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March 3, 2011

TO: School Board Members

FROM: Joanne W. Harrison, Ed.D., Deputy Superintendent
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VIA: James F. Notter
Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: **SMALLER LEARNING COMMUNITIES (SLC) GRANT EVALUATION
REPORT, 2005-06 THROUGH 2009-10**

1. What is the purpose of the report?

This evaluation examines the five years of activities and outcomes of the eight high schools participating in the Smaller Learning Communities (SLC) grant program. In addition to meeting the United States Department of Education's requirements for an independent evaluation, this study highlights the robust requirements of the SLC program, examines the process of establishing SLC in Broward County Public Schools, and analyzes the extent to which grant goals have been met. This report is the final evaluation for the five-year SLC grant.

2. Which populations were targeted in this report?

Students ($n=15,508$) in the eight participating SLC high schools (Coconut Creek, Deerfield Beach, Dillard, Fort Lauderdale, Hollywood Hills, Northeast, Piper, and Stranahan) were targeted for this evaluation. Students in non-SLC schools were targeted for District and grade level comparisons pertaining to achievement and graduation rate. Parents, teachers, and principals of SLC students were targeted to provide additional feedback.

3. How were the data for this report collected?

Multiple sources and a combination of approaches were used to collect data for this evaluation. Student achievement, behavior, graduation, post-graduation, and other outcome data were extracted from the District's Data Warehouse, Florida Department of Education's Florida School Indicators Report, and other relevant sources. Teacher and principal surveys and interviews provided details regarding the implementation and benefits of SLC and gauged perceptions of the participants. SLC document reviews and results from the District's Annual Student and Parent Customer Survey were also used in this report.

4. What are the main highlights in this report?

Grant activities were carried out according to the proposal and most of the SLC objectives were met. Highlights from the final evaluation include:

SLC Participation: Seven of eight schools met the grant goal of 100% student participation, while one school had not implemented SLC strategies and structures in the 12th grade. Overall, the percentage of students participating in some type of SLC increased to 97% in 2009-10 from 73% in 2004-05.

Student Achievement: The grant goal of a five percentage point increase of students scoring at proficient or advanced levels on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) was met at five schools in 9th grade and 10th grade reading, seven schools in 9th grade mathematics, and all schools in 10th grade mathematics. Comparison of growth rates from 8th to 10th grade showed no difference in reading and mathematics achievement of SLC and non-SLC students.

Graduation Rates: The eight SLC schools met the grant goal of increasing graduation rates by five percentage points from 2004-05 to 2009-10; all eight schools exceeded the District and state gains during this period. The unweighted graduation rate—which treats all schools with the same weight—increased 23.0 percentage points for SLC schools, compared to the District increase of only 10.8 percentage points. The SLC graduation rate increased from 6.8 percentage points below the District in 2004-05 to 5.4 percentage points above the District rate in 2009-10.

Post-secondary Education: All SLC schools increased the percentage of students enrolled in post-secondary education from 2004-05 to 2008-09, but only one school met the four-year goal of increasing enrollment by 16 percentage points or more. During this time, three SLC schools exceeded Broward's 13.3 percentage point gain, while six SLC schools exceeded the state's 6.4 percentage point gain.

Suspensions: The eight SLC schools reduced their number of suspensions by 47%, falling just short of the grant goal of a 50% reduction in the rate of suspensions over the five year grant.

Advanced Academics: Four schools met or exceeded the grant goal of increasing the percentage of students enrolled in Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate courses by 10 percentage points over the five-year period. The remaining schools had increases from 5 to 9 percentage points during the grant.

5. What are the conclusions of the Smaller Learning Communities Grant?

Based on the findings of this grant, the following was formulated for reflection and continuing school improvement.

- In educational literature and practice, there is a pessimistic sentiment that many issues in education are “intractable.” During the grant, the eight schools highlighted the possibility for school improvement by demonstrating progress, as a whole, above the District average.
- There had been many changes in the strategies and structures the SLC schools employed during the five-year grant. On one hand, educators should welcome adjustments during the process of educational change; however, too many changes from year to year in a

relatively short period of time may impact the depth of implementation. Therefore, formative program changes should be balanced with the depth of implementation.

- This SLC grant was structured so each school would develop a custom annual implementation plan, which would maximize schools taking their unique circumstances into account; however, this approach might dissipate the impact of the cohort effect. In other words, balancing common requirements for all SLC schools, but still offering schools flexibility in program implementation, is an important aspect of the SLC program design.

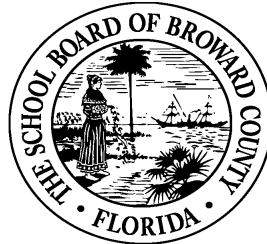
If you have any comments concerning this report, please contact **Dean Vaughan, Evaluation Administrator, Research Services at 754-321-2500**. This report may also be accessed via the Research Services Web site (http://www.broward.k12.fl.us/research_evaluation/Releases.htm).

JFN/JWH/MRL:dvw
Attachments

cc: Executive Leadership Team
Area Directors
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The School Board of Broward County, Florida

**Smaller Learning Communities Grant
Evaluation Report, 2005-06 through 2009-10**



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March 2011

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**Smaller Learning Communities Grant
Evaluation Report, 2005-06 through 2009-10**

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The School Board of Broward County, Florida

Smaller Learning Communities Grant Evaluation Report, 2005-06 through 2009-10

Executive Summary

Broward County Public Schools (BCPS) was awarded a five-year Smaller Learning Communities (SLC) grant by the United States Department of Education (USDOE) with associated federal funding of \$7,399,887 for the period of 2005-06 to 2009-10. The federal grant targeted eight of the most populated BCPS high schools: Coconut Creek, Deerfield Beach, Dillard, Fort Lauderdale, Hollywood Hills, Northeast, Piper, and Stranahan. Each of the targeted schools enhanced or created programs to implement SLC strategies, such as common planning periods and interdisciplinary teacher teams, or SLC structures, such as career theme and magnet programs. These strategies and structures enabled the eight schools to reinvent themselves and provided (a) greater personalization, (b) increased academic rigor, (c) stronger connections between academic and career education, (d) and enhanced adult accountability for the achievement of all students.

Summary

This report examines all five years of the grant and highlights the robust requirements of the SLC program concerning outcomes. Although this report's findings focused on outcomes, the process of establishing SLC was also emphasized. The outcome evaluation analyzed the extent to which goals were met, while the process evaluation investigated pathways of progression to the outcomes. This report is the final evaluation for the five-year SLC grant.

Of the eight schools implementing SLC, various SLC strategies and structures have been implemented. By 2009-10, in terms of strategies, at least five schools used (a) adult mentors, (b) alternative scheduling/block scheduling, (c) common planning periods, and (d) counselors assigned to SLC. In terms of structures, six or more schools implemented (a) freshman/transition academy and (b) separate building space. All SLC structures were used by at least five schools. By 2009-10, SLC strategies and structures were implemented at all grade levels in all schools, except for one school, which has not expanded SLC strategies and structures to the 12th grade. During the first year, 73% of SLC students were in some form of SLC. By 2009-10, participation rose to 97%. In summary, by the 2009-10 school year, seven schools met the goal of having 100% of students participate in SLC, while one school did not meet the goal.

By 2009-10, the grant goal of increasing the percentage of ninth and tenth graders scoring at proficient or advanced levels in reading and mathematics by five points was met in 25 out of a total of 32 comparisons (78%). In other words, when examining the results by school ($n=8$), grade level (9th and 10th grades), and subject (reading and mathematics), the number of schools, that met the goal of increasing the percentage of ninth and tenth graders scoring at proficient or advanced levels by five percentage points by 2009-10, was: five of eight schools for 9th grade reading and 10th grade reading; seven of eight schools for 9th grade mathematics; and all schools for 10th grade mathematics.

When comparing the eight schools, individually with the District on the increase of the percentage of ninth and tenth graders proficient in reading and mathematics between 2004-05

and 2009-10, in a total of 32 comparisons, SLC schools surpassed the District average improvement rate on 15 occasions, tied with the District average improvement rate on one occasion, and were below the District average improvement rate on 16 occasions. In other words, two of eight SLC schools surpassed the District's average gain in 9th grade reading and 10th grade reading; four of eight SLC schools improved more than the District's average gain for 9th grade mathematics; and for 10th grade mathematics, seven of eight schools exceeded the District's average gain of 10 percentage points. It appeared that in comparison to the District average, the SLC schools improved more in mathematics than in reading. These results should be read with caution, because SLC data were included in the District-level results and other District initiatives may be potential confounding factors.

All eight SLC schools met the grant goal of increasing graduation rates by five-percentage points from 2004-05 to 2009-10; and all eight schools exceeded the District and State gains over the same time period. Collectively, the eight SLC high schools' unweighted graduation rate—which treats all schools with the same weight by adding the eight graduation rates and dividing by eight—increased 23.0 percentage points from 60.3 in 2004-05 to 83.3 in 2009-10, while the District's graduation rate increased just 10.8 percentage points from 67.1 to 77.9 during the same time. Within five years, the eight SLC schools collectively demonstrated a far greater increase in graduation rate and went from 6.8 percentage points below the District rate in 2004-05 to 5.4 percentage points above the District rate in 2009-10. In summary, the eight schools far exceeded the graduation goals for 2009-10, both individually and collectively.

All SLC schools increased their post-secondary enrollment percentage from 2004-05 to 2008-09; however, only one school met the four-year goal of increasing enrollment by 16 percentage points or more. Post-secondary enrollment data was examined from 2004-05 to 2008-09, because 2009-10 data had not been released by the Florida Department of Education, at the time of publication. Comparisons with District and state gains show that three schools exceeded Broward's 13.3 percentage point increase in post-secondary enrollment from 2004-05 to 2008-09, and six schools exceeded the state's 6.4 percentage point gain, during the same time.

The eight SLC schools, as a whole, reduced their number of suspensions by 47%, a figure that was close to the SLC goal of a 50% reduction in the rate of suspensions. Among the eight schools, four schools (Dillard, Stranahan, Fort Lauderdale, and Hollywood Hills) met the grant goal. Caution is warranted because the changes in number of suspension actions between 2004-05 and 2009-10 varied widely, across the SLC schools.

All schools increased the rate of students enrolled in at least one Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) credit course from 2004-05 to 2009-10 by at least five percentage points. Four schools met or exceeded the grant goal of increasing the percentage of students enrolled in AP/IB courses by 10 percentage points, over the five-year period. The remaining schools had increases from 5 to 9 percentage points, during the grant.

Overall, there appeared to be a small amount of improvement in personalizing the learning environment during the five years. For example, data collected from students and teachers indicated that from 2005-06 to 2009-10, the percentage of:

- students who *agreed* that, *there is an adult at school I can talk with about my personal problems*, increased from 50.2% to 54.7%; and

- teachers who know 75% or more of their students' *academic aspirations* increased from 35.4% to 46.8%.

The fifth-year evaluation also included two hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) analyses which examined growth from a longitudinal perspective. The first HLM looked into whether there was a statistically significant difference between the rate of growth of SLC and non-SLC students in terms of how the 8th graders (in 2007-08) progressed to the 9th grade (in 2008-09) and to the 10th grade (in 2009-10). The results indicated that the rate of growth from Grade 8 to Grade 10 appeared to be no different between SLC and non-SLC students for the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) Reading and Mathematics developmental scale scores. The above conclusion was also true for an unadjusted HLM model in which statistical adjustments were made, based on students' and schools' background.

The second HLM analysis examined whether there was a statistically significant difference between SLC and non-SLC students in the probability of graduation after controlling for prior academic achievement and demographic background. The HLM was used to match a student's data over five years and by nesting a student in the same SLC or non-SLC school over five years. The 2005-06 cohort of 8th grade students were followed to their graduation. When predicting graduation status from Grade 8, there was a statistically significant difference in graduation status between SLC and non-SLC students, in favor of non-SLC students. Specifically, non-SLC students were found to be 1.28 times as likely ($1 \div 0.78$) to graduate from high school than SLC students, after adjustment for student-level and school-level variables. This finding does not contradict the finding that SLC schools increased their graduation rates more than the District average, because the HLM unit of analysis followed students from a group of 8th graders in the 2005-06 school year to 2009-10, while examination of graduation rates was a trend analysis over multiple years at the school level. Overall, when considering both findings, it appears that when following a group of 8th graders in 2005-06 to examine their graduation status at the 12th grade, the SLC grant did not appear to improve their probability of graduation. However, looking at school graduation rates across years, which involved multiple groups of graduates, then SLC schools improved their graduation rates dramatically, in comparison to the District's average rates.

Reflections

As was indicated in the foregoing, most of the SLC objectives were met. Grant activities were carried out according to the proposal; and all schools were active participants in the grant. The teams at both the school and District levels were diligent in planning and implementing the grant activities and reflecting upon the experience for continuing improvement. Based on the findings of this grant, the following was formulated for reflection and continuing school improvement.

First, school improvement is possible. In educational literature and practice, there is a pessimistic sentiment that many issues in education are "intractable." During the grant, the eight schools gave us an image of the possibility for school improvement by demonstrating progress, as a whole, above the District average. There was a cluster of schools among the eight schools, such as Dillard, Fort Lauderdale, and Stranahan, that did particularly well, in comparison to the District average over the five-year period.

Second, there had been many changes and adjustments in terms of the strategies and the structures that the eight schools employed, from year to year, during the five-year period. On the one hand, we should be open to the changes and adjustments, along the way, in the process of educational change. On the other hand, too many changes, from year to year, in a relatively short period of time might impact the depth of implementation. Therefore, adjustments along the way should be balanced with the depth of implementation.

Third, this SLC grant was structured so that each school would write its own annual SLC implementation plan. The advantage of the individual school approach is that each school would maximize taking its unique situation into account. The disadvantage of the approach is that it might dissipate the cohort effect. In other words, balancing common core requirements for all eight schools, but still offering schools flexibility in program implementation, is an important aspect of the SLC program design. The new SLC grant application from BCPS has addressed this balance.

The School Board of Broward County, Florida
Smaller Learning Communities Grant
Second Evaluation Report, 2005-06 through 2009-10

Introduction

Smaller Learning Communities Federal Program¹

The Smaller Learning Communities (SLC) federal grant provides funding to local education authorities (LEA) to support the development of small, safe, and successful learning environments as a component of comprehensive high school improvement plans. LEA receive funding on behalf of large high schools to plan, implement, or expand SLC in large high schools to undertake research-based strategies and develop, implement, and expand smaller learning environments with no more than 600 students. Strategies for reshaping large high schools into SLC include (a) establishing houses, career academies, magnet programs, and other schools within a school; (b) instituting block scheduling; (c) developing personal adult advocates, teacher-advisory systems, and other mentoring strategies; (d) reducing teaching loads; and (e) using other innovations to create a more personal experience for students.

The *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* outlined the important purpose of SLC. The law provided a defined structure to the discretionary status of the SLC grant competition ensuring that the SLC program assisted large public high schools that included Grades 11 and 12 and enrolled at least 1,000 students in Grades 9 and above. Grantees were authorized to use funding to (a) study the feasibility of creating SLC; (b) research, develop, and implement strategies for creating SLC; (c) provide professional development for school staff for teaching methods used in SLC; and (d) develop and implement strategies to include parents, business representatives, community-based organizations, and other community members in the activities of SLC.

Although the SLC program targeted districts with schools enrolling 1,000 or more students, school districts may have applied to fund Districtwide strategies. Examples included development of ninth grade academies, teacher-advisory systems, or adult mentoring programs. Permissible expenses included (a) providing extended learning time, (b) professional development, (c) supporting services for students, (d) building partnerships, (e) costs to reorganize schools, and (e) data collection and evaluation activities.

BCPS Smaller Learning Communities Grant

The SLC program has provided eight rounds (cohorts) of competitive grants. Broward County Public Schools (BCPS) was awarded a grant in cohort five and targeted eight of the most populated high schools: Coconut Creek, Deerfield Beach, Dillard, Fort Lauderdale, Hollywood Hills, Northeast, Piper, and Stranahan. Each of the targeted schools enhanced existing or created new programs to implement SLC through (a) a ninth grade transitional houses and

¹ This section, "The Federal Program," is adapted from the materials on the official Web site of the Smaller Learning Communities Grant Program (www.ed.gov/programs/slep).

career academies, (b) a whole-school magnet program,² or (c) school-within-school models. These SLC mechanisms enabled the eight participating schools to reinvent themselves and provide greater personalization, increased academic rigor, stronger connections between academic and career education, and enhanced adult accountability for the achievement of all students. The BCPS SLC goals, revised by the SLC task force (comprised of SLC principals, coordinators, and District staff) and approved by the federal grant officer, were as follows.

1. To engage students academically by June 2010,
 - 1.1a. increase by 5% the number of students who score proficient or better on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) in reading, using each school's 2004-05 data as baseline;
 - 1.1b. increase by 5% the number of students who score Level 3 or better on the FCAT in mathematics, using each school's 2004-05 data as baseline;
 - 1.2. increase the percentage of students enrolled in classes of high rigor [Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) classes] by ten percentage points, compared to 2004-05;
 - 1.3. increase the graduation rate (completing in four years) by five percentage points over 2004-05;
 - 1.4. increase the percentage of students enrolled in post-secondary education, apprenticeships, or advanced training by 20 percentage points, compared to 2004-05;
 - 1.5. increase the percentage of students who are employed or join the military after graduation by five percentage points, compared to 2004-05; and
 - 1.6. decrease the number of disciplinary actions (suspensions) by 50% (adjusted by enrollment), compared to 2004-05.
2. To personalize the learning environment for all students by June 2010,
 - 2.1. all students will be in SLC by random selection or choice; and
 - 2.2. increase the percentage of students reporting contact with an adult advocate who is familiar with student needs and aspirations to 75% by 2010.
3. To engage the entire community in articulating a shared vision by June 2010,
 - 3.1 increase the percentage of parent/community member involvement in academic/instructional support, development of program goals, and activities within SLC by 50 percentage points over year one (2005-06).

This evaluation covered five years of the SLC grant, from October 1, 2005 to September 30, 2010. The reporting requirements of the SLC grant were robust in meeting objectives. The objective-oriented evaluation focused on the extent to which the above goals were met. In addition to being objective-oriented, this report also emphasized process.

4. The process-oriented component investigated how SLCs were established.
 - 4.1. According to the teachers' perspective, to what extent and how has the SLC grant been implemented?

² An SLC whole-school magnet program is a school where all students are exposed to magnet themes through their SLC houses.

- 4.2. According to the students' perspective, to what extent and how has the SLC grant been implemented?
- 4.3. According to parents' perspective, to what extent and how has the SLC grant been implemented?

Literature Review³

Smaller Learning Communities: A Concept and Practice Gaining Momentum

Ineffective learning environments, concern for school safety, and low levels of achievement have spurred efforts to raise student achievement and personalize the high school educational experience through the development of a number of comprehensive high school reform models (Bernstein, Millsap, Schimmenti, & Page, 2008; USDOE, 2008a). Traditional, large high schools—many enrolling one to four thousand students—result in anonymous students lacking strong adult/peer connections or sense of belonging, and a higher propensity to drop out of high school before graduation (Clark et al., 2006). The SLC program was initiated by the United States Department of Education (USDOE) to attempt to counter student anonymity by offering a smaller environment within the larger high school context in which students know a group of other students well, and are known by a cadre of teachers who work as a team (Clark et al., 2006). This core group of teachers and other adults within the school know the needs, interests, and aspirations of each student well, closely monitor individual student progress, and provide the academic and other support each student needs to succeed (USDOE, 2006).

The SLC program was authorized under Title V, Part D, Subpart 4 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7249), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001. Via eight rounds of grants, USDOE committed about half a billion dollars to stem the growing national concern that students are too often lost and alienated in large, impersonal school structures. Discretionary grants were awarded to local educational agencies (LEA) for up to 60 months to study the feasibility of incorporating effective, innovative organizational and instructional strategies; and were geared towards innovative changes in curriculum and instruction. These grants focused on high state content and student performance standards in large public high schools with enrollments of 1,000 or more—about 70% of American high school students attend facilities registering 1,000 or more students; nearly half attend schools enrolling more than 1,500 (USDOE, 2008c). The SLC program fostered new research to determine the effects of small schools and ideal size of such communities and the feasibility of replication within large high schools (USDOE, 2008c).

Large traditional schools are usually structured around a cluster of academic subjects unrelated to each other with no attempt at horizontal linkage. The failure to indicate how classes relate to the outside world or careers after high school, contributes to stifling motivation during the high school experience (Clark et al., 2006). SLC include structures, such as (a) freshman academies, (b) multi-grade academies organized around career interests or other themes, (c) houses in which small groups of students remain together throughout high school, and (d) autonomous schools-within-a-school (USDOE, 2008c). Personalization strategies, such as student advisories, family advocate systems, and mentoring programs are also inherent in the program design

³ This section of literature review was extracted from last year's evaluation report.

(USDOE, 2008c). Composition varies from as few as one section per grade level, about 30 students, to as many as four or five sections per grade level, up to 150 students. Groupings often incorporate more than one grade level, so that students and teachers stay together across two or more years and may include several hundred students (Clark et al., 2006). SLC strategies include teacher teaming across subjects, so that teacher groups share responsibility for curriculum, instruction, evaluation, and discipline for the same group of 100 to 150 students. In addition to organizing large high schools around SLC structures, there is also a movement toward small, stand-alone high schools (Clark et al., 2006). The rationale for creating small schools draws on many of the same premises as SLC, though small schools usually have a greater degree of autonomy.

SLC are among the few high school reform approaches recently indicating promise (Clark, Dayton, Tidyman, & Hanna, 2006). While Oxley and Kassissieh (2008) agreed that SLC reforms show a pattern of sustained growth over the last four decades, they contend that frequently SLC fail to achieve instructional improvements. One challenge in the pursuit of sound instructional strategies is the ability to permit uniquely positioned teachers to make shifts in district policy and practice that currently pose barriers to adopting such strategies (Oxley & Kassissieh, 2008). According to Clark et al. (2006), failure to adhere to cohort student and team teacher scheduling was responsible for the most frequent downfalls of SLC.

