been positively impacted.					
15. Students in this school are more enthusiastic about learning.					
16. Parents are more involved in the educational program of this school.					

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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 Disagree	2- Disagree	3- Neutral	4- Agree	5- Strongly Agree
17. Community support for our school has increased.					
18. Students have higher standards for their own work.					
19. Teachers are more involved in decision making at this school.					
20. Our program adequately addresses the requirements of students with special needs.					
21. Teachers in this school spend more time working together to develop curriculum and plan instruction.					
22. Teachers in this school are generally supportive of our HSRR redesign efforts.					
23. Interactions between teachers and students are more positive than before.					
24. The elements of our HSRR program are effectively integrated to help us meet school improvement goals.					
25. As a school staff, we regularly review implementation and outcome benchmarks to evaluate our progress.					
26. Our school has a plan for evaluating all components of our High School Redesign and Restructuring program.					
27. My school receives effective assistance from external partners (e.g., university, businesses, agencies, etc.).					
28. I am satisfied with the Federal, State, local and private resources that are being coordinated to support our HSRR program.					

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## Appendix A

### HSRR Principal Questionnaire

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29. Think of your experience with your school's High School Redesign and Restructuring program; which of the following helped facilitate program implementation?

**(SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)**

- 1 Support from district administration
- 2 Support from school administration
- 3 Support (buy-in) from teachers
- 4 Support from TEA
- 5 Adequate human resources
- 6 Adequate financial resources
- 7 Adequate time resources
- 8 Training/professional development
- 9 Technical assistance from ESCs
- 10 Technical assistance from LEA-selected provider
- 11 Technology
- 12 Whole school focus
- 13 Reform focus
- 14 Curriculum focus
- 15 Academic standards
- 16 Assessment/use of data
- 17 Evaluation of progress
- 18 Parent/community involvement
- 19 Other (**DESCRIBE**): \_\_\_\_\_

- 29a. Which three of these do you consider the main facilitators of your school's High School Redesign and Restructuring program implementation? (**RECORD NUMBERS FROM Q.29**)

— — —

30. Again, think of your experience with your school's High School Redesign and Restructuring program; what barriers did you and other teachers or administrators experience in implementing the program? (**SELECT ALL THAT APPLY**)

- 5 Lack of or insufficient support from district administration
- 6 Lack of or insufficient support from school administration
- 7 Lack of or insufficient support from teachers
- 8 Lack of or insufficient support from TEA
- 5 Lack of or insufficient human resources
- 6 Lack of or insufficient financial resources
- 7 Lack of or insufficient time
- 8 Lack of or insufficient training/professional development
- 9 Lack of or insufficient technical assistance from ESCs
- 10 Lack of or insufficient technical assistance from LEA-selected provider

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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.

- 11 Lack of or insufficient technology
- 12 Lack of whole school focus
- 13 Lack of reform focus
- 14 Lack of curriculum focus
- 15 Lack of assessment/use of data
- 16 Lack of evaluation of progress
- 17 Lack of or poor parent/community involvement
- 18 Other: **(DESCRIBE)** \_\_\_\_\_

30a. Which three of these are the biggest barriers? **(RECORD NUMBERS FROM Q.30)**

\_\_\_\_\_

### ***III. School Climate***

Using a 5-point scale ranging from 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4-agree, to 5-strongly agree, 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 have no basis on which to respond, leave the item blank.

	1- Strongly Disagree	2- Disagree	3- Neutral	4- Agree	5- Strongly Agree
31. The faculty and staff share a sense of commitment to the school goals.					
32. Low achieving students are given opportunity for success in this school.					
33. School rules and expectations are clearly communicated.					
34. Teachers use a variety of teaching strategies.					
35. Community businesses are active in this school.					
36. Students are encouraged to help others with problems.					
37. Faculty and staff feel that they make important contributions to this school.					

