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July 8, 2010

TO: School Board Members

FROM: Joanne W. Harrison, Ed.D., Deputy Superintendent
Educational Programs & Student Support

VIA: James F. Notter
Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: **SMALLER LEARNING COMMUNITIES (SLC) GRANT EVALUATION
REPORT, 2005-06 THROUGH 2008-09**

1. What is the purpose of the report?

This evaluation examines the first four years of the 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 provides formative feedback concerning the progress of establishing SLC in participating schools, examines the extent to which grant goals have been met, and documents best practices identified during the first four years of the grant.

2. Which populations were targeted in this report?

Students ($n=16,505$) 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, graduation rate, and post-secondary status. 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. A literature review, 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?

The SLC grant has made progress at meeting important goals with basic SLC strategies and structures in place, including demonstrating progress in mathematics achievement and graduation rates, while goals pertaining to post-secondary education, suspensions, and enrollment in advanced courses have not been met by all SLC schools. Highlights include:

SLC Participation: Six of eight schools met the grant goal of 100% student participation, while two schools had not implemented SLC strategies and structures in the 11th and 12th grade. Overall, the percentage of students participating in some form of SLC increased to 88% in 2008-09 from 73% in 2004-05.

Student Achievement: The grant goal of a four 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 reading, four schools in 10th grade reading, seven schools in 9th grade mathematics, and all schools in 10th grade mathematics. Comparison of growth rates of SLC and non-SLC students from 8th to 10th grade showed no difference in reading achievement, however, SLC students exhibited a marginally stronger performance in mathematics achievement.

Graduation Rates: The eight SLC schools met the grant goal of increasing graduation rates by four-percentage points from 2004-05 to 2008-09; and seven schools exceeded the District and State gains during this period. The unweighted graduation rate for all SLC schools increased 16.9 percentage points compared to the District increase of only 7.1 percentage points. Overall, within four years, the SLC schools' graduation rate increased from 6.8 percentage points below the District average in 2004-05 to 3.0 percentage points above the District average in 2008-09.

Post-secondary Education: All SLC schools increased the percentage of students enrolled in post-secondary education from 2004-05 to 2008-09, but only Fort Lauderdale High School met the interim goal with a gain of 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: SLC grant goals for reducing the rate of suspensions was not met as the rate increased slightly over the years for seven of the eight SLC schools.

Advanced Academics: From 2004-05 to 2008-09, SLC schools increased the rate of students enrolled in at least one Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate course, but only Dillard and Stranahan high schools met the grant goal by registering an increase in upper level enrollment of at least eight percentage points.

5. What are the best practices identified through examination of the data?

The best practices identified by the participants of the grant, and supported by the literature, include personalizing the learning environment, engaging parents, ninth grade academies, and community involvement. These best practices have been among the foci for the eight SLC high schools during the final year of the grant, with specific emphasis placed on sustaining these critical components of SLC beyond the end of the grant term.

6. What are the next steps for the Smaller Learning Communities Grant?

During the fifth year of the grant, additional strategies were implemented to increase personalization and parent involvement, and teachers implemented interventions for students with behavior and/or academic issues. Progress towards sustainability of the grant was made

through the implementation of ninth-grade academies in all District high schools by the LINGO (Leading In Ninth Grade as One) program. Additionally, SLC coordinators will submit best practices to the District's Best Practices Web site, which will include topics such as school wide student-teacher advisory systems, community partnerships, and parent involvement strategies. Currently, there are tentative plans to apply for a new \$12.5 million five-year SLC grant when the new SLC grant competition is announced in the summer of 2010. A final summative evaluation will examine the five-year impact of the program by December 2010.

If you have any comments concerning this report, please contact **Dr. Katherine Blasik, Associate Superintendent, Research Development & Assessment at 754-321-2470** or **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).

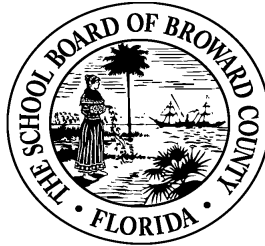
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Attachments

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 2008-09**



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June 2010

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**Smaller Learning Communities Grant
Evaluation Report, 2005-06 through 2008-09**

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The School Board of Broward County, Florida

Smaller Learning Communities Grant Evaluation Report, 2005-06 through 2008-09

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. The federal grant targets 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.

This report examines the first four years of the grant and highlights the robust requirements of the SLC grant 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 the status of SLC measures.

Of the eight schools implementing SLC, various SLC strategies and structures have been implemented. By 2008-09, in terms of SLC strategies, at least six schools implemented (a) alternative scheduling/block scheduling, (b) interdisciplinary curriculum, (c) adult mentors, (d) common planning periods, and (e) interdisciplinary teacher teams. In terms of structures, more than six schools implemented a freshman/transition academy and separate building space. SLC strategies and structures were implemented at all grade levels in all schools, except for two schools which have not yet expanded SLC strategies and structures to 11th and 12th grades. During the first year, 73% of SLC students were in some form of SLC. By 2008-09, participation rose to 88%. In summary, during the 2008-09 academic year, six schools met the goal of having 100% of students participate in SLC, while the remaining two schools did not meet the goal.

As in previous evaluations, grant goals have been operationalized to examine formative progress of the five-year objectives in interim years. A summative judgment regarding whether the five-year goal is attained will be made at the end of the fifth year. According to the data examined, several goals of the SLC grant were met. By 2008-09, the grant goal of increasing the percentage of ninth and tenth graders scoring at proficient or advanced levels in reading and mathematics by four points was met in 24 out of a total of 32 comparisons. 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 four percentage points by 2008-09 were: five out of eight schools for 9th grade reading; four out of eight schools for 10th grade reading; seven out 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 scoring at proficient or advanced levels in reading and mathematics between 2004-05 and 2008-09, 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 two occasions, and were below the District average improvement rate on 15 occasions. In other words, for 9th grade reading, four out of eight schools surpassed the District's average gain of nine percentage points; three out of eight schools exceeded the District's average gain of five percentage points in 10th grade reading; for 9th grade mathematics, three out of eight schools improved more than the District's average gain of eight percentage points; and for 10th grade mathematics, five out of eight schools beat the District's average gain of nine percentage points. 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.

This evaluation included an HLM (hierarchical linear modeling) growth model study of how the 8th graders in 2006-07 progressed to the 9th grade in 2007-08 and to the 10th grade in 2008-09, and whether there is a difference between students in SLC schools and those in non-SLC schools in terms of their growth rate in reading and mathematics. After control for individual and school factors, no difference was found between SLC and non-SLC students in their 8th grade to 10th grade growth rate in FCAT reading developmental scale scores. However, analysis of the 8th grade to 10th grade growth rate in FCAT mathematics developmental scale scores reveals a marginally significant difference between SLC and non-SLC students, in favor of SLC students. SLC students grew 7.92 percentage points more each year than their non-SLC counterparts in the unadjusted model, and 5.89 percentage points more each year in the adjusted model.

All eight SLC schools met the grant goal of increasing graduation rates by four-percentage points from 2004-05 to 2008-09; and seven schools exceeded the District and State gains over the same time period. The increase in graduation rates between 2004-05 and 2008-09 for all eight SLC high schools far exceeded that of the Districtwide statistics. Collectively, the eight SLC high schools' unweighted graduation rate was 60.3 in 2004-05 and 77.2 in 2008-09, with an increase of 16.9 percentage points, while the Districtwide graduation rate increased from 67.1 to 74.2, an increase of only 7.1 percentage points. Within four years, the eight SLC schools collectively demonstrated a far greater increase in graduation rate and went from 6.8 percentage points below the District average in 2004-05 to 3.0 percentage points above the District average in 2008-09. The SLC schools' improvement in graduation rate between 2004-05 and 2008-09 has been remarkable, indeed. In summary, the eight schools met the graduation goals for 2008-09 and are trending toward meeting the grant's five-year goal.

BCPS SLC grant calls for a 20 percentage point increase for post-secondary enrollment over the five years of the grant, in comparison to the baseline data of 2004-05. Although all schools increased the post-secondary enrollment percentage from 2004-05 to 2008-09, only one school met the overall four-year goal of increasing by 16 percentage points or more between 2004-05 and 2008-09. 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, whereas six schools exceeded the State's 6.4 percentage point gain during the same time period. SLC grant goals for reducing the rate of suspensions was not met as the rate increased slightly over the years. As to the goal of percentage of students taking at least one Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) course, schools increased the rate of students enrolled in at least one AP/IB credit course from 2004-05 to 2008-09. However, only two schools—Dillard and Stranahan—increased the percentage of enrollment by at least eight percentage points over the four-year period. The other six SLC schools have increases from 1 to 7 percentage-points over a four-year period.

The evaluation data collected from students, teachers, and parents indicated that the learning environment has become more personalized. For example, 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% in 2005-06 to 55.2% in 2008-09. The percentage of teachers who know 75% or more of their students' *academic aspirations* increased from 35.4% in 2005-06 to 53.0% in 2008-09. Between 2005-06 and 2008-09, the percentage of teachers who reported that they engaged a parent/guardian in *developing program/learning goals and instructional activities in schools* increased noticeably, while their level of engagement in *helping with homework and talking about the school day* remained stable until 2008-09 when it decreased slightly. The percentage of parents, who agreed with the statement, *there is an adult at school I can talk to about my children's problems*, increased from 70.2% in 2005-06 to 74.2% in 2008-09. Overall, the improvement in personalizing the learning environment and parental involvement for the first four years of the grant appeared small, but steady. Additionally, parent responses should be carefully considered given the low response rates of the parent survey and the fact that it is a general customer satisfaction survey rather than a SLC-specific survey.

The participating schools exhibited a high level of fidelity in implementing classroom walkthroughs (CWTs), models of effective advocacy (i.e., personalization), and block schedules. However, the professional development for teachers could focus more on personalizing the learning environment; the mechanisms for engaging parents should move beyond providing information about the school to engaging parents in providing support to their children; and practices should be improved to reduce the number of suspensions.

The leadership teams in the eight schools are conscious of distilling best practices for continuous improvement and sustainability. Based on extensive discussions in July 2009, representatives from the eight schools felt that four best practices—personalization, parent engagement, ninth grade academy, and community involvement—can be replicated and sustained when SLC funding disappears. These best practices are among the foci for the eight SLC high schools during the final year of the SLC grant, and the SLC schools intend to maintain these critical components of SLC beyond the grant term. The best practices are supported by the literature.

Next Steps

During the fifth year of the grant, additional strategies were implemented to increase personalization and parent involvement by increasing the number of student-administrator conferences and offering the *Keys to Success Dinner*, where parents and students met with a teacher or administrator to review their academic achievement and behavior and set a plan of action for improvement. Teachers also met during common planning times to implement interventions for students with behavior and/or academic issues. Progress towards sustainability of the grant was made through the implementation of ninth-grade academies in all District high schools by the LINGO (Leading In Ninth Grade as One) program. Additionally, SLC coordinators will submit best practices to the District's Best Practices Web site, which will include topics such as school wide student-teacher advisory systems, community partnerships, and parent involvement strategies. Currently, there are tentative plans to apply for a new \$12.5 million five-year SLC grant when the new SLC grant competition is announced in the summer of 2010. A final summative evaluation will examine the five-year impact of the program by September 2010.

The School Board of Broward County, Florida
Smaller Learning Communities Grant
Second Evaluation Report, 2005-06 through 2008-09

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 the first four years of the SLC grant, from October 1, 2005 to September 30, 2009. 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 eight 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 indicates the number and percentage of students participating in SLC during the first and fourth year of implementation. As seen in Table 1, 73% of the students in the eight schools were in some form of SLC during the first year. By the fourth year, the corresponding statistics increased to 88%, for a 15 percentage-point increase between the first and fourth years. By the fourth year, all but Coconut Creek and Piper high schools implemented schoolwide SLC strategies and structures.

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

School	2005-06		2008-09		Goal for 2009-10
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	%
Coconut Creek	2,280	100	1,047	48	100
Deerfield Beach	2,244	100	2,409	100	100
Dillard	1,096	56	1,619	100	100
Fort Lauderdale	516	29	1,622	100	100
Hollywood Hills	2,070	100	2,019	100	100
Northeast	2,080	100	2,164	100	100
Piper	1,800	61	1,680	61	100
Stranahan	693	32	1,757	100	100
All schools	12,779	73	16,505	88	100

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 fourth year of the grant (2008-09), SLC strategies and structures were implemented at all grade levels in all schools except for Coconut Creek and Piper. In order to meet grant goals, Coconut Creek needs to expand SLC strategies and structures to the 11th and 12th grades; and Piper needs to expand SLC to the 12th grade in 2009-10.

Table 2
Grade Levels at Which SLC Were Implemented from 2005–06 to 2008–09

School/Year	Grade			
	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	–	–
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
Dillard				
2005–06	X	X	–	–
2006–07	X	X	–	–
2007–08	X	X	–	–
2008–09	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
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
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
Piper				
2005–06	X	X	X	X
2006–07	X	X	X	X
2007–08	X	X	–	–
2008–09	X	X	X	–

(table continues)

Table 2 (continued).