At the heart of the SLC debate are three questions posed by USDOE.

1. Are larger or smaller schools more effective in increasing student achievement and producing other important school outcomes?
2. How much of the benefits of smaller schools are related to size versus other factors, such as smaller communities, supportive educational environments, instructional quality, or parental involvement?
3. Can any benefits to smaller schools be produced by restructuring larger schools into smaller learning environments?

Current Research

Although the research to date is largely non-experimental and must be interpreted with caution, there is evidence to concur that smaller schools hold advantages over larger schools (USDOE, 2008c). Current research reviewed by USDOE indicates that:

- Larger high schools, particularly those serving low-income students, have disproportionately lower achievement and higher incidences of violence than smaller schools serving similar student populations.
- In small schools, students tend to be more satisfied, more academically productive, more likely to participate in school activities, better behaved, and less likely to drop out than students in large schools.
- The size of high schools may have an indirect effect on student learning. Essentially, more moderately sized schools—those with 900 or fewer students—likely improve the climate and conditions for student success, especially teacher sense of self-efficacy and appropriate sense of responsibility for student learning when accompanied by high expectations, standards, and supporting strategies.

- Smaller schools also may be safer because students feel less alienated, more nurtured and connected to caring adults; and teachers feel that they have more opportunities to get to know and support their students.
- While small schools have a higher cost per pupil than large schools, they have a lower cost per graduate since they tend to have lower dropout rates (Lawrence, Bingler, Diamond, Hill, Hoffman, Howley, Michell, Rudolph, & Washor, 2002). Furthermore, the higher percentage of dropouts from large schools carries additional societal costs.
- At the same time, some high schools may theoretically be too small to provide adequate resources, and the effects of school size may be more important for some groups of students than others.

Large School District Findings

According to Clark et al. (2006), SLC assisted in keeping students in high school; maintained a more positive experience; and boosted attendance, grades, and graduation rates, while attempting to hold on to the benefits of the comprehensive high school with its broad range of course offerings. Given these findings, many large school districts have taken steps to address the issue of high school size by offering schools resources to simulate the effects of small high schools within large high school campuses, which the majority of American students attend.

Similar to many large school districts, Los Angeles Unified School District has increased the number of SLC to personalized instruction, hoping to boost student achievement and offer an alternative to charter schools (Song, 2008). At the Student Empowerment Academy, the small campus has produced some of the biggest academic gains in the district—638 versus 457 at the traditional campus on the most recent state Academic Performance Index (API) measuring test scores in mathematics, English and other subjects (Song, 2008). The 181-point difference between the traditional campus and SLC was significant, as all the students at SLC would otherwise have attended the traditional campus.

On the nation's other coast, a study of small high schools that opened in New York City in 2002 was part of a closely watched secondary school improvement effort (Gewertz, 2008). The New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE, 2008) reported that SLC composed of 250-500 students organized around themes or unifying principles led by assistant principals or teachers at several large NYC high schools, facilitated personalizing the learning environments for students and helped raise performance (NYCDOE, 2008). Students at schools with SLC experienced many of the benefits of large high schools, including a wide array of elective courses and extracurricular activities, while developing close relationships with teachers and guidance counselors (Hoff, 2008).

Credit accumulation and daily attendance in ninth grade are good predictors of high school graduation (Hoff, 2008). Accordingly, the NYCDOE preliminary findings (2006-07) indicated that 16 SLC schools increased the percentage of ninth grade students earning at least ten credits from 49% to 51%. The percentage of ninth grade students earning at least ten credits in similar schools without SLC dropped from 43% to 42%. While SLC attendance increased from 73% in 2005-06 to 76 %, at the same time, attendance remained flat at schools without SLC.

Schools that were part of New York City's New Century High Schools initiative enrolled unusually high portions of poor and minority students and students with weaker academic skills (Hoff, 2008). A final report by Policy Studies Associates Inc., a Washington-based research group that has been studying the ten-year initiative since it began, found 78% of New Century students graduated in four years, compared with 58% at NYC high schools on average, (Foley, Klinge, & Reisner, 2008). In addition to outpacing the citywide graduation rate by 20 percentage points, New Century schools also produced a graduation rate nearly 18 percentage points higher than ten schools with demographically similar students that were chosen by researchers as a comparison (Hoff, 2008).

USDOE Major Research Findings

A 2008 USDOE study evaluated the implementation of the federal education law authorizing the SLC program, and described SLC strategies and practices. The findings were based on data from grantees funded in 2000 for the first cohort. Surveys were conducted in the spring of 2002 and fall of 2003, using data from in-depth case studies of 18 grantees that intended to use freshman or career academies to structure SLC (Bernstein et al., 2008). Major implementation and outcome findings from the study included:

- The most prevalent SLC structures were freshman and career academies.
- Most participating schools chose to implement one or more SLC strategies, with block scheduling and teacher teams the most popular choices.
- SLC-related professional development provided by nearly all schools was not extensive.
- Most schools reported application for SLC funds to increase overall student academic achievement, academic achievement of at-risk students, and student motivation.
- Schools reported a number of factors limiting effective SLC implementation, including scheduling and logistical issues, physical space, lack of SLC professional development for teachers, and school staffing needs—especially in terms of core academic teachers and guidance counselors.

While the 2008 federal study focused on implementation issues, limited outcome data from the first Annual Performance Reports (APR) were included, as well as a number of limitations and cautions in interpreting the data (Bernstein et al., 2008). The data were based on school overall statistics observed immediately before and after participation in the federal program, and do not imply a causal connection. The data suggested:

- an upward trend in student extracurricular participation before and after program participation;
- a statistically significant positive trend in the percentage of ninth grade students being promoted to tenth grade during the post-grant period;
- a downward trend in the incidence of violence in SLC schools over time;
- increases in the percentage of graduating students who reported they planned to attend either two- or four-year colleges; and
- no significant trends observed in academic achievement, as measured by scores on statewide assessments or college entrance exams over the short period of the study.

According to the USDOE study (2008b), the SLC schools in the first cohort were distinctly different. The SLC schools were larger (median enrollments of 1,874 students vs. 1,554 in large high schools), had a much higher percentage of minority enrollment (median of 60% vs. 22%),

and were more likely to be located in large or mid-size central cities (60% vs. 33%). Although APR was modest or neutral, with large variation between schools, trends appear to be moving in the right direction for school-related behaviors. By the end of the first or second year of receiving SLC grants, Cohort 1 reported success in implementation of varied approaches.

- Although block scheduling (58%) and teacher teams (52%) were the most popular choices, over time, schools gradually shifted from the use of SLC strategies to a greater use of SLC structures.
- All but two schools shared the common goal of personalizing the high school experience. The most popular mechanisms for enhancing personalization were classroom-based schools and involved providing individual assessments (76%), a cooperative learning focus (63%), or formal mentoring programs (47%).
- Providing professional development for school staff in innovative teaching methods that challenge and engage students is another goal of the SLC legislation. However, Cohort 1 school teachers received a little more than three days of professional development each year, with 45% of schools providing teachers with less than 16 hours of SLC-specific professional development during the 2002-03 school year.
- Cohort 1 schools reported success involving community representatives, with 82% working with an external partner in 2002-03 versus 65% from the previous year.
- According to survey data, 26 out of 44 career academies had moderate implementation, eight were deemed at high levels, and ten at low.
- Cohort 1 SLC respondents reported factors that appeared to facilitate implementation, including professional development focused on SLC; the availability of resources, including instructional materials; and a variety of teacher-related variables (e.g., attitudes toward reform, pedagogical practices, and expertise).
- Facilitating factors included strong school leadership, involved and supportive districts, high levels of staff buy-in, and sufficient space to make programs separate. Inhibiting factors included staff and administrative turnover, weak school leadership, prescriptive district oversight of SLC reforms, and limited school resources.

Possibly of greater interest was the schoolwide APR data for early changes in SLC reported outcomes. High schools receiving \$80 million in annual federal funding to support SLC, documented steps to establish learning environments more intimate than found in the typical comprehensive high school (Hoff, 2008). However, according to the federal study, such smaller schools cannot answer the most significant question: Is student achievement improving in the smaller settings? Early changes in schoolwide academic outcomes were modest or neutral, with a good deal of variation between schools and no significant trends in academic achievement, as measured by scores on statewide assessments or college entrance exams. Nevertheless, the evaluation of the eight-year-old program found that schools participating showed signs of success (Hoff, 2008). APR data suggested:

- an upward trend in student extracurricular participation and promotion rates from ninth to tenth grades;
- on average, SLC schools experienced a statistically significant 1.4-point drop in the number of violent incidents (for every 100 students) during the post-grant period;
- increases in the percentage of graduating students planning to attend colleges were evident. Between the pre- and post-grant periods, an increase of about four, statistically significant percentage points was found. The absence of comparative national data,

however, made it difficult to infer whether this was due to receipt of the SLC grant rather than part of a more general national trend.

- a serious commitment on the part of most SLC schools to sustain structural changes in the way their school and classrooms were organized. Specifically, close to three-quarters of those schools, that report having made changes using SLC funding, expected to sustain those changes after the grants end. For example, almost all (96%) of the schools that reported making their schoolwide core curricula more academically rigorous were committed to sustaining those changes after their SLC funding runs out. Ninety-four percent of the schools that reported using more varied student assessments for grading and promotion decisions, and 80% of the schools, that implemented classroom-level changes, expected to sustain those changes in the future.

Program Implementation

The BCPS SLC grant began in October 2005. Because of individual history and circumstances, each of the participating high schools took an individualized approach to implement the SLC grant. The project staff and the staffs of the eight schools developed and implemented plans for each academic year, based on the previous years' work and evaluation data. The following tables provide implementation data for each school and the District as a whole in terms of grade levels, formation, and the strategies and structures each school used to establish SLC. The data in this section was gleaned from the grant application materials, the SLC principal surveys, and other implementation-related materials collected from the project staff and eight high schools.

Table 1 shows the number and percentage of students participating in SLC during the first and last year of implementation. In the eight schools, 73% of the students were participating in some type of SLC during the first year. By the fifth year, the corresponding statistics increased to 97%, for a 24 percentage point increase between the first and fifth years. By the fifth year, all but Coconut Creek High School implemented schoolwide SLC strategies and structures.

Table 1
Number and Percentage of Students Participating in Smaller Learning Communities

School	2005-06		2009-10	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Coconut Creek	2,280	100	1,515	75
Deerfield Beach	2,244	100	2,346	100
Dillard	1,096	56	1,451	100
Fort Lauderdale	516	29	1,603	100
Hollywood Hills	2,070	100	1,881	100
Northeast	2,080	100	2,319	100
Piper	1,800	61	2,706	100
Stranahan	693	32	1,687	100
All schools	12,779	73	15,508	97

The goal of the SLC grant was to enroll all students in SLC by 2009-10. The data in Table 2 illustrates that during the first year of the grant (2005-06), Coconut Creek, Deerfield Beach, Hollywood Hills, Northeast, and Piper implemented the SLC grant schoolwide; Dillard and Stranahan at the ninth and tenth grade levels; and Fort Lauderdale at the ninth grade level.

By the fifth year of the grant (2009-10), SLC strategies and structures were implemented at all grade levels in all schools except for Coconut Creek which did not implement SLC at the 12th grade level.

Table 2

Grade Levels at Which SLC Were Implemented from 2005–06 to 2009–10

School/Year	9 th	10 th	11 th	12 th
Coconut Creek				
2005–06	X	X	X	X
2006–07	X	X	X	X
2007–08	X	X	X	X
2008–09	X	X	–	–
2009–10	X	X	X	–
Deerfield Beach				
2005–06	X	X	X	X
2006–07	X	X	X	X
2007–08	X	X	X	X
2008–09	X	X	X	X
2009–10	X	X	X	X
Dillard				
2005–06	X	X	–	–
2006–07	X	X	–	–
2007–08	X	X	–	–
2008–09	X	X	X	X
2009–10	X	X	X	X
Fort Lauderdale				
2005–06	X	–	–	–
2006–07	X	X	–	–
2007–08	X	X	X	X
2008–09	X	X	X	X
2009–10	X	X	X	X
Hollywood Hills				
2005–06	X	X	X	X
2006–07	X	X	X	X
2007–08	X	X	X	X
2008–09	X	X	X	X
2009–10	X	X	X	X
Northeast				
2005–06	X	X	X	X
2006–07	X	X	X	X
2007–08	X	X	X	X
2008–09	X	X	X	X
2009–10	X	X	X	X
Piper				
2005–06	X	X	X	X
2006–07	X	X	X	X
2007–08	X	X	–	–
2008–09	X	X	X	–
2009–10	X	X	X	X

(table continues)

Table 2 (continued).

School/Year	9 th	10 th	11 th	12 th
Stranahan				
2005–06	X	X	–	–
2006–07	X	X	X	X
2007–08	X	X	X	X
2008–09	X	X	X	X
2009–10	X	X	X	X

Note. “X” indicates implementation; “–” indicates no implementation.

Strategies and Structures Employed During the Five Years

Another important aspect of implementing SLC was the strategies and structures the schools employed. Therefore, knowing what strategies and structures the schools used, revealed how the schools implemented the SLC grant. The data in Table 3 were extracted from the SLC principal surveys. Just as for grade levels, the data illustrate that a variety of SLC strategies and structures were employed by the eight schools.

Table 3

Strategies and Structures of Smaller Learning Communities Implemented Between the 2005-06 and 2009-10 School Years

School/Year	Strategies							Structures				
	Adult Mentors	Advisory period/ Teacher Adv.	Alternative/Block Scheduling	Common Planning Periods	Counselor Assigned to SLC	Interdisciplinary Curriculum	Interdisciplinary Teacher Teams	Career Theme	Freshman/Transition Academy	House	Magnet Program ^a	Separate Building Space
Coconut Creek												
2005-06	-	-	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	X	-	X
2006-07	-	-	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	-	X
2007-08	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	-	X
2008-09	X	-	X	X	-	X	X	-	X	X	-	X
2009-10	X	X	-	X	-	-	-	-	-	X	-	-
Deerfield Beach												
2005-06	-	-	X	-	X	-	-	X	X	X	X	X
2006-07	X	-	X	-	-	X	X	X	-	X	X	-
2007-08	-	-	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	-
2008-09	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	-
2009-10	X	-	X	-	-	X	-	-	X	X	X	-
Dillard												
2005-06	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	X
2006-07	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2007-08	-	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2008-09	-	-	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	-	X	X
2009-10	-	-	-	X	X	-	X	-	X	X	X	X

(table continues)

Table 3 (continued).

School/Year	Strategies							Structures				
	Adult Mentors	Advisory period/ Teacher Adv.	Alternative/Block Scheduling	Common Planning Periods	Counselor Assigned to SLC	Interdisciplinary Curriculum	Interdisciplinary Teacher Teams	Career Theme	Freshman/Transition Academy	House	Magnet Program ^a	Separate Building Space
Fort Lauderdale												
2005-06	-	-	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2006-07	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2007-08	-	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2008-09	-	-	X	X	-	X	X	-	X	-	X	X
2009-10	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	X	X	-	X	X
Hollywood Hills												
2005-06	-	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X
2006-07	-	X	X	-	X	-	-	X	X	X	-	X
2007-08	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X
2008-09	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	X	-	-	X
2009-10	X	X	X	-	X	-	-	X	X	-	-	X
Northeast												
2005-06	-	X	X	X	-	X	-	-	X	-	X	X
2006-07	-	X	X	X	-	X	-	-	X	-	X	-
2007-08	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	-	X	-	X	X
2008-09	X	-	X	-	X	X	-	-	X	-	X	X
2009-10	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Piper												
2005-06	-	-	-	X	X	X	X	-	X	-	-	-
2006-07	X	-	-	X	-	X	-	-	-	-	-	-
2007-08	-	-	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	-
2008-09	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	X
2009-10	X	-	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	X
Stranahan												
2005-06	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	-
2006-07	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	-	X
2007-08	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2008-09	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2009-10	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Note. "X" indicates implementation; "-" indicates no implementation.

^aSLC magnet programs include whole-school magnet programs or separate SLC magnet programs within a school.

Based on the data in Table 3, Table 4 was developed to compare the number and percentage of schools that implemented the SLC strategies and structures in 2005-06 and 2009-10. The data indicate that the percentage increased in three areas—(a) adult mentors, (b) advisory period/teacher advisories, and (c) career themes; remained the same in three areas—(a) freshman/transition academy, (b) magnet program, and (c) separate building space; and decreased in six areas—(a) alternative scheduling/block scheduling, (b) common planning periods, (c) counselors assigned to SLC, (d) interdisciplinary curriculum, (e) interdisciplinary teacher teams, and (f) house.

Table 4

Number and Percentage of Schools that Implemented the Following SLC Strategies and Structures: A Comparison Between 2005-06 and 2009-10 School Years

Strategy	2005-06		2009-10	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Adult Mentors	2	25	7	88
Advisory period/Teacher Advisories	1	13	4	50
Alternative/Block Scheduling	7	88	5	63
Common Planning Periods	7	88	5	63
Counselor Assigned to SLC	6	75	5	63
Interdisciplinary Curriculum	7	88	4	50
Interdisciplinary Teacher Teams	6	75	4	50
Structure				
Career Theme	3	38	5	63
Freshman/Transition Academy	7	88	7	88
House	6	75	5	63
Magnet Program	5	63	5	63
Separate Building Space	6	75	6	75

In terms of strategies, by the 2009-10 school year, at least five schools used (a) adult mentors, (b) alternative scheduling/block scheduling, (c) common planning periods, and (d) counselors assigned to SLC, among which “adult mentors” was used the most frequently by a total of seven schools. In terms of structures, all structures were used by at least five schools. “Freshman/transition academy” is a structure that was used the most frequently.

One critical factor why SLC strategies and structures may change from year to year is principal turnover. The eight SLC schools have had 15 different principals during the five years of the grant, which almost always impacts the leadership and direction of how the SLC grant is implemented. A change in support by teachers or the District may also lead the principal to change how SLC is implemented. For example, an advisory program was implemented at Stranahan High School in 2006-07 but not in 2007-08, due to teacher contractual issues raised by the Broward Teachers Union. Other changes may have been due to school staffs determining that a strategy did not work (e.g., separate building space at Deerfield Beach High School in 2005-06) or implementing strategies or structures in one year conflicted with state and District requirements (e.g., the state-mandated and District-developed Intensive Reading program). In 2008-09, a new principal at Coconut Creek and the decision to focus on common planning by subject areas at the 9th and 10th levels rolled back the SLC implementation at the 11th and 12th grade levels.

Major Achievements during the Five-year SLC Grant

Each principal was asked to list their three most significant grant achievements. Appendix A summarizes the most significant achievements in implementing the SLC grant, from 2005-06 to 2009-10. Overall, achievements included overcoming barriers to implementation of the grant in fidelity; initiating the strategies and structures; and the positive staff morale, parental involvement, and ultimately student achievement. For example, Fort Lauderdale High School’s most significant achievements were related to establishing the house, setting up common

planning time, implementing personalized teaching methods and curriculum, fine-tuning teacher professional development and curriculum, and ultimately raising student achievement. A review of major achievements most commonly reported by year revealed that during the first year (2005-06), principals indicated advancement in improved relationships and interactions and common planning. In the second year (2006-07), principals identified increased community identification, fostering a productive climate, and enhanced personalization. During the third year of the grant (2007-08), principals found improved teacher buy-in and strengthened staff development. For the fourth year (2008-09), school principals reported progress not only in implementing the SLC grant, but also in student achievement and the success of specific SLC strategies that aim to raise student achievement. For the final year (2009-10), all eight principals reported more collaboration and collegiality among teachers as a major achievement; and seven principals mentioned that various mechanisms were implemented to personalize the learning environment.

Each principal was also asked to list the three most significant learnings in relation to the SLC grant work; Appendix B summarizes their responses. Themes for the first three years (2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08) included (a) scheduling, (b) team building, (c) alignment, (d) personalization, (e) understanding goals and objectives, (f) curricular integration, (g) budget, (h) professional development, (i) union concerns, (j) leadership, and (k) sustainability issues. During the fourth year (2008-09), these themes emerged again. However, personalization strategies have been mentioned more frequently, such as organizing field trips, assigning counselors, developing new programs for students, and having role models. Specific learnings on sustainability have also been mentioned more frequently, such as incorporating the SLC concept into the curriculum and engaging in continuous improvement. With the passage of years, the learnings were related more to the specific issues of implementing SLC strategies directly associated with student learning, which is an indication of the deepening of implementation. The data for the fifth year (2009-10) indicate that six principals focused on general issues—rather than specific implementation technical issues—related to the SLC grant. Lessons learned include (a) the importance of human relations in the success of the grant, (b) the possible conflict between the district mandates and SLC philosophies, (c) the importance of professional development in implementing the grant, (d) the challenge in sustaining the activities and programs associated with the SLC grant, (e) the reduction of budget as a barrier, and (f) the need for a unified SLC approach across the eight participating schools (the SLC grant allowed each school to develop its own SLC activities).

Expenditures

As reported in Table 5, the budget for five years was \$7,399,887, and the expenditures for the five years were \$7,311,306. The grant underspent in the area of (a) travel, (b) contractual, (c) other, and (d) training stipends. As for “travel,” the eight schools allocated the same amount each year for five years. However, during the fifth year, the project did not have a summer to use the funds as “travel” had to end in January 2010. Regarding the “contractual” category, the initial budget for the external evaluator included annual site visits, which were not necessary and did not occur. Furthermore, due to the reporting schedule, four evaluation reports were produced rather than five. There were also times during the grant that the District issued a freeze on hiring

consultants even if the funds were already allocated through a grant. As for “training stipends,” the majority of teachers who attended training were paid their hourly rates and not stipends, which accounted for the relatively low expenditure for training stipends and higher expenditures for personnel. The higher expenditure on fringe benefits was a result of both higher personnel cost and higher fringe benefits rates according to District policies. All changes in expenditures were reviewed and approved, on an annual basis, by the grants department.