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## Appendix A

### HSRR Principal Questionnaire

	1- Strongly Disagree	2- Disagree	3- Neutral	4- Agree	5- Strongly Agree
38. The administration communicates the belief that all students can learn.					
39. Varied learning environments are provided to accommodate diverse teaching and learning styles.					
40. The school building is neat, bright, clean, and comfortable.					
41. Parents actively support school activities.					
42. Parents are treated courteously when they call or visit the school.					
43. Rules for student behavior are consistently enforced.					
44. School employees and students show respect for each other's individual differences.					
45. Teachers at each grade (course) level design learning activities to support both curriculum and student needs.					
46. Teachers are encouraged to communicate concerns, questions, and constructive ideas.					
47. Students share the responsibility for keeping the school environment attractive and clean.					
48. Parents are invited to serve on school advisory committees.					
49. Parent volunteers are used whenever possible.					
50. The administration encourages teachers to be creative and to try new methods.					
51. Students are held responsible for their actions.					
52. All students in this school are expected to master basic skills at each grade level.					

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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 Disagree	2- Disagree	3- Neutral	4- Agree	5- Strongly Agree
53. Student discipline is administered fairly and appropriately.					
54. The administration encourages teachers to be creative and to try new methods.					
55. Student misbehavior in this school does not interfere with the teaching process.					
56. Students participate in solving school-related problems.					
57. Students participate in classroom activities regardless of their sex, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, or academic ability.					
58. Faculty and staff cooperate a great deal in trying to achieve school goals.					
59. An atmosphere of trust exists among the administration, faculty, staff, students, and parents.					
60. Student tardiness or absence from school is not a major problem.					
61. Teachers are active participants in the decision making at this school.					
62. Information about school activities is communicated to parents on a consistent basis.					
63. Teachers use curriculum guides to ensure that similar subject content is covered within each grade.					
64. The principal (or administration) provides useful feedback on staff performance.					
65. Teachers use appropriate evaluation methods to determine student achievement.					
66. The administration does a good job of protecting instructional time.					

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## Appendix A

### HSRR Principal Questionnaire

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	1- Strongly Disagree	2- Disagree	3- Neutral	4- Agree	5- Strongly Agree
67. Parents are often invited to visit classrooms.					
68. Teachers are proud of this school and its students.					
69. This school is a safe place in which to work.					
70. Most problems facing this school can be solved by the principal and faculty.					
71. Pull-out programs do not interfere with basic skills instruction.					
72. The principal is an effective instructional leader.					
73. Teachers have high expectations for all students.					
74. Teachers, administrators, and parents assume joint responsibility for student discipline.					
75. The goals of this school are reviewed and updated regularly.					
76. Student behavior is generally positive in this school.					
77. The principal is highly visible throughout the school.					
78. Teachers use a wide range of teaching materials and media.					
79. People in this school really care about each other.					

80. Please provide any additional comments you may have pertaining to your school's climate:

**THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRE!**

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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.

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDER SURVEY

1. Please record the name of the school and district to which you have been providing technical assistance for the High School Redesign and Restructuring (HSRR) 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**

2. When did you begin providing HSRR-related technical assistance to the school (Month/Year)? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2a. How often do you visit the site and provide assistance?
- 2b. Were you the original technical assistance provider on the HSRR 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 HSRR grant?  
**(INDICATE NUMBER OF HOURS PER YEAR FOR THE SPECIFIC GRANT TYPE)**

**HSRR- Cycle 1 Schools:**

Year 1 (4/1/05-12/31/05): \_\_\_\_\_

Year 2 (1/1/06-12/31/06): \_\_\_\_\_

**HSRR- Cycle 2 Schools:**

Year 1 (2/1/06-12/31/06): \_\_\_\_\_

Year 2 (1/1/07-8/31/07): \_\_\_\_\_

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## Appendix A

### Technical Assistance Provider Survey

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4a. Is the school implementing a **primary** High School Redesign and Restructuring (HSRR) model or program?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

4b. If so, please circle the model or program below: (**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 School House
- 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 Schools-Within-Schools
- 29 Combination of different models
- 30 Other: (**PLEASE DESCRIBE**) \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Using the scale below, please indicate the degree to which this school is currently implementing any of the following redesign program elements and then check whether or not you have assisted the school with any of these elements.