School/Year	Grade			
	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

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

Strategies and Structures Employed During the First Four 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 2008-09 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
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	-
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
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

(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
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
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
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
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

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 2008-09. The data indicate that the percentage increased or remained the same in all areas except for common planning periods, counselors assigned to SLC, career themes, and house.

Table 4

Number and Percentage of Schools that Implemented the Following SLC Strategies and Structures: A Comparison Between 2005-06 and 2008-09 School Years

Strategy	2005-06		2008-09	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Adult Mentors	2	25	6	75
Advisory period/Teacher Advisories	1	13	2	25
Alternative/Block Scheduling	7	88	8	100
Common Planning Periods	7	88	6	75
Counselor Assigned to SLC	6	75	5	63
Interdisciplinary Curriculum	7	88	7	88
Interdisciplinary Teacher Teams	6	75	6	75
Structure				
Career Theme	3	38	2	25
Freshman/Transition Academy	7	88	8	100
House	6	75	3	38
Magnet Program	5	63	5	63
Separate Building Space	6	75	7	88

In terms of strategies, by the 2008-09 school year, at least six schools used (a) alternative scheduling/block scheduling, (b) interdisciplinary curriculum, (c) adult mentors, (d) common planning periods, and (e) interdisciplinary teacher teams. Advisory period/teacher advisories were used the least frequently, reported by two of eight schools. In terms of structures, more than six schools implemented (a) freshman/transition academy and (b) separate building space. Career theme is a structure that has been used the least frequently, reported by two of eight schools.

One critical factor why SLC strategies and structures may change from year to year is principal turnover. The eight SLC schools have had 15 principals during the first four 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 and Lessons Learned during the 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08, and 2008-09 School Years

Each principal was asked to list their three most significant grant achievements. Appendix A summarizes the most significant aspects of the journey that each school traveled to implement the SLC grant, from 2005-06 to 2008-09. 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.

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. In reviewing the data for 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.

Best Practices

Representatives from the eight SLC high schools and the District had a retreat in July 2009 and discussed, among others, the best practices in the eight SLC high schools. After brainstorming all the SLC best practices currently being implemented in SLC high schools, the SLC leadership team narrowed down the list to the following critical SLC best practices (Table 5) that staff has implemented. The leadership team felt that these critical best practices can be replicated and sustained, when SLC funding disappears. These best practices are among the foci for the eight SLC high schools during the final year of the SLC grant; and the SLC schools intend to maintain these critical components of SLC beyond the grant term. The best practices are supported by the literature. Please see Appendix C for the list of references that support the best practices implemented by SLC high schools.

Table 5

Best Practices Identified by SLC High Schools

Personalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer Bridge Programs for incoming ninth graders • Student/teacher advisory programs
Parent engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Keys to Success Dinner” for one-on-one student/parent data chats with school personnel • Parent Resource Centers and “Parent University”
Ninth grade academies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure: Dedicated staff and building (guidance, AP course offering, behavior specialist) • Common planning with teachers sharing common students • Staff development for teachers and teacher leaders that focuses on how to make use of common planning time
Community involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board of Directors for the SLC that incorporates community stakeholders (business partners, university partnerships, etc.)

Expenditures

As reported in Table 6, the budget for the first four years was \$5,932,386, and the expenditures for the first four years were \$5,258,650. Essentially, funds were spent according to the proposed budget. The budget for personnel was allocated for teachers to attend staff development or work on curriculum after hours; however, expenditures were below the budget in this category because some schools did not attract as many teachers to after-school-hour workshops as anticipated. Additionally, 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. Expenditures for the contractual category were also below the budgeted amounts as the Area Office denied proposed consultant agreements for some schools; and the external evaluator did not use all allocated funds for travel to site visits.

Table 6

Summary of Four-Year Budget and Expenditures (October 1, 2005 to June 30, 2009)

Category	Budget (\$)	Expenditure (\$)
Personnel	3,093,513	2,853,911
Supplies/equipment	712,853	652,330
Contractual	446,300	208,785
Travel	507,402	505,638
Fringe benefits	401,648	429,617
Other	206,700	145,072
Indirect costs	231,428	188,880
Training stipends	117,040	34,293
Total	5,932,386	5,258,650

Note: Other includes registration/tuition, room rental, bus transportation, and printing.

In addition, the 2008-09 school year presented several challenges at the District level that impacted grant expenditures. During the first three years of the grant, the District supported and paid for a SLC grant budget keeper. Due to budget cuts and reduction of overtime pay for employees, the SLC grant lost its bookkeeper in April 2009, which slowed down spending because orders were not processed. Furthermore, the Project Director was reassigned for five

weeks as a teacher, which impacted the processing of requests from the schools. Coupled with these challenges is the fact that the District moved to a new electronic system (BRITE), which has slowed down ordering and payment of invoices, as well as making it difficult to ascertain true balances for the schools.

For the final year, a plan is in place to monitor the SLC budgets on a monthly basis, with monthly budget meetings at each school that will include the Project Director, principal, SLC site coordinator, and the school's bookkeeper. Each school completed a detailed plan for expending their budget at the beginning of the year; and mid-year reviews will be held at all schools. The budget plan is aligned to the approved goals and objectives of the grant. The Area Office budget analysts also will attend the mid-year budget reviews to assist schools in meeting deadlines in the final year. Two administrative assistants in the Advanced Academics Department will attend workshops to assist with the budget and improve their knowledge of the BRITE system as it relates to grants. A request to allow for overtime hours for the existing clerical staff will be sent to the program officer in Washington, and once approved, will put the spending process back on track.

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 first three years of grant implementation.

Methods

One strength of this evaluation was the continuous interaction of the SLC staff 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. 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) 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 2008-09, 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 2008-09, 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 for 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08, and 2008-09. For the four school years, all eight principals returned their completed questionnaires for a 100% response rate. Survey data from Appendix D 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>) and the FCAT Web site 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 E). 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. 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.

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.

Other Data Sources

Data were extracted from the District's Data Warehouse for each of the school years from 2004-05 to 2008-09. 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, the research department also extracted a data file 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.

In addition to FCAT data, graduation rate data were also retrieved from the FDOE Florida School Indicators Report (<http://www.fldoe.org/eias/eiaspubs/0809fsir.asp>) because of the unique technical specifications involved in calculating these statistics. Post-graduation data were also retrieved from the FDOE Florida School Indicators Report, as it provided the most reliable data by tracking post-graduates status through social security numbers. .

The last data source for this report included documents and data 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, (g) list of best practices implemented in each school during the fourth year, 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?

A note is needed on how we evaluate whether a five-year goal has been met during the interim years. For example, if the goal is to improve by five percentage points over five years, it is operationalized in such a way that on average it should be increased by one percentage point a year to meet the goal. In other words, the goal is to increase by one percentage point by the end of the first year, four percentage points by the end of the fourth year, and five percentage points during the end of the fifth year. For programming and federal reporting purposes, we have to

evaluate the formative progress during the first four years; and therefore, the above conventional approach has been taken for making statements about whether a goal has been met in interim years. A summative judgment regarding whether the goal is attained will be made by the end of the fifth year.

Table 7 presents a summary of the student achievement objectives met for Grades 9 and 10, using the 2004-05 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) as baseline, and the most recent 2008-09 data as outcome. As evidenced, the predominant number of reading and mathematics grant objectives were achieved. Out of the individual objectives shown in Table 7, 75% ($n=24$) were met. Three schools (Deerfield Beach, Dillard, and Fort Lauderdale) met the SLC objectives in reading and mathematics for ninth and tenth grades. All schools met the grant goal for tenth grade mathematics.

Table 7
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	not met	not met	met	met
Deerfield Beach	met	met	met	met
Dillard	met	met	met	met
Fort Lauderdale	met	met	met	met
Hollywood Hills	met	not met	met	met
Northeast	not met	not met	met	met
Piper	not met	met	not met	met
Stranahan	met	not met	met	met

Tables 8 through 11 report 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 2008-09 (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 four percentage points by the end of the fourth year.

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

As seen in Table 8, 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 four percentage points, using 2004-05 as the base year and 2008-09 as the end point. All but Coconut Creek High School, Northeast High School, and Piper High School met the interim goal for 2008-09.

A comparison of SLC performance with District and State proficiency levels provides another view. Four schools, which include Deerfield Beach, Dillard, Fort Lauderdale, and Stranahan, exceeded both the District's 9 percentage point increase and the State's 11 percentage point increase from 2004-05 to 2008-09. Note that Broward's proficiency rates include SLC

proficiency levels for all schools (including participating SLC schools), and therefore, caution should be used when interpreting these data.

Table 8

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	Difference between 2004-05 and 2008-09
Coconut Creek	19	24	23	21	18	-1
Deerfield Beach	27	31	35	40	39	+12
Dillard	18	23	24	28	33	+15
Fort Lauderdale	35	38	45	48	50	+15
Hollywood Hills	32	31	31	40	39	+7
Northeast	39	39	39	45	41	+2
Piper	30	32	35	43	33	+3
Stranahan	33	37	35	37	45	+12
Broward	37	42	42	47	46	+9
State	36	40	41	46	47	+11

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

Table 9 shows that four high schools, Deerfield Beach, Dillard, Fort Lauderdale, and Piper met the goal of increasing the percentage of tenth graders at proficient or advanced levels in reading by four percentage points between 2004-05 and 2008-09. Comparisons with the District and the State reveal that three SLC schools (i.e., Deerfield Beach, Dillard, and Fort Lauderdale) exhibited gains that exceeded the eight percentage point increase found in Broward, and the five percentage point increase in the State of Florida, during the same time period.

Table 9

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	Difference between 2004-05 and 2008-09
Coconut Creek	15	13	14	14	13	-2
Deerfield Beach	22	27	24	34	31	+9
Dillard	14	19	21	17	23	+9
Fort Lauderdale	27	33	32	39	40	+13
Hollywood Hills	22	25	22	25	25	+3
Northeast	31	38	36	31	33	+2
Piper	21	25	22	26	26	+5
Stranahan	27	34	28	30	30	+3
Broward	29	33	34	38	37	+8
State	32	32	34	38	37	+5

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 FCAT, by grade level? Is the goal for the SLC grant met?

Table 10 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 2008-09, seven schools, with the exception of Piper, met the goal of four percentage point increase between 2004-05 and 2008-09. However, just three of the SLC high schools (i.e., Deerfield Beach, Dillard, and Stranahan) exhibited gains that exceeded the District's eight percentage point increase and the State's nine percentage point increase.

Table 10

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	Difference between 2004-05 and 2008-09
Coconut Creek	41	47	51	49	48	+7
Deerfield Beach	51	52	58	60	60	+9
Dillard	46	49	50	59	68	+22
Fort Lauderdale	63	64	65	69	71	+8
Hollywood Hills	60	54	58	59	64	+4
Northeast	65	70	70	70	72	+7
Piper	59	56	59	63	60	+1
Stranahan	52	57	53	60	72	+20
Broward	62	63	64	68	70	+8
State	59	59	60	65	68	+9

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

The data for tenth grade mathematics displayed in Table 11 indicate that all schools met or surpassed the SLC goal of four percentage point increase between 2004-05 and 2008-09. Furthermore, all but three schools (i.e., Coconut Creek, Hollywood Hills, and Stranahan) exceeded Broward's nine percentage point increase and all but two schools (i.e., Hollywood Hills and Stranahan) surpassed the State's six percentage point increase. 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 11

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	Difference between 2004-05 and 2008-09
Coconut Creek	44	39	45	52	53	+9
Deerfield Beach	51	62	58	66	64	+13
Dillard	50	63	60	64	72	+22
Fort Lauderdale	67	77	71	73	77	+10
Hollywood Hills	55	56	60	61	63	+8
Northeast	63	70	73	69	73	+10
Piper	52	65	60	62	66	+14
Stranahan	56	62	60	61	61	+5
Broward	63	68	69	71	72	+9
State	63	65	65	69	69	+6

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 12 were extracted from the District Data Warehouse. The goal is 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 2008-09. However, only Dillard and Stranahan are on track to meet the goal, having increased the percentage of enrollment by at least eight percentage points over the initial four-year period.