Table 5
Summary of Five-Year Budget and Expenditures (July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2010)

Category	Budget (\$)	Expenditure (\$)	Difference (\$)
1. Personnel	3,726,475	3,909,012	-182,537
2. Fringe benefits	647,527	871,984	-224,457
3. Travel	753,850	627,820	126,030
4. Equipment	0	0	0
5. Supplies	838,673	1,000,635	-161,962
6. Contractual	642,000	369,661	272,339
7. Construction	0	0	0
8. Other	365,800	223,411	142,389
9. Total direct cost (Items 1-8)	6,974,325	7,002,523	-28,198
10. Indirect costs	284,762	274,220	10,542
11. Training stipends	140,800	34,563	106,237
12. Total costs (Items 9-11)	7,399,887	7,311,306	88,581

Note: Other includes registration/tuition, room rental, bus transportation, and printing. The *Difference* column was calculated as “Budget” minus “Expenditure”. Therefore, a negative figure means “over-spending” for the category while a positive figure indicates “under-spending”.

Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of this formative evaluation was to provide feedback concerning the progress of implementation of the SLC grant and status of the grant’s three goals. Specifically, the objective-oriented evaluation investigated the extent to which the following SLC grant objectives were met.

1. To engage students academically by June 2010,
 - 1.1a. increase by 5% the number of students who score proficient or better on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) in reading, using each school’s 2004-05 data as baseline;
 - 1.1b. increase by 5% the number of students who score Level 3 or better on the FCAT in mathematics, using each school’s 2004-05 data as baseline;
 - 1.2. increase the percentage of students enrolled in classes of high rigor [Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) classes] by ten percentage points, compared to 2004-05;
 - 1.3. increase the graduation rate (completing in four years) by five percentage points over 2004-05;
 - 1.4. increase the percentage of students enrolled in post-secondary education, apprenticeships, or advanced training by 20 percentage points, compared to 2004-05;

- 1.5. increase the percentage of students who are employed or join the military after graduation by five percentage points, compared to 2004-05; and
 - 1.6. decrease the number of disciplinary actions (suspensions) by 50% (adjusted by enrollment), compared to 2004-05.
2. To personalize the learning environment for all students by June 2010,
 - 2.1. all students will be in SLC by random selection or choice; and
 - 2.2. increase the percentage of students reporting contact with an adult advocate who is familiar with student needs and aspirations to 75% by 2010.
 3. To engage the entire community in articulating a shared vision by June 2010,
 - 3.1. increase the percentage of parent/community member involvement in academic/instructional support, development of program goals, and activities within SLC by 50 percentage points over year one (2005-06).

In addition to the above objectives, the evaluation also focused on the process. Specially, data from students, teachers, and parents regarding the extent to which SLC were established in the eight participating schools, as well as lessons learned during the five years of grant implementation.

Methods

One of the strengths of this evaluation was the continuous interaction among the SLC staff, the evaluation administrator of the Research Department, and the external evaluator. It was challenging to implement the grant programming, and at the same time, weave evaluation activities into grant implementation. The external evaluator maintained continuous contact with the SLC staff through conference calls and e-mail communications; the evaluator also had frequent contacts with the evaluation administrator. Qualitative and quantitative evaluative techniques were used to address process areas and stakeholder perceptions. SLC evaluation questions were addressed using descriptive, quantitative methods. To gather pertinent information, a combination of approaches was utilized including a literature review, stakeholder surveys, interviews, and document review. Data were collected, directly and indirectly, from the eight participating SLC schools—students, teachers, principals, parents, and others. Student achievement and other outcomes were extracted from the District’s Data Warehouse, Florida Department of Education’s (FDOE) FCAT Web site (<http://fcat.fldoe.org/results>) and Florida School Indicators Report, and other relevant documents. Surveys and interviews provided details regarding the implementation and benefits of the SLC grant and gauged perception of the participants.

Annual District Customer Survey Report

Results from the annual BCPS Customer Survey were used, rather than disrupting school function to initiate a SLC survey during the last phase of the school year. To assess BCPS climate, the Customer Survey has been administered annually to students, teachers, and parents. In 2005-06, the Twelfth Annual Customer Survey was administered to students in Grades 3 through 12, all full-time instructional staff, and a random sample of BCPS parents. No significant changes have been made to the survey instrument between 2003-04 and 2009-10,

with some items being revised over the years. However, the BCPS Customer Survey data used for this evaluation report were based on items that were phrased exactly the same between 2004-05 and 2009-10, permitting comparison from year-to-year. Because the grant began in the 2005-06 school year, data from 2004-05 were used as the baseline for the evaluation.

The Student Customer Survey questions included in the analysis of the student perceptions of their learning environment and experience were: (a) *There is an adult at school I can talk to about my personal problems*; (b) *My teacher(s) regularly tell(s) me how I am doing in school*; and (c) *I am accepted and feel like I belong at this school*. The Parent Customer Survey items included in the analysis of parent perceptions of their student learning environment and experiences were: (a) *I share responsibility with the school for my child's academic progress*; (b) *I help school staff when academic or behavioral problems occur with my child*; and (c) *I am aware of the goals of my child's school*. The parent survey also contained items related to the student learning environment, such as (a) *There is an adult at school I can talk to about my child's problems*, and (b) *The teachers respond quickly to my requests*.

Smaller Learning Communities Surveys

Paper-and-pencil survey of principals. A SLC instrument was developed to survey the eight principals concerning SLC implementation in their respective schools during each year of the grant. For the five school years, all eight principals returned their completed questionnaires for a 100% response rate. Survey data from Appendix C on strategies, structures, learnings, and achievements regarding implementing the SLC grant were used in this report. Graduation, post-graduation, and disaggregated data were used for federal online reporting, but not in this report. The graduation, post-graduation status, and FCAT data in this report were from the Florida School Indicators Report (<http://www.fldoe.org/eias/eiaspubs/0809fsir.asp> for 2004-05 to 2008-09 and <http://www.fldoe.org/eias/eiaspubs/default.asp> for 2009-10) and the FCAT Web site (<http://fcats.fldoe.org/results>), so that all data in this report are authoritative.

*Online survey of high school teachers in the eight participating schools.*⁴ During the first year of SLC grant implementation, a purposive sample of 81 SLC teachers was selected by the SLC project staff to take part in the online survey (Appendix D). All those in the sample were involved in the SLC grant. The teacher survey focused on the extent to which a personalized learning environment was provided to the students, and the issues encountered in implementing the SLC grant. A total of 65 teachers answered the questions online for a return rate of 80.2%. Among the respondents, (a) 66% were women, (b) 3% Asian and Pacific Islanders, (c) 27% Black, (d) 3% Hispanic, and (e) 67% White.

The survey was administered again for the second year of the SLC grant implementation. A purposive sample of 80 SLC teachers was selected by the SLC project staff to complete the online survey. The sample of 80 teachers was constructed by the SLC project staff and the evaluator. To maximize the comparability of the data from year-to-year, an attempt was made to keep the first-year sample except where the teacher was no longer with a particular school. This process resulted in 66 of those in the first-year sample also in the second-year sample.

⁴ The survey items are adapted from American Institutes for Research and SRI International. (2005). *Evaluation of the National School District and Network Grants Program, Annual Report Year 4*. Washington, DC and Menlo Park, CA: Authors. Dr. Victor Kuo at The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation are acknowledged for the permission.

Fifty-five of the 80 teachers responded to the second-year online survey, resulting in a return rate of 68.8%. Among the respondents, (a) 71% were women, (b) 2% Asian and Pacific Islanders, (c) 27% Black, (d) 11% Hispanic, and (e) 60% White.

The teacher online survey was not implemented during the third year, due to the fact that two evaluation reports were produced for the first three-year period. The teacher online survey was administered again during the fourth year (2008-09). The methodology was the same as for the second year, trying to maximize the comparability of the data from year-to-year. As a result, for the fourth-year teacher online survey, 68 out of the sample of 80 teachers were the same as the previous administration. The 12 who were substituted were no longer with the school. Sixty-six of the 80 teachers responded to the fourth-year online survey, resulting in a return rate of 82.5%. Among the respondents, (a) 70% were women, (b) 2% Asian and Pacific Islanders, (c) 35% Black, (d) 9% Hispanic, (e) 3% Native/Indian American, and (e) 52% White. The total percentage does not add to 100%, due to rounding.

For the final year (2009-10) of the survey, the same methodology was used. Only the teachers who left the school were substituted in order to maximize the comparability across the years. Seventy-one, out of the sample of 80 teachers, were the same as the prior year's administration. Among the 80, who were sent the online link to be surveyed, 62 teachers completed the survey, with a return rate of 77.5%. Among the respondents, (a) 66% were women, (b) 2% Asian and Pacific Islanders, (c) 34% Black, (d) 10% Hispanic, and (e) 55% White. The total percentage does not add to 100%, due to rounding.

Other Data Sources

Data were extracted from the District's Data Warehouse for each of the school years from 2004-05 to 2009-10. File variables included FCAT Reading achievement level, FCAT Mathematics achievement level, number of suspensions, IB/AP course enrollment, and student demographic information.

For the fourth-year evaluation, a data file was extracted from the District Data Warehouse to evaluate whether there was a statistically significant difference between the SLC and non-SLC students in their growth rate in reading and mathematics between the 8th grade and 10th grade. The sample included 3,156 students in SLC high schools and 10,245 in non-SLC high schools. These students were 8th graders in 2006-07, and became 9th graders in 2007-08, and 10th graders in 2008-09. All students in the sample were consistently either in an SLC school or a non-SLC school for 2007-08 and 2008-09 school years. The data files included time-variant variables over the three years, such as FCAT Reading developmental scale score, FCAT Mathematics developmental scale score, special education status, free and reduced-priced lunch status, limited English proficiency status, as well as time-invariant variables, such as gender and race/ethnicity. A hierarchical linear model (HLM) was used to match students' data over three years and by nesting a student in the same SLC or non-SLC school over the three years.

For the fifth year evaluation, the same analyses were conducted as in the fourth year, except that a newer sample was used—those who were 8th graders in 2007-08, and became 9th graders in 2008-09, and 10th graders in 2009-10. This sample included 3,133 students in the SLC schools and 11,906 students in non-SLC schools. The variables in this year's data file were the same as

those in the previous year. As in last year's analysis, an HLM model was used to match students' data over three years and by nesting a student in the same SLC or non-SLC school over the three years.

Additionally, in the fifth year evaluation, 2005-06 8th graders' graduation rate in 2009-10 were analyzed to answer the question of whether there was a statistically significant difference between the students of SLC and non-SLC schools in the probability of graduation, after adjusting for prior academic achievement and demographic background. An HLM model was used to match students' data over five years and by nesting a student in the same SLC or non-SLC school over the five years. Student demographic, achievement, and graduation rate data were extracted from the District's Data Warehouse on August 3, 2010; the sample included 11,169 students, with 2,386 in the SLC schools and 8,783 in non-SLC schools.

In addition to FCAT data, graduation rate and post-graduation data were also retrieved from the FDOE Florida School Indicators Report (<http://www.fldoe.org/eias/eiaspubs/0809fsir.asp> for 2004-05 to 2008-09 and <http://www.fldoe.org/eias/eiaspubs/default.asp> for 2009-10), because of the unique technical specifications involved in calculating these statistics, and because it provided the most reliable source for tracking post-graduates status through social security numbers. Graduation rate data was available up to 2009-10; however, post-graduation data for 2009-10 have not been officially published. Therefore, the 2008-09 data was used to evaluate progress.

The last data source for this report included documents and information related to the SLC grant, such as the (a) funded proposal, (b) school talking-points report, (c) the schools' reflection, (d) the reflection from the SLC project staff, (e) communications with the SLC project and school staff, (f) annual plans, and (g) materials for presentation and dissemination by the SLC staff, etc.

Findings

This section contains two major components. The first component is the objective-oriented evaluation in which the findings were presented, in relation to the objectives set forth for the SLC grant. The second component contains the process-oriented evaluation; with findings concerning how and to what extent the SLC grant has been implemented. The evaluation question is presented first and then the data and findings related to the particular question.

Objective-Oriented Evaluation:

To What Extent Have the Goals of the SLC Grant Been Met?

Table 6 presents a summary of the student achievement objectives met for Grades 9 and 10, with the 2004-05 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) as baseline; and the most recent 2009-10 data as outcome. As evidenced, the predominant number of reading and mathematics grant objectives was achieved. Out of the individual objectives shown in Table 6, 78% ($n=25$) were met. Four schools (Deerfield Beach, Dillard, Fort Lauderdale, and Stranahan) met the SLC objectives in both reading and mathematics for both ninth and tenth grades. All schools met the grant goal for tenth grade mathematics.

Table 6

Summary of Schools Meeting the SLC Grant Objectives in Reading and Mathematics, 2008-09

School	Reading		Mathematics	
	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 9	Grade 10
Coconut Creek	met	not met	met	met
Deerfield Beach	met	met	met	met
Dillard	met	met	met	met
Fort Lauderdale	met	met	met	met
Hollywood Hills	not met	met	not met	met
Northeast	not met	not met	met	met
Piper	not met	not met	met	met
Stranahan	met	met	met	met

Tables 7 through 10 report, in detail, the percentage of ninth and tenth grade students at proficient or advanced levels, as taken from the FDOE Web site (<http://fcats.fldoe.org/results>), measured by FCAT from 2004-05 to 2009-10 (with 2004-05 data serving as baseline). SLC student proficiency is compared with District and state proficiency levels to provide another view of program impact. The FDOE Web site does not provide the number of students; therefore, the tables present the percentage of students achieving at proficient or advanced levels only. According to the goals of the grant, the percentage of students achieving at these levels should increase by five percentage points by the end of the fifth and final year.

Question 1.1a. Reading: What percentages of students scored at proficient and advanced levels, as measured by the FCAT? Was the goal for the SLC grant met?

As seen in Table 7, five out of eight schools met the SLC grant goal of increasing the percentage of ninth graders scoring at proficient or advanced levels in reading by five percentage points, using 2004-05 as the base year and 2009-10 as the end point. All but Hollywood Hills High School, Northeast High School, and Piper High School met the final grant goal for 2009-10.

A comparison of SLC performance with District and state proficiency levels provides another view. Two schools, which include Deerfield Beach and Fort Lauderdale, exceeded both the District's 11 percentage point increase and the state's 12 percentage point increase from 2004-05 to 2009-10. Please note that Broward's proficiency rates include proficiency levels for all schools (including participating SLC schools); and therefore, caution should be used when interpreting these data.

Table 7

Percentage of Ninth Graders Who Achieved Proficient or Advanced Levels in Reading for SLC Schools, Broward County, and the State of Florida

School	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	Difference between 2004-05 and 2009-10
Coconut Creek	19	24	23	21	18	27	+8
Deerfield Beach	27	31	35	40	39	42	+15
Dillard	18	23	24	28	33	23	+5
Fort Lauderdale	35	38	45	48	50	51	+16
Hollywood Hills	32	31	31	40	39	34	+2
Northeast	39	39	39	45	41	41	+2
Piper	30	32	35	43	33	34	+4
Stranahan	33	37	35	37	45	43	+10
Broward	37	42	42	47	46	48	+11
State	36	40	41	46	47	48	+12

Note: Source is the FDOE FCAT results reports at <http://fcats.fldoe.org/results>.

Table 8 shows that five high schools, Deerfield Beach, Dillard, Fort Lauderdale, Hollywood Hills, and Stranahan met the goal of increasing the percentage of tenth graders at proficient or advanced levels in reading by five percentage points between 2004-05 and 2009-10. Comparisons with the District and the state reveal that two SLC schools (i.e., Fort Lauderdale and Hollywood Hills) exhibited gains that met or exceeded the 10 percentage point increase found in Broward, and the five schools (i.e., Deerfield Beach, Dillard, Fort Lauderdale, Hollywood Hills, and Stranahan) exhibited gains that exceeded the seven percentage point increase in the State of Florida, during the same time period.

Table 8

Percentage of Tenth Graders Who Achieved Proficient or Advanced Levels in Reading for SLC Schools, Broward County, and the State of Florida

School	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	Difference between 2004-05 and 2009-10
Coconut Creek	15	13	14	14	13	14	-1
Deerfield Beach	22	27	24	34	31	30	+8
Dillard	14	19	21	17	23	24	+10
Fort Lauderdale	27	33	32	39	40	46	+19
Hollywood Hills	22	25	22	25	25	34	+12
Northeast	31	38	36	31	33	31	0
Piper	21	25	22	26	26	23	+2
Stranahan	27	34	28	30	30	35	+8
Broward	29	33	34	38	37	39	+10
State	32	32	34	38	37	39	+7

Note: Source is the FDOE FCAT results reports at <http://fcats.fldoe.org/results>.

Question 1.1b. Mathematics: What percentages of students scored at proficient and advanced levels, as measured by the FCAT? Was the goal for the SLC grant met?

Table 9 reports the percentage of ninth grade students at proficient or advanced levels in mathematics, as measured by the FCAT. The data confirm that between 2004-05 and 2009-10, seven schools, with the exception of Hollywood Hills, met the goal of five percentage point increase between 2004-05 and 2009-10. Four schools (i.e., Deerfield Beach, Dillard, Fort Lauderdale, and Stranahan) exhibited gains that exceeded the District’s 10 percentage point increase; and five schools (i.e., Coconut Creek, Deerfield Beach, Dillard, Fort Lauderdale, and Stranahan) exhibited gains that exceeded the state’s eight percentage point increase.

Table 9
Percentage of Ninth Graders Who Achieved Proficient or Advanced Levels in Mathematics for SLC Schools, Broward County, and the State of Florida

School	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	Difference between 2004-05 and 2009-10
Coconut Creek	41	47	51	49	48	50	+9
Deerfield Beach	51	52	58	60	60	65	+14
Dillard	46	49	50	59	68	69	+23
Fort Lauderdale	63	64	65	69	71	75	+12
Hollywood Hills	60	54	58	59	64	58	-2
Northeast	65	70	70	70	72	71	+6
Piper	59	56	59	63	60	66	+7
Stranahan	52	57	53	60	72	67	+15
Broward	62	63	64	68	70	72	+10
State	59	59	60	65	68	67	+8

Note: Source is the FDOE FCAT results reports at <http://fcats.fldoe.org/results>.

The data for tenth grade mathematics displayed in Table 10 indicate that all schools met or surpassed the SLC goal of five percentage point increase between 2004-05 and 2009-10. Furthermore, all but one school (i.e., Fort Lauderdale) exceeded Broward’s and the state’s 10 percentage point increase during the same period. Again, Broward’s proficiency rates include proficiency levels for participating SLC, as well as non-SLC schools; and therefore, caution should be used when interpreting these data. However, the data clearly suggest that 10th grade mathematics is among the successes for the eight SLC schools.

Table 10

Percentage of Tenth Graders Who Achieved Proficient or Advanced Levels in Mathematics for SLC Schools, Broward County, and the State of Florida

School	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	Difference between 2004-05 and 2009-10
Coconut Creek	44	39	45	52	53	54	+10
Deerfield Beach	51	62	58	66	64	68	+17
Dillard	50	63	60	64	72	75	+25
Fort Lauderdale	67	77	71	73	77	76	+9
Hollywood Hills	55	56	60	61	63	68	+13
Northeast	63	70	73	69	73	74	+11
Piper	52	65	60	62	66	63	+11
Stranahan	56	62	60	61	61	69	+13
Broward	63	68	69	71	72	73	+10
State	63	65	65	69	69	73	+10

Note: Source is the FDOE FCAT results reports at <http://fcats.fldoe.org/results>.

Question 1.2. What is the percentage of students enrolled in at least one course that offers AP/IB credit? Was the goal for the SLC grant met?

The student Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) data presented in Table 11 were extracted from the District Data Warehouse. The goal was for students taking at least one AP or IB course to increase by ten percentage points by 2010. All schools increased the rate of students enrolled in at least one AP/IB credit course from 2004-05 to 2009-10. Four schools (i.e., Dillard, Northeast, Piper, and Stranahan) met or exceeded the grant goal of increasing the percentage of enrollment by 10 percentage points over the five-year period.

Table 11

Number and Percentage of Students Who Took at Least One AP or IB Course

School	2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08		2008-09		2009-10		Change from 2004-05 to 2009-10
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Coconut Creek	256	10	299	12	321	12	308	12	244	11	326	15	+5
Deerfield Beach	312	11	289	11	276	12	348	15	351	15	491	19	+8
Dillard	80	4	94	4	135	7	210	11	256	16	331	22	+18
Fort Lauderdale	345	19	382	21	314	19	367	21	354	22	463	27	+9
Hollywood Hills	212	9	245	10	183	8	189	9	226	11	341	17	+8
Northeast	118	5	155	7	155	8	164	8	245	11	352	15	+10
Piper	205	6	267	9	328	12	333	12	362	13	627	22	+16
Stranahan	486	22	411	19	431	23	569	31	627	36	654	37	+15

Question 1.3. What are the high school graduation rates for the eight participating schools? Was the goal for the SLC grant met?

The SLC grant objective was to increase the graduation rate by five percentage points over five years, with 2004-05 as the base line and 2009-10 as the ending point. Data in Table 12

indicate that all eight high schools met this objective. The increase in graduation rates from 2004-05 to 2009-10 for eight schools ranged from 11.6 to 47.1 percentage points. All eight schools exceeded the gains in graduation rates for Broward County (10.8 percentage points) and the State of Florida (8.8 percentage points) over the same time period. Six schools exhibited large increases of more than 20 percentage points during this time period: Dillard (47.1), Stranahan (27.5), Coconut Creek (25.2), Deerfield Beach (22.9), and Fort Lauderdale (22.6).

