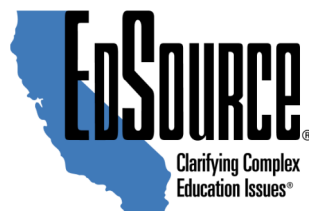


TECHNICAL APPENDIX C • FEBRUARY 2010

Gaining Ground in the Middle Grades: Why Some Schools Do Better

A Large-Scale Study of Middle Grades
Practices and Student Outcomes



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Gaining Ground in the Middle Grades: Why Some Schools Do Better

TECHNICAL APPENDIX C

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APPENDIX C – Findings and Domain Comparisons

Decision Rules

This section provides an overview of the decision rules used to translate the statistical analyses into substantive findings.

Full Set of Subdomain Findings with Survey Items Reported in Initial Research Report

This section lists all the subdomains—and the specific items contained within them—which are reported in this study as having a positive and significant correlation to higher student outcomes.

Statistical Comparisons Across Study Domains—Figures C-1–C-4

This section includes four charts that compare the relative strength of the ten study domains—across all outcomes—with respect to:

- *Longitudinal Principal and Teacher subdomains*
- *Longitudinal Principal and Teacher and Superintendent subdomains*
- *Cross-sectional Principal and Teacher subdomains*
- *Cross-sectional Principal and Teacher and Superintendent subdomains*

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APPENDIX C– Decision Rules

The research team’s decision rules for reporting findings

In order to translate the large set of numerical outputs from our cross-sectional and longitudinal regression analyses into *substantive findings to report*, it was necessary for the research team to interpret and make judgments about stronger versus weaker findings, consistent themes, and a limited number of instances where the regression outputs could not be interpreted sufficiently. The goal was to distill and report findings that are both coherent and defensible.

In doing this, we adopted a number of decision rules:

- Subdomains that correlate positively and significantly at the .05 level of statistical significance with **multiple CST outcomes**—in either the cross-sectional analyses, the longitudinal analyses, or both—should be reported.
- Subdomains that correlate positively and significantly in **both the cross-sectional and longitudinal analyses** should be reported.
- *Within* a given domain, multiple principal, teacher, and/or superintendent subdomains that **reinforce one another**—i.e., address the same practices or policies, or complementary aspects thereof—and correlate positively and significantly should be reported.
- *Across* domains, subdomains that are **consistent with themes already identified in other domains** and correlate positively and significantly should be reported.
- With respect to subdomains that correlated positively and significantly with **only one CST outcome** for a single analysis (cross-sectional or longitudinal), these were variously:
 - Dropped as reportable findings on the grounds that they were weak or “one-off” outputs, especially in cases where the regression output pertained to a single SCI band;
 - Reported, on the grounds that they correlated with a “summative” CST outcome of relevance, such as the Grade 8 English Language Arts CST.
 - Reported, on grounds that they were analyzed against few possible outcomes. A subdomain pertaining only to practices in grade 6—or to a particular grade and subject area—might only be relevant to one or a few outcomes, for example.
- **Confounding or confusing subdomains were dropped.** These were cases where:
 - A subdomain variable clearly did not operate as intended;
 - The subdomain variable was plausibly influenced by student achievement, or by some omitted variable correlated with student achievement; or
 - Several subdomains contradicted one another, or extensive further study was required to develop a responsible understanding of the finding (perhaps to be taken up in future reports).

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APPENDIX C – Full Set of Subdomain Findings with Survey Items Reported in Initial Research Report

This study found that its ten research domains fell into three “groupings” with respect to their relative predictive strength in differentiating higher-performing middle grade schools in our sample.

- *Grouping #1:* The domain with the greatest predictive strength across most of the cross-sectional and longitudinal analyses was Domain B, “An intense, school-wide focus on improving academic outcomes.”
- *Grouping #2:* Six domains consistently followed Domain B in terms of predictive strength. Relative to one another, their predictive strength varied depending on the analysis, and there were relatively few statistically-significant differences between them. These domains pertain to standards-based instruction and curricula; extensive use of data; proactive academic interventions; teacher competencies; principal leadership; and superintendent leadership.
- *Grouping #3:* Three domains, although they *did* differentiate schools with higher CST scores and higher gains in CST scores, did so with less predictive strength than the other seven domains in almost every analysis conducted. These three domains pertain to school environment; organization of time and instruction; and attention to student transitions.

Equally important—if not more so—are the specific district- and school-level practices *under* each domain that distinguished higher-performing middle grade schools. This section of Technical Appendix C presents all the subdomains—and the survey items contained within them—that were reported as findings in the Initial Research Report.