Table 12

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		Difference between 2004-05 and 2008-09
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	
Coconut Creek	256	10	299	12	321	12	308	12	244	11	+1
Deerfield Beach	312	11	289	11	276	12	348	15	351	15	+4
Dillard	80	4	94	4	135	7	210	11	256	16	+12
Fort Lauderdale	345	19	382	21	314	19	367	21	354	22	+3
Hollywood Hills	212	9	245	10	183	8	189	9	226	11	+2
Northeast	118	5	155	7	155	8	164	8	245	11	+6
Piper	205	6	267	9	328	12	333	12	362	13	+7
Stranahan	486	22	411	19	431	23	569	31	627	36	+14

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. Therefore, the graduation rate should increase by four percentage points from 2004-05 to 2008-09. Data in Table 13 illustrate that all eight high schools met this objective. The increase

in graduation rates from 2004-05 to 2008-09 for eight schools that are all on track ranged from 5.2 to 41.5 percentage points. Except for Hollywood Hills that increased 5.2 percentage points between 2004-05 and 2008-09, the other seven schools' increase ranged from 11.5 to 41.5, which exceeded the gains in graduation rates for Broward County (7.1 percentage points) and the State of Florida (6.7 percentage points) over the same time period. Four schools exhibited large percentage point increases during this time period: Dillard (41.5), Fort Lauderdale (18.7), Deerfield Beach (16.3), and Stranahan (15.4). From the perspective of graduation rate, the eight SLC schools did extremely well in comparison to the District- and state-wide graduation rates. The increase in graduation rates between 2004-05 and 2008-09 for all eight SLC high schools far exceeded that of the Districtwide statistics. Between 2004-05 and 2008-09, collectively the eight SLC high schools' unweighted graduation rate⁵ was 60.3 in 2004-05 and 77.2 in 2008-09, with an increase of 16.9 percentage points, while the Districtwide graduation rate increased from 67.1 to 74.2, an increase of only 7.1 percentage points. Within four years, the eight SLC schools collectively demonstrated far greater increase in graduation rate and surpassed the Districtwide graduation rate (Figure 1).

As for many evaluation findings in this report, graduation rates should be read with caution. As we know, the SLC grant has been implemented for four years; however, we only have graduation rate data for the first four years, and the graduation rate is calculated on a four-year basis. Therefore, we will continue to monitor graduation rates.

Table 13
High School Graduation Rates in Percent

School	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	Difference between 2004-05 and 2008-09
Coconut Creek	56.1	55.3	60.8	62.0	70.5	+14.4
Deerfield Beach	56.8	60.0	66.6	76.8	73.1	+16.3
Dillard	42.2	59.2	58.3	70.2	83.7	+41.5
Fort Lauderdale	60.0	63.5	75.1	83.0	78.7	+18.7
Hollywood Hills	73.9	67.2	72.9	76.7	79.1	+5.2
Northeast	67.2	69.4	72.9	76.5	78.7	+11.5
Piper	68.1	62.3	63.0	77.3	79.7	+11.6
Stranahan	58.3	60.7	68.0	74.5	73.7	+15.4
Broward	67.1	67.8	66.3	69.7	74.2	+7.1
State	71.9	71.0	72.4	75.4	78.6	+6.7

Note: Source is the FDOE Florida School Indicators Report: <http://www.fldoe.org/eias/eiaspubs/0809fsir.asp>. 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."

⁵The FDOE Web site 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.

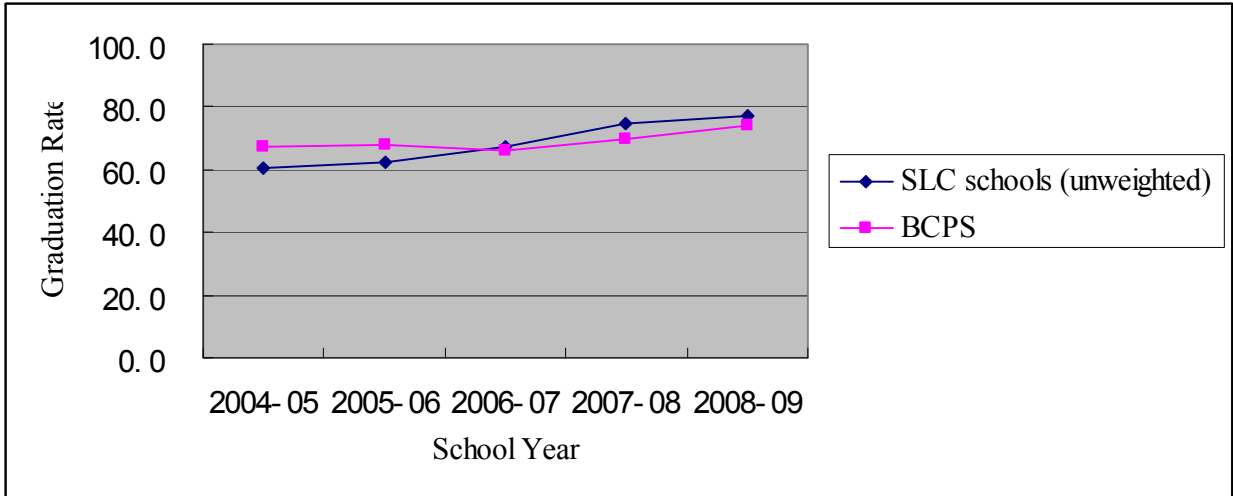


Figure 1. Graduation rates from 2004-05 to 2008-09: A comparison between the District and SLC Schools.

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.

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 14, 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 14

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 graduate (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 statistics tracked by FDOE that is closest in meaning to the federal term of *employed or joined the military*.

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 15. BCPS does not consistently track this information, 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. Three schools (i.e., Coconut Creek, Northeast, and Piper) were on track to meet the overall objective of increased employment or military service by registering increases of 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 15

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 16, 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 16 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 numbers 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. 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. By 2008-09, one out of the eight schools (Dillard) met this goal by reducing the number of suspensions for every 100 students by 40% based on the data between 2004-05 and 2008-09. This goal was not met in the remaining seven schools. However, the data in this table should be interpreted with caution, as disciplinary practice varies from school to school and year to year. As far as all eight schools are concerned, number of suspensions trended up from 43 for every 100 students in 2004-05 to 52 in 2008-09.

The trend was upward for all SLC schools in the same time period, except for two schools (Dillard and Stranahan).

Table 16
Number of Suspension Actions for Every 100 Students

School	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Coconut Creek	19	14	27	47	41
Deerfield Beach	44	32	21	35	66
Dillard	67	34	37	36	11
Fort Lauderdale	59	70	58	50	105
Hollywood Hills	47	45	48	51	54
Northeast	10	12	56	55	35
Piper	20	19	40	48	36
Stranahan	96	77	102	81	75
All Eight Schools	43	36	46	50	52

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 for the cohort of the eighth graders in 2006-07 who progressed to the ninth grade in 2007-08, and to the tenth grade in 2008-09, 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?

Additional Steps in the SLC Grant Evaluation Report, 2005-06 through 2007-08, reported the need to “Examine the program impact on student achievement longitudinally.” The previous analyses are based on year-by-year cohorts, for example, the cohort of 2004-05 compared with the cohort of 2005-06. However, those analyses did not examine the impact of SLC on students who participate in SLC for multiple years to determine the program’s longitudinal effect. As a result, longitudinal analyses were conducted to examine how the SLC and non-SLC cohorts of the 8th graders in 2006-07 progressed to the 9th grade in 2007-08 and to the 10th grade in 2008-09.

Longitudinal analysis is based on three years of FCAT data combined with student and school variables. Dependent variables are FCAT Reading and Mathematics developmental scale scores (with data for Grades 8, 9, and 10). Independent time-varying variables at the student level are limited English proficiency, special education status, and free or reduced-price lunch status (with data for Grades 8, 9, and 10). Independent time-invariant variables at the student level are gender and race-ethnicity, resulting in three dummy coded variables of Black, Hispanic, and Other, with White as the baseline. Based on complete school data obtained in Grade 10, proportions are calculated for each school to function as school-level variables, including the proportion of male students, proportion of minority students, proportion of students with limited English proficiency, proportion of students in special education, and proportion of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. The analysis essentially inquired into how the 8th graders in 2006-07 progressed to the 9th grade in 2007-08 and to the 10th grade in 2008-09; and whether there is a difference between students in SLC schools and those in non-SLC schools, in terms of their growth rate. The sample included 3,156 students in SLC high schools

and 10,245 in non-SLC high schools. All students in the sample were in the same SLC or non-SLC school for the 2007-08 and 2008-09 school years.

A three-level HLM model was developed for each analysis. A software called “HLM (Hierarchical Linear and Nonlinear Modeling)” was used for the analyses. The first level equation accommodates all time-varying (student) variables. The second level equation models Grade 8 status and Grade 9 and Grade 10 improvements (increments) with adjustment of (student) time-invariant variables. The third level equation tests these adjusted Grade 8 status and Grade 9 and Grade 10 improvements for differences between SLC and non-SLC students with further adjustment over school variables. Parsimonious HLM models are sought that contain only statistically significant student and school variables, except for the dummy variable that distinguishes between SLC and non-SLC high schools. The growth model yields initial (Grade 8) status and rate of growth (from Grade 8 to Grade 10) that can be adjusted at different levels with the previously mentioned variables at each level.

The 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 the adjusted and unadjusted models. However, concerning FCAT Mathematics developmental scale score, SLC students grew 7.92 percentage points more per year than their non-SLC counterparts in the unadjusted model with *p* value less than 0.05; after adjusting for student and school factors, SLC students grew by 5.89 points more per year than their non-SLC counterparts in the adjusted model with *p* value equal to 0.09. **In summary, it appears that there is no difference between SLC and non-SLC students in their 8th grade to 10th grade growth rate in FCAT Reading developmental scale score. However, regarding the 8th grade to 10th grade growth rate in FCAT Mathematics developmental scale score, there appears to be a marginally significant difference between SLC and non-SLC students, in favor of SLC students.** Tables A and B in Appendix F contain student and school variables that are important in adjusting status and improvement in the data analysis of the growth model from the 8th to the 10th grade.

Table 17

Effects of Smaller Learning Communities by Initial Status and Growth Rate (Grades 8 to 10)

Group	Effect	SE
<i>Reading, Unadjusted</i>		
Initial (Grade 8) Status	-7.75	28.76
Rate of Growth (from Grade 8 to Grade 10)	-8.22	5.07
<i>Reading, Adjusted</i>		
Initial (Grade 8) Status	49.07*	23.79
Rate of Growth (from Grade 8 to Grade 10)	0.78	5.09
<i>Mathematics, Unadjusted</i>		
Initial (Grade 8) Status	25.77	21.71
Rate of Growth (from Grade 8 to Grade 10)	7.92*	3.64
<i>Mathematics, Adjusted</i>		
Initial (Grade 8) Status	62.73*	22.80
Rate of Growth (from Grade 8 to Grade 10)	5.89	3.43

Note. * *p* < 0.05. SE = standard error.

The results in Table 17 tested whether there was a difference between students in SLC schools and non-SLC schools in their growth rate between the 8th and 10th grades (a two-year span). The results in Table 18 tested whether there was a difference between students in SLC schools and non-SLC schools in their growth rate between the 8th and 9th grades, and between the 9th and 10th grades (i.e., two one-year spans). **The analyses indicated that after statistical adjustment to hold the student intake and school demographic background constant, there was no difference between the SLC and non-SLC students in their year-by-year growth rate between the 8th and 9th grades, and between the 9th and 10th grades in either FCAT Reading or Mathematics developmental scale scores (see Table 18).** Tables C to F in Appendix F contain student and school variables that are important in adjusting initial status and rate of growth in the year-by-year analysis.

Table 18

Effects of Smaller Learning Communities by Status and Improvement in Reading and Mathematics from the 8th to the 9th grade, as Well as from 9th to the 10th grade

Group	Effect	SE
<i>Grade 8 Status in Reading</i>		
SLC vs. Non-SLC (Unadjusted)	-10.24	25.38
SLC vs. Non-SLC (Adjusted)	39.96*	19.50
<i>Grade 9 Improvement in Reading</i>		
SLC vs. Non-SLC (Unadjusted)	-23.33*	5.86
SLC vs. Non-SLC (Adjusted)	-8.49	5.86
<i>Grade 8 Status in Mathematics</i>		
SLC vs. Non-SLC (Unadjusted)	11.76	19.33
SLC vs. Non-SLC (Adjusted)	42.86*	16.92
<i>Grade 9 Improvement in Mathematics</i>		
SLC vs. Non-SLC (Unadjusted)	8.66	5.47
SLC vs. Non-SLC (Adjusted)	-7.11	5.91
<i>Grade 9 Status in Reading</i>		
SLC vs. Non-SLC (Unadjusted)	-21.80	29.65
SLC vs. Non-SLC (Adjusted)	37.67	22.82
<i>Grade 10 Improvement in Reading</i>		
SLC vs. Non-SLC (Unadjusted)	-14.42*	6.14
SLC vs. Non-SLC (Adjusted)	-2.99	5.88
<i>Grade 9 Status in Mathematics</i>		
SLC vs. Non-SLC (Unadjusted)	6.49	17.54
SLC vs. Non-SLC (Adjusted)	34.26*	14.23
<i>Grade 10 Improvement in Mathematics</i>		
SLC vs. Non-SL (Unadjusted)	0.82	2.85
SLC vs. Non-SLC (Adjusted)	-0.29	2.48

Note. * $p < 0.05$. SE = standard error.

Question 2.1. What percentage of students are 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 19, 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 2008-09, 88% of the students in the eight schools were in some kind of SLC, a 15 percentage point increase over 2005-06. More specifically, however, during the 2008-09 school year, six of the schools met the goal of 100% of students in SLC, while Coconut Creek decreased from 100% in 2005-06 to 48% in 2008-09 due to the decision to concentrate SLC activities at the 9th and 10th levels through common planning by subject areas; and Piper stayed stable across the years at 61%.