Table 12
High School Graduation Rates in Percent

School	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	Difference between 2004-05 and 2009-10
Coconut Creek	56.1	55.3	60.8	62.0	70.5	81.3	+25.2
Deerfield Beach	56.8	60.0	66.6	76.8	73.1	79.7	+22.9
Dillard	42.2	59.2	58.3	70.2	83.7	89.3	+47.1
Fort Lauderdale	60.0	63.5	75.1	83.0	78.7	82.6	+22.6
Hollywood Hills	73.9	67.2	72.9	76.7	79.1	85.6	+11.7
Northeast	67.2	69.4	72.9	76.5	78.7	78.8	+11.6
Piper	68.1	62.3	63.0	77.3	79.7	83.3	+15.2
Stranahan	58.3	60.7	68.0	74.5	73.7	85.8	+27.5
Broward	67.1	67.8	66.3	69.7	74.2	77.9	+10.8
State	71.9	71.0	72.4	75.4	78.6	80.7	+8.8

Note: Source is the FDOE Florida School Indicators Report: <http://www.fldoe.org/eias/eiaspubs/0809fsir.asp> for 2004-05 to 2008-09 and <http://www.fldoe.org/eias/eiaspubs/default.asp> for 2009-10. Graduation rate is defined as the following on the above Web site: “The percentage of students who have graduated within four years of entering ninth grade for the first time. Students who transfer out of the school or district to attend school elsewhere or to enroll in an adult-education program are removed from the group of students (cohort) tracked. Incoming transfer students, at the time of their enrollment, are included in the count of the class with which they are scheduled to graduate and are tracked accordingly. A graduate is defined as a student who receives a standard diploma, a special diploma, or a diploma awarded after successful completion of the GED examination. Certificate recipients are not included.”

From the perspective of graduation rate, the eight SLC schools did extremely well in comparison to the District and statewide graduation rates. The increase in graduation rates, between 2004-05 and 2009-10 for all eight SLC high schools, far exceeded that of the Districtwide statistics. Between 2004-05 and 2009-10, collectively, the eight SLC high schools’ unweighted graduation rate⁵ was 60.3 in 2004-05 and 83.3 in 2009-10, with an increase of 23.0 percentage points, while the Districtwide graduation rate increased from 67.1 to 77.9, an increase of only 10.8 percentage points. Within five years, the eight SLC schools, collectively, demonstrated a far greater increase in graduation rate and surpassed the Districtwide graduation rate (Figure 1).

⁵The FDOE Web site—<http://www.fldoe.org/eias/eiaspubs/0809fsir.asp>—only provides the percentage of students graduating rather than the actual count of graduates and the total population, therefore, an unweighted average is calculated. An unweighted average is a method that treats the percentages of graduation from eight schools with equal weights.

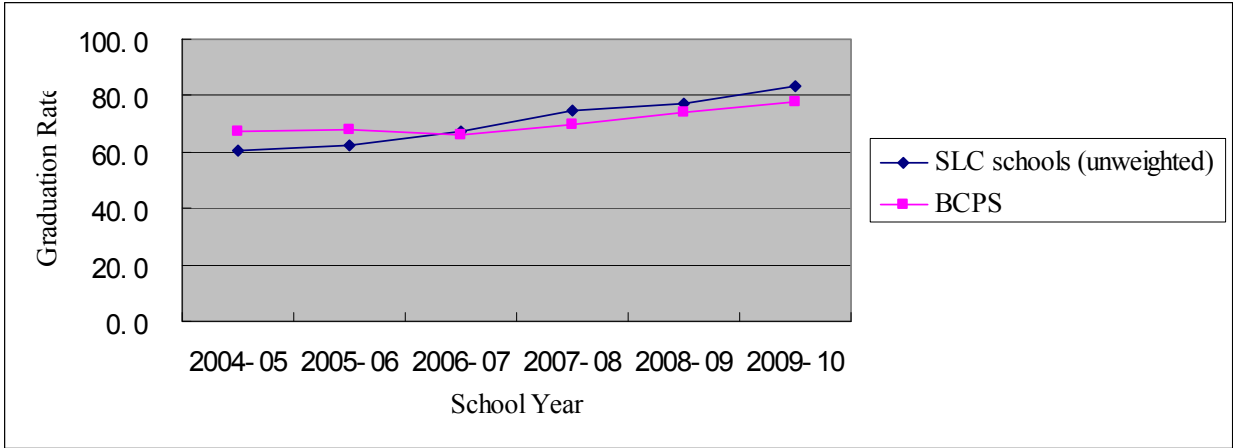


Figure 1. Graduation rates from 2004-05 to 2009-10: A comparison between the District and SLC Schools.

Question 1.4. What is the percentage of the previous year graduates enrolled in post-secondary education, apprenticeship, or advanced training for the semester following graduation? Was the SLC grant objective met?

Enrolled in post-secondary education, apprenticeship, or advanced training is the terminology used by the USDOE SLC Grant Program. The FDOE Florida School Indicators Report uses the term *continuing education*. FDOE developed the statistics for continuing education, based on tracking graduates' social security numbers, one of the most reliable methods to arrive at the post-graduation statistics. *Continuing education* is a statistic tracked by FDOE that is closest in meaning to the federal term of *enrolled in post-secondary education, apprenticeship, or advanced training*. Therefore, the data concerning the percentage of graduates *enrolled in post-secondary education, apprenticeship, or advanced training* for the semester following graduation were collected from the FDOE Florida School Indicators Report, which provides education and employment data for graduates from the previous year.

Since the 2009-10 data on post graduation have not been officially published, the 2008-09 data were used to determine whether the four-year interim goal was met. BCPS SLC grant calls for a 20 percentage point increase over the five years of the grant, in comparison to the baseline data of 2004-05. As shown in Table 13, although all schools increased the post-secondary enrollment percentage from 2004-05 to 2008-09, only Fort Lauderdale is on track to meet the five-year goal by registering an increase of 16 percentage points or more between 2004-05 and 2008-09.

Comparisons with District and state gains show that three schools (i.e., Coconut Creek, Dillard, and Fort Lauderdale) exceeded Broward's 13.3 percentage point increase in post-secondary enrollment from 2004-05 to 2008-09, whereas six schools (i.e., Coconut Creek, Dillard, Fort Lauderdale, Hollywood Hills, Piper, and Stranahan) exceeded the state's 6.4 percentage point gain during the same time period.

Table 13

Percentage of Previous Year Graduates Enrolled in Post-Secondary Education, Apprenticeship, or Advanced Training

School	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	Difference between 2004-05 and 2008-09
Coconut Creek	39.6	55.5	63.3	53.2	53.1	+13.5
Deerfield Beach	50.2	54.7	58.9	53.9	55.0	+4.8
Dillard	43.3	46.2	40.6	48.8	56.7	+13.4
Fort Lauderdale	44.7	64.7	60.2	66.7	63.4	+18.7
Hollywood Hills	54.0	50.0	56.3	62.7	63.0	+9.0
Northeast	61.5	68.6	68.9	64.4	63.4	+1.9
Piper	55.8	59.3	62.1	60.4	65.6	+9.8
Stranahan	61.3	63.0	72.0	69.5	69.8	+8.5
Broward	57.9	66.2	67.5	69.2	71.2	+13.3
State	57.6	61.2	61.7	63.6	64.0	+6.4

Note: Source: is the FDOE Florida School Indicators Report.

Question 1.5. What is the percentage of previous year graduates who were employed or joined the military by the end of the first quarter after they graduated (e.g., for students who graduate in May or June that would be September 30th)? Was the SLC grant objective met?

Employed or joined the military is the terminology used by the USDOE SLC Grant Program. FDOE Florida School Indicators Report uses the term *employed, full-time or part-time*. FDOE developed the statistics for *employed, full-time or part-time*, based on using graduates' social security numbers. *Employed, full-time or part-time*, is a statistic tracked by FDOE that is closest in meaning to the federal term of *employed or joined the military*.

Since the 2009-10 data on post graduation have not been officially published, the 2008-09 data were used to determine whether the four-year interim goal was met. The data concerning the percentage of students *employed or joined the military* for the semester following graduation were collected from the FDOE Florida School Indicators Report, as shown in Table 14. BCPS does not track this information consistently, as few students voluntarily report accurate status after graduation. The BCPS SLC grant goal is a five percentage point increase by 2010, in comparison to the baseline of 2004-05. As an interim measure, if a school increased by one percentage point each year with 2004-05 as the baseline, it would be judged as trending toward meeting the grant goal. Four schools (i.e., Coconut Creek, Hollywood Hills, Northeast, and Piper) were on track to meet the overall objective of increased employment or military service by registering increases of more than three percentage points between 2004-05 and 2007-08. However, by 2008-09 none of the schools was on track to meet the goal of increasing four percentage points between 2004-05 and 2008-09. The pattern observed for 2008-09 is most likely associated with the recent economic down turn. Comparisons with District and state employment levels between 2004-05 and 2008-09 show that five schools (i.e., Fort Lauderdale, Hollywood Hills, Northeast, Piper, and Stranahan) performed better than the Broward average of a 3.0 percentage point decrease, and six schools, except for Coconut Creek and Dillard, performed better than Florida's 7.6 percentage point decrease.

Table 14

Percentage of Previous Year Graduates Who Were Employed or Joined the Military

School	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	Difference between 2004-05 and 2008-09
Coconut Creek	56.2	70.7	66.4	60.0	47.8	-8.4
Deerfield Beach	46.6	51.9	55.7	46.9	43.2	-3.4
Dillard	49.9	54.9	53.0	46.8	35.6	-14.3
Fort Lauderdale	48.4	56.9	55.7	44.3	46.6	-1.8
Hollywood Hills	52.6	63.6	65.5	58.6	51.2	-1.4
Northeast	54.9	60.7	64.5	59.3	57.5	+2.6
Piper	57.6	64.0	59.3	63.1	54.7	-2.9
Stranahan	45.1	52.9	49.8	47.4	45.6	+0.5
Broward	47.5	54.0	53.7	50.5	44.5	-3.0
State	55.3	58.9	58.1	54.1	47.7	-7.6

Note: Source: is the FDOE Florida School Indicators Report.

Question 1.6. What are the numbers of suspensions with enrollment adjustment? Was the SLC grant objective met?

The SLC grant proposal by BCPS combined expulsion and suspension together for this particular goal. The District database does not include reliable expulsion data, because final expulsion decisions are not captured in the database; therefore, only suspension data are used for this goal. The data, as seen in Table 15, were extracted from the District Data Warehouse. The numbers represent suspension actions for every 100 students. The concept of number of suspensions for every 100 students is different from the measurement of the percentage of students who had at least one suspension. Using the number of suspensions for every 100 students, if one student had three suspensions, they were counted three times in the calculation; therefore, this represents a duplicated count of students. For the measure of percentage of students who had at least one suspension, no matter how many disciplinary actions a student had in an academic year, it counted as one out of 100 students, focusing on how many students had at least one disciplinary incident. As in the case of Coconut Creek High School for 2004-05, Table 15 shows that there were 19 incidents of suspensions for every 100 students. However, District data indicate that there were actually 11% of students who had at least one suspension for 2004-05. The federal reporting for the SLC grant and the goal of BCPS SLC grant call for the reduction in the number of suspensions. Therefore, the definition of number of suspensions for every 100 students is used in this report.

The goal for BCPS SLC grant is to cut the number of suspensions in half by 2010. In other words, the goal is to reduce the number of suspensions by 50%. The numbers of suspensions for every 100 students was calculated by the total number of suspensions, divided by total enrollment, and then multiplied by 100. The percentage change between 2004-05 and 2009-10 was calculated as follows: (the number for 2009-10 minus the number for 2004-05) divided by the number for 2004-05, and then multiplied by 100. For example, for Coconut Creek High School, it was calculated by $(22-19)/19*100=16\%$. By 2009-10, four out of the eight schools (i.e., Dillard, Fort Lauderdale, Hollywood Hills, and Stranahan) met this goal, by reducing the number of suspensions for every 100 students thereby cutting the number of suspensions in half by 2010.

Taking the eight SLC schools, as a whole, the rate was reduced by 47%, a figure that is close to the goal of 50%. However, the data in this table should be interpreted with caution, as disciplinary practice varies from school to school and year to year. It is worth noting that in an effort to reduce the number of suspensions during the final year and provide more learning opportunities, the number of suspensions was reduced from 2008-09 to 2009-10 for all eight SLC schools. Another caution is that the changes in number of suspension actions between 2004-05 and 2009-10 varied widely, with -85% for Dillard and +173% for Northeast.

Table 15
Number of Suspension Actions for Every 100 Students

School	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	% change between 2004-05 & 2009-10
Coconut Creek	19	14	27	47	41	22	16
Deerfield Beach	44	32	21	35	66	28	-36
Dillard	67	34	37	36	11	10	-85
Fort Lauderdale	59	70	58	50	105	23	-61
Hollywood Hills	47	45	48	51	54	23	-51
Northeast	10	12	56	55	35	27	+173
Piper	20	19	40	48	36	22	+10
Stranahan	96	77	102	81	75	29	-70
All eight schools	43	36	46	50	52	23	-47

Note. The number of suspensions for every 100 students represents a duplicated count of suspensions. For example, if one student had three suspensions, they were counted three times in the calculation.

Question 1.7. What are the trajectories of the longitudinal growth in English/language arts and mathematics FCAT developmental scores for the cohort of the eighth graders in 2007-08 who progressed to the ninth grade in 2008-09, and to the tenth grade in 2009-10, disaggregated by those who were in SLC high schools and non-SLC high schools? Is there a statistically significant difference between the two groups of students?

For this evaluation question, FCAT and other data for the 2007-08 cohort of 8th graders was analyzed to evaluate the trajectories of the longitudinal growth in English/language arts and mathematics from the eighth (in 2007-08), to the ninth (in 2008-09), and to the tenth (2009-10) grades for those students in SLC and non-SLC high schools. This analysis answered the question of whether there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups of students in terms of how the 8th graders (in 2007-08) progressed to the 9th grade (in 2008-09) and to the 10th grade (in 2009-10) (i.e., rate of growth across Grades 8 to 10). The data were extracted from the District's Data Warehouse. The sample for analysis includes 3,133 students in the SLC high schools and 11,866 students in the non-SLC high schools. These sample sizes are a result of certain exclusion rules. First, students in home education settings were excluded. Second, students who were held back to a lower grade or who jumped to a higher grade during the timeframe were also excluded. These exclusions resulted in a "purer" sample of regular students, all of whom were in the same SLC or non-SLC school for the school years of 2008-09 and 2009-10. The descriptive statistics for the sample are presented in Table 16.

Table 16

Descriptive Statistics on Dependent and Independent Variables by Intervention Status

Variable	SLC students		Non-SLC students	
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Reading Developmental Score (Grade 8)	1873.31	213.12	1933.95	211.59
Reading Developmental Score (Grade 9)	1925.39	241.65	2000.59	241.66
Reading Developmental Score (Grade 10)	1939.26	301.90	2046.31	311.97
Mathematics Developmental Score (Grade 8)	1902.85	171.22	1953.30	171.69
Mathematics Developmental Score (Grade 9)	1966.38	157.62	2010.46	153.91
Mathematics Developmental Score (Grade 10)	2009.35	148.82	2051.82	153.05
FRL (Grade 8)	0.64		0.37	
FRL (Grade 9)	0.60		0.38	
FRL (Grade 10)	0.66		0.41	
LEP (Grade 8)	0.08		0.06	
LEP (Grade 9)	0.08		0.05	
LEP (Grade 10)	0.07		0.04	
ESE (Grade 8)	0.09		0.08	
ESE (Grade 9)	0.07		0.07	
ESE (Grade 10)	0.07		0.07	
Male	0.50		0.51	
White	0.23		0.36	
Black	0.51		0.29	
Hispanic	0.22		0.28	

Note. Reading and mathematics developmental scores, FRL, LEP, and ESE are time-varying variables. A mean indicates a portion of students coded as “1” or “Yes” for FRL, LEP, ESE, male, White, Black, and Hispanic.

This longitudinal analysis is based on three years of FCAT data, combined with student and school information. Dependent variables are FCAT Reading and Mathematics developmental scale scores (with data for Grades 8, 9, and 10). The intervention variable is group status (dummy coded 1=SLC and 0=non-SLC). Independent time-varying variables at the student level are free or reduced-price lunch (FRL), limited English proficiency (LEP), and special education status (ESE) (with data for Grades 8, 9, and 10). Independent time-invariant variables at the student level are gender (dummy coded as male=1 and female=0) and race-ethnicity, which is dummy coded into three variables of White, Black, and Hispanic with other racial-ethnic background as the baseline. Table 16 displays descriptive information about both time-varying and time-invariant variables used for this analysis. Based on those time-invariant variables, proportions are calculated for each school to function as school-level variables, including the proportion of male students, minority students, FRL students, LEP students, and ESE students.

A three-level hierarchical linear model (HLM) was developed for the purpose of this analysis, one for reading and one for mathematics, with repeated measures (at level one) nested within students (at level two) and nested within schools (at level three). A software package called “HLM” is used for these analyses. The first level equation accommodates (adjusts) all time-varying (student) variables (FRL, LEP, and ESE) to generate initial (Grade 8) status and rate of growth (improvements in Grades 9 and 10). The second level equation models (adjusts) initial status and rate of growth with time-invariant (student) variables (male, White, Black, and Hispanic). The third level equation tests school average initial status and rate of growth for

differences between SLC and non-SLC high schools, with further adjustment over school variables (proportion of male students, minority students, FRL students, LEP students, and ESE students). Parsimonious HLM models are sought that contain only statistically significant student and school variables, except for the dummy variable, intervention status, that distinguishes between SLC and non-SLC high schools.

This three-level HLM model tests whether there is a statistically significant difference between students in SLC and non-SLC schools, in terms of their growth rate between the 8th and 10th grades. Models are also developed to look into each transition separately (i.e., from the 8th to 9th grades and from the 9th to 10th grades) (a two-year span), testing whether there is a statistically significant difference between SLC and non-SLC students in each transition. For the two-year span analyses, a two-level HLM model was developed, which is a multilevel analysis of covariance model, with students at the first level and schools at the second level. For example, for the two-year span from the 8th to 9th grades, achievement in the 9th grade is the dependent variable, with achievement in the 8th grade as the covariate. Student and school variables are also used to adjust the gain in achievement from the 8th to 9th grades, including all time-invariant student variables described above, as well as FRL, LEP, and SES in Grade 9.

The analytical results on the growth rate from the 8th grade to the 10th grade are presented in Table 17. As far as FCAT Reading developmental scale score is concerned, the rate of growth from Grade 8 to Grade 10 appears to be no different between SLC and non-SLC students, for both unadjusted and adjusted models, because none of the statistics associated with “rate of growth” (i.e., the italicized entries in Table 17) is statistically significant. A similar phenomenon is also observed for FCAT Mathematics developmental scale score. **Therefore, it appears that there is no difference between SLC and non-SLC students in their growth rate from the 8th grade to the 10th grade in both FCAT Reading and Mathematics developmental scale scores.**

Table 17

Effects of Smaller Learning Communities on Rate of Growth in Reading and Mathematics Performance from Grades 8 to 10 between Students in SLC and Non-SLC Schools

Subject/group	Effect	SE
Reading, Unadjusted		
Initial (Grade 8) Status	36.30	26.56
<i>Rate of Growth (from Grade 8 to Grade 10)</i>	<i>11.96</i>	<i>8.35</i>
Reading, Adjusted		
Initial (Grade 8) Status	38.21	22.75
<i>Rate of Growth (from Grade 8 to Grade 10)</i>	<i>12.44</i>	<i>8.27</i>
Mathematics, Unadjusted		
Initial (Grade 8) Status	51.58*	23.31
<i>Rate of Growth (from Grade 8 to Grade 10)</i>	<i>6.96</i>	<i>4.84</i>
Mathematics, Adjusted		
Initial (Grade 8) Status	59.84*	27.52
<i>Rate of Growth (from Grade 8 to Grade 10)</i>	<i>6.50</i>	<i>4.60</i>

Note. * $p < 0.05$. SE = standard error. Within-student time-varying variables are adjusted at the first level, including FRL, LEP, and ESE. Between-student time-invariant variables are adjusted at the second level, including male, White, Black, and Hispanic. School variables are adjusted at the third level, including proportions of male, minority, FRL, LEP, and ESE students (within a school).

The analytical results in Tables 18 and 19 explore whether there is a statistically significant difference between students in SLC and non-SLC schools in each transition. **The analyses indicate that after adjustment (for student and school variables), there is no difference between the SLC and non-SLC students in terms of their year-by-year gain between the 8th and 9th grades, as well as between the 9th and 10th grades in either FCAT Reading or Mathematics developmental scale scores.** These results serve to support the findings from the three-level HLM analyses previously reported.

Overall, it appears that, from Grade 8 to Grade 10, students in the SLC schools make academic progress in both FCAT Reading and Mathematics developmental scales at the same rate as students in the non-SLC schools.

Table 18

Effects of Smaller Learning Communities on Gains in Reading and Mathematics Performance from Grade 8 to Grade 9 between Students in SLC and Non-SLC Schools

Subject/group	Effect	SE
Reading		
Smaller Learning Communities (SLC) vs. Non-SLC (Unadjusted)	5.39	28.01
Smaller Learning Communities (SLC) vs. Non-SLC (Adjusted)	-5.82	6.57
Mathematics		
Smaller Learning Communities (SLC) vs. Non-SLC (Unadjusted)	24.39	19.47
Smaller Learning Communities (SLC) vs. Non-SLC (Adjusted)	3.95	5.16

Note. * $p < 0.05$. SE = standard error. Student time-invariant variables are adjusted at the first level, including male, White, Black, Hispanic, (Grade 9) FRL, (Grade 9) LEP, and (Grade 9) ESE. School variables are adjusted at the second level, including proportion of male, minority, FRL, LEP, and ESE students (within a school).

Table 19

Effects of Smaller Learning Communities on Gains in Reading and Mathematics Performance from Grade 9 to Grade 10 between Students in SLC and Non-SLC Schools

Subject/group	Effect	SE
Reading		
Smaller Learning Communities (SLC) vs. Non-SLC (Unadjusted)	38.95	44.15
Smaller Learning Communities (SLC) vs. Non-SLC (Adjusted)	-0.53	10.73
Mathematics		
Smaller Learning Communities (SLC) vs. Non-SLC (Unadjusted)	59.82*	25.62
Smaller Learning Communities (SLC) vs. Non-SLC (Adjusted)	3.90	5.33

Note. * $p < 0.05$. SE = standard error. Student time-invariant variables are adjusted at the first level, including male, White, Black, Hispanic, (Grade 10) FRL, (Grade 10) LEP, and (Grade 10) ESE. School variables are adjusted at the second level, including proportion of male, minority, FRL, LEP, and ESE students (within a school).