**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.

		Degree of Implementation					Have you assisted the school with this?	
		0	1	2	3	4	Yes	No
		Not Implementing	Planning	Piloting	Implementing	Fulfilling		
1	Effective, research-based methods and strategies							
2	Comprehensive design for effective school functioning that aligns the school’s curriculum, technology, and professional development into a school-wide reform plan							
3	Continuing professional development to teachers and staff							
4	Measurable goals and benchmarks							
5	Support of school faculty, administrators, and staff							
6	Support for teachers and staff through shared leadership and teamwork							

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# Appendix A

## Technical Assistance Provider Survey

		Degree of Implementation					Have you assisted the school with this?	
		0	1	2	3	4	Yes	No
		Not Implementing	Planning	Piloting	Implementing	Fulfilling		
7	Parental and community involvement in planning and implementing school improvement activities							
8	High quality external support and assistance							
9	A plan to evaluate implementation of the school reforms and the results							
10	Coordination of federal, state, and local resources to support and sustain school reform							
11	Strategies to improve student academic achievement							
12	Development and support for school leaders							
13	A focus on the climate and the culture of the campus							
14	Processes to amend redesign plans based on the use of student achievement data							

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6. How did you gather information from the school and the district on their implementation of the HSRR 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)** \_\_\_\_\_

7. How would you rate board, district administration, school administrator, teacher, and staff support for the HSRR 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	

8. Which of the following describes the types of support the district provided to the school in implementing the HSRR 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)** \_\_\_\_\_

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## Appendix A

### Technical Assistance Provider Survey

9. Based on your experience with the HSRR program at this school, are the following resources the school allocated 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

10. Has the school made any changes at the **classroom level** as a result of the HSRR program?

- 1 Yes  
2 No (**SKIP TO Q.14**)

11. 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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12. If changes have been implemented, 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

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14. In your judgment, to what extent has the HSRR 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' 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 HSRR 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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16. In your judgment, to what extent has the HSRR program affected teachers in each of the following areas? If you don't know, please leave the item blank. **(SELECT ONE NUMBER FOR EACH)**

	Not At All	A Little	Moderate Extent	Great Extent
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: <b>(PLEASE DESCRIBE)</b> _____	1	2	3	4

17. To what extent has the HSRR 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 HSRR 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

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19. Overall, please assess how helpful this professional development has been to the implementation of the HSRR program. Use a 10-point scale ranging from “1 – not at all helpful” to “10 – very helpful.” (SELECT ONE ONLY FOR EACH)

	Not At All Helpful					Very Helpful				
Teachers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Staff	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Administrators	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

20. Has the school provided staff development related to the implementation of the HSRR program to new teachers?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Unsure

21. How has the school informed the community about the HSRR 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 HSRR 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) \_\_\_\_\_

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23. Please indicate how supportive the community has been of the HSRR program this school is implementing? Use a 10-point scale ranging from “1 – not at all supportive” to “10 – very supportive.” (SELECT ONE ONLY)

Not At All Supportive					Very Supportive				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

24. 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)

Not At All Supportive					Very Supportive				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

25. To what extent has school management changed to align the school’s curriculum, technology, and professional development because of the HSRR program? Use a 10-point scale ranging from “1 – not at all” to “10 – to a great extent.” (SELECT ONE ONLY)

Not At All					To A Great Extent				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

26. To what extent has leadership been shared with teachers and staff because of the HSRR program? Use a 10-point scale ranging from “1 – not at all” to “10 – to a great extent.” (SELECT ONE ONLY)

Not At All					To A Great Extent				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

27. To what extent has the school integrated the HSRR 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)

Not At All					To A Great Extent				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

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# Appendix A

## Technical Assistance Provider Survey

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28. To what extent has the school implemented the HSRR program as designed? Use a 10-point scale ranging from “1 – not at all” to “10 – to a great extent.” (SELECT ONE ONLY)

Not At All										To A Great Extent	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		

29. To what extent has this school experienced the following difficulties or barriers in implementing the HSRR program? (SELECT ONE NUMBER FOR EACH)

	Not At All	A Little	Moderate Extent	Great Extent
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 HSRR program in this school?

**THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRE!**

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**PRINCIPAL/PROJECT COORDINATOR INTERVIEW**  
**HSSR SITES**

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**I. General Information**

1. Describe your school's redesign program and the process your school used for program selection?

| What led to your school's decision to implement the redesign program?

| Did the school select the type(s) of reform to implement?

| If so, how did your school select this type of reform, and which type(s) of reforms did your school select?

| (Probe: Did the school select a formal reform model or a locally-developed reform program?)

| How was the technical assistance provider selected?

2. A criterion for HSSR schools is to use a comprehensive school-wide 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.

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## Appendix A

### Principal/Project Coordinator Interview

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3. How is the implementation of the HSRR program going?

Compare and contrast this year with last year (**for Cycle 1 schools only**).

3a. What elements are the most effective?

3b. What elements are the least effective?

3c. What role does the program coordinator play in structuring and implementing the HSRR program? (**SKIP IF INTERVIEWING THE PROGRAM COORDINATOR**)

3d. What role do teachers play in structuring and implementing the HSRR program?

3e. Are there reform steps that are supposed to be followed? If so, how closely do you feel the reform design is being followed? Describe.

3f. What other programs/grants does your school implement?

3g. How are these aligned with your school reform design?

3h. How do you monitor the progress of the reform?

3i. Describe your role in program implementation.

3j. How has the HSRR program changed the way you do your job?

3k. How are the HSRR grant funds being used?

4. What changes have you seen at your school since the implementation of the HSRR program?

5. How would you describe teacher support for your school's HSRR 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 HSRR 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?

7. How many students are being impacted by the HSRR program?

If not all students are impacted by the HSRR program, are there plans to expand the HSRR program to include all students?

What determines which students are impacted by the program?

## II. Classroom Level Changes

8. If I were to visit classrooms, what would I see that would represent your school's HSRR program?

9. How is this different from the way classrooms used to be?

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## Appendix A

### Principal/Project Coordinator Interview

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10. 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?

11. 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?

12. How does your program accommodate special needs children?

### III. Results

13. How has your HSRR program impacted students?

Can you describe any differences in student motivation, enthusiasm, school attendance, and conduct?

14. How has the HSRR program fostered relationships between students? Between students and teachers?

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- 15. What differences in achievement have you seen to date (grades or test scores) as a result of the HSRR program?
  
- 16. How has the HSRR program impacted teachers?
  - | How has the program impacted relationships between teachers?
  
  - | Discuss differences in teacher collegiality and teamwork, motivation and enthusiasm.
  
  - | Instruction provided to teachers?
  
- 17. How has the program created shared leadership and a broad base of responsibility for HSRR 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 HSRR-related professional development initiatives?
  
- 22. Describe your school's interaction with the technical assistance providers.
  
- 23. Tell me about training and support received from the district.
  - | What kinds of support does your district provide?
  
  - | How effective has the support been?

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## Appendix A

### Principal/Project Coordinator Interview

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#### 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.

What is the evidence of increased involvement?

#### VI. Program Sustainability

25. Are there plans to maintain the HSRR program efforts beyond the current grant?

If so, what efforts are being made to maintain the HSRR program beyond the current grant?

#### Closure:

Are there any important aspects of program implementation that have not been mentioned today?

Any additional comments you would like to make?

For the current school year, how many professional staff are employed at your school?

Your district received the grant on [Cycle 1 Schools—April 2005; Cycle 2 Schools—February 2006], when did your school start receiving the grant funds?

When did your school start implementing the HSRR-related reforms?

## TEACHER/COUNSELOR INTERVIEW/FOCUS GROUP HSRR SITES

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This interview is part of an evaluation of the Texas High School Redesign and Restructuring grants. These grants are intended to 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.

Your district received the Texas High School Redesign and Restructuring (HSRR) grant on [Cycle 1 Schools—April 2005; Cycle 2 Schools—February 2006]. The questions in this interview/focus group relate to your school's implementation of the redesign program since [Cycle 1 Schools- April 2005; Cycle 2 Schools- February 2006]. Think back to this date and take a few minutes to recall any changes that have occurred in the school since your school received the HSRR grant.