Table 19

Number and Percentage of Students Who Are in Smaller Learning Communities

School	2005-06		2008-09		Goal for 2009-10 (%)
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	
Coconut Creek	2,280	100	1,047	48	100
Deerfield Beach	2,244	100	2,409	100	100
Dillard	1,096	56	1,619	100	100
Fort Lauderdale	516	29	1,622	100	100
Hollywood Hills	2,070	100	2,019	100	100
Northeast	2,080	100	2,164	100	100
Piper	1,800	61	1,680	61	100
Stranahan	693	32	1,757	100	100
All schools	12,779	73	16,505	88	100

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 20 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 55.2% in 2008-09. Between 2004-05 to 2008-09, seven schools

(Coconut Creek, Deerfield Beach, Fort Lauderdale, Hollywood Hills, Northeast, Piper, and Stranahan) registered an increase, while only one school (Dillard) reported a slight decrease in percentage points related to this item. Although seven schools and the eight schools, as a whole, have improved on this item, more work is needed to reach the goal of 75%.

Table 20

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	
	<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	820	45.5	988	53.4
Deerfield Beach	668	50.6	832	48.9	1,018	57.0	1,068	58.3	1,147	54.6
Dillard	547	60.1	787	49.8	781	57.9	86	52.1	553	59.9
Fort Lauderdale	642	47.1	768	53.4	677	49.9	727	53.8	753	58.3
Hollywood Hills	586	47.7	768	49.5	882	51.3	1,035	54.5	809	51.0
Northeast	995	51.1	1,062	56.1	1,016	56.3	980	59.8	799	58.9
Piper	995	48.6	1,139	54.7	1,157	50.2	1,313	53.0	1,210	52.7
Stranahan	547	47.8	719	49.2	694	57.8	795	59.8	782	57.9
All Eight Schools	5,838	50.2	6,830	51.3	7,096	53.7	6,824	54.6	7,041	55.2

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 2008-09 school year, at least six schools used (a) alternative scheduling/block scheduling, (b) interdisciplinary curriculum, (c) adult mentors, (d) common planning periods, and (e) interdisciplinary teacher teams. Advisory period/teacher advisories were used least frequently, two of eight schools reported. In terms of structures, more than six schools implemented (a) freshman/transition academy and (b) separate building space. Career theme is a structure that has been used least frequently, two of eight schools reported.

Regarding academies, the following list addresses the additional step in the recommendation section of last year’s report that requested examining the fidelity of implementation of the career academies. During the 2008-09 school year, each school implemented academies in their unique ways, as indicated in the following.

- Coconut Creek:* Engineering Technology, Technology Studies, Automotive Technology, and Nursing
- Deerfield Creek:* Professional, Communications, and International
- Dillard:* Performing Arts, Emergent Computer Technology, and Health Science Education
- Fort Lauderdale:* Fashion Design and Pre-Law Affairs
- Hollywood Hills:* Business and Human Services; Health Science and Engineering; Government, Law and Communications; and Liberal, Creative and Performing Arts

<i>Northeast:</i>	School of Architecture, School of Graphic Design, School of Performing Arts, and School of Communication and Broadcast Arts
<i>Piper:</i>	Engineering; Early Childhood; and Nursing Assistant
<i>Stranahan:</i>	Health Pavilion, Downtown, Sci-Tech, The Studio, and CREST (Career Research Exploration and Successful Transitions)

Question 2.4 What is the level of implementation fidelity for the following aspects of SLC: (a) professional development to teachers on personalizing learning environment, (b) principals' classroom-walkthroughs (CWTs), (c) model of effective advocacy, (d) mechanisms for engaging parents, (e) mechanisms for reducing suspensions, (f) block scheduling, and (g) documenting and sustaining best practices of SLC in BCPS?

In response to Additional Steps cited in the SLC Grant Evaluation Report, 2005-06 through 2007-08, a closer examination of the fidelity of implementation of additional aspects of the SLC program was conducted. Working with the project director, the external evaluator designed a questionnaire, asking principals and school staff to provide additional information for 2008-09. The project director and the external evaluator reviewed these data and followed up with school staff for further clarification.

Professional development for teachers on personalizing the learning environment. Appendix G lists the professional activities reported in each school during the 2008-09 school year. The data seem to suggest that while some activities do focus on personalizing the learning environment, others are for more general professional development purposes. More attention should be paid to professional development activities that focus on personalizing the learning environment.

Classroom-walkthroughs (CWTs). All high schools participate in CWTs. The strong District and state focus on CWTs, as part of the Florida's Differentiated Accountability program, suggests that a high level of fidelity of implementation of CWTs can be assumed. A specific form outlining what to look for on the CWT is used by the person who conducts the CWTs. At each school, the principal, assistant principals, and sometimes the behavior specialists, department chairs, or teacher team leaders, conduct CWTs. The results of the CWTs are entered into a database, and the results are used by the school administration and staff to analyze trends at the schools to drive staff development. This evaluation did not look into the CWT data by itself as it was not a focus of this evaluation report. Principals decide on the number of CWTs each week and usually develop a schedule with the assistant principal. The number of CWTs varies for each school, but is in the range of 10-15 each week. Schools also vary in specific ways to record the data. For example, at Stranahan, CWT forms are in triplicate and a copy always goes to the teacher for immediate feedback. Another copy stays with the observer, and the last copy goes into the "main book" for District staff to look for instructional patterns, etc. Administrators can all access the "main book" to see if there are any trends in the classroom instruction that need attention and intervention.

Model of effective advocacy. As the strategies for effective advocacy in Appendix H indicate, each SLC high school is committed to personalizing the learning environment and each school employs SLC structures and strategies in a unique manner—in terms of by whom, for whom and how—to accomplish this goal. For example, at Coconut Creek, senior students are paired with

freshmen students to mentor and assist them in the transition to high school. Deerfield Beach has a mentoring program for their at-risk students. Every Level 1 and 2 (FCAT) student is assigned to an adult mentor. At Dillard, the Million Fathers Mentoring Program expands each year and focuses on providing opportunities for African-American fathers to become more involved in school and academics with their children. Targeting at-risk students is a theme running through various models for effective advocacy. Overall, the models of effective advocacy used by each school in 2008-09 have a high level of fidelity, as shown in Appendix H. However, lack of direct observation of these findings warrants caution when interpreting these data.

Mechanisms for engaging parents. Dillard did not provide data for this question. For the other seven schools, during 2008-09, some engaged parents in more traditional ways, while others used more innovative approaches. For example, at Fort Lauderdale, parents participated in a campus beautification project. Parent workshops were offered on topics, such as Virtual Counselor; Pinnacle; High School 101; College Planning; and Literacy Strategies; even twitter (i.e., a free social networking and micro-blogging service that enables their users to send and read messages) was used to communicate school news with parents. At Hollywood Hills, parents were engaged through “Keys for Success Dinner,” “College Career Night,” “Advanced Placement Potential Night,” “ESOL (Engaging in Sensational Opportunities of Literacy) Night,” and “Rachel’s Challenge Presentation.” Stranahan held the first ever ZONE parent night and included all of the feeder elementary schools and middle schools in the one-night parent education. The school’s Urban Teachers Academy Program offered child care and the culinary program provided light refreshments. Topics of the Parent University at Stranahan ranged from FCAT to making transitions to high schools. About 100 parents attended the Parent University at Stranahan. For more information on how schools engaged parents during 2008-09, please refer to Appendix I. Consistent with these SLC schools’ increasing efforts of engaging the parents, parents did report, in the Customer Survey, that their engagement increased over the years; however, this finding should be read with caution due to the low response rates of the Parent Customer Survey for the SLC schools for 2008-09. Generally speaking, the parent engagement activities reported by the SLC schools were to provide program information to parents. Engaging parents in more substantive ways, such as providing help with homework and contributing to setting learning goals for their children, will further improve the fidelity of parental engagement.

Mechanisms for reducing suspensions. The eight SLC schools also implemented a range of strategies to reduce suspensions during 2008-09. For example, at Northeast, more students went through the Academy Advocate Program, receiving personal mentoring and support for being successful in school; and teachers, security, and administration referred students who were determined to receive additional support (academic or behavioral) to the Collaborative Problem Solving Team. The strategy at Northeast was to address the issues before they occurred. The similar strategy of prevention was used at Piper. Administration and guidance established a mentoring program for at-risk students. The program helped to prevent and decrease suspensions, as well as reduce the number of schoolwide incidents. Small group counseling was also provided by guidance and outside agencies were recommended on an as-needed basis for family support. Furthermore, “Rachel’s Challenge” was implemented to set a tone of decency by exposing the students to the ideals of random acts of kindness. Fort Lauderdale High, on the

other hand, reported that they carried out suspensions in more constructive ways. For example, Fort Lauderdale offered Saturday school as an alternative consequence to internal suspension, so that the student had the ability to complete any missed assignments or work on FCAT preparation materials. Students were referred to family counseling service housed at the school for intervention services to avoid any further consequences for misbehavior. The Peer Counseling class provided peer mediation to students assigned to Internal Suspension, a program that allows peers to discuss behaviors and appropriate methods to handle future situations. Overall, as the data in Table 16 indicate, there is still a wide range of differences in number of suspensions for every 100 students during 2008-09, ranging from 11 suspension actions per 100 students for Dillard to 105 for Fort Lauderdale. The change between 2004-05 and 2008-09 also varies greatly among schools, with Fort Lauderdale increasing from 59 to 105, and Dillard decreasing from 67 to 11. For more information on schools' efforts to reduce the number of suspensions during 2008-09, please refer to Appendix J. Further discussions with the principals and the SLC grant staff indicate that the practice of deciding whether suspensions should be carried out varies among schools, therefore, it is impossible to associate schools' efforts to reduce number of suspensions and the actual numbers of suspensions.

Block scheduling. In 2008-09, six SLC high schools (Coconut Creek, Deerfield, Dillard, Fort Lauderdale, Northeast and Piper) are on the 4 x 4 block schedule, with one school (Stranahan) on the A/B modified college block and one school (Hollywood Hills) utilizing two schedules. Overall the implementation fidelity for block scheduling appears to be high. Hollywood Hills is the only school with two schedules: the 4 x 4 block for their 9th grade academy and the 7 period rotator schedule for their SLCs. Principals reported that the 4 x 4 has the advantage of providing extended time for more in-depth study and suits more rigorous classes which helps increase AP enrollment. Since the 4 x 4 block is comprised of semester courses, the disadvantage is not having the students all year long, which seems to hurt the lower performing students. Coconut Creek is the only SLC school that voted in 2008-09 to change their schedule for the upcoming year. During 2009-10, the school is on the 7-period rotator in the hope that providing instruction all year long will benefit their students.

Documenting and sustaining best practices. The eight SLC schools also worked on best practices as a way of not only reflecting upon their SLC grant implementation, but also thinking ahead regarding the sustainability of the grant work. As reported in the section on program implementation, representatives from the eight SLC high schools and the District had a summer institute in July 2009, discussing, among others, the best practices in the eight SLC high schools. After brainstorming all the SLC best practices currently being implemented in SLC high schools, the SLC leadership team narrowed down a list of critical SLC best practices that fall under the categories of "personalization," "parent engagement," "ninth grade academy," and "community involvement" (Table 5). These best practices are targeted for implementation for the final year of the SLC grant and sustainability of SLC beyond the grant term.

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 when reading the following findings.

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 21. Based on weighted percentage for all eight schools, the number of parents who *strongly agreed* or *agreed* with sharing responsibility with the school for academic progress increased slightly from 79.5% in 2004-05 to 83.3% in 2008-09, with an increase of 3.8 percentage points. All high schools, except for Dillard, Fort Lauderdale, and Hollywood Hills, demonstrated an increase between 2004-05 and 2008-09, with Piper and Stranahan reporting increases of 7.9% and 6.2%, respectively.

Table 21
Number and Percentage of 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	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Coconut Creek	30	81.1	84	78.5	42	79.2	25	86.2	88	88.0
Deerfield Beach	57	79.2	53	75.7	84	80.8	54	79.4	105	83.3
Dillard	37	86.0	10	83.3	129	81.1	59	88.1	105	85.4
Fort Lauderdale	53	80.3	31	73.8	32	88.9	34	87.2	32	78.1
Hollywood Hills	96	77.4	55	84.6	31	79.5	125	79.6	83	76.9
Northeast	292	78.5	275	79.7	275	80.9	245	82.8	57	81.4
Piper	170	81.0	107	84.3	77	85.6	48	84.2	40	88.9
Stranahan	58	79.5	25	73.5	50	89.3	53	88.3	30	85.7
All Eight Schools	793	79.5	640	79.8	720	82.1	643	83.2	540	83.3

Responses to the survey question, *I help school staff when academic or behavioral problems occur with my child*, are displayed in Table 22. Based on a weighted percentage for all eight schools, the percentage of parents who *strongly agreed* or *agreed* with sharing responsibility with staff for academic and behavioral problems increased from 64.8% in 2004-05 to 71.0% in 2008-09, reflecting a 6.2 percentage point increase over four 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—Piper (21.0%), Dillard (11.6%), and Stranahan (10.0%).