Question 1.8. Is there a statistically significant difference in the probability of high school graduation between the students in SLC schools and non-SLC schools, after controlling for student prior academic achievement and demographic background?

For this evaluation question, 2005-06 8th graders' graduation rate in 2009-10 were analyzed to answer the question of whether there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups of students in the probability of graduation after controlling for prior academic achievement and demographic background. The HLM involves matching students' data over five years, and nesting a student within the same SLC and non-SLC school over five years. The

sample included 11,169 students, with 2,386 in the SLC schools and 8,783 in non-SLC schools. The descriptive statistics for the sample are presented in Table 20.

For this set of analyses, a cohort of students who were 8th graders in 2005-06 was followed to examine their high school graduation status in 2009-10. Some students were in SLC schools and others were in non-SLC schools. The data from this cohort presented a good opportunity to examine the effects of SLC on high school graduation status. In the following, the empirical data, statistical models, and analytical results related to SLC’s effect on high school graduation are examined.

The 2005-06 cohort of 8th grade students were followed to their graduation. Like in other cohorts, data from this cohort can be classified into time-invariant variables and time-varying variables. The dependent variable is graduation status (in Grade 12), a dichotomous variable with 1=graduate and 0=fail to graduate. The intervention variable is group status, a dichotomous variable with 1=SLC participation and 0=non-participation. Time-varying independent variables include FCAT Reading and Mathematics developmental scale scores (with data for Grades 8, 9, and 10), as well as free or reduced-price lunch (FRL), limited English proficiency (LEP), and special education status (ESE) (with data for Grades 8, 9, and 10).

Table 20
Descriptive Statistics on Dependent and Independent Variables by Intervention

Variable	SLC students		Non-SLC students	
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Graduation (Dependent Variable)	0.73		0.83	
Reading Developmental Score (Grade 8)	1853.96	229.15	1925.16	215.95
Mathematics Developmental Score (Grade 8)	1893.97	186.48	1955.73	171.93
FRL (Grade 8)	0.55		0.32	
LEP (Grade 8)	0.10		0.07	
ESE (Grade 8)	0.11		0.12	
Reading Developmental Score (Grade 9)	1918.01	244.61	1996.27	245.11
Mathematics Developmental Score (Grade 9)	1958.43	162.75	2007.26	156.36
FRL (Grade 9)	0.51		0.28	
LEP (Grade 9)	0.08		0.05	
ESE (Grade 9)	0.10		0.11	
Reading Developmental Score (Grade 10)	1940.16	293.59	2049.22	287.98
Mathematics Developmental Score (Grade 10)	2003.66	147.79	2054.82	137.25
FRL (Grade 10)	0.54		0.31	
LEP (Grade 10)	0.07		0.04	
ESE (Grade 10)	0.09		0.09	
Male	0.48		0.49	
White	0.25		0.39	
Black	0.50		0.28	
Hispanic	0.19		0.25	

Note. A mean indicates a portion of students coded as “1” or “Yes” for graduation, FRL, LEP, ESE, male, White, Black, and Hispanic.

Time-invariant independent variables include gender (dummy coded as male = 1 and female = 0) and race-ethnicity, which is dummy coded into three variables of White, Black, and Hispanic with other racial-ethnic background as the baseline. Table 20 provides descriptive information about dependent and independent variables that are used for data analysis. Based on those independent variables, proportions are calculated for each school to function as school-level variables, including proportion of male students, proportion of minority students, as well as proportion of FRL students, LEP students, and ESE students (for Grades 8, 9, and 10).

Statistical Models. The goal of this analysis is to examine the effects of SLC participation on graduation status (in Grade 12). Three separate analyses are performed, one for each school grade of Grades 8, 9, and 10. Each analysis is based on a two-level (logistic) HLM, with students (at level one) nested within schools (at level two). Take Grade 8 as an example. The logistic HLM model has graduation status (in Grade 12) as the dichotomous dependent variable. Independent variables include intervention status, male, White, Black, Hispanic, FRL status (Grade 8), LEP status (Grade 8), ESE status (Grade 8), reading developmental scale scores (Grade 8), and mathematics developmental scale scores (Grade 8) at the student level; and proportion of male students, proportion of minority students, proportion of FRL students (in Grade 8), proportion of LEP students (in Grade 8), and proportion of ESE students (in Grade 8) at the school level. Parsimonious HLM models are sought that contain only statistically significant student-level and school-level variables, except for the dummy intervention variable (that distinguishes between SLC and non-SLC conditions).

The focus of this analysis is to predict graduation status in Grade 12 from participation in SLC in Grades 8, 9, and 10 (the three grade levels with comprehensive data). Given that the research literature strongly suggests the importance of academic success to high school graduation, the effects of reading and mathematics developmental scale scores (reading and mathematics achievement) on graduation status are reported, together with the effects of SLC participation on graduation status (for each school grade of Grades 8, 9, and 10), if achievement variables are statistically significant. This arrangement provides a good comparison between SLC participation and academic success (academic achievement) in terms of their importance to high school graduation.

Analytical Results. Table 21 presents results from separate analyses of three school grades (Grades 8, 9, and 10), together with the unadjusted effects of SLC participation on graduation status. There are no statistically significant (unadjusted) effects of SLC participation on graduation status. When predicting graduation status from Grade 8 (data), there are statistically significant differences in graduation status between SLC students and non-SLC students, in favor of non-SLC students. Specifically, non-SLC students are found to be 1.28 times as likely ($1 \div 0.78$) to graduate from high school than SLC students, after adjustment over student-level and school-level variables.

In contrast, with the same adjustment over student-level and school-level variables, if two students are 100 score points apart in their reading developmental scale, then the one with a higher score is 1.61 times as likely to graduate from high school, than the one with a lower score (regardless of intervention status). Meanwhile, if two students are 100 score points apart in their

mathematics developmental scale, then the one with a higher score is 1.68 times as likely to graduate from high school, than the one with a lower score (regardless of intervention status).

Analytical results from Grade 9 indicate quite similar findings to those from Grade 8 (in terms of pattern and magnitude of statistically significant effects). In Grade 10, although SLC students are equally likely to graduate from high school as non-SLC students (indicating no SLC intervention effects on graduation status), the effects of academic achievement remain. In fact, the effects of reading and mathematics achievement on graduation status are quite robust (consistent) across Grades 8, 9, and 10.

Table 21

Effects of Smaller Learning Communities on Graduation Status in Grade 12, Compared with Effects of Academic Achievement, by Grades 8 to 10

	Effect	SE	Exp
Unadjusted			
Participation in Smaller Learning Communities	0.28	0.25	1.32
Adjusted for Student and School Variables in Grade 8			
Participation in Smaller Learning Communities	-0.24*	0.10	0.78
Reading Developmental Score	0.48*	0.02	1.61
Math Developmental Score	0.52*	0.03	1.68
Adjusted for Student and School Variables in Grade 9			
Participation in Smaller Learning Communities	-0.27*	0.11	0.77
Reading Developmental Score	0.46*	0.03	1.59
Math Developmental Score	0.59*	0.04	1.80
Adjusted for Student and School Variables in Grade 10			
Participation in Smaller Learning Communities	-0.13	0.10	0.88
Reading Developmental Score	0.49*	0.02	1.63
Math Developmental Score	0.71*	0.04	2.02

Note. SE = standard error. Exp = e raised to the power of the effect. Both reading and mathematics developmental scores are measured in the number of units, with one unit as 100 score points (on both scales). Student-level variables are adjusted at each school grade (Grades 8 to 10), including male, White, Black, Hispanic, FRL, LEP, and ESE. School-level variables are adjusted at each school grade (Grades 8 to 10), including proportions of male, White, Black, Hispanic, FRL, LEP, and ESE students (within a school).

* $p < 0.05$.

Overall, academic achievement appears to be a much more important predictor of graduation status than SLC participation. Stated with implications, for students in SLC to improve their graduation status, SLC must manage to improve their academic achievement (in reading and mathematics). As estimated in this analysis, an improvement in the reading developmental scale by 100 score points, during Grades 8 to 10, would increase the probability of graduation from high school from 1.59 to 1.63 times. Stated differently, students with an improvement of 100 score points in the reading developmental scale, during Grades 8 to 10, are 1.59 to 1.63 times as likely to graduate from high school in Grade 12 (than students without such an improvement). Meanwhile, an improvement in the mathematics developmental scale by 100 score points, during Grades 8 to 10, would increase the probability of graduation from high school from 1.68 to 2.02 times. Stated differently, students with an improvement of 100 score

points in the mathematics developmental scale during Grades 8 to 10 are 1.68 to 2.02 times as likely to graduate from high school in Grade 12 (than students without such an improvement).

Furthermore, because the effects of reading and mathematics achievement are adjusted over each other, their effects become additive. Therefore, students with improvements of 100 score points in both reading and mathematics developmental scales, during Grades 8 to 10, are 3.29 to 3.65 times as likely to graduate from high school in Grade 12 (than students without such improvements).

Although the effects of academic achievement appear powerful and robust, it is important to point out that SLC does make some positive progress in terms of promoting graduation from high school. This fact can be appreciated from the findings showing that students in SLC catch up with non-SLC students, in terms of the possibility of graduation from high school in Grade 10, after lingering behind for two school years (Grades 8 and 9). There are no FCAT data to examine whether students in SLC would become more likely to graduate from high school than students in non-SLC in Grades 11 and 12, if the trend continues. With FCAT data (for Grades 8 to 10), however, the small progress in terms of participation in SLC on graduation status appears to be secondary to the large effects of academic success (academic achievement) on graduation status.

Therefore, a tentative implication (conclusion) for education policy and practice would be for SLC to strive to improve its students' academic achievement, which as estimated in this analysis would lead statistically significantly more students to graduation from high school. A reasonable goal for SLC, according to this analysis, is to improve its students' performance in either reading or mathematics developmental scale by 100 score points, during the period of Grades 8 to 10. If this goal can be accomplished, according to the estimates in this analysis, the graduation rate of the SLC students would approximately improve from (the current) 73% to 87% (by a conservative estimation using 1.50 as the effects).

Question 2.1. What percentage of students is involved in SLC? Was the objective of the SLC grant met?

The goal of the SLC grant is that all students will be enrolled in SLC by 2010. Because implementation is unique in each school, there are no data in the District Data Warehouse regarding the number of students participating in SLC at each school. Therefore, the following data were collected via a principal survey.

As seen in Table 1, in 2005-06 using the SLC principal survey, five principals (Coconut Creek, Deerfield, Hollywood Hills, Northeast, and Piper) reported that an SLC whole-school approach (implementing SLC at all grade levels) was implemented during the first year, with 61% to 100% of the students in their schools in some form of SLC. On average, in 2005-06, 73% of the students in eight schools were in some type of SLC, as seen in Table 19. During 2009-10, 97% of the students in the eight schools were in some kind of SLC, a 24 percentage point increase over 2005-06. More specifically, during the 2009-10 school year, seven of the schools met the goal of 100% of students in SLC, while Coconut Creek was the only school that implemented SLC at the 9th, 10th, and 11th grade levels, but not at the 12th grade level.

Question 2.2. What percentage of students report contact with an adult advocate who is familiar with their needs and aspirations? Was the objective of the SLC grant met?

The objective of the grant was to increase the percentage of students who have contact with an adult advocate to 75% over a five-year period. Data for this section were extracted from the student portion of the annual District Customer Survey. One item on the survey—*There is an adult at school I can talk to about my personal problems*—speaks directly to whether there is a personalized learning environment. Again, because the grant was first implemented in 2005-06, 2004-05 was used as the baseline for comparison.

Table 23 displays the number and percentage of students who indicated that: *There is an adult at school I can talk to about my personal problems*. The weighted percentage of students at all eight schools, who *strongly agreed* or *agreed* with the statement, increased from 50.2% in 2004-05 to 54.7% in 2009-10. Between 2004-05 and 2009-10, six schools (Deerfield Beach, Fort Lauderdale, Hollywood Hills, Northeast, Piper, and Stranahan) registered an increase, while only two schools (Coconut Creek and Dillard) reported a slight decrease in percentage points related to this item. Although six schools and all eight schools, as a whole, have improved on this item, the goal of 75% was not reached.

Table 23
Number and Percentage of Students Who Strongly Agreed or Agreed With the Statement: “There Is an Adult at School I Can Talk to About My Personal Problems.”

School	2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08		2008-09		2009-10	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Coconut Creek	858	51.7	755	47.1	871	51.8	871	51.8	988	53.4	950	51.4
Deerfield Beach	668	50.6	832	48.9	1,018	57.0	1,018	57.0	1,147	54.6	1,070	56.9
Dillard	547	60.1	787	49.8	781	57.9	781	57.9	553	59.9	58	59.2
Fort Lauderdale	642	47.1	768	53.4	677	49.9	677	49.9	753	58.3	699	56.9
Hollywood Hills	586	47.7	768	49.5	882	51.3	882	51.3	809	51.0	768	50.3
Northeast	995	51.1	1,062	56.1	1,016	56.3	1,016	56.3	799	58.9	1,008	59.3
Piper	995	48.6	1,139	54.7	1,157	50.2	1,157	50.2	1,210	52.7	1,003	50.6
Stranahan	547	47.8	719	49.2	694	57.8	694	57.8	782	57.9	709	60.0
All eight schools	5,838	50.2	6,830	51.3	7,096	53.7	7,096	53.7	7,041	55.2	6,265	54.7

Question 2.3. Has each school implemented the following (a) SLC strategies: adult mentors, advisory period/teacher advisories, alternative scheduling/block scheduling, common planning periods, counselor assigned to SLC, interdisciplinary curriculum, and interdisciplinary teacher teams; and (b) SLC structures—career theme, freshman/transition academy, house, magnet program, and separate building space?

The data on the extent to which the eight SLC schools implemented SLC strategies and structures were reported in Tables 3 and 4 in the section on program implementation. In terms of strategies, by the 2009-10 school year, at least five schools used (a) adult mentors, (b) alternative scheduling/block scheduling, (c) common planning periods, and (d) counselors assigned to SLC. In terms of structures, six or more schools implemented (a) freshman/transition academy and (b) separate building space. All structures were used by at least five schools.

Question 3. What percentage of parents are involved in their children’s education, through activities, such as involvement in academic/instructional support, development of program goals, and activities within the Smaller Learning Communities?

Due to the concern for budget and the feasibility for carrying out a parent survey specifically for the SLC grant, a decision was made at the beginning of the SLC evaluation to use the parent survey conducted as part of the District Annual Customer Survey. However, the low response (e.g., return rates ranged from 4.9% to 24.1% for the eight schools in 2008-09) for the parent survey should be taken into account because the findings may represent only the perceptions of the respondent parents, not those of all parents at the SLC schools.

The SLC grant calls for a 50 percentage point increase in parent involvement over a five-year period. Schools indicated that more than half of the parents were involved in their children’s education. Therefore, an increase of 50 percentage points over a five-year period is a challenging task.

Responses to the question, *I share responsibility with the school for my child’s academic progress*, are displayed in Table 24. Based on weighted percentage for all eight schools, the number of respondent parents, who *strongly agreed* or *agreed* with sharing responsibility with the school for academic progress, increased slightly from 79.5% in 2004-05 to 82.2% in 2009-10, with an increase of 2.7 percentage points. All high schools, except for Coconut Creek, Dillard, and Piper, demonstrated an increase between 2004-05 and 2009-10, with Fort Lauderdale and Stranahan reporting increases of 14.7% and 7.2%, respectively. Generally speaking, the number of responses from respondent parents was small over the years, and the results should be interpreted with caution due to the low response rates, a caveat that applies to other tables using the parent survey.

Table 24

Number and Percentage of Respondent Parents Who Strongly Agreed or Agreed With the Statement, “I Share Responsibility With the School for My Child’s Academic Progress.”

School	2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08		2008-09		2009-10	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Coconut Creek	30	81.1	84	78.5	42	79.2	25	86.2	88	88.0	125	76.7
Deerfield Beach	57	79.2	53	75.7	84	80.8	54	79.4	105	83.3	80	82.5
Dillard	37	86.0	10	83.3	129	81.1	59	88.1	105	85.4	69	83.1
Fort Lauderdale	53	80.3	31	73.8	32	88.9	34	87.2	32	78.1	57	95.0
Hollywood Hills	96	77.4	55	84.6	31	79.5	125	79.6	83	76.9	44	80.0
Northeast	292	78.5	275	79.7	275	80.9	245	82.8	57	81.4	132	82.5
Piper	170	81.0	107	84.3	77	85.6	48	84.2	40	88.9	66	80.5
Stranahan	58	79.5	25	73.5	50	89.3	53	88.3	30	85.7	39	86.7
All eight schools	793	79.5	640	79.8	720	82.1	643	83.2	540	83.3	612	82.2

Responses to the survey question, *I help school staff when academic or behavioral problems occur with my child*, are displayed in Table 25. Based on a weighted percentage for all eight schools, the percentage of respondent parents, who *strongly agreed* or *agreed* with sharing responsibility with staff for academic and behavioral problems, increased from 64.8% in 2004-05 to 70.1% in 2009-10, reflecting a 5.3 percentage point increase over five years. All high schools, with the exception of Coconut Creek and Deerfield Beach, demonstrated an increase. Three

schools reported increases of ten percentage points or more—Fort Lauderdale (18.7), Stranahan (15.1), Piper (12.6), and Dillard (10.9).

Table 25

Number and Percentage of Respondent Parents Who Strongly Agreed or Agreed With the Statement, “I Help School Staff When Academic or Behavioral Problems Occur With My Child.”

School	2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08		2008-09		2009-10	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Coconut Creek	26	72.2	58	54.2	28	54.9	23	79.3	67	67.0	105	64.0
Deerfield Beach	48	66.7	45	62.5	67	64.4	41	62.1	81	64.3	59	60.2
Dillard	26	65.0	4	36.4	111	70.3	47	67.1	95	76.6	63	75.9
Fort Lauderdale	41	63.1	22	53.7	25	67.6	32	82.1	30	71.4	45	81.8
Hollywood Hills	80	63.5	41	63.1	25	65.8	122	77.7	75	71.4	40	72.7
Northeast	240	65.2	234	68.2	225	66.0	199	67.7	47	67.1	111	68.5
Piper	131	62.7	91	73.4	57	64.8	41	73.2	36	83.7	61	75.3
Stranahan	49	67.1	20	58.8	40	71.4	48	78.7	27	77.1	37	82.2
All eight schools	641	64.8	515	64.6	578	66.2	553	71.6	458	71.0	521	70.1

Responses to the survey question, *I am aware of the goals of my child’s school*, are displayed in Table 26. Based on weighted percentage for all eight schools, there was an increase (2.8 percentage points) in the percentage of respondent parents who *strongly agreed* to *agreed* that they were aware of the school’s goals from 2004-05 (65.5%) to 2009-10 (68.3%). It should be noted that there appears to be a significant increase during between 2004-05 and 2008-09, with a 7.2 percentage point increase from 2004-05 to 2008-09. All schools, except for Coconut Creek, Dillard and Piper, showed an increase between 2004-05 and 2009-10. Deerfield Beach had an increase of 16.1 percentage points between 2004-05 and 2009-10.

Table 26

Number and Percentage of Respondent Parents Who Strongly Agreed or Agreed With the Statement, “I Am Aware of the Goals of My Child’s School.”

School	2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08		2008-09		2009-10	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Coconut Creek	27	73.0	70	65.4	37	69.8	18	62.1	74	75.5	105	64.4
Deerfield Beach	41	56.9	46	63.9	69	67.0	49	72.1	94	73.4	73	73.0
Dillard	33	78.6	11	91.7	117	73.6	51	73.9	91	72.2	55	67.1
Fort Lauderdale	43	67.2	27	64.3	31	83.8	28	71.8	31	75.6	41	70.0
Hollywood Hills	83	65.9	39	60.9	29	74.4	70	44.6	75	70.8	37	68.5
Northeast	243	65.5	225	66.0	235	69.9	212	73.9	48	66.7	110	70.1
Piper	131	62.7	78	63.9	60	68.2	37	66.1	30	68.2	50	62.5
Stranahan	50	68.5	19	55.9	36	64.3	39	63.9	29	85.3	33	76.7
All eight schools	651	65.5	515	64.8	614	70.5	504	65.8	472	72.7	504	68.3

Process-Oriented Evaluation:
To What Extent Have Smaller Learning Communities Been Established?

Question 4.1. According to the teachers' perspective, to what extent and how has the SLC grant been implemented?

During 2005-06, a sample of 81 teachers participating in the SLC grant was selected to take part in the online survey (Appendix D). The SLC teacher survey focused on the extent to which students were provided a personalized learning environment, and the SLC issues encountered in implementation of the grant. Sixty-five teachers responded to the online survey, for a response rate of 80.2%.

During 2006-07, the survey was administered again during the second year of the grant. A sample was constructed by the SLC project staff and the evaluator consisting of 80 teachers involved in the SLC grant to take the online survey. The sample included SLC teachers who continued to teach in the same school; teachers who left the SLC school would be replaced with current SLC teachers. Sixty-six of those in the second year sample were also in the first year sample, in an attempt to maximize the comparability of the data from year to year. Fifty-five of the 80 teachers responded, for a response rate of 68.8%.

The survey was not administered during the third year due to second-year federal reporting guidelines being published in the middle of the grant's third year, which resulted in producing one evaluation report for the first and second years of the grant. During 2008-09, the survey was administered again. The methodology was the same as for the second year, trying to maximize the comparability of the data from year to year. As a result, for the fourth year teacher online survey, 68 out of the sample of 80 teachers were the same as the previous administration. The 12 teachers who were substituted were no longer with their SLC school. Sixty-six of the 80 teachers responded to the fourth year online survey, resulting in a return rate of 82.5%. For the fifth year, 71 out of the sample of 80 teachers were the same as the fourth-year administration. Sixty-two of the 80 teachers responded to the fifth year online survey, resulting in a return rate of 77.5%

Teachers reported that during the 2005-06 school year, in a given week, the median number of students for each teacher to interact in an instructional/academic capacity was 94. This statistic was reported to be 90 during the 2006-07 school year, 100 for 2008-09, and again 100 for 2009-10. That is, it appears that the median number of students with whom teachers interacted in an instructional/academic capacity increased slightly over the years.