### IV. General Information-

1. Describe your school's redesign program and the process your school used for program selection?

What led to your school deciding to implement the program?

Did the school select the type(s) of reform to implement?

If so, how did your school select this type of reform, and which type(s) of reforms did your school select?

2. Discuss how your HSRR program employs proven strategies and methods for student learning, teaching, and school management that are based on scientifically-based research and effective practices.
3. What changes have you seen at your school since the implementation of the HSRR program?

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# Appendix A

## Teacher/Counselor Interview/Focus Group

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4. How is the implementation of your school HSRR program going?
- | Compare and contrast this year with last year (**for Cycle 1 schools only**).
- 4a. What elements are the most effective?
- 4b. What elements are the least effective?
- 4c. What role does the principal play in structuring and implementing the HSRR program?
- 4d. What role does the program coordinator play in structuring and implementing the HSRR program?
- 4e. How closely do you feel the reform design is followed? Describe.
- 4f. What other programs/grants does your school implement?
- 4g. How are these aligned with your school reform efforts?
- 4h. How has the HSRR program changed the way you do your job?
5. How would you describe teacher support for your HSRR 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?

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6. What additional resources have been needed to support your HSRR 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?

7. How many students are being impacted by the HSRR program?

If not all students are impacted by the HSRR program, are there plans to expand the HSRR program to include all students?

What determines which students are impacted by the program?

**V. Classroom Level Changes**

8. If I were to visit classrooms, what would I see that would represent your school's HSRR program?

9. How is this different from the way classrooms used to be?

10. 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?

# Appendix A

## Teacher/Counselor Interview/Focus Group

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11. 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?

12. How does your program accommodate special needs children?

### VI. Results

13. How has your HSRR program impacted students?

Can you describe any differences in student motivation, enthusiasm, school attendance, and conduct?

14. How has the HSRR program fostered relationships between students? Between students and teachers?

15. What differences in achievement have you seen to date (grades or test scores) as a result of the HSRR program?

16. How has the HSRR program impacted teachers?

How has the program impacted relationships between teachers?

Discuss differences in teacher collegiality, teamwork, motivation, and enthusiasm.

Instruction provided to teachers?

17. How has the program created shared leadership and a broad base of responsibility for HSRR efforts?

**IV Professional Development**

18. What specific training or support have you received as a teacher/counselor in a restructuring school?

19. How would you describe faculty training sessions for this program?

| Did you find the faculty training sessions useful?

| Did you implement any of these ideas in the classroom? (Probe: If not, why not?)

| How many faculty training sessions did you attend?

| Who provided the training? (Probe: Was it the district or the TAP?)

20. How have new faculty been brought into the program?

21. How would you characterize the success of HSRR-related professional development initiatives?

22. Tell me about training and support received from the district.

| What kinds of support does your district provide?

| How effective has the support been?

## Appendix A

### Teacher/Counselor Interview/Focus Group

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#### VI. Community Support

23. 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.

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?

**PARENT FOCUS GROUP  
HSRR SITES  
(ENGLISH VERSION)**

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**INTRODUCTION:**

- 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.
  - *Prompts: Are you becoming involved at this school?*
  - *Yes – How did you become involved and how has the school responded?*
  - *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.*

1. When your child/children first started coming here, what was this school like in terms of instruction, curriculum, and other academic support services?
2. Have there been any important negative or positive 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 made the changes work or not 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 Focus Group (English Version)

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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, disciplinary?*
  - b. *Can you provide examples?**If no:*
  - c. *Why aren't they involved more?*
  - d. *What would increase involvement?*
  