Table 22

Number and Percentage of 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	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Coconut Creek	26	72.2	58	54.2	28	54.9	23	79.3	67	67.0
Deerfield Beach	48	66.7	45	62.5	67	64.4	41	62.1	81	64.3
Dillard	26	65.0	4	36.4	111	70.3	47	67.1	95	76.6
Fort Lauderdale	41	63.1	22	53.7	25	67.6	32	82.1	30	71.4
Hollywood Hills	80	63.5	41	63.1	25	65.8	122	77.7	75	71.4
Northeast	240	65.2	234	68.2	225	66.0	199	67.7	47	67.1
Piper	131	62.7	91	73.4	57	64.8	41	73.2	36	83.7
Stranahan	49	67.1	20	58.8	40	71.4	48	78.7	27	77.1
All Eight Schools	641	64.8	515	64.6	578	66.2	553	71.6	458	71.0

Responses to the survey question, *I am aware of the goals of my child's school*, are displayed in Table 23. Based on weighted percentage for all eight schools, there was a noticeable increase (7.2 percentage points) in the percentage of parents who *strongly agreed* to *agreed* that they were aware of the school's goals from 2004-05 (65.5%) to 2008-09 (72.7%). It should be noted that there appears to be a significant increase during 2008-09, with a 6.9 percentage point increase from 2007-08 to 2008-09. All schools, except for Dillard, showed an increase between 2004-05 and 2008-09. The following schools had an increase of more than 10 percentage points—Stranahan (16.8 percentage points) and Deerfield Beach (16.5 percentage points).

Table 23

Number and Percentage of 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	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Coconut Creek	27	73.0	70	65.4	37	69.8	18	62.1	74	75.5
Deerfield Beach	41	56.9	46	63.9	69	67.0	49	72.1	94	73.4
Dillard	33	78.6	11	91.7	117	73.6	51	73.9	91	72.2
Fort Lauderdale	43	67.2	27	64.3	31	83.8	28	71.8	31	75.6
Hollywood Hills	83	65.9	39	60.9	29	74.4	70	44.6	75	70.8
Northeast	243	65.5	225	66.0	235	69.9	212	73.9	48	66.7
Piper	131	62.7	78	63.9	60	68.2	37	66.1	30	68.2
Stranahan	50	68.5	19	55.9	36	64.3	39	63.9	29	85.3
All Eight Schools	651	65.5	515	64.8	614	70.5	504	65.8	472	72.7

Process-Oriented Evaluation:

To What Extent Have Smaller Learning Communities Been Established?

The project leadership team and the staff members in each school were diligent in implementing the grant activities and reflecting on their SLC experience. The following was a project director's reflection extracted from the narrative sent to the grant officer at USDOE for the first-year SLC grant implementation.

All eight schools in Cohort 5 are working to meet the expectations set forth in the SLC grant. Some past year highlights included increases in student achievement, movement towards redesigning the structure of each school, efforts in making the high school experience more personal, involving business partners in a larger and more significant way, and creating more opportunities for meaningful staff development at the school site or through traveling to conferences. For example:

- All eight schools met once a month to share best practices and discuss successes and barriers in SLC implementation;
- Four of the eight schools have already restructured guidance and administrative personnel to align them with their respective SLC structures;
- Two of the eight schools restructured their SLC budgets to have a certain amount of autonomy as to how they can allocate SLC funds to meet the goals of the grant;
- One school has 95% of their seniors in some type of internship or mentoring situation;
- All schools have increased the amount of business partner participation, with one school involving business partners in monthly academy meetings;
- All schools use data to drive decisions about curriculum and instruction and share that data with all stakeholders; and
- One school completely transformed its facility into five separate areas: one for each school, which included room for classrooms, teachers' planning area, administrative staff, and guidance personnel.

This was the fourth year for the eight schools to continue to implement the SLC grant. The following reports findings in various aspects of the grant during the first four years.

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 E). 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 the school. Sixty-six of the 80 teachers responded to the fourth year online survey, resulting in a return rate of 82.5%.

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 and 100 for 2008-09. 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 were reported for 2005-06, 2006-07, and 2008-09 in Table 24 through 29. The data in Tables 24 and 25 indicate the extent to which teachers estimated knowing various aspects about their students. A comparison between teacher surveys in 2005-06 and 2008-09 indicated that the percentage of teachers who reported *None* decreased for all categories, which is a good indication given the emphasis of the SLC grant. At the same time, the percentage of teachers who know 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 25 with accompanying narrative and interpretation. It appears that overall teacher knowledge about students improved between 2005-06 and 2008-09.

Table 24
Number and Percentage of Teachers Who Knew the Following Aspects about Their Students in 2005-06, 2006-07, and 2008-09

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

(table continues)

Table 24 (continued).

Aspect	n	Percentage responding				
		None	1 to 25%	26 to 50%	51 to 75%	More than 75%
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

Table 25 revealed improvement in the following areas by comparing the percentage differences between 2005-06 and 2008-09 for the “more than 75%” category: *academic aspirations* (17.6 percentage point increase), *cultural and linguistics background* (12.1 percentage point increase), *who are their friends* (7.4 percentage point increase), *home life* (7.3 percentage point increase), and *academic background prior to this year* (7.0 percentage point increase). However, there were decreases between 2005-06 and 2008-09 in *first and last names* (5.9 percentage point decrease) and essentially remained the same for *names of the person/people with whom they live* (0.2 percentage point decrease). It should be noted that the 0.2 percentage point decrease for knowing *names of the person/people with whom they live* was for the category of “more than 75%”; the corresponding statistics for “none” decreased from 13.8 in 2005-06 to 3.0 in 2008-09 (Please see Table 24). Overall, it appears that teachers have become to know their students better over the years between 2005-06 and 2008-09.

Table 25

Number and Percentage of Teachers Who Know About the Following Aspects of More than 75% of the Students: A Comparison Among 2005-06, 2006-07, and 2008-09

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

The data in Tables 26 and 27 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 95.5% in 2008-09. Teachers are 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 87.8% for 2008-09.

Table 26

Number and Percentage of Teachers Who Took the Following Steps or Approaches to Help Students Who Were Having Difficulty with Academics from 2005-06 to 2008-09

Step or approach	<i>n</i>	Never	Small Extent	Moderate Extent	Great 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
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 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

Comparison of the data between 2005-06 and 2008-09 in Table 27, found more than a six-percentage point increase for *diagnose student problems*, *determine match of resources to student needs*, and *help students learn to overcome difficulties that compensate for different learning disabilities*” The increase for *diagnose student problems*, is particularly large, with almost a 10 percentage point gain. However, the percentage for *provide a personalized environment for students* essentially remained stable between 2005-06 and 2008-09.

Table 27

Number and Percentage of Teachers Who Took the Following Steps or Approaches to a Great Extent to Help Students Who Were Having Difficulty with Academics: A Comparison Between 2005-06 and 2008-09 School Years

Step or approach	2005-06		2008-09	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
a. Diagnose student problems	34	52.3	41	62.1
b. Determine match of resources to student needs	29	44.6	33	50.0
c. Gather information to understand student difficulties	33	51.6	35	53.0
d. Help students learn to overcome difficulties that compensate for different learning disabilities	31	47.7	36	54.5
e. Provide a personalized learning environment	37	56.9	37	56.1

The extent to which teachers involved parents and guardians in their children’s education are illustrated in Tables 28 through 29. Over the three years measured, data indicate that teachers were more likely to engage parents, at least a few times a year, for *helping with homework and talking about the school day* than they were for *instructional activities in schools* (least likely), or *developing program/learning goals*. Generally speaking, between 2005-06 and 2008-09, the level of engagement of parent/guardians in *developing program/learning goals* and *instructional activities in schools* increased noticeably, while their level of engagement in *helping with homework and talking about the school day* remained stable until 2008-09, when it decreased slightly.

Table 28

Number and Percentage of Teachers Who Were Engaged in Any of the Following Activities Since the Beginning of the School Year from 2005-06 to 2008-09

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

One way to summarize the data in Tables 28 is to compare the data collected in 2005-06 and 2008-09, with a focus on the percentage of teachers who *Never* engaged in the listed activities (see Table 29). The percentages in the *Never* response decreased from 2005-06 to 2008-09 across all categories, an indication that more involvement by parents/guardians has taken place.

Table 29

Number and Percentage of Teachers Who Never Engaged in Any of the Following Activities: A Comparison Between 2005-06 and 2008-09

Activity	2005-06		2008-09	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
a. Involve parent/guardian in academic support at home	2	3.1	0	1.5
b. Involved parent/guardian in developing program/learning goals	10	15.6	5	4.5
c. Involved parent/guardian in instructional activities in schools	33	50.8	25	40.9

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 30 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 1.7 percentage points from 2004-05 to 2008-09. However, there was a slight decrease of 2.5 percentage points between 2007-08 and 2008-09. During 2004-05 to 2008-09, of the eight high schools, seven registered an increase, and only one (Dillard) registered a decrease to this item.

Table 30

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	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Coconut Creek	923	55.8	781	49.5	961	57.8	929	52.1	1,033	57.1
Deerfield Beach	746	57.2	971	58.3	1,142	64.2	1,278	70.4	1,340	64.5
Dillard	671	74.5	998	64.0	950	71.1	106	65.4	623	69.0
Fort Lauderdale	869	64.3	956	67.4	933	68.9	952	71.2	832	65.5
Hollywood Hills	726	59.6	942	62.3	1,079	63.4	1,211	64.4	961	62.4
Northeast	1,314	68.0	1,228	65.7	1,286	71.7	1,217	74.5	958	70.9
Piper	1,144	56.6	1,281	62.4	1,487	64.9	1,556	63.6	1,361	59.8
Stranahan	717	63.4	842	58.1	745	63.1	909	69.6	850	63.9
All Eight Schools	7,110	61.7	7,999	61.0	8,583	65.5	8,158	65.9	7,958	63.4

Table 31 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, essentially remained the same from 2004-05 to 2008-09, with a slight decrease of only 0.8 percentage points. During the same time period, of the eight high schools, half reported an increase (with increases ranging from 3.4 to 6.6 percentage points); and half reported a decrease to this item (with decreases ranging from 4.8 to 7.6 percentage points).

Table 31

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	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Coconut Creek	890	53.4	912	57.0	1,028	61.4	945	52.2	1,042	56.8
Deerfield Beach	799	60.7	953	56.0	1,051	59.4	1,099	60.1	1,174	55.9
Dillard	526	57.7	861	54.7	803	59.7	95	58.3	568	61.9
Fort Lauderdale	792	57.9	760	53.2	677	50.2	731	54.3	647	50.3
Hollywood Hills	643	52.1	811	52.6	870	50.9	956	49.8	740	46.4
Northeast	1,203	62.3	1,221	65.3	1,150	64.3	1,076	65.7	769	56.9
Piper	954	46.4	1,100	53.3	1,269	55.2	1,357	54.6	1,218	53.0
Stranahan	554	48.4	693	47.6	670	56.3	777	58.2	695	51.9
All Eight Schools	6,361	54.7	7,311	55.2	7,518	57.3	7,036	56.2	6,853	53.9

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. Therefore, caution should be used when interpreting these findings because the survey was not designed specifically for the SLC grant and the parent response rate was low. The data related to *There is an adult at school I can talk to about my child's problems* are presented in Table 32. Between 2004-05 and 2008-09, all schools, except for Coconut Creek and Fort Lauderdale, had higher percentages of parents who *strongly agreed* or *agreed* with this statement. For all eight schools, the weighted percentage increased by 4.0 percentage points from 2004-05 to 2008-09. The increase was particularly notable for Piper (15.5 percentage points increase) and Stranahan (14.2 percentage points increase).

Table 32

Number and Percentage of 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	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Coconut Creek	29	78.4	74	69.8	42	79.2	23	79.3	74	74.0
Deerfield Beach	50	66.7	50	72.5	79	76.0	51	76.1	87	70.2
Dillard	31	72.1	8	66.7	117	72.7	56	80.0	97	77.0
Fort Lauderdale	52	78.8	29	70.7	28	75.7	31	79.5	31	75.6
Hollywood Hills	84	66.7	47	72.3	26	66.7	128	80.0	75	70.8
Northeast	273	73.6	251	72.8	254	74.1	200	68.0	53	74.7
Piper	136	64.5	85	66.9	63	70.0	40	69.0	36	80.0
Stranahan	48	65.8	21	61.8	41	74.5	42	68.9	28	80.0
All Eight Schools	703	70.2	565	70.7	650	73.7	571	73.4	481	74.2

The data indicating that *The teachers respond quickly to my requests* are displayed in Table 33. Between 2004-05 and 2008-09 school years, for all eight schools, the weighted percentage increased from 49.6 in 2004-05 to 56.4 in 2008-09, for a 6.8-percentage point increase over the four year period. Between 2004-05 and 2008-09, six schools increased in the percentage of parents, who *strongly agreed* or *agreed* with the indicator, while two schools (Coconut Creek and Fort Lauderdale) decreased. As mentioned in the forgoing, we should interpret the results with caution as the return rate for parent survey was relatively low.