The survey data are reported in Tables 27 through 32. The data in Tables 27 and 28 indicate the extent to which teachers estimated knowing various aspects about their students. A comparison between teacher surveys in 2005-06 and 2009-10 indicated that the percentage of teachers who reported *None* decreased or remained the same for all categories except for academic aspirations, which is a good indication given the emphasis of the SLC grant. At the same time, the percentage of teachers who reported knowing students really well (that is, the percent who responded knowing the information for more than 75% of their students) increased in five out of seven areas, as summarized in Table 28 with accompanying narrative and interpretation. It appears that overall teacher knowledge about students improved between 2005-06 and 2009-10.

Table 27

Number and Percentage of Teachers Who Reported Knowing the Following Aspects about Their Students in 2005-06, 2006-07, and 2009-10

Aspect	n	Percentage responding				
		None	1 to 25%	26 to 50%	51 to 75%	More than 75%
2005-06						
a. First and last names	65	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.2	93.8
b. Academic aspirations	65	0.0	9.2	20.0	35.4	35.4
c. Academic background prior to this year	65	4.6	13.8	20.0	26.2	35.4
d. Home life	65	3.1	21.5	27.7	32.3	15.4
e. Names of person/people with whom they live	65	13.8	30.8	24.6	13.8	16.9
f. Who are their friends	65	9.2	13.8	24.6	38.5	13.8
g. Cultural and linguistic backgrounds	64	1.6	9.4	7.8	31.3	50.0
2006-07						
a. First and last names	55	0.0	1.8	0.0	3.6	94.5
b. Academic aspirations	55	0.0	9.1	14.5	41.8	34.5
c. Academic background prior to this year	55	1.8	20.0	18.2	29.1	30.9
d. Home life	55	3.6	20.0	29.1	40.0	7.3
e. Names of person/people with whom they live	55	10.9	32.7	18.2	14.5	23.6
f. Who are their friends	55	1.8	23.6	21.8	38.2	14.5
g. Cultural and linguistic backgrounds	55	0.0	9.1	9.1	27.3	54.5
2008-09						
a. First and last names	66	0.0	0.0	3.0	9.1	87.9
b. Academic aspirations	66	0.0	3.0	12.1	31.8	53.0
c. Academic background prior to this year	66	3.0	7.6	9.1	37.9	42.4
d. Home life	66	0.0	13.6	27.3	36.4	22.7
e. Names of person/people with whom they live	66	3.0	30.3	27.3	22.7	16.7
f. Who are their friends	66	1.5	9.1	25.8	42.4	21.2
g. Cultural and linguistic backgrounds	66	0.0	1.5	10.6	25.8	62.1
2009-10						
a. First and last names	62	0.0	1.6	3.2	4.8	90.3
b. Academic aspirations	62	1.6	4.8	19.4	27.4	46.8
c. Academic background prior to this year	62	3.2	6.5	12.9	27.4	50.0
d. Home life	62	0.0	11.3	33.9	35.5	19.4
e. Names of person/people with whom they live	62	9.7	25.8	30.6	22.6	11.3
f. Who are their friends	62	0.0	11.3	37.1	33.9	17.7
g. Cultural and linguistic backgrounds	62	0.0	4.8	17.7	14.5	62.9

Table 28 revealed improvement in the following areas by comparing the percentage differences between 2005-06 and 2009-10 for the “more than 75%” category: *academic background prior to this year* (14.6 percentage point increase), *cultural and linguistics background* (12.9 percentage point increase), *academic aspirations* (11.4 percentage point increase), *home life* (4.0 percentage point increase), and *who are their friends* (3.9 percentage point increase). However, there were decreases between 2005-06 and 2009-10 in *first and last names* (3.5 percentage point decrease) and in *names of the person/people with whom they live* (5.6 percentage point decrease). Overall,

it appears that teachers have become to know their students better over the years between 2005-06 and 2009-10.

Table 28

Number and Percentage of Teachers Who Reported Knowing About the Following Aspects of More than 75% of the Students: A Comparison Among 2005-06, 2006-07, and 2009-10

School	2005-06		2006-07		2008-09		2009-10	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
a. First and last names	61	93.8	52	94.5	58	87.9	56	90.3
b. Academic aspirations	23	35.4	19	34.5	35	53.0	29	46.8
c. Academic background prior to this year	23	35.4	17	30.9	28	42.4	31	50.0
d. Home life	10	15.4	4	7.3	15	22.7	12	19.4
e. Names of the person/people they live with	11	16.9	13	23.6	11	16.7	7	11.3
f. Who are their friends	9	13.8	8	14.5	14	21.2	11	17.7
g. Cultural and linguistic backgrounds	32	50.0	30	54.5	41	62.1	39	62.9

The data in Tables 29 and 30 suggest that a majority of teachers provide a personal learning environment. For example, in 2005-06, 86.1% of the teachers selected *to a moderate extent* or *to a great extent* they *provide a personalized learning environment for students*; the corresponding statistic was 96.8% in 2009-10. Teachers reported paying more attention to helping students with learning disabilities. In 2005-06, 83.1% of the teachers indicated *to a moderate extent* or *to a great extent* they *help students learn to overcome difficulties that compensate for different learning disabilities*, the corresponding statistic was 90.3% for 2009-10.

Table 29

Number and Percentage of Teachers Who Reported Taking the Following Steps or Approaches to Help Students Who Were Having Difficulty with Academics from 2005-06 to 2009-10

Step or approach	<i>n</i>	Small Moderate Great			
		Never	Extent	Extent	Extent
2005-06					
a. Diagnose student problems	65	0.0	7.7	40.0	52.3
b. Determine match of resources to student needs	65	0.0	12.3	43.1	44.6
c. Gather information understand student difficulties	65	1.6	12.5	34.4	51.6
d. Help students learn to overcome difficulties that compensate for different learning disabilities	65	1.5	15.4	35.4	47.7
e. Provide a personalized learning environment	65	0.0	13.8	29.2	56.9
2006-07					
a. Diagnose student problems	55	0.0	12.7	32.7	54.5
b. Determine match of resources to student needs	55	3.6	9.1	40.0	47.3
c. Gather information understand student difficulties	55	0.0	9.1	38.2	52.7
d. Help students learn to overcome difficulties that compensate for different learning disabilities	55	0.0	9.1	36.4	54.5
e. Provide a personalized learning environment	55	1.8	7.3	36.4	54.5

(table continues)

Table 29 (continued).

Step or approach	n	Never	Small	Moderate	Great
			Extent	Extent	Extent
2008-09					
a. Diagnose student problems	66	0.0	9.1	28.8	62.1
b. Determine match of resources to student needs	66	1.5	12.1	36.4	50.0
c. Gather information to understand student difficulties	66	1.5	10.6	34.8	53.0
d. Help students learn to overcome difficulties that compensate for different learning disabilities	66	3.0	9.1	33.3	54.5
e. Provide a personalized learning environment	66	1.5	3.0	39.4	56.1
2009-10					
a. Diagnose student problems	62	3.2	1.6	30.6	64.5
b. Determine match of resources to student needs	62	0.0	1.6	38.7	59.7
c. Gather information to help understand student difficulties	62	1.6	0.0	37.1	61.3
d. Help students learn to overcome difficulties that compensate for different learning disabilities	62	1.6	8.1	25.8	64.5
e. Provide a personalized learning environment	62	1.6	1.6	38.7	58.1

Comparison of the data between 2005-06 and 2009-10 in Table 30, found more than a 9.0 percentage point increase for *teachers reporting that they help students learn to overcome difficulties that compensate for different learning disabilities* (16.8), *determine match of resources to student needs* (15.1), *diagnose student problems* (12.2), and *gather information to help understand student difficulties* (9.7). However, the percentage of *teachers who reported that they provide a personalized environment for students* showed a small amount of improvement between 2005-06 and 2009-10, with a 1.2 percentage point increase.

Table 30

Number and Percentage of Teachers Who Reported Taking the Following Steps or Approaches to a Great Extent to Help Students Who Were Having Difficulty with Academics: A Comparison Between 2005-06 and 2009-10 School Years

Step or approach	2005-06		2009-10	
	n	%	n	%
a. Diagnose student problems	34	52.3	40	64.5
b. Determine match of resources to student needs	29	44.6	37	59.7
c. Gather information to understand student difficulties	33	51.6	38	61.3
d. Help students learn to overcome difficulties that compensate for different learning disabilities	31	47.7	40	64.5
e. Provide a personalized learning environment	37	56.9	36	58.1

The extent to which teachers reported involving parents and guardians in their children's education are illustrated in Tables 31 and 32. Over the four years measured (as mentioned in the section on data source, no teacher survey was administered for 2007-08), data indicate that teachers were more likely to engage parents, at least a few times a year, in *helping with homework and talking about the school day* than they were in *instructional activities in schools* (least likely), or *developing program/learning goals*. Generally speaking, between 2005-06 and 2009-10, teachers reported a higher level of engagement with parents/guardians. The level of

engagement of parent/guardians in *developing program/learning goals* and *instructional activities in schools* was reported to have increased noticeably more than that of *helping with homework and talking about the school day*.

Table 31

Number and Percentage of Teachers Who Reported Being Engaged in Any of the Following Activities Since the Beginning of the School Year from 2005-06 to 2009-10

Activity	N	Never	A few times a year	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Almost every day
2005-06						
a. Involved parent/guardian in academic support at home (e.g., helping with homework)	65	3.1	20.0	33.8	30.8	12.3
b. Involved parent/guardian in developing program/ learning goals (e.g., developing IEP with parents)	64	15.6	37.5	29.7	12.5	4.7
c. Involved parent/guardian in instructional activities in schools (e.g., volunteering in the classroom)	65	50.8	29.2	13.8	4.6	1.5
2006-07						
a. Involved parent/guardian in academic support at home (e.g., helping with homework)	55	0.0	23.6	38.2	29.1	9.1
b. Involved parent/guardian in developing program/ learning goals (e.g., developing IEP with parents)	55	9.1	52.7	27.3	5.5	5.5
c. Involved parent/guardian in instructional activities in schools (e.g., volunteering in the classroom)	55	45.5	32.7	12.7	5.5	3.6
2008-09						
a. Involved parent/guardian in academic support at home (e.g., helping with homework)	66	1.5	31.8	36.4	21.2	9.1
b. Involved parent/guardian in developing program/ learning goals (e.g., developing IEP with parents)	66	4.5	43.9	31.8	12.1	7.6
c. Involved parent/guardian in instructional activities in schools (e.g., volunteering in the classroom)	66	40.9	33.3	12.1	7.6	6.1

(table continues)

Table 31 (continued).

Activity	N	Never	A few times a year	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Almost every day
2009-10						
a. Involved parent/guardian in academic support at home (e.g., helping with homework)	62	1.6	30.6	29.0	29.0	9.7
b. Involved parent/guardian in developing program/ learning goals (e.g., developing IEP with parents)	62	9.7	50.0	24.2	9.7	6.5
c. Involved parent/guardian in instructional activities in schools (e.g., volunteering in the classroom)	62	41.9	37.1	12.9	3.2	4.8

One way to summarize the data in Table 31 is to compare the data collected in 2005-06 and 2009-10, with a focus on the percentage of teachers who reported *Never* having been engaged in the listed activities (see Table 32). The percentages in the *Never* response decreased from 2005-06 to 2009-10 across all categories, an indication that teachers reported that more involvement by parents/guardians had taken place.

Table 32

Number and Percentage of Teachers Who Reported Never Having Been Engaged in Any of the Following Activities: A Comparison Between 2005-06 and 2009-10

Activity	2005-06		2009-10	
	n	%	n	%
a. Involved parent/guardian in academic support at home	2	3.1	1	1.6
b. Involved parent/guardian in developing program/learning goals	10	15.6	6	9.7
c. Involved parent/guardian in instructional activities in schools	33	50.8	26	41.9

Question 4.2. According to the students' perspective, to what extent and how has the SLC grant been implemented?

It was not possible to administer a student survey specifically relating to the objectives of the SLC grant. Consequently, students' perspectives of aspects of their school that might reasonably be related to SLC implementation were extracted from the student portion of the annual District Customer Survey. Items that could be interpreted as addressing the personalization of the student learning environment, which could be theoretically linked to SLC grant implementation, were selected from the survey.

Table 33 provides the data related to *I am accepted and feel like I belong at this school*. The weighted percentage of students, who *strongly agreed* or *agreed* with the statement, increased slightly by 0.4 percentage points from 2004-05 to 2009-10. However, there was a decrease of 3.8 percentage points between 2007-08 and 2009-10. During 2004-05 to 2009-10, of

the eight high schools, six registered an increase, and two (i.e., Dillard, and Northeast) registered a decrease to this item. Dillard had an extremely low number of responses in 2009-10 and its results should be read with caution.

Table 33

Number and Percentage of Students Who Strongly Agreed or Agreed With the Statement, "I Am Accepted and Feel Like I Belong at This School."

School	2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08		2008-09		2009-10	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Coconut Creek	923	55.8	781	49.5	961	57.8	929	52.1	1,033	57.1	1,037	56.4
Deerfield Beach	746	57.2	971	58.3	1,142	64.2	1,278	70.4	1,340	64.5	1,189	63.7
Dillard	671	74.5	998	64.0	950	71.1	106	65.4	623	69.0	62	63.9
Fort Lauderdale	869	64.3	956	67.4	933	68.9	952	71.2	832	65.5	833	68.2
Hollywood Hills	726	59.6	942	62.3	1,079	63.4	1,211	64.4	961	62.4	912	60.0
Northeast	1,314	68.0	1,228	65.7	1,286	71.7	1,217	74.5	958	70.9	1,137	67.7
Piper	1,144	56.6	1,281	62.4	1,487	64.9	1,556	63.6	1,361	59.8	1,131	57.4
Stranahan	717	63.4	842	58.1	745	63.1	909	69.6	850	63.9	757	64.3
All eight schools	7,110	61.7	7,999	61.0	8,583	65.5	8,158	65.9	7,958	63.4	7,058	62.1

Table 34 displays the data related to *My teacher(s) regularly tell(s) me how I am doing in school*. The weighted percentage of students, who *strongly agreed* or *agreed* with the statement, decreased slightly from 2004-05 to 2009-10, registering a decrease of 1.6 percentage points. During the same time period, of the eight high schools, three (i.e., Dillard, Piper, and Stranahan) reported an increase (with increases ranging from 4.2 to 6.9 percentage points); and five reported a decrease to this item (with decreases ranging from 0.6 to 8.2 percentage points). Dillard had an extremely low number of responses in 2009-10 and its results should be read with caution.

Table 34

Number and Percentage of Students Who Strongly Agreed or Agreed With the Statement, "My Teacher(s) Regularly Tell(s) Me How I Am Doing in School."

School	2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08		2008-09		2009-10	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Coconut Creek	890	53.4	912	57.0	1,028	61.4	945	52.2	1,042	56.8	984	52.8
Deerfield Beach	799	60.7	953	56.0	1,051	59.4	1,099	60.1	1,174	55.9	1,100	59.0
Dillard	526	57.7	861	54.7	803	59.7	95	58.3	568	61.9	62	64.6
Fort Lauderdale	792	57.9	760	53.2	677	50.2	731	54.3	647	50.3	604	49.7
Hollywood Hills	643	52.1	811	52.6	870	50.9	956	49.8	740	46.4	679	44.8
Northeast	1,203	62.3	1,221	65.3	1,150	64.3	1,076	65.7	769	56.9	994	59.3
Piper	954	46.4	1,100	53.3	1,269	55.2	1,357	54.6	1,218	53.0	1,001	50.8
Stranahan	554	48.4	693	47.6	670	56.3	777	58.2	695	51.9	618	52.6
All eight schools	6,361	54.7	7,311	55.2	7,518	57.3	7,036	56.2	6,853	53.9	6,022	53.1

Question 4.3. According to parents' perspective, to what extent and how has the SLC grant been implemented?

As in the previous section on student perceptions, the data in this section were collected from the annual Districtwide Customer Survey, which was designed for general school improvement purposes, and is not specific to the SLC grant. Additionally, because the parent response rates are low, the findings may represent only the perceptions of the respondent parents, not those of

all parents at the SLC schools. Therefore, caution should be used when interpreting these findings.

The data related to *There is an adult at school I can talk to about my child's problems* are presented in Table 35. Between 2004-05 and 2009-10, only three schools—Deerfield Beach, Piper and Stranahan—had higher percentages of respondent parents who *strongly agreed* or *agreed* with this statement. For all eight schools, the weighted percentage decreased by 2.0 percentage points from 2004-05 to 2009-10.

Table 35
Number and Percentage of Respondent Parents Who Strongly Agreed or Agreed With the Statement, "There Is an Adult at School I Can Talk to About My Child's Problems."

School	2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08		2008-09		2009-10	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Coconut Creek	29	78.4	74	69.8	42	79.2	23	79.3	74	74.0	97	60.0
Deerfield Beach	50	66.7	50	72.5	79	76.0	51	76.1	87	70.2	76	74.5
Dillard	31	72.1	8	66.7	117	72.7	56	80.0	97	77.0	58	70.0
Fort Lauderdale	52	78.8	29	70.7	28	75.7	31	79.5	31	75.6	42	70.0
Hollywood Hills	84	66.7	47	72.3	26	66.7	128	80.0	75	70.8	30	55.6
Northeast	273	73.6	251	72.8	254	74.1	200	68.0	53	74.7	112	69.1
Piper	136	64.5	85	66.9	63	70.0	40	69.0	36	80.0	59	72.8
Stranahan	48	65.8	21	61.8	41	74.5	42	68.9	28	80.0	36	81.8
All eight schools	703	70.2	565	70.7	650	73.7	571	73.4	481	74.2	510	68.2

The data indicating that *The teachers respond quickly to my requests* are displayed in Table 36. Between 2004-05 and 2009-10 school years, for all eight schools, the weighted percentage increased from 49.6 in 2004-05 to 51.5 in 2009-10, for a 1.9 percentage point increase over the five year period. Between 2004-05 and 2009-10, six schools increased in the percentage of respondent parents, who *strongly agreed* or *agreed* with the indicator, while two schools (Coconut Creek and Fort Lauderdale) decreased. Among the eight schools, Deerfield Beach and Stranahan increased the most, with 12.1 and 9.2 percentage point increases, respectively. As mentioned in the forgoing, we should interpret the results with caution, as the return rate for parent survey was relatively low.

Table 36
Number and Percentage of Respondent Parents Who Strongly Agreed or Agreed With the Statement, "The Teachers Respond Quickly to My Requests."

School	2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08		2008-09		2009-10	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Coconut Creek	25	67.6	43	40.2	27	50.9	15	53.6	53	52.5	66	41.0
Deerfield Beach	37	49.3	30	42.3	48	46.6	31	45.6	76	59.8	62	61.4
Dillard	21	51.2	5	41.7	87	54.0	40	57.1	68	54.0	45	54.2
Fort Lauderdale	36	55.4	20	47.6	21	56.8	22	56.4	22	52.4	33	55.0
Hollywood Hills	52	42.3	24	37.5	19	48.7	63	39.6	61	56.5	24	43.6
Northeast	191	51.2	177	52.1	176	51.8	146	50.5	38	54.3	86	52.8
Piper	91	43.3	62	50.0	41	46.1	27	46.6	28	62.2	41	49.4
Stranahan	42	57.5	14	42.4	30	53.6	32	52.5	23	65.7	30	66.7
All eight schools	495	49.6	375	47.3	449	51.1	376	48.7	369	56.4	387	51.5

Summary

This report examines all five years of the grant and highlights the robust requirements of the SLC program concerning outcomes. Although this report's findings focused on outcomes, the process of establishing SLC was also emphasized. The outcome evaluation analyzed the extent to which goals were met, while the process evaluation investigated pathways of progression to the outcomes. This report is the final evaluation for the five-year SLC grant.

Of the eight schools implementing SLC, various SLC strategies and structures have been implemented. By 2009-10, in terms of strategies, at least five schools used (a) adult mentors, (b) alternative scheduling/block scheduling, (c) common planning periods, and (d) counselors assigned to SLC. In terms of structures, six or more schools implemented (a) freshman/transition academy and (b) separate building space. All SLC structures were used by at least five schools. By 2009-10, SLC strategies and structures were implemented at all grade levels in all schools, except for one school, which has not expanded SLC strategies and structures to the 12th grade. During the first year, 73% of SLC students were in some form of SLC. By 2009-10, participation rose to 97%. In summary, by the 2009-10 school year, seven schools met the goal of having 100% of students participate in SLC, while one school did not meet the goal.

By 2009-10, the grant goal of increasing the percentage of ninth and tenth graders scoring at proficient or advanced levels in reading and mathematics by five points was met in 25 out of a total of 32 comparisons (78%). In other words, when examining the results by school ($n=8$), grade level (9th and 10th grades), and subject (reading and mathematics), the number of schools, that met the goal of increasing the percentage of ninth and tenth graders scoring at proficient or advanced levels by five percentage points by 2009-10, was: five of eight schools for 9th grade reading and 10th grade reading; seven of eight schools for 9th grade mathematics; and all schools for 10th grade mathematics.

When comparing the eight schools, individually with the District on the increase of the percentage of ninth and tenth graders proficient in reading and mathematics between 2004-05 and 2009-10, in a total of 32 comparisons, SLC schools surpassed the District average improvement rate on 15 occasions, tied with the District average improvement rate on one occasion, and were below the District average improvement rate on 16 occasions. In other words, two of eight SLC schools surpassed the District's average gain in 9th grade reading and 10th grade reading; four of eight SLC schools improved more than the District's average gain for 9th grade mathematics; and for 10th grade mathematics, seven of eight schools exceeded the District's average gain of 10 percentage points. It appeared that in comparison to the District average, the SLC schools improved more in mathematics than in reading. These results should be read with caution, because SLC data were included in the District-level results and other District initiatives may be potential confounding factors.