7. Describe the quality of education being provided to your child/children at this school.
  
8. Describe the quality of teachers and counseling support provided at your child's/ children's school.
  
9. Are you familiar with the reform program that this school is implementing since [Cycle 1 Schools—April 2005; Cycle 2 Schools—February 2006]?  
*If yes:*
  - a. *How has it impacted the school?*
  - b. *What have been some benefits?*
  - c. *What have been the disadvantages of the program?**If no:*
  - a. *Have you seen changes in the school since [Cycle 1 Schools—April 2005; Cycle 2 Schools—February 2006]*

#### **Closure:**

10. Is there anything else you want to tell us that would help us understand this school?
  
11. Do you have any questions you want to ask us?

**PARENT FOCUS GROUP  
HSRR SITES  
(SPANISH VERSION)**

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**INTRODUCCIÓN:**

- Para empezar, por favor comparta con nosotros cada quien cuánto tiempo ha tenido hijos en esta escuela.
- Hablemos sobre su relación con la escuela
  - *Prompts: ¿Ha estado participando más en la escuela?*
  - *Sí, ¿cómo fue que empezó a participar y cómo respondió la escuela?*
  - *No, ¿por qué no participa más?*

**PREGUNTAS PRINCIPALES:**

*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.*

1. Cuándo su hijo empezó a venir a esta escuela, ¿cómo era la escuela en términos de instrucción, planes de estudios y otros servicios de apoyo académico?
2. En los últimos años, ¿han ocurrido cambios importantes positivos o negativos?  
*Si contesta sí:*
  - a. *¿Quién participó?*
  - b. *¿Ocurrió algún evento en particular que inició el cambio?*
  - c. *¿Qué hizo que los cambios funcionaran o no funcionaran?**Si contesta no:*
  - d. *¿Qué cambios le gustaría ver?*
  - e. *¿Qué tendría que suceder para que ocurrieran esos cambios?*
3. ¿Cómo se informa del progreso de su hijo en la escuela?
4. Si es posible, piense en una ocasión reciente cuando su hijo estaba batallando con sus tareas escolares. ¿Qué hizo la escuela para ayudarlo? ¿Qué tal funcionó?

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## Appendix A

### Parent Focus Group (Spanish Version)

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5. Piense en una ocasión en la que tenía una preocupación o sugerencia sobre la escuela y sobre la experiencia de su hijo aquí, ¿qué hizo? ¿cómo respondió la escuela?
6. ¿Cree que los padres y la comunidad participan en la toma de decisiones en la escuela? Por favor, explique su respuesta.  
*Si contesta sí:*  
a. ¿Qué tipo de decisiones? presupuesto, planes de estudios, disciplina  
b. ¿Puede proporcionar ejemplos?  
*Si contesta no:*  
c. ¿Por qué no participan más?  
d. ¿Qué incrementaría la participación de los padres?
7. Describa la calidad de la educación que se le está brindando a su hijo en esta escuela.
8. Describa la calidad de los maestros y apoyo de la consejería que la escuela le proporciona a su hijo.
9. ¿Está familiarizado con el programa de reforma que la escuela ha estado implementando desde [escuelas del 1er. ciclo; abril de 2005; escuelas del 2ndo. Ciclo; febrero de 2006]?  
*Si contesta sí:*  
a. ¿Cómo ha impactado a la escuela?  
b. ¿Cuáles han sido algunos de los beneficios?  
c. ¿Cuáles han sido las desventajas del programa?  
*Si contesta no:*  
a. ¿Ha visto cambios en la escuela desde [escuelas del 1er. ciclo; abril de 2005; escuelas del 2ndo. Ciclo; febrero de 2006]?

#### **Para finalizar:**

10. ¿Le gustaría añadir algo que nos ayudaría a entender la escuela?
11. ¿Le gustaría hacernos alguna pregunta?

## STUDENT FOCUS GROUP HSRR SITES

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. To start off, let's go around the room and have each of you tell us a bit about yourselves. Tell us what grade you are in and how long you have been at this school.
2. Tell me about a teacher whose teaching style you really liked. Why is he/she a good teacher? What kind of work did you do in the class? Did you feel challenged in this class? Has the teacher recently introduced new ways of learning in class? Were you interested in what you were learning? Did your class work involve working with computers, in small groups, or together as a class with the teacher?
3. Tell me about a teacher whose teaching style you didn't like. How was this class different from a class you really like? What kind of work did you do in the class? Did you feel challenged in this class? Has the teacher recently introduced new ways of learning in class? Were you interested in what you were learning? Did your class work involve working with computers, in small groups, or together as a class with the teacher?
4. In thinking about the next TAKS test, do you feel prepared for it? 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 or he/she get help? Did any adults help you?
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?