Table 33

Number and Percentage of 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	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Coconut Creek	25	67.6	43	40.2	27	50.9	15	53.6	53	52.5
Deerfield Beach	37	49.3	30	42.3	48	46.6	31	45.6	76	59.8
Dillard	21	51.2	5	41.7	87	54.0	40	57.1	68	54.0
Fort Lauderdale	36	55.4	20	47.6	21	56.8	22	56.4	22	52.4
Hollywood Hills	52	42.3	24	37.5	19	48.7	63	39.6	61	56.5
Northeast	191	51.2	177	52.1	176	51.8	146	50.5	38	54.3
Piper	91	43.3	62	50.0	41	46.1	27	46.6	28	62.2
Stranahan	42	57.5	14	42.4	30	53.6	32	52.5	23	65.7
All Eight Schools	495	49.6	375	47.3	449	51.1	376	48.7	369	56.4

Summary

Of the eight schools implementing SLC, various SLC strategies and structures have been implemented. By 2008-09, in terms of SLC strategies, at least six schools implemented (a) alternative scheduling/block scheduling, (b) interdisciplinary curriculum, (c) adult mentors, (d) common planning periods, and (e) interdisciplinary teacher teams. In terms of structures, more than six schools implemented a freshman/transition academy and separate building space. SLC strategies and structures were implemented at all grade levels in all schools, except for two schools which have not yet expanded SLC strategies and structures to 11th and 12th grades. During the first year, 73% of SLC students were in some form of SLC. By 2008-09, participation

rose to 88%. In summary, during the 2008-09 academic year, six schools met the goal of having 100% of students participate in SLC, while the remaining two schools did not meet the goal.

As in previous evaluations, grant goals have been operationalized to examine formative progress of the five-year objectives in interim years. A summative judgment regarding whether the five-year goal is attained will be made at the end of the fifth year. According to the data examined, several goals of the SLC grant were met. By 2008-09, the grant goal of increasing the percentage of ninth and tenth graders scoring at proficient or advanced levels in reading and mathematics by four points was met in 24 out of a total of 32 comparisons. 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 four percentage points by 2008-09 were: five out of eight schools for 9th grade reading; four out of eight schools for 10th grade reading; seven out 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 scoring at proficient or advanced levels in reading and mathematics between 2004-05 and 2008-09, 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 two occasions, and were below the District average improvement rate on 15 occasions. In other words, for 9th grade reading, four out of eight schools surpassed the District's average gain of nine percentage points; three out of eight schools exceeded the District's average gain of five percentage points in 10th grade reading; for 9th grade mathematics, three out of eight schools improved more than the District's average gain of eight percentage points; and for 10th grade mathematics, five out of eight schools beat the District's average gain of nine percentage points. 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.

This evaluation included an HLM (hierarchical linear modeling) growth model study of how the 8th graders in 2006-07 progressed to the 9th grade in 2007-08 and to the 10th grade in 2008-09, and whether there is a difference between students in SLC schools and those in non-SLC schools in terms of their growth rate in reading and mathematics. After control for individual and school factors, no difference was found between SLC and non-SLC students in their 8th grade to 10th grade growth rate in FCAT reading developmental scale scores. However, analysis of the 8th grade to 10th grade growth rate in FCAT mathematics developmental scale scores reveals a marginally significant difference between SLC and non-SLC students, in favor of SLC students. SLC students grew 7.92 percentage points more each year than their non-SLC counterparts in the unadjusted model, and 5.89 percentage points more each year in the adjusted model.

All eight SLC schools met the grant goal of increasing graduation rates by four-percentage points from 2004-05 to 2008-09; and seven schools exceeded the District and State gains over the same time period. The increase in graduation rates between 2004-05 and 2008-09 for all eight SLC high schools far exceeded that of the Districtwide statistics. Collectively, the eight SLC high schools' unweighted graduation rate was 60.3 in 2004-05 and 77.2 in 2008-09, with an increase of 16.9 percentage points, while the Districtwide graduation rate increased from 67.1 to 74.2, an increase of only 7.1 percentage points. Within four years, the eight SLC schools collectively

demonstrated a far greater increase in graduation rate and went from 6.8 percentage points below the District average in 2004-05 to 3.0 percentage points above the District average in 2008-09. The SLC schools' improvement in graduation rate between 2004-05 and 2008-09 has been remarkable, indeed. In summary, the eight schools met the graduation goals for 2008-09 and are trending toward meeting the grant's five-year goal.

BCPS SLC grant calls for a 20 percentage point increase for post-secondary enrollment over the five years of the grant, in comparison to the baseline data of 2004-05. Although all schools increased the post-secondary enrollment percentage from 2004-05 to 2008-09, only one school met the overall four-year goal of increasing by 16 percentage points or more between 2004-05 and 2008-09. 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, whereas six schools exceeded the State's 6.4 percentage point gain during the same time period. SLC grant goals for reducing the rate of suspensions was not met as the rate increased slightly over the years. As to the goal of percentage of students taking at least one Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) course, schools increased the rate of students enrolled in at least one AP/IB credit course from 2004-05 to 2008-09. However, only two schools—Dillard and Stranahan—increased the percentage of enrollment by at least eight percentage points over the four-year period. The other six SLC schools have increases from 1 to 7 percentage-points over a four-year period.

The evaluation data collected from students, teachers, and parents indicated that the learning environment has become more personalized. For example, 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% in 2005-06 to 55.2% in 2008-09. The percentage of teachers who know 75% or more of their students' *academic aspirations* increased from 35.4% in 2005-06 to 53.0% in 2008-09. Between 2005-06 and 2008-09, the percentage of teachers who reported that they engaged a parent/guardian in *developing program/learning goals and instructional activities in schools* increased noticeably, while their level of engagement in *helping with homework and talking about the school day* remained stable until 2008-09 when it decreased slightly. The percentage of parents, who agreed with the statement, *there is an adult at school I can talk to about my children's problems*, increased from 70.2% in 2005-06 to 74.2% in 2008-09. Overall, the improvement in personalizing the learning environment and parental involvement for the first four years of the grant appeared small, but steady. Additionally, parent responses should be carefully considered given the low response rates of the parent survey and the fact that it is a general customer satisfaction survey rather than a SLC-specific survey.

The participating schools exhibited a high level of fidelity in implementing classroom walkthroughs (CWTs), models of effective advocacy (i.e., personalization), and block schedules. However, the professional development for teachers could focus more on personalizing the learning environment; the mechanisms for engaging parents should move beyond providing information about the school to engaging parents in providing support to their children; and practices should be improved to reduce the number of suspensions.

The leadership teams in the eight schools are conscious of distilling best practices for continuous improvement and sustainability. Based on extensive discussions in July 2009, representatives from the eight schools felt that four best practices—personalization, parent engagement, ninth

grade academy, and community involvement—can be replicated and sustained when SLC funding disappears. These best practices are among the foci for the eight SLC high schools during the final year of the SLC grant, and the SLC schools intend to maintain these critical components of SLC beyond the grant term. The best practices are supported by the literature.

Next Steps

During the fifth year of the grant, additional strategies were implemented to increase personalization and parent involvement by increasing the number of student-administrator conferences and offering the *Keys to Success Dinner*, where parents and students met with a teacher or administrator to review their academic achievement and behavior and set a plan of action for improvement. Teachers also met during common planning times to implement interventions for students with behavior and/or academic issues. Progress towards sustainability of the grant was made through the implementation of ninth-grade academies in all District high schools by the LINGO (Leading In Ninth Grade as One) program. Additionally, SLC coordinators will submit best practices to the District's Best Practices Web site, which will include topics such as school wide student-teacher advisory systems, community partnerships, and parent involvement strategies. Currently, there are tentative plans to apply for a new \$12.5 million five-year SLC grant when the new SLC grant competition is announced in the summer of 2010. A final summative evaluation will examine the five-year impact of the program by September 2010.

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Appendix A

Significant Achievements Related to Smaller Learning Communities Grant Work 2005-06 to 2008-09

Coconut Creek

2005-06

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

2006-07

- Vertical and horizontal planning for students creating an overall effective enhancement of planning and instruction.
- Improved student/administrator relationships in correlation to SLC identification.
- Community identification builds 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.
-

Deerfield Beach

2005-06

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

2006-07

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

2007-08

- Student achievement continues to be the primary focus with SLC supporting the mission, vision and goals for all students.
 - Freshman Academy provides 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 provide staff to work on interdisciplinary units and themes allowing for collegiality through staff development learning communities.
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(table continues)

Appendix A (*continued*).

Deerfield Beach (*continued*).

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 do 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.
-

Dillard

2005-06

- Scheduling teams to create/provide common planning time for each SLC teams.
- Increased interaction/communication among members within the SLC teams (students/teachers/administrators/parents).
- The schedule makes it more convenient and allows 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.

2007-08

- The 9th grade Academy of Success had resource staff “housed” in the same building as the students; resource staff include 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.
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(*table continues*)

Appendix A (*continued*).

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 are able to work together in close proximity, sharing common spaces for planning and lunch; students benefit, as well, as they do not have as far to travel for 50-75% of their Academy courses.
- Employing 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 student 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 is also the Reading Coach, worked throughout the year to have eight teachers complete the Content Area Reading-Professional Development (CAR-PD) Bundle; this enables 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 creates an ideal situation for the SLC program at Fort Lauderdale High School (FLHS), since the elective teachers will have fuller class loads, the students will get the electives they want, and they are 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 an ASCD 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 will be welcoming a new principal and SLC School-Site Coordinator in 2008-09, so this trip will help 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.
- Creation of a comprehensive intensive writing curriculum to build capacity of teachers in the 9th and 10th grade academies; this writing plan proved to make gains in the FCAT Writing Assessment.

2008-09

- Fort Lauderdale High School has continued with training teachers to become CAR-PD. Five additional teachers have completed the training this school year. FLHS has a total of 13 teachers trained in this area. This certification enables the teacher to teach fluent, Level 2 students through their coursework. The teacher implements effective reading strategies into the curriculum allowing for students that qualify to enroll in an elective, in lieu of, an additional reading course.

(*table continues*)

Appendix A (continued).

Fort Lauderdale (continued).

- Teachers and administrators have 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.
 - Continuation of intensive writing curriculum. This curriculum is taught to all level 1 and 2 students in ninth and tenth grade. The course is 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.
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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 a 10th grade team of World History and English in the Liberal, Creative and Performing Arts SLC created an integrated curriculum to be implemented in 2009.

2008-09

- There are three significant achievements in the implementation of Hollywood Hills High Schools Small Learning Communities Grant for the 2008-2009 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.
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(table continues)

Appendix A (continued).

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, mathematics, and 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 Northeast 9th grade academy developed, implemented, and monitored a year-long entry plan for 9th graders into high school.
- Northeast improved its community relationships through an increase in the number of new partnerships and family involvement.

2008-09

- Implementation of a school-wide Advisory program by Academy theme: For each Academy program, Academy Advocates were assigned to mentor and work with students within the theme. Each Advocate work 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 CRISS training 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 teachers after-school and on Saturdays: this program targeted student achievement in math, reading, and science. Teachers met with students one-on-one and in small groups to provide academic support.

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.

(table continues)

Appendix A (continued).

Piper (continued).

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 variety 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 lesson plan 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 the FCAT assessment showed a significant increase of 11% in reading from the 2007-2008 school year.
 - Increased parental involvement through a variety of activities.
-

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 (CREST).
- Design of the grades 10-12 career-themed academies.
- Involvement of all stakeholders in SLC development/implementation.

2006-07

- The School-wide 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.

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.
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(table continues)

Appendix A (*continued*).

Stranahan (*continued*).

- 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 include “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 the our school. We offered child care from out 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 attending this event – and next year we hope to advertise it even more and fill the school.
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Appendix B

Significant Learnings Related to Smaller Learning Communities Grant Work, 2005-06 to 2007-08

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.

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.

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.

(table continues)

Appendix B (*continued*).

Deerfield Beach (*continued*).

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.
-

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 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.

2008-09

- Personalization: Teachers used their planning periods to personalize the learning environment for the lowest 30 percentile of learners in each academy. This school-wide 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 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.
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(*table continues*)

Appendix B (continued).

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 (a) working together to integrate curricular units; and (b) creating 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 Level 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.
- 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 for 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 the amount of student data that is being collected for review.

(table continues)

Appendix B (*continued*).

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.

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.

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 (NE); it celebrates achievements for all students, not only the select few.
- Providing incoming 9th graders an opportunity to learn more about NE before school begins, prepares them for high school with the right knowledge and attitudes.

2007-08

- NE staff wants to be involved and find relevance in the staff development offered to them.
- NE 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.

(*table continues*)

Appendix B (*continued*).

Northeast (*continued*).

- 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 GLIDES presentation), allows teachers to see tangible results for their study.

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 meets the need of the students, which provides opportunities for other innovations.