All eight SLC schools met the grant goal of increasing graduation rates by five-percentage points from 2004-05 to 2009-10; and all eight schools exceeded the District and State gains over the same time period. Collectively, the eight SLC high schools' unweighted graduation rate—which treats all schools with the same weight by adding the eight graduation rates and dividing by eight—increased 23.0 percentage points from 60.3 in 2004-05 to 83.3 in 2009-10, while the District's graduation rate increased just 10.8 percentage points from 67.1 to 77.9

during the same time. Within five years, the eight SLC schools collectively demonstrated a far greater increase in graduation rate and went from 6.8 percentage points below the District rate in 2004-05 to 5.4 percentage points above the District rate in 2009-10. In summary, the eight schools far exceeded the graduation goals for 2009-10, both individually and collectively.

All SLC schools increased their post-secondary enrollment percentage from 2004-05 to 2008-09; however, only one school met the four-year goal of increasing enrollment by 16 percentage points or more. Post-secondary enrollment data was examined from 2004-05 to 2008-09, because 2009-10 data had not been released by the Florida Department of Education, at the time of publication. Comparisons with District and state gains show that three schools exceeded Broward's 13.3 percentage point increase in post-secondary enrollment from 2004-05 to 2008-09, and six schools exceeded the state's 6.4 percentage point gain, during the same time.

The eight SLC schools, as a whole, reduced their number of suspensions by 47%, a figure that was close to the SLC goal of a 50% reduction in the rate of suspensions. Among the eight schools, four schools (Dillard, Stranahan, Fort Lauderdale, and Hollywood Hills) met the grant goal. Caution is warranted because the changes in number of suspension actions between 2004-05 and 2009-10 varied widely, across the SLC schools.

All schools increased the rate of students enrolled in at least one Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) credit course from 2004-05 to 2009-10 by at least five percentage points. Four schools met or exceeded the grant goal of increasing the percentage of students enrolled in AP/IB courses by 10 percentage points, over the five-year period. The remaining schools had increases from 5 to 9 percentage points, during the grant.

Overall, there appeared to be a small amount of improvement in personalizing the learning environment during the five years. For example, data collected from students and teachers indicated that from 2005-06 to 2009-10, the percentage of:

- students who *agreed* that, *there is an adult at school I can talk with about my personal problems*, increased from 50.2% to 54.7%; and
- teachers who know 75% or more of their students' *academic aspirations* increased from 35.4% to 46.8%.

The fifth-year evaluation also included two hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) analyses which examined growth from a longitudinal perspective. The first HLM looked into whether there was a statistically significant difference between the rate of growth of SLC and non-SLC students in terms of how the 8th graders (in 2007-08) progressed to the 9th grade (in 2008-09) and to the 10th grade (in 2009-10). The results indicated that the rate of growth from Grade 8 to Grade 10 appeared to be no different between SLC and non-SLC students for the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) Reading and Mathematics developmental scale scores. The above conclusion was also true for an unadjusted HLM model in which statistical adjustments were made, based on students' and schools' background.

The second HLM analysis examined whether there was a statistically significant difference between SLC and non-SLC students in the probability of graduation after controlling for prior academic achievement and demographic background. The HLM was used to match a student's data over five years and by nesting a student in the same SLC or non-SLC school over five years.

The 2005-06 cohort of 8th grade students were followed to their graduation. When predicting graduation status from Grade 8, there was a statistically significant difference in graduation status between SLC and non-SLC students, in favor of non-SLC students. Specifically, non-SLC students were found to be 1.28 times as likely ($1 \div 0.78$) to graduate from high school than SLC students, after adjustment for student-level and school-level variables. This finding does not contradict the finding that SLC schools increased their graduation rates more than the District average, because the HLM unit of analysis followed students from a group of 8th graders in the 2005-06 school year to 2009-10, while examination of graduation rates was a trend analysis over multiple years at the school level. Overall, when considering both findings, it appears that when following a group of 8th graders in 2005-06 to examine their graduation status at the 12th grade, the SLC grant did not appear to improve their probability of graduation. However, looking at school graduation rates across years, which involved multiple groups of graduates, then SLC schools improved their graduation rates dramatically, in comparison to the District's average rates.

Reflections

As was indicated in the foregoing, most of the SLC objectives were met. Grant activities were carried out according to the proposal; and all schools were active participants in the grant. The teams at both the school and District levels were diligent in planning and implementing the grant activities and reflecting upon the experience for continuing improvement. Based on the findings of this grant, the following was formulated for reflection and continuing school improvement.

First, school improvement is possible. In educational literature and practice, there is a pessimistic sentiment that many issues in education are “intractable.” During the grant, the eight schools gave us an image of the possibility for school improvement by demonstrating progress, as a whole, above the District average. There was a cluster of schools among the eight schools, such as Dillard, Fort Lauderdale, and Stranahan, that did particularly well, in comparison to the District average over the five-year period.

Second, there had been many changes and adjustments in terms of the strategies and the structures that the eight schools employed, from year to year, during the five-year period. On the one hand, we should be open to the changes and adjustments, along the way, in the process of educational change. On the other hand, too many changes, from year to year, in a relatively short period of time might impact the depth of implementation. Therefore, adjustments along the way should be balanced with the depth of implementation.

Third, this SLC grant was structured so that each school would write its own annual SLC implementation plan. The advantage of the individual school approach is that each school would maximize taking its unique situation into account. The disadvantage of the approach is that it might dissipate the cohort effect. In other words, balancing common core requirements for all eight schools, but still offering schools flexibility in program implementation, is an important aspect of the SLC program design. The new SLC grant application from BCPS has addressed this balance.

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Appendix A

Significant Achievements Related to Smaller Learning Communities Grant Work 2005-06 to 2009-10

Coconut Creek

2005-06

- Student vertical/horizontal planning created an overall effective enhancement of planning and instruction.
- Improved student/administrator relationships in correlation to SLC identification.
- Community identification built pride and morale (e.g., Spirit Stick, ID badges by community, lanyards with SLC name).

2006-07

- Vertical and horizontal planning for students created an overall effective enhancement of planning and instruction.
- Improved student/administrator relationships in correlation to SLC identification.
- Community identification built pride and morale (e.g., Spirit Stick, ID badges by community, lanyards with SLC name).

2007-08

- We achieved a much greater parent involvement than in previous years.
- Significantly achieved a greater awareness of the SLC concept amongst parents and students.
- Teacher buy-in has improved significantly over last year.

2008-09

- Implementation of teacher training.
- Took a team of teachers to ASCD conference in Orlando.
- Support of student achievement with after school tutoring and training programs.

2009-10

- Increases test scores: BAT scores went up significantly; FCAT retakes scores increased in both reading and math, making it the second consecutive year of receiving the bonus points.
- Collaboration: Common planning was added to the master schedule in Math, Language Arts, Reading, Science, and Social Studies. Teachers were assigned scheduled time to collaborate in developing lessons, discuss the individual needs and concerns of specific children, and take a closer look at the critical thinking and rigor in their lessons plans.
- Staff development: The scheduling at the school changed from 4x4 block to straight 7 this year. This allowed for professional development during planning periods (Cougar Collegiality). Sessions included Webb's Depth of Knowledge, Learning Strategies, Critical Thinking, and Looking at the DATA and what to do with it, Rigor, English as a Second Language (ESL) Strategies, Direct Instruction, and Higher Order Questioning.

Deerfield Beach

2005-06

- Development of Pathways assisted students to identify a career path, allowing them to choose classes that align with post-secondary education.
- Development of Bucks 101, 9th grade course, provided foundation to better prepare students for high school.
- Personalization-development; sustained relationships between staff and students.

2006-07

- Student Achievement goals continued to be met in small increments.
- Collegiality/collaboration among faculty to foster a productive climate for teaching and learning.
- Increased personalization strategies with a priority given to staff members understanding the whole child.

(table continues)

Appendix A (*continued*).

Deerfield Beach (*continued*).

2007-08

- Student achievement continued to be the primary focus with SLC supporting the mission, vision and goals for all students.
- Freshman Academy provided opportunities for increased personalization, while setting the foundation for freshman to be successful. Through the SLC initiative, students are assigned their own academic advisor, behavior specialist, and administrator to ensure that academic and affective needs are met.
- SLC provided staff to work on interdisciplinary units and themes, allowing for collegiality through staff development learning communities.

2008-09

- The first significant achievement was hosting a freshmen academy awards ceremony. Over 100 students were recognized for various areas of achievement, from most improved student to academic honor roll.
- The second achievement was our digital divide laptop give away. SLC students, who did not currently have computer access at home, were given laptop computers to allow students to continue their education through the use of technology.
- The third achievement was in developing a mentoring program for our at-risk students. Students attended monthly seminars with positive community role models.

2009-10

- Student achievement continued to be the primary focus with SLC's supporting the mission, vision, and goals for all students. Various push-in/pull-out programs were developed to continue increasing FCAT scores and graduation rate.
- Freshman Academy provided opportunities for increased personalization, while setting the foundation for freshman to be successful. Through the SLC initiative, students were assigned their own behavior specialist and administrator, to ensure that academic and affective needs were met. Three adult mentors were assigned to work with students.
- SLC's provided staff the opportunity to work together, allowing for collegiality through staff development learning communities. Professional Learning Communities were incorporated by discipline to ensure the sharing of best practices.

Dillard

2005-06

- Scheduling teams to created/provided common planning time for each SLC teams.
- Increased interaction/communication among members within the SLC teams (students/teachers/administrators/parents).
- The schedule made it more convenient and allowed for team/parent conferences.

2006-07

- The scheduling made it convenient for teams to hold common teacher/parent conferences.
- Created/provided common planning time for each SLC team.
- Interactions and communications between the members within the SLC team were increased.
- Flexible scheduling allowed for rigorous intervention and remediation in the 9th and 10th grade houses; instructors were able to utilize team teaching and develop a collaborative student-centered environment.

(*table continues*)

Appendix A (continued).

Dillard (continued).

2007-08

- The 9th grade Academy of Success had resource staff “housed” in the same building as the students; resource staff included the 9th grade administrator, guidance counselor, behavior specialist, and clerical staff.
- Each house had meetings which established and reinforced the teacher’s understanding that they had been “selected” to work with particular groups, due to qualities they exhibited that would assist the student performance and acclimation to high school; the initial meeting outlined the goals of each academy.

2008-09

- Common Planning Periods: Teachers were able to meet and devise instruction to support the individual needs of students within their academies. Teachers were able to review student data, share best practices, and model effective teaching strategies to enhance student achievement and design team teaching initiatives.
- Flexible Scheduling: Allowed for rigorous intervention and remediation in the 9th and 10th grade houses. Instructors were able to utilize team teaching and develop a collaborative student-centered environment.
- Resource staff dedicated to the support and success of the 9th -12th grade level houses. Each grade level academy had an administrator, guidance counselor, and clerical personnel to support the particular student needs of that house. The 9th Grade Academy of Success had the benefit of their resource staff “housed” in the same building as the students.

2009-10

- Common Planning Periods: They were restructured for the 9th grade academy and the 10th grade house to allow the Reading and English teachers to share a common planning time.
- Resource Staff Looping: The Assistant Principals and Grade Level Counselor looped with their group of students. The current 12th Grade Assistant Principal and Counselor have worked with the 2010 graduating class for their four-year matriculation.
- Professional Development: Due to the pairing of the 9th & 10th grade English and reading teachers along with their common planning, the professional learning communities were customized to meet the common needs of the group and their targeted learners.

Fort Lauderdale

2005-06

- Creation/implementation of common planning times for teachers to create common thematic lesson plans; integrate existing Instructional Focus Calendars.
- Designation of House Leaders for teacher-led initiatives in planning activities to build capacity of SLC on campus (i.e., Career Day and Ninth Grade Showcase of Success).
- Used SLC funds for teacher participation with effective SLC schools/workshops and shared best practices to initiate SLC into traditional comprehensive high school campus.

2006-07

- Created a two-year transition period for 9th and 10th grade students; students in the 9th and 10th grade academies were separated into two Houses (Blue and White), based on the self-selection of their Academy Elective choice.
- Moving the core 9th and 10th grade academy classes to their new location upon the opening of our newest 32-classroom building; teachers were able to work together in close proximity, sharing common spaces for planning and lunch; students’ benefit, as well as they did not have as far to travel for 50-75% of their academy courses.

(table continues)

Appendix A (*continued*).

Fort Lauderdale (*continued*).

- Employed two house leaders to coordinate activities of the Blue and White Houses within the academies. These house leaders successfully implemented the phone-log system, which encouraged and tracked phone calls from teachers to students' parents/guardians, with the results of the phone conferences being documented in TERMS; as well as finding relevant phone numbers for contact.

2007-08

- The SLC Coordinator, who was also the Reading Coach, worked throughout the year to have eight teachers complete the Content Area Reading-Professional Development (CAR-PD) Bundle; this enabled the CAR-PD teacher to teach fluent Level 2 students through their coursework, while implementing effective reading practices in the core/elective area, thus, opening the student's schedule for enrollment in an elective of his/her choice in lieu of a reading course. This created an ideal situation for the SLC program at Fort Lauderdale High School (FLHS), since the elective teachers had fuller class loads. The students got the electives they wanted, and they were not pigeon-holed into double-dipped reading courses all year long.
- FLHS used SLC funds to plan for a group of 10 (teachers and administrators) to attend a conference on Differentiating Instruction for the FLHS SLC. This conference was planned to work as a 5-day retreat for FLHS to refocus on the goals and purposes of the SLC Implementation.
- Grant FLHS welcomed a new principal and SLC School-Site Coordinator in 2008-09, so this trip helped to facilitate the group to work together on setting goals and guidelines for the final 2 years of the SLC Implementation Grant, along with the assistance of the District SLC Coordinator for additional support.
- Created a comprehensive intensive writing curriculum to build capacity of teachers in the 9th and 10th grade academies; this proved to make gains in the FCAT Writing Assessment.

2008-09

- Fort Lauderdale High School continued with training teachers to become CAR-PD. Five additional teachers completed the training this school year. FLHS has a total of 13 teachers trained in this area. This certification enabled the teacher to teach fluent Level 2 students through their coursework. The teacher implemented effective reading strategies into the curriculum, allowing students who qualified to enroll in an elective, in lieu of an additional reading course.
- Teachers and administrators engaged in sustained professional development, which yielded increases in student reading achievement and the achievement of minority subgroups and students with disabilities, as measured by state mandated testing.
- Continued intensive writing curriculum. This curriculum was taught to all Level 1 and 2 students in ninth and tenth grades. The course was taught first semester providing a solid grammatical and mechanical foundation to be successful through the high school year. Gains were as follows: FLHS FCAT Writing Averages Score increased from 4.1 for 2007 to 4.2 in 2008 and to 4.3 in 2009; FLHS percent scoring 3.5 and above: 84% in 2007 to 86% in 2008 to 90% in 2009; FLHS percent scoring 4.0 and above: 72% in 2007 to 73% in 2008 and to 80% in 2009.

2009-10

- This year FLHS developed a program to address the social and academic needs of its students following the RtI process. The program was titled BRASS (Building Relationships for Academic and Social Success). There was a BRASS cohort for each grade level. All teachers were assigned a group of students to monitor attendance, academics, and behavior. Documentation was to be done at a minimal of once every two weeks on student progress. Teachers were released for an extra planning period once each nine weeks to collaborate with other teachers in the cohort to discuss curriculum and student progress.

(*table continues*)

Appendix A (*continued*).

Fort Lauderdale (*continued*).

- This school year FLHS has incorporated ACT strategies into the Saturday School Curriculum. There were seven teachers who consistently were trained in the strategies and had the opportunity to demonstrate with the students who were assigned Saturday School. Additionally, Saturday School was open to any student who wished to attend.
- In order to support the BRASS initiative, all department chairs had common planning. This was first block. This proved effective for multiple reasons: (a) academic support for students block one; (b) assist with emergency lesson plan; (c) availability for bi-weekly Leadership Team meetings.

Hollywood Hills

2005-06

- Establishment of houses with themes.
- Administrative and Guidance assignments.
- Formation of a design team; researched the possibility of implementing student advisories wall-to-wall for the next school year.

2006-07

- The implementation of a Student Advisory Program involving all students at Hollywood Hills High (HHH) School grades 9-12 is the most significant achievement.
- A design team of teachers from each SLC, and grade, and a variety of subject areas was developed.
- The original advisory curriculum that was developed during the summer of 2006 will be used for the incoming 9th graders only; and a new curriculum has been developed for all 10-12 grade students for the 2007-08 school year.
- Another accomplishment included each SLC developing a theme to be used in the implementation of thematic units within each small learning community.

2007-08

- HHH worked to provide a more personalized education to our students, build SLC identity, develop a positive school climate, and to develop integrated lessons.
- Parents and students sat down one-on-one with a staff member to review and develop a success plan. Parents were happy/looking forward to the next Key to Success Evening.
- The continuation of the Student Advisory Program, with the implementation of two separate advisory curriculums to meet the student needs of Hollywood Hills High School students, (9-12 graders) is the most significant achievement.
- Other accomplishments include creating an integrated curriculum by a 10th grade team of World History and English teachers in the Liberal, Creative and Performing Arts SLC, to be implemented in 2009.

2008-09

- There are three significant achievements in the implementation of Hollywood Hills High School's Small Learning Communities Grant for the 2008-09 school year. These achievements include the implementation of several student academic intervention programs, and the various parent involvement programs.
- During the school day, several programs were available to students in need of academic interventions. These programs included Reading Pullout, and Writing Pullout. Students worked one-on-one with a reading and or English teacher to strengthen their reading and writing skills.
- Additional programs designed to improve student achievement included After School Tutoring in mathematics, reading, and Saturday FCAT Camp for reading, mathematics and science.

(*table continues*)

Appendix A (continued).

Hollywood Hills (continued).

2009-10

- HHH School's instructional staff implemented schoolwide Professional Learning Communities (PLC) for the 2009-10 school year. The school's Professional Development Committee developed the guidelines for implementation. Teachers developed PLC focus groups based on: school data, professional needs of teachers and student needs. All teachers were active participants in at least one of the 10 PLCs developed at HHH. Topics for the PLCs included, reading, advanced mathematics, vertical teaming, 9th – 10th grade writing, school climate, integrating technology into the classroom, and curriculum development for alternate suspension program.
- Re-establishing a guidance counselor into the 9th Grade Center.
- The continued support for the schoolwide advisory program.

Northeast

2005-06

- Revamping the ninth grade writing course by creating coursework and meeting with ninth grade writing teachers to provide an overview and answer questions.
- Developed/implemented the Freshman Advisory Program.
- Developed mathematics and science professional learning communities.

2006-07

- Curriculum development facilitated by Northeast teachers, particularly in writing, math, science.
- Development of areas of emphasis in each academy and student selection of academies at registration in spring 2007.
- Development and implementation of freshman Hurricane Camp for incoming freshmen.

2007-08

- At the beginning of the year, Northeast associated all teachers, guidance, and administrative staff with an academy, and developed Academy Advisor positions to oversee the SLC; this year we hired two 9th grade Academy Advisors, one Business and Entrepreneurship Advisor, one Architecture and Design advisor, and one Latin and Collegiate studies advisor; these advisors led academy meetings, planned and implemented staff development, and fostered staff collaboration.
- The 9th grade academy developed, implemented, and monitored a year-long entry plan.
- Northeast improved its community relationships through an increase in the number of new partnerships and family involvement.

2008-09

- Implementation of a schoolwide advisory program by academy theme: For each academy program, academy advocates were assigned to mentor and work with students within the theme. Each advocate worked closely with 20-30 students to ensure that students were getting the mentoring and support needed for success in high school.
- Professional development for teachers that followed the SLC model: teachers self-selected/developed a professional learning community that targeted student achievement challenges in their areas of interest. These communities provided intensive study for staff, and they included training in Creating Independence through Student-owned Strategies (CRISS) for one group. The CRISS group will continue to meet next school year to discuss and implement reading strategies in their classes (across all subject areas).
- Implementation of an extensive student tutoring program that provided students with access to teacher's after-school and Saturdays: this program targeted student achievement in math, reading, and science. Teachers met with students one-on-one and in small groups to provide support.

(table continues)

Appendix A (continued).

Northeast (continued).

2009-10

- Teachers were able to offer assistance to students after school.
 - Teachers were able to attend trainings that were beneficial to their subject area.
 - Teachers worked together after school to work on common planning.
-

Piper

2005-06

- Empowerment of teachers.
- Increase in rigor.
- Building of personalization for students.

2006-07

- The development of pull-out tutoring, the after school academic camps, the Saturday FCAT review, and writing camps assisted students through various venues.
- The mentor/mentee program allowed us to truly help several at-risk students who needed the extra attention of a caring, patient adult; we will continue this program and definitely expand it.

2007-08

- Teamed the 9th and 10th grade teachers, which allowed for common planning for 3 of 4 teachers.
- Developed cadre of adult mentors that reflected our students' gender.
- Increased parent involvement through a wide verity of activities, such as Virtual Counselor Training Night and Parent and Student Career Night.

2008-09

- In order to increase the rigor and relevance across curricula, teachers attended data training in the areas of critical thinking: Webbs' upper level questioning for content and reference/research. This facilitated alignment of instructional practices based on collected data. All content areas developed curriculum maps with objectives and benchmarks. Common planning gave the teachers the opportunity to collaborate and share best practices, especially in reading and writing.
- Students who had to re-take FCAT showed a significant increase of 11% in reading from 2007-08.
- Increased parental involvement through a variety of activities.

2009-10

- The common planning.
 - Mentoring/transition piece for freshman and sophomores.
 - The common planning aligned and structured curriculum to the point that administration could track student progress and grades.
-

Stranahan

2005-06

- In year one of SLC, a schoolwide design team agreed to design DragonFest, a once-per-week, 30-minute advisory period implemented in 2006-07.
- Implementation of Community of Career Research, Exploration, and Successful Transition.
- Design of the grades 10-12 career-themed academies.
- Involvement of all stakeholders in SLC development/implementation.