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## *Appendix A*

### *Student Focus Group*

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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 fearful 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 are the circumstances, and what have you done to address the issue? Did you talk with a teacher/school staff about the issue? Was a teacher or other school staff involved in helping you address this issue?
  
10. How are your parents or other family members involved with your education as a student? How are they involved with the school?

**Closure:**

Are there any additional comments you would like to make?

**HSRR 53-POINT IMPLEMENTATION SCALE**

NAME OF SCHOOL

<b>Component</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Possible Score*</b>	<b>Site Score</b>
<b>1. Research-Based Method or Strategy</b>			
1.1 Comprehensive, school-wide reform model:	yes (1)    no (0)	1	
1.2 The program shows strong evidence that it will significantly improve the academic achievement of participating students.	yes (1)    no (0)	1	
1.3 Percentage of classrooms involved:		0.0-1.0	
1.4 Rating by TAP (TAP Survey Q 5a):	4   3   2   1   0	0-4	
1.5 Content-focused model:	yes (1)    no (0)	1	
1.6 Percentage of classrooms involved:		0.0-1.0	
1.7 Tertiary model:	yes (1)    no (0)	1	
1.8 School assessed implementation (avg progress report Q23-28 1-5 scale):	5   4   3   2   1	1-5	
<b>Total Possible Score for Component 1</b>		<b>16</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Component</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Possible Score*</b>	<b>Site Score</b>
<b>2. Professional Development:</b>			
<b>2.1 Comprehensive, School-wide Model</b>			
2.1.1 Strong content focus:	yes (1)    no (0)	1	
2.1.2 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	
2.1.3 Evidence that preceding estimate excludes traditional teacher set-up (in the fall) and teacher clean-up (in the spring) days	yes (1)    no (0)	1	
2.1.4 Evidence of collective participation of groups of teachers from the same school	yes (1)    no (0)	1	
2.1.5 Evidence of some PD taking place in the teacher's classroom-e.g., mentoring	yes (1)    no (0)	1	
2.1.6 Explicit guidance to align PD with standards, curriculum, or assessment tools	yes (1)    no (0)	1	

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# Appendix A

## HSRR 53-Point Implementation Scale

<b>2.2 Content-Focused Model</b>			
2.2.1 Strong content focus:	yes (1)	no (0)	1
2.2.2 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
2.2.3 Evidence that preceding estimate excludes traditional teacher set-up (in the fall) and teacher clean-up (in the spring) days	yes (1)	no (0)	1
2.2.4 Evidence of collective participation of groups of teachers from the same school	yes (1)	no (0)	1
2.2.5 Evidence of some PD taking place in the teacher's classroom-e.g., mentoring	yes (1)	no (0)	1
2.2.6 Explicit guidance to align PD with standards, curriculum, or assessment tools	yes (1)	no (0)	1
<b>Total Possible Score for Component 2</b>			<b>16</b>
			<b>0</b>
<b>Component</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Possible Score*</b>	<b>Site Score</b>
3. Measurable Goals and Benchmarks:			
3.1 Number of academic subjects covered:	No.:	4+ =3	
		2 - 3 =2	
		0 - 1 =1	
3.2 Number of grades covered and total no. of grades in the school:	No.: No.:	0.0 -1.0 (%)	
<b>Total Possible Score for Component 3</b>			<b>4</b>
			<b>0</b>
<b>Component</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Possible Score*</b>	<b>Site Score</b>
<b>4. Support within the school:</b>			
4.1 Existence of formal faculty votes on reform or research-based method(s)	yes (1)	no (0)	1
4.2 Formal faculty vote(s) on reform or research based method(s) show 75% support	yes (1)	no (0)	1
4.3 Interviewees voice strong support or enthusiasm	yes (1)	no (0)	1
4.4 Two or more interviewees voice dissent or indicate lack of use	yes (0)	no (1)	1
<b>Total Possible Score for Component 4</b>			<b>4</b>
			<b>0</b>