Stranahan

2005-06

- The importance of scheduling/certification and how that affects the SLC structures and faculty placement.
- The depth/quality of staff development necessary for successful SLC development and implementation.
- The necessity for the teacher's 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.
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Appendix C
Literature Base That Supports the Best Practices Selected by the SLC Schools

Categories	References
Personalization	<p>Esposito, J. F., & Curcio, C. C. (2002). What works and what doesn't work in five teacher advisory programs. <i>Middle School Journal</i>, 34(1), pp. 27-35.</p> <p>Neild, R. C. (2009). Falling off track during the transition to high school: What we know and what can be done. <i>Future of Children</i>, 19(1), pp. 53-76.</p> <p>Patterson, N. C., Berman, K., & Francis, A. (2007). The making of sophomores: Student, parent, and teacher reactions in the context of systemic urban high school reform. <i>Urban Education</i>. 42(2), pp. 124-144.</p> <p>Quint, J., Thompson, S. L., & Bald, M. (2008). <i>Relationships, rigor and readiness: Strategies for improving high schools</i>. New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation.</p> <p>Stone, S. I., Engel, M., & Nagaoka, J. (2005). Getting it the second time around: Student classroom experience in Chicago's summer bridge program. <i>Teachers College Record</i>, 32(4), pp. 435-437.</p>
Parent engagement	<p>Fege, A. F. (2006). Getting Ruby a quality public education: Forty-two years of building the demand for quality public schools through parental and public involvement. <i>Harvard Educational Review</i>, 76(4), pp. 570-586.</p> <p>Gandara, P., Mejorado, M., Gutierrez, D., & Molina, M. (1998). <i>Final report of the evaluation of High School Puente: 1994–1998</i>. New York: Carnegie Corporation.</p> <p>Leonard, J. (2002). The case of the first-wear charter school. <i>Urban Education</i>, 37(2), pp. 219-40.</p> <p>Marschall, M. (2006). Parent involvement and educational outcomes for Latino students. <i>The Review of Policy Research</i>, 23(5), pp. 1053-76.</p> <p>Patterson, N. C., Berman, K., & Francis, A. (2007). The making of sophomores: Student, parent, and teacher reactions in the context of systemic urban high school reform. <i>Urban Education</i>. 42(2), pp. 124-144.</p>
Ninth grade academies	<p>Azzam, A. M. (2007). Why students drop out. <i>Educational Leadership</i>. 64(7), pp. 91-93.</p> <p>Huffman, J. B. (2000). One school's experience as a professional learning community. <i>Planning & Changing</i>, 31(1/2), pp. 84-94.</p> <p>Kemple, J. J. (2001). <i>Career Academies: Impacts on students' initial transitions to post-secondary education and employment</i>. New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation.</p>

(table continues)

Appendix C (continued).

Categories	References
Ninth grade academies (continued).	<p>Kemple, J. J. (2004). <i>Career Academies: Impacts on labor market outcomes and educational attainment</i>. New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation.</p> <p>Kemple, J. J. (2008). <i>Career Academies: Long term impacts on labor market outcomes, educational attainment, and transitions to adulthood</i>. New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation.</p> <p>Kemple, J. J., & Snipes, J. C. (2000). <i>Career Academies: Impacts on students' engagement and performance in high school</i>. New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation.</p> <p>McAdamis, S. (2007). A View of the Future: Teamwork is daily work. <i>Journal of Staff Development</i>, 28(3), pp. 43, 45-7.</p> <p>Plank, S. B., DeLuca, S., & Estacion, A. (2008). High School Dropout and the Role of Career and Technical Education: A Survival Analysis of Surviving High School. <i>Sociology of Education</i>, 81(4), pp. 345-370.</p>
Community involvement	<p>Myatt, L. (2004). Fulfilling the promise of small high schools. <i>Phi Delta Kappan</i>, 85(10), pp. 770-2.</p> <p>Wasley, P.A., Fine, M., King, S.P.; Powell, L.C.; Holland, N.E., Gladden, R.M., & Mosak, E. (2000). <i>Small Schools: Great Strides. A Study of New Small Schools in Chicago</i>. New York, NY: The Bank Street College of Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED465474).</p>

Appendix D
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 2008-09 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 2008-09 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 D (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 2008-09 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					

Appendix D (continued).

4. Please provide post-graduation outcome data for those who graduated from your high school during the 2008-09 school year (i.e., graduated in June 2009)

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Student demographic category	Total number of students receiving a regular diploma	Number of students for which post-graduation outcomes are known	Number of graduates who enrolled in post secondary education, apprenticeship or advanced training for the semester following graduation	Number of graduates who were employed [1] or joined the military by the end of the first quarter after they graduate (e.g., for students who graduate in May or June, this would be September 30)
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				

[1] Employed means “paid employment”.

5. What were the three most significant achievements in implementing the Small Learning Communities grant in your school during the 2008-09 school year?
6. What were the three most significant learnings based on the implementation of the Small Learning Communities grant in your school during the 2008-09 school year?

Appendix E
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 E (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

Appendix F
Additional Tables for the HLM Analysis of FCAT Student Achievement Score

Table A
Student and School Variables for Adjusting Initial Status and Growth Rate in Reading

	Effect	SE
Time-Varying Variables Adjusting Repeated Measures		
Limited English Proficiency (Yes vs. No)	-158.17*	13.23
Special Education (Yes vs. No)	-122.00*	10.31
Free or Reduced-Price Lunch (Yes vs. No)	-21.71*	2.43
Student and School Variables Adjusting Initial Status		
Male vs. Female	-30.54*	4.19
Black vs. White	-126.00*	10.67
Hispanic vs. White	-53.24*	8.06
Proportion of Students in Limited English Proficiency	-40.48*	13.12
Proportion of Students Taking Free or Reduced-Price Lunch	-32.26*	6.12
Student and School Variables Adjusting Rate of Growth		
Black vs. White	-20.06*	2.44
Hispanic vs. White	-12.18*	1.63
Proportion of Students in Limited English Proficiency	-6.41*	3.11
Proportion of Students Taking Free or Reduced-Price Lunch	-4.81*	1.45

Note. * $p < 0.05$. SE = standard error. Proportion of students with limited English proficiency and proportion of students taking free or reduced-price lunch are used as number of measurement units with 10% as one unit.

Table B
Student and School Variables for Adjusting Initial Status and Growth Rate in Mathematics

	Effect	SE
Time-Varying Variables Adjusting Repeated Measures		
Limited English Proficiency (Yes vs. No)	-79.85*	8.56
Special Education (Yes vs. No)	-89.05*	6.90
Free or Reduced-Price Lunch (Yes vs. No)	-11.60*	1.93
Student and School Variables Adjusting Initial Status		
Male vs. Female	11.17*	2.97
Black vs. White	-96.05*	6.64
Hispanic vs. White	-39.13*	5.14
Others vs. White	20.94*	5.82
Proportion of Students in Special Education	-7.33*	3.58
Proportion of Students Taking Free or Reduced-Price Lunch	-27.30*	3.78
Student and School Variables Adjusting Rate of Growth		
Male vs. Female	-2.35*	0.95
Black vs. White	10.10*	2.10

Note. * $p < 0.05$. SE = standard error. Proportion of students in special education and proportion of students taking free or reduced-price lunch are used as number of measurement units with 10% as one unit.

Appendix F (continued).

Table C

Student and School Variables for Adjusting Grade 8 Status and Grade 9 Improvement in Reading

	Effect	SE
Time-Varying Variables Adjusting Repeated Measures		
Limited English Proficiency (Yes vs. No)	-185.33*	14.11
Special Education (Yes vs. No)	-141.00*	11.69
Free or Reduced-Price Lunch (Yes vs. No)	-27.33*	2.94
Student and School Variables Adjusting Grade 9 Status		
Male vs. Female	-26.89*	4.21
Black vs. White	-111.51*	10.14
Hispanic vs. White	-42.36*	7.65
Proportion of Students with Limited English Proficiency	-38.62*	11.44
Proportion of Students Taking Free or Reduced-Price Lunch	-26.40*	4.91
Student and School Variables Adjusting Grade 10 Improvement		
Male vs. Female	19.43*	3.18
Black vs. White	-20.70*	4.00
Hispanic vs. White	-15.13*	3.41
Proportion of Male Students	-20.22*	9.63
Proportion of Students Taking Free or Reduced-Price Lunch	-5.53*	2.31

Note. * $p < 0.05$. SE = standard error. Proportion of male students, proportion of students with limited English proficiency, and proportion of students taking free or reduced-price lunch are used as number of measurement units with 10% as one unit.

Table D

Student and School Variables for Adjusting Grade 8 Status and Grade 9 Improvement in Mathematics

	Effect	SE
Time-Varying Variables Adjusting Repeated Measures		
Limited English Proficiency (Yes vs. No)	-107.21*	11.08
Special Education (Yes vs. No)	-101.83*	8.59
Free or Reduced-Price Lunch (Yes vs. No)	-18.48*	2.59
Student and School Variables Adjusting Grade 9 Status		
Male vs. Female	13.44*	3.13
Black vs. White	-99.32*	7.26
Hispanic vs. White	-35.78*	5.18
Others vs. White	20.14*	6.80
Proportion of Students with Limited English Proficiency	-24.60*	9.05
Proportion of Students in Special Education	-9.26*	3.57
Proportion of Students Taking Free or Reduced-Price Lunch	-19.85*	4.76
Student and School Variables Adjusting Grade 10 Improvement		
Male vs. Female	4.76*	1.72
Black vs. White	17.35*	3.64
Proportion of Students Taking Free or Reduced-Price Lunch	5.70*	1.27

Note. * $p < 0.05$. SE = standard error. Proportion of students with limited English proficiency, proportion of students in special education, and proportion of students taking free or reduced-price lunch are used as number of measurement units with 10% as one unit.

Appendix F (continued).

Table E
Student and School Variables for Adjusting Grade 9 Status and Grade 10 Improvement in Reading

	Effect	SE
Time-Varying Variables Adjusting Repeated Measures		
Limited English Proficiency (Yes vs. No)	-206.83*	14.73
Special Education (Yes vs. No)	-213.99*	13.98
Free or Reduced-Price Lunch (Yes vs. No)	-31.76*	4.30
Student and School Variables Adjusting Grade 9 Status		
Male vs. Female	-16.31*	4.41
Black vs. White	-131.48*	10.54
Hispanic vs. White	-52.79*	8.18
Proportion of Students with Limited English Proficiency	-51.12*	14.23
Proportion of Students Taking Free or Reduced-Price Lunch	-29.08*	6.00
Student and School Variables Adjusting Grade 10 Improvement		
Male vs. Female	-9.33*	2.89
Black vs. White	-22.15*	4.44
Hispanic vs. White	-8.88*	3.05
Proportion of Students with Limited English Proficiency	-20.39*	8.52
Proportion of Students in Special Education	-6.97*	3.48

Note. * $p < 0.05$. SE = standard error. Proportion of students with limited English proficiency, proportion of students in special education, and proportion of students taking free or reduced-price lunch are used as number of measurement units with 10% as one unit.

Table F
Student and School Variables for Adjusting Grade 9 Status and Grade 10 Improvement in Mathematics

	Effect	SE
Time-Varying Variables Adjusting Repeated Measures		
Limited English Proficiency (Yes vs. No)	-96.79*	9.56
Special Education (Yes vs. No)	-126.12*	7.57
Free or Reduced-Price Lunch (Yes vs. No)	-12.60*	2.12
Student and School Variables Adjusting Grade 9 Status		
Male vs. Female	16.60*	2.64
Black vs. White	-88.40*	5.62
Hispanic vs. White	-35.06*	4.77
Others vs. White	19.80*	5.98
Proportion of Students with Limited English Proficiency	-32.64*	9.45
Proportion of Students in Special Education	-9.58*	3.37
Proportion of Students Taking Free or Reduced-Price Lunch	-14.29*	4.04
Student and School Variables Adjusting Grade 10 Improvement		
Male vs. Female	-3.13*	1.50
Black vs. White	6.15*	2.44

Note. * $p < 0.05$. SE = standard error. Proportion of students with limited English proficiency, proportion of students in special education, and proportion of students taking free or reduced-price lunch are used as number of measurement units with 10% as one unit.

Appendix G
Professional Development Activities Conducted in Each School in 2008-09

School	Professional Development Activities
Coconut Creek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of Differentiated Instructional Strategies • Data Analysis • 8-Step Process (FCIM) • Use of Technology for Differentiated Instruction • Use of Promethean Boards in the Digital Classrooms • Multiple Intelligences • Use of CRISS Strategies • Team Building • Bloom’s Taxonomy • CHAMPS • Classroom Walkthrough • Marzano’s Academic Vocabulary & High Yield Strategies • Critical Thinking • Vertical Teaming • DOE Staff Development
Deerfield Beach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of Math Curriculum and Alignment of Math Sunshine State Standards (SSS) Benchmarks • Integration of National Math Standardized Tests (ACT, SAT, PSAT) into Math Classrooms • 8-Step Process • Seven Correlates of Effective Schools • Marzano’s High Yield Strategies • Utilization of Math Instructional Focus Calendar
Dillard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercising Creativity: Arts integration by training content area teachers to engage students in academic subjects utilizing various arts oriented strategies • Authentic Engagement of Student Learners • Relevant Curriculum • Data Disaggregation • Weekly Technology Training: Pinnacle, BEEP. Virtual Counselor, and utilization of technology in the classroom • Professional Learning Communities: engaging teachers in reflective practice intended to improve teacher practice student learning, and whole school reform • Team Building
Fort Lauderdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Endorsement Training • CRISS and McRel Training • Florida Online Reading – Professional Development (FOR-PD) • Content Area Reading • Effective Reading Strategies in Core Courses • Benchmark of the Week Training • Teacher Directed Staff development on Professional Study Days based on Teacher Needs Assessment.