2006-07

- The Schoolwide Advisory Program called DragonFest; this initiative involved all faculty and support staff as advisors to all students.
 - Implementation of the four, 10th - 12th grades Career Academies.
 - Institution of a practice that all of our senior students will experience an internship/mentorship/apprenticeship experience within their senior year in the area, or major, they have selected/studied.
-

(table continues)

Appendix A (*continued*).

Stranahan (*continued*).

2007-08

- Adjustment of the leadership structure in each SLC was significant because it allowed more faculty members to have ownership of each SLC.
- The creation of monthly “Family Nights” helped to increase parental involvement and awareness of our SLC and school.
- Every SLC in the school hosted a career fair for their students and involved the CREST students (in the 10-12 academies); this gave students a unique opportunity to examine and interact with professionals from various career fields within the SLC.

2008-09

- The adjustment to the leadership structure made last year has still proven to be significant in building capacity within our school’s SLCs. More and more faculty members contribute their time; more events have been planned and executed; and students really strongly identify with their respective academies. Great new ideas for next year have also been generated, as a result of this collaborative structure.
- Our monthly “Family Nights” have REALLY been successful. We started with approximately thirty parents attending and our last family night had almost two hundred fifty parents attending and participating in our last “Family Night!” Each of our SLCs decides on a theme for the evening that would involve community interest with the work of our students within the academy. Some examples of family nights this year included “Brain Based Learning and Memory Function” and “Florida Friendly (Native) Plants and Trees”. Students get to present their expertise and work, while parents serve as evaluators and get to experience hands-on lessons from the students.
- Parent University. We held the first ever ZONE parent night and included all of our feeder elementary schools and middle school in a one night, parent education event held at our school. We offered childcare from our UTAP program and our culinary program made light refreshments. Topics included: Understanding the report card, FCAT and student promotion requirements, How to help a struggling reader, Advanced Placement information, Transitioning from 5th to 6th and from 8th to 9th grades and more. Approximately one hundred parents attended this event – and next year we hope to advertise it even more and fill the school.

2009-10

- A true interdisciplinary unit with essential question that crossed over 6 subjects tying into a theme about the evolution of transportation and going green. Over 265 students participated in over 40+ projects and presentations using the latest technologies. The work was showcased in a student and community presentation and the product was also presented at a conference during the summer of 2010.
 - Inter-academy competitions... we finally got the academies competing in the first ever academy brain bowl! This matched students teams from each academy against each other in an after school program/jeopardy style format. The students competed well and had a nice audience of teachers and peers! The winning academy then had to face a team from the faculty – so, fun was had by all and the students were challenged academically at the same time. You truly saw academy pride as everyone cheered for their respective academies – even faculty!
 - The second year of our Parent University – a zone initiative to educate parents in the entire zone at all grades levels. Last year the event was marginally attended, but this year showed a significant increase and very positive feedback from our parents. Topics covered included transitioning schools, FCAT scores and information, remediation and enrichment opportunities and strategies for students, AP and rigorous course information, scholarships/financial aid workshops and more.
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Appendix B

Significant Learnings Related to Smaller Learning Communities Grant Work, 2005-06 to 2009-10

Coconut Creek

2005-06

- There are many considerations in the implementation of SLC, such as scheduling, teaming; budgeting concerns; physical plant issues; etc.
- Staff buy-in is essential to the effective operation of an SLC model.
- SLC foster student/teacher/administrator relationships and reduce behavior issues.

2006-07

- There are many considerations in the implementation of the SLC, such as scheduling; teaming; budgeting concerns; physical plant issues; etc.
- Staff buy-in is essential to the effective operation of an SLC model.
- SLC foster better relationships among students, teachers, and administrators; thus, reducing behavioral issues.

2007-08

- The SLC model works better with career academies versus houses; course selection and interdisciplinary issues make it hard to keep with teaming.
- The costs to maintain pure teaming is significant. In order to effectuate this, you must have more staff with identical course selections for each house.
- It is difficult to have teacher advisory as required under the current teacher's contract, without causing a possible labor issue.

2008-09

- Ninth grade transition academies are imperative to the working of the SLC model.
- SLC structures by design are expensive to maintain due to true teaming concept.
- SLC tends to support teaching to mastery.

2009-10

- Authentic Direct Instruction (DI) changed the classroom environment where teachers covered materials by giving students' assignments and students working independently. Using DI, teachers accessed prior knowledge and then implemented the teaching strategy of "I Do, We Do, and You Do."
- To meet the individual needs of each student, DI was introduced. Although not used across the curriculum at this school, more teachers are using DI than in previous years.
- Through coaching and teachers modeling for teachers, reading strategies have become embedded across the curriculum.

Deerfield Beach

2005-06

- A development of Pathways assists students in identifying a career path and chooses classes that align with post-secondary education.
- Development of Bucks 101, a 9th grade course that provides a foundation to prepare for high school.
- Personalization-development and sustaining relationships between staff/students.

2006-07

- The challenges faced in scheduling students to accommodate District mandates and SLC philosophies.
- Positive change in student achievement and school culture takes time.
- Teachers need on-going training to implement creative teaching strategies, interdisciplinary lessons, team teaching, use of common planning, and thematic units.

(table continues)

Appendix B (*continued*).

Deerfield Beach (*continued*).

2007-08

- The challenges faced in scheduling students to accommodate District mandates and SLC philosophies (the same as the previous year).
- Putting into place sustainable programs and initiatives that will continue after grant funds are no longer available.
- Implementation of new initiatives takes time as teachers slowly shift their thinking and take ownership.

2008-09

- Activities that are relevant to students are an essential part of developing effective SLC. It is important for students to participate in field trips, lab experiences, guest speakers, etc.
- Staff development is extremely important to the SLC process. Teachers need to be properly trained in new strategies, technology, and methods.
- It is imperative that the SLC concept is stressed across the curriculum, as the goal is to continue the SLC goals beyond the grant years.

2009-10

- The challenges faced in scheduling students to accommodate District mandates and SLC philosophies.
 - Putting into place sustainable programs and initiatives that will continue after grant funds are no longer available.
 - Professional learning communities are restricted to early release, professional study and planning days, as it is challenging to provide common planning on the 4x4 block.
-

Dillard

2005-06

- Understanding the concept of working together to enhance the school community.
- Understanding the SLC goals, objectives, expectations, and benefits.
- Learning that the school budget has a direct effect.
- A challenge in creating SLC teams with common schedules.

2006-07

- Understanding the goals, objectives, expectations, and benefits of small learning communities in a large school setting.
- Understanding the true concept of teaming and working together to improve the school.
- Learning how the school's budget affects staffing and scheduling of SLC teams.

2007-08

- The entire faculty participated in a staff development that increased their understanding about the 9th grade group of students; this PowerPoint informed teachers that if we are to be successful as a high school, we must be successful with 9th graders; as a result, the need to "Reinvent 9th grade" was established and promoted.
 - Through professional development, teachers were able to gain a greater understanding of the impact that cross curricular teaching can have on student learning and improve the success of our students on the FCAT.
 - The Team Structure and the Academy Structure is in place and needs to be continually improved.
 - The goal next year will be to develop pride and allegiance within the students in regards to their academy affiliation.
-

(*table continues*)

Appendix B (*continued*).

Dillard (*continued*).

2008-09

- Personalization: Teachers used their planning periods to personalize the learning environment for the lowest 30 percentile of learners in each academy. This schoolwide effort acknowledged the philosophy that students need to have someone take a personal interest in their development. Many of these academic learning situations provided opportunities for students to receive guidance in other areas of school performance, participation, and progression.
- Through Professional Development, teachers were able to gain a greater understanding of the impact that cross curricular teaching can have on student learning and improve the success of our students in standardized testing and overall academic performance. Teachers also accessed the diversity of skills available through their colleagues to improve their individual classroom instruction and lesson design.
- The Team Structure and the Academy Structure is in place and needs to be continually improved and strengthened.

2009-10

- To strengthen the academy structure it was necessary to implement team level staff development and facilitate discussions regarding performance, achievement and growth of shared students.
- There needs to be a common language implemented in the SLC houses. This common language would be inclusive of instructional strategies, rules, rubrics for assignments and projects.
- Vertical Teaming: 9th to 10th grade transitional support was implemented last year and introduced this year for the 10th to 11th grade transition. The teaming for the transition was primarily through the guidance counselors and the reading and English teachers. This must be expanded to include more content areas.

Fort Lauderdale

2005-06

- Departments work together to integrate curricular themes by better utilizing their shared/common planning times.
- SLC goals need to be publicized, shared, built on, and measured by all members of the SLC teaching teams to more effectively implement the SLC purpose.
- Building the Showcase of Success identified, for stakeholders, how to work together to integrate curricular units and create thematic lessons. The exercise also (a) encouraged a greater reality of student learning, and (b) promoted linking of subject areas to build relevance for the students.

2006-07

- Implementation of interdisciplinary lesson planning techniques for teachers within each house has been a barrier.
- Scheduling is an issue in implementing the SLC grant. FLHS is currently on a 4x4 block schedule under the scheduling mandates from the FDOE for all Levels 1 and 2 reading and math students; FLHS needs to be open to scheduling conflicts as they relate to the SLC to best serve the student; it is an ongoing process of case-by-case attention for placement into desired SLC Academy.
- With two teacher-leaders essentially coordinating all activities for the under-classman transition academies, the process of deciding how and who will hold the leadership positions for the four upper-classman thematic academies is an ongoing process.

2007-08

- Staff development may need to be focused on how departments can work together to vertically and horizontally team/plan and to integrate curricular themes by better utilizing shared/common planning times.

(*table continues*)

Appendix B (*continued*).

Fort Lauderdale (*continued*).

- When teachers work together to build a curriculum, the students benefit from the collaboration and strength of the instructional plan; teachers are empowered to control the learning that takes place in their classrooms, while implementing research-based strategies and practices to foster student learning; participation; and advancement.
- Goals of the SLC need to be publicized, shared, built upon, and measured by all members of the SLC teaching teams; this will more effectively *implement* the purpose of the SLC.

2008-09

- Through the collaboration of departments, the development and implementation of a curriculum has proven to be successful in the intensive writing courses. This has been through collaboration and following the instructional focus calendar. The math department has taken this philosophy and is developing a common curriculum for the Pre-Algebra course. Furthermore, all departments will continue with vertical and horizontal teaming to produce a common curriculum and literacy focus.
- The development of a mentoring program has been initiated through the Peer Counseling course and the Varsity athletics. This has provided a positive relationship among upper and lower classmen. The plan will continue next year with the incorporation of a staff/student mentor program to address the needs of incoming freshmen in areas of behavior, attendance, academics, and adjustment to high school.
- Time for collaboration and a structured approach to address individual students' strengths and areas of growth continue to become a need. This is a continual process that is growing due to the amount of student data that is being collected for review.

2009-10

- There was a decrease in the number of electives offered due to budget constraints. Although initially this seemed as a barrier, we were able to increase our enrollment in Advanced Academic core electives.
- Through vocational electives, students were able to attain Industry Certification in the area of Adobe Photoshop and Police/Fire Emergency Dispatching. This was for all grade levels.
- There was an increase in parental involvement as evidenced by the SAC/SAF attendance. Additionally, after school and evening parental training increased from the previous year. As a result, FLHS will incorporate a PTSO for the 2010-11 school year.

Hollywood Hills

2005-06

- Purity within the houses is needed when creating the master schedule, to allow for teaming and common planning.
- More professional development is needed in interdisciplinary curriculum.
- The need for an advisory curriculum that is grade specific.

2006-07

- Although every student has selected a SLC, scheduling problems have made it very difficult to build identity within the SLC.
- In order for the culture of the school to be changed, we needed everyone to participate.

(*table continues*)

Appendix B (*continued*).

Hollywood Hills (*continued*).

2007-08

- The most significant learning, based on the implementation of the SLC grant, is the scheduling of teams; Hollywood Hills had one academic team in each SLC for the 2007-08 school year; it was discovered that the process of scheduling wall-to-wall teams of teachers and students within the 10th grade, had significant barriers; an additional learning involves the Advisory Program; the HH design team will continue to meet the needs of students, by developing the third phase of the Advisory Program Curriculum to create additional interactive advisory lessons.

2008-09

- Three significant learnings based on Hollywood Hills High School's implementation of SLC grant included: the important role of a ninth grade guidance counselor, providing teams of teachers common planning, and integrating curriculum within a SLC.

2009-10

- The three most significant learnings, based on the implementation of the SLC grant for the 2009-10 school year included: (a) the importance of a 9th grade guidance counselor, (b) the difficulty of maintaining 2 separate bell schedules under budget restraints, and (c) the importance of designing a sustainable Advisory Program.

Northeast

2005-06

- Shared experiences led to a student-centered approach to teaching and learning.
- Creating SLC that impact student achievement, takes a tremendous amount of planning and even more compromise.
- It is difficult to tailor curriculum to all teaching styles for the majority of buy-in.

2006-07

- Teachers are more interested and involved in staff development if it comes from their interests/needs.
- Inclusion of all programs in our academies, through development of the Areas of Emphasis, allows more students to feel connected to Northeast High School (NEHS); it celebrates achievements for all students, not only the select few.
- Providing incoming 9th graders an opportunity to learn more about NEHS before school begins, prepares them for high school with the right knowledge and attitudes.

2007-08

- NEHS staff wants to be involved and find relevance in the staff development offered to them.
- NEHS needs more than four Academy Advisors to have an impact and truly lead the academy programs.
- Alignment of the counselors and administrators by academy increases challenges.

2008-09

- Teacher teams and common planning would greatly assist with evaluation of student achievement data. We will be having teams for our 9th and 10th grades next year.
- The fewer the students assigned to a mentor, the more effective the program. Academy Advocates with fewer students were able to work more closely with their advisees and be more effective in supporting student achievement.
- Effectiveness of professional development for staff is more easily discernable if there is a concrete achievement or product. For example, CRISS training which provided certification, or the production of product (such as a presentation for the Global Learning Initiative Through Digital Education for Students), allows teachers to see tangible results for their study.

(*table continues*)

Appendix B (*continued*).

Northeast (*continued*).

2009-10

- Human relationships were formed within the school.
 - Students were valued as individuals.
 - Teachers and students worked collaboratively to assess learning.
-

Piper

2005-06

- No Response.

2006-07

- Working as a team is not always easy, but it is vital to the success of our students; teachers, staff, and administration collaborated extensively; and dialogue was open and respectful; these are key areas that lead to improvement in our school culture, which will directly assist the students.

2007-08

- During the summer of 2007, there was several vertical teaming and curriculum mapping meetings, in which content area teachers created a plan for continuing high expectations of all students; the vertical teaming model enabled students to be better prepared for rigorous courses in upper level grades.
- As a result of the above measure, the percentage of students enrolled in high rigor classes was increased: Advanced Placement, Honors, and/or Dual Enrollment.
- Reform efforts should be focused; during the 2007-08 school year, we reviewed and revamped the reading curriculum; introduced the Pilot reading program; and implemented literacy coaches.

2008-09

- Increasing percentage of students enrolled in higher rigor classes can be achieved via advanced placement, honors and/or dual enrollment though strategies, such as motivating students, setting higher expectations, etc.
- Fostering more interaction between the members of each department is important for successfully implementing the SLC grant.
- A new reading coach reviewed and revamped the reading curriculum to appropriately place and meet the needs of the students, which provides opportunities for other innovations.

2009-10

- Teacher and student relationships led to student achievement.
 - Aligned curriculum and better diagnostic methods lead to student success.
 - Team orientation and collegiality among teachers improved when less experienced teachers were paired with master teachers with more experience.
-

Stranahan

2005-06

- The importance of scheduling/certification and how that affects SLC structures/faculty placement.
- The depth/quality of staff development necessary for successful SLC development and implementation.
- The necessity for the teachers' union and District to be involved in the process for smoother SLC transition and implementation.

2006-07

- Scheduling of the 10th-12th grade communities has been more of a challenge than anticipated.
 - We have ongoing dialogue with our union, but we have found that you can be very limited on your creativity for SLC by union related issues.
 - Our first strike at a school-wide advisory program was a successful endeavor.
-

(*table continues*)

Appendix B (*continued*).

Stranahan (*continued*).

2007-08

- It is a learning curve to see how the union policies effect decisions in the SLC change process; leadership needs to sit down with the union representatives to get all parties on the same page, and working for a common goal; our advisory program has been affected by the interpretation of the contract.
- Scheduling is a challenge in the 10-12 academies; some of the SLC student enrollment numbers are less than others, making it difficult to schedule teachers purely into one academy.
- While we have made significant strides, we still would like more parental involvement; this still is a work in progress for our school.

2008-09

- It is always a learning curve to see how the union policies effect decisions in the SLC change process. Leadership definitely needs to sit down with the union representatives to get all parties on the same page and working for a common goal. Our advisory program has been deeply affected by the interpretation of things within the contract.
- Scheduling is always a challenge in the 10-12 academies. With a smaller school enrollment, some of the SLC student enrollment numbers are less than others, making it difficult to schedule teachers purely into one academy. Some teachers are placed within an academy to operate in, but their course load is split – two sections of one academy and three sections of another. We are always working on ways to make SLC scheduling more pure and with more common planning for the 10-12 academies. 9th has been quite successful.
- Budget. The District has lost millions of dollars in funding from the state and this has made a tremendous impact on the District and our school. This has effected the hiring of teachers and ultimately the master schedule. It has made making “pure” 10-12 career academies quite challenging. The prospects on the horizon in this area are bleak and this will continue to negatively impact the complete and effective implementation of SLCs.

2009-10

- Budget affects scheduling. Some of our teaming ideas on the 10-12 level have been impacted by layoffs and budget cuts. It is disheartening to have to pause, or step backward, temporarily due to circumstances beyond our control.
 - When moving forward with this process, it is important for all member schools in the cohort to be on the same page, using a common reform process for data analysis and technical assistance.
 - Make sure your academy leaders are not over-extended with other positions within the school. Some of our academies did not complete as many of the expected tasks successfully this year due to over-extension. Process monitoring becomes spotty when time constraints and other obligations are pulling in many directions.
-

Appendix C
School-Based Data Request for SLC Grant

Name of the High School _____

1. At which grade level(s) has the Small Learning Communities Grant been implemented in your school during the 2009-10 school year? (Please check all those that apply.)

___ 9th grade ___ 10th grade ___ 11th grade ___ 12th grade

2. Please report the number of students who were involved in any type of small learning communities during the 2009-10 school year. Please estimate if needed.

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Number of students involved in an SLC strategy or structure in your school, in the following categories	9 th Grade	10 th Grade	11 th Grade	12 th Grade	Totals
2	Total					
3	Female					
4	Male					
5	African American					
6	American Indian/Native Alaskan					
7	Asian/Pacific Islander					
8	Hispanic					
9	White					
10	Limited English Proficient/English Language Learners					
11	Students with disabilities					
12	Economically disadvantaged					

Appendix C (continued).

3. In this table, the concept of “Small Learning Communities” is operationalized as strategies and structures. Please report the number of students who were involved in any type of strategies and structures during the 2009-10 school year. Please estimate if needed.

1	A	B	C	D	E	F
2		GRADE LEVEL				Total
3		9	10	11	12	
4	Total # of students in SLC at each grade level:					
5	<i>Strategies</i> Number of students involved in the following SLC strategies:					
6	Adult Mentors					
7	Advisory period/Teacher Advisories					
8	Alternative Scheduling/Block Scheduling					
9	Common Planning Periods					
10	Counselor Assigned to SLC					
11	Interdisciplinary Curriculum					
12	Interdisciplinary Teacher Teams					
13	Other (describe below)					
14	<i>Structure</i> Number of students involved in the following SLC structures:					
15	Career Theme					
16	Freshman/Transition Academy					
17	House					
18	Magnet Program					
19	Separate Building Space					
20	Other (describe below)					
21	Number of students who earn:					
22	less than ½ of their credits in an SLC					
23	½ or more of their credits in an SLC					

4. What were the three most significant achievements in implementing the Small Learning Communities grant in your school during the 2009-10 school year?
5. What were the three most significant learnings based on the implementation of the Small Learning Communities grant in your school during the 2009-10 school year?

Appendix D
Online Teacher Survey

The following items are developed for evaluating the Small Learning Communities Grant. The data will be reported in an aggregated form and no individually identifiable data will be reported. Thank you in advance for answering the questions.

1. In a given week, how many different students do you interact with in an instructional/academic capacity? _____
2. Of the students you interact with in an instructional/academic capacity mentioned in the previous item, please estimate the percentage for whom you know the following:

	None	1 to 25%	26 to 50%	51 to 75%	More than 75%
a. Their first and last names					
b. Their academic aspirations					
c. Their academic background prior to this year (e.g., they were held back a year)					
d. Their home life (e.g., family situations that may affect their learning)					
e. The names of the person/people with whom they live					
f. Who their friends are					
g. Their cultural and linguistic backgrounds					

3. To what extent do YOU take the following steps or approaches to help students who are having difficulty with academics?

	Never	To a small extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent
a. Spend time diagnosing the problems the students are having				
b. Determine how to match the school's resources to the students' needs				
c. Gather information to help understand students' difficulties.				
d. Help students learn how to overcome their difficulties in ways that compensate for different learning disabilities.				
e. Provide a personalized learning environment for students				

Appendix D (continued).

4. Since the beginning of this school year, about how often have you engaged in any of the following activities?

	Never	A few times a year	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Almost Every day
a. Involve parent(s)/guardian(s) in academic support at home (e.g., helping with homework and talking about the school day)					
b. Involved parent(s)/guardian(s) in developing program/learning goals (e.g., developing IEP with parents/guardians, seeking parents'/guardians' input in setting learning goals)					
c. Involved parent(s)/guardian(s) in instructional activities in schools (e.g., volunteering in the classroom for instructional purpose)					

5. What is your gender?

Female

Male

6. What is your race/ethnicity?

Asian and Pacific Islanders

African American

Hispanic

Native/Indian American

White

7. Which school are you from?

Coconut Creek

Deerfield Beach

Dillard

Fort Lauderdale

Hollywood Hills

Northeast

Piper

Stranahan