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Component	Measure	Possible Score*	Site Score
<b>5. Support for Teachers and Principals:</b>			
5.1 Evidence of shared leadership	yes (1)    no (0)	1	
5.2 Evidence of teamwork outside of departments or grade levels	yes (1)    no (0)	1	
5.3 Positive acknowledgement of staff accomplishments	yes (1)    no (0)	1	
<b>Total Possible Score for Component 5</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>
Component	Measure	Possible Score*	Site Score
<b>6. Parent and Community Involvement</b>			
6.1 Emergence of new forms of parent involvement during HSRR years:	yes (1)    no (0)	Total all 6.1 scores	
6.1.1 Special new parent events	yes (1)    no (0)		
6.1.2 Programs or opportunities for parents in instructional roles	yes (1)    no (0)	(3 – 4) =1	
6.1.3 Parent advisory or other committees	yes (1)    no (0)	(0 – 2) =0	
6.2 Level of parental involvement (high, medium, or low, as defined as follows):			
high: You’ve observed parents in the school and interviewees voice strong or satisfactory level or parental involvement in school activities.	high	2	
medium: School gets traditional level of parental involvement (e.g., 10% attendance).	medium	1	
low: No evidence of parental involvement beyond a handful of parents, and interviewees voice low levels of participation.	Low	0	
6.3 Evidence of at least one community partnership	yes (1)    no (0)	1	
<b>Total Possible Score for Component 6</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>

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## Appendix A

### HSRR 53-Point Implementation Scale

Component	Measure	Possible Score*	Site Score
<b>7. External Technical Support and Assistance</b>			
7.1 Model developer(s) support and assistance (Progress report avg q 124-129 use 0-4 scale):			
high: 2.5 - 4.0	high	3	
medium: 1.1-2.4	medium	2	
low: 0-1	Low	1	
7.2 Other external (but non-district) support and assistance			
yes: Evidence for a specific source and function on two or more occasions	yes (1)    no (0)	1	
no: No such evidence (evidence can be documentation, interviewee mentions, or direct observation)			
<b>Total Possible Score for Component 7</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>
Component	Measure	Possible Score*	Site Score
<b>8. Coordination of Resources</b>			
8.1 Evidence of some coordination of funds from different external (e.g., federal) sources			
	yes (1)    no (0)	1	
8.2 Evidence of some coordination of external and local funds (i.e., core building)			
	yes (1)    no (0)	1	
<b>Total Possible Score for Component 8</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>			

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***APPENDIX B***





## SCALE DESCRIPTIONS

### HIGH SCHOOL REDESIGN AND RESTRUCTURING TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

This instrument is designed and reported to measure the five constructs underlying High School Redesign and Restructuring: 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
Support	The extent to which school receives effective professional development and support to implement its HSRR program	$\alpha = .82$
Capacity/ Resources	The extent to which planning, time, materials, technology, and faculty are available at the school	$\alpha = .70$
Pedagogy	The extent to which classroom practices, materials, and technology use have changed at the school	$\alpha = .75$
Outcome	The extent to which positive student, faculty, and parent/ community outcomes have occurred as a result of HSRR	$\alpha = .90$
Focus	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
Order	The extent to which the environment is ordered and appropriate student behaviors are present	$\alpha = .84$
Leadership	The extent to which the administration provides instructional leadership	$\alpha = .83$
Environment	The extent to which positive learning environments exist	$\alpha = .81$
Involvement	The extent to which parents and the community are involved in the school	$\alpha = .76$
Instruction	The extent to which the instructional program is well developed and implemented	$\alpha = .75$
Expectations	The extent to which students are expected to learn and be responsible	$\alpha = .73$
Collaboration	The extent to which the administration, faculty, and students cooperate and participate in problem solving	$\alpha = .74$

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