(table continues)

Appendix G (continued).

School	Professional Development Activities
Hollywood Hills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sterling Process of Plan, Do, Study Act • Correlates of Effective Schools • Marzano’s High Yield Strategies • Principles of High School Reform • Ruby Payne’s Framework for Understanding Poverty • Classroom Walkthrough • Safe and Civil Schools (CHAMPS and Foundation) • Technology Training based on the school’s need
Northeast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FCIM Model - 8-step Instructional Process • Curriculum Alignment • Reading Strategies in all Content Areas • CRISS Strategies • Multiple Intelligences and Learning Styles • NESS New Educator Support System • Differentiated Instruction • Training for Math Teachers on the New Generation Math Standards • Six Traits of Writing • Utilization of the FCAT Writing Scoring Rubrics Across the Curriculum
Piper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differentiated Instructional Strategies • TeachFirst • Advanced Placement • ESE Instructional Strategies and Coaching • Best Practices in Reading and Writing • Strategies to Enhance Comprehension and Analytical Thinking (H.O.T. Higher Order Thinking) Trainings • Six Trait Writing in the Content Area • CRISS training • New Bodies of Knowledge Math Standards • Inspiration Software Training • FCAT Strategies for Science Teachers
Stranahan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sterling Process of Plan, Do, Study, Act • The Seven Correlates of Effective Schools • The Eight Step Instruction Process • Classroom Walkthrough • Differentiated Instruction • Marzanos High Yield Strategies • The Principles of High School Reform • Ruby Payne’s Framework for Understanding Poverty • Safe and Civil Schools (CHAMPS and Foundations) • Instruction Focus Calendar Training • Marzano’s Nine High Yield Strategies • Staff Development Modules: Alternative Assessment, Basic and Advanced Technology, Teacher Talk (which consists of Action-Based Research), Project-Based Learning and CRISS training for all content area teachers. All of these modules incorporate differentiated instructional strategies.

Appendix H
Models of Effective Advocacy in Each School in 2008-09

School	Strategies for Effective Advocacy
Coconut Creek	At Coconut Creek, senior students are paired with freshmen students to mentor and assist them in the transition to high school.
Deerfield Beach	Deerfield Beach has a mentoring program for their at-risk students. Every Level 1 and 2 (FCAT) student is assigned to an adult mentor. Students attend monthly seminars with positive community role models. They also have four adults who volunteer in the school's Internal Suspension Program with the goal of reengaging students academically. One very successful personalization strategy is the Freshmen Academy Awards ceremony. Over 100 students are recognized for various areas of achievement from Most Improved Student to Academic Honor Roll Winners.
Dillard	Dillard has several programs all targeted at mentoring students and personalizing the learning environment. The Million Fathers Mentoring Program expands each year and focuses on providing opportunities for African-American fathers to become more involved in school and academics with their children. Dillard also sponsors "Project Live" which employs local volunteers at a community church to provide mentoring and tutoring for students after school. In addition, all ninth graders in the 35 th percentile and below are assigned a mentor at the school. Teachers use their planning periods to meet with their assigned students in each academy. These sessions provide students with guidance in school performance, participation, and progression.
Fort Lauderdale	Fort Lauderdale has a mentoring program developed through its Peer Counseling course and varsity athletics. This is successful in that it develops positive relationships between the upper and lower classmen. The plans will be expanded next year to incorporate a staff/student-mentoring program to address the needs of incoming freshmen in the areas of behavior, attendance, academics, and adjustment to high school.
Hollywood Hills	Hollywood Hills High is the only SLC school that has a school-wide student advisory program that meets on a regular basis. All instructional staff members participate and the school runs the advisory after its second period class. The curriculum was written by a group of Hollywood Hills High teachers and has been expanded each year to make sure that there are grade specific activities for each grade level.
Northeast	Northeast has a school-wide advisory program designed in accordance with their academy themes. Academy Advocates for each academy are assigned to mentor and work with students within the theme. Each advocate works closely with 20 – 30 students to ensure that students are getting the mentoring and support needed for success in high school. In addition, there is an extensive student-tutoring program that provides students with access to teachers after school and on Saturdays. This program targets student achievement in math, reading and science. Teachers meet with students one-on-one and in small groups to provide academic support.

(table continues)

Appendix H (continued).

School	Strategies for Effective Advocacy
Piper	<p>Piper has a mentoring program for at-risk students. The program is credited with preventing and decreasing suspensions and reducing the amount of school-wide incidents. Small group counseling is provided by guidance counselors and subsequently outside agencies are recommended when appropriate for family support. In addition, the Jobs for Florida's Graduates/Jobs for America's Graduates (JFG/JAG) program started this year and is a personal development program for ninth grade students who need additional support services to increase their chances of completing high school. The curriculum allows them to explore careers, learn about teamwork, develop leadership skills, create and manage wealth, and serve and interact with the community. It also gives them the opportunity to build relationships with community mentors, gaining valuable insight into possible careers.</p>
Stranahan	<p>Stranahan High School utilizes teacher mentors for the lower quartile and assigns only three students per mentor to ensure personalization. They also have an advisory system embedded within teacher's classes in the CREST academy (ninth grade academy). This advisory goes over career planning, goal setting, grades, GPA, as well as providing guidance in choosing a career academy for their grade10-12 classes.</p>

Appendix I
Engagement of Parents in 2008-09 by the SLC Schools

School	Strategies to Engage Parents
Coconut Creek	Utilized incoming freshmen open houses and showcases for information and availability of programs and to provide assistance to parents.
Deerfield Beach	Deerfield Beach High School hosted various freshmen parent nights that focused on various topics, such as success in high school, preparing for high school, GPA requirements, etc. The freshmen academy also hosted its first awards ceremony for students in the freshmen academy. Lastly, an advanced placement parent night was held to inform parents and students of the various advanced placement courses offered and their benefits. In 2007-08, only one freshmen parent night was held. Also, the freshmen awards evening and AP parent night were new additions in 2008-09 to continue to involve parents.
Dillard	N/A
Fort Lauderdale	<p>Parent and student volunteers have participated in a campus beautification project for the school year. This began during the summer and continued throughout the first semester of the school year.</p> <p>Parent workshops have been offered in the evening throughout the school year as either break-out sessions during Open House or stand alone sessions. Topics have included Virtual Counselor, Pinnacle, High School 101, College Planning, and Literacy Strategies.</p> <p>Additionally, the use of Twitter was implemented to communicate school news with parents and community members who join.</p>
Hollywood Hills	<p>Hollywood Hills High School implemented several new or improved methods for engaging parents during the 2008-2009 school year. These methods included a “Keys for Success Dinner,” “College Career Night,” “Advanced Placement Potential Night,” “ESOL Night,” and “Rachel’s Challenge Presentation”.</p> <p>The Keys to Success Dinner was an opportunity for parents and student to return in the evening for a dinner, presentation and one-on-one meeting with an adult staff member to review individual student progress and to discuss possible academic interventions available during the school day and after school that may assist each student in meeting their highest potential.</p> <p>College Career Night provided seniors, underclassmen and their parents with the steps and procedures for meeting college admissions requirements, securing scholarships, and financial aid as well as other post-secondary educational opportunities.</p> <p>Advanced Placement Potential Night, this evening was designed to create awareness for the incoming ninth grade students and current students’ parents. This event was held in the school auditorium where parents heard a brief presentation of the Advanced Placement courses offered at Hollywood Hills and the advantages for students who complete these courses. Following the presentation parents were given an opportunity to ask Advanced Placement teachers, administrators and District personnel questions regarding the school’s Advanced Placement Program.</p>

(table continues)

Appendix I (continued).

School	Strategies to Engage Parents
Hollywood Hills (<i>cont.</i>)	<p>“Engaging in the Sensational Opportunities of Literacy” (ESOL) Night was an event designed to encourage the parents of English Language Learners (ELL) students to participate in their son’s or daughter’s education. This parent involvement activity provided parents with graduation requirements, Spanish language textbook websites, and how to access the District’s Virtual Counselor used to monitor individual students’ grades and attendance.</p> <p>The Rachel’s Challenge Presentation was first presented during the school day to Hollywood Hills High School students. The presentation stressed the importance of looking for the best in others, eliminating prejudice, writing down personal goals, journaling, choosing positive influences, and demonstrating acts of kindness to one another. The evening presentation was an opportunity for parents to participate in a program designed for the parent that was meaningful to their child.</p>
Northeast	<p>During 2008-09, Northeast High School implemented several new mechanisms for engaging parents. They provided more resources for parents on the website, and they set parent advisory meetings far in advance and posted the dates and times (meeting dates and times for the entire year were posted at the beginning of the school year). Also, this year parents of incoming 9th graders were targeted in the spring. Northeast staff visited their feeder middle school several times to provide parents with information regarding Parent Advisory opportunities and student orientations scheduled. At the end of this school year, they solicited a parent to begin a PTSA group for the parents starting next school year. Finally they sent out Parent Link phone calls notifying parents of events/activities, such as parent nights with thematic foci (AP involvement, student achievement, ESOL parent/student services, service learning projects, etc.)</p>
Piper	<p>Interim progress reports were revised to be more parent-friendly and establish better feedback and interaction between teachers and parents as to the status of their child’s educational growth.</p>
Stranahan	<p>Parent University. The school held the first ever ZONE parent night and included all of the feeder elementary schools and middle school in a one night parent education event held at Stranahan. The school offered child care from the UTAP program and the 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 the event – and next year the school hopes to advertise it even more and fill the school. This initiative is different from previous events in that the school staff is involving the entire zone – all feeder schools with information that is relevant to all grade levels. Many parents have children in multiple grades at different schools – this was an opportunity to get information for all students in one place...one stop shopping to educate parents!</p>

Appendix J
Strategies for Reducing Suspensions in Each School in 2008-09

School	Strategies to Reduce Suspensions
Coconut Creek	This school year had some particular circumstances as the school was an “F” school, had a new Principal with a new vision, as well as was driven by District mandates. We have been implementing academies by program and CTACE programs.
Deerfield Beach	New mechanisms that were used to reduce suspensions include mentors for at-risk students, involving students in engaging programs such as GLIDES, providing mentors in our internal suspension program and continuing Saturday tutoring for students. These programs are different from those offered in the past in that the programs are proactive.
Dillard	N/A
Fort Lauderdale	<p>Saturday school has been offered as an alternative consequence to internal suspension. While a student serves a Saturday school, the student has the ability to complete any missed assignments or work on FCAT preparation materials.</p> <p>The use of the family counseling service housed at Fort Lauderdale High. Students may be referred to a counselor by any staff member. Students, who have shown a pattern of misbehaviors, have been referred for intervention services. This has been done to avoid any further consequences for misbehavior.</p> <p>The Peer Counseling class has provided peer mediation to students assigned to Internal Suspension. This program allows peers to discuss behaviors and appropriate methods to handle future situations.</p>
Hollywood Hills	No change during 2008-09.
Northeast	<p>By serving more students than ever before through the Academy Advocate program, students received personal mentoring and support on being successful in school. In addition to this extra support, students were provided with opportunities to serve time for disciplinary infractions after school and on Saturdays. During this time, students could have also elected to attend a tutoring session in lieu of a detention, providing them with the opportunity to receive assistance with their academic work while serving their detentions.</p> <p>Teachers, security, and administration referred students who were determined to need additional support (academic or behavioral) to the Collaborative Problem Solving Team. The Collaborative Problem Solving Team met regularly to review students on a case-by-case basis and put interventions in place to ensure students were receiving the help they needed to be successful in high school.</p>
Piper	<p>In the 2008-09 school year, administration and guidance established a mentoring program for at-risk students. The program helps to prevent and decrease suspensions and reduced the amount of school-wide incidents.</p> <p>Small group counseling was provided by guidance; and outside agencies were recommended on an as needed basis for family support.</p>

(table continues)

Appendix J (*continued*).

School	Strategies to Reduce Suspensions
Piper (<i>cont.</i>)	“Rachel’s Challenge” is the implementation of a nation-wide program that sets a tone of decency by exposing the students to the ideals of random acts of kindness; the benefits gained from this program were a reduction of critical incidents and a positive school climate.
Stranahan	The school did not implement any new strategies in 2008-09, other than the introduction of the District’s Discipline Matrix which has made discipline more uniform and consistent from all administrators. The school plans to readdress intervention and teaming strategies with the ninth grade academy in trainings this coming school year (2009-10). This practice, when implemented effectively by all ninth grade academy teachers, will be highly effective in reducing suspensions. Also, more training on differentiated instruction will be offered to our staff. When all students are academically engaged on a rigorous level, disruptive behavior is greatly reduced.