- Subdomains that differentiated higher-performing schools with respect to at least one outcome among the *longitudinal analyses* are presented first, by domain.
- Subdomains that differentiated higher-performing schools with respect to at least one CST outcome among the *cross-sectional analyses* are presented next, again by domain.

In each case, the domains are presented *in order of the three groupings* described above.

A Guide to Understanding the Findings

Within each domain, superintendent subdomains are presented first, followed by principal subdomains and then teacher subdomains. Superintendent subdomains (designated with a letter “S”) contain only items from the superintendent survey, principal subdomains (designated with a letter “P”) contain only items from the principal survey, and teacher subdomains (designated with a letter “T”) contain only items from the teacher survey. Most subdomains have multiple items but some contained only one. The number preceding each item is its survey question number.

These survey items typically, but not always, asked about the *extent* to which a particular practice or policy was in effect at the school or district, or the *frequency* with which educators undertook a particular action, often on a five-point scale.

Generally, subdomains differentiated higher-performing schools in our sample *regardless* of whether schools were located in the 20th–35th or 70th–85th percentiles of the School Characteristics Index (SCI). In a few cases, however, a subdomain did so *only* within one of these two SCI bands. These subdomains are noted as such and listed at the end of their respective domains.

For a summary of further judgments the research team made in deciding which regression results constituted reportable findings, see “The research team’s decision rules for reporting findings” section elsewhere in Appendix C.

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**Subdomain Findings from Longitudinal Analyses,
With Survey Items**

**The Top Domain
(Grouping #1)**

Gaining Ground in the Middle Grades: Why Some Schools Do Better

Subdomain Findings from Longitudinal Analyses

Domain B

An intense, school-wide focus on improving academic outcomes

Superintendent Responses

S-3

Superintendent expects middle-grade principals and staff to prioritize improving student achievement regardless of proficiency level and for subgroups, and the district sets measurable objectives for improving CST scores across all performance levels and by grade level and subject area.

- What priority do you expect your middle grades principals and staff to place on the following:
 - (S_04a) Improving student achievement for all students regardless of proficiency level.
 - (S_04b) Raising achievement of low income, African American, and/or Latino students.
- For which of the following does your district/CMO set annual explicit measurable objectives for the middle grades:
 - (S_05c) Improving student achievement across all the CST performance levels (from “far below basic” through “Advanced”).
 - (S_05f) Improving grade level and subject area CST scores.

Principal Responses

P-3

School emphasizes improving achievement across all CST performance levels, and setting goals by grade and subject. (2 items)

- To what extent do you agree with the following statements?
 - (P_11d) Our school emphasizes improving student achievement across all the CST performance levels (from "Far Below Basic" through "Advanced").
 - (P_11f) Our school sets measurable goals for CST scores by grade level and subject area.

P-4

School sets measurable goals for improving district benchmark test scores. (1 item, P_11k)

P-6

English language arts and mathematics teachers take responsibility for improving their students' achievement and grade and subject matter teams set goals for student achievement. (2 items)

- To what extent do you agree with the following:
 - (P_5e) Our school's ELA and Math teachers take responsibility for improving the achievement of their students.
 - (P_11p) Grade and subject matter teams set goals for student achievement.

P-6a

Principal regularly communicates to faculty the importance of high expectations for the achievement of all students. (1 item)

- (P_05a) To what extent do you agree with the following statements? I regularly communicate to faculty the importance of high expectations for the achievement of all students.

Teacher Responses

T-2

Teachers report that meeting and exceeding AYP and API targets are a school priority. (3 items)

- How much do you agree with the following statements?
 - (T_10a) Our school's AYP subgroup targets are a priority.
 - (T_10b) Our school's API growth target is a priority.
 - (T_10c) Our school sets measurable goals that exceed the API growth target.

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T-3

Teachers report that the school emphasizes improving achievement across all CST performance levels and sets measurable goals for CST scores by grade and subject matter. (2 items)

- How much do you agree with the following statements?
 - (T_10d) Our school emphasizes improving student achievement across all the CST performance levels (from far below basic to advanced).
 - (T_10g) Our school sets measurable goals for CST scores by grade level and subject area.

T-10

School's curriculum and instruction are designed to prepare students for a rigorous high school curriculum. (3 items)

- Related to students leaving your middle grades to enter high school, to what extent are your school's instruction and curriculum designed to:
 - (T_12a) Prepare all students to leave the middle grades with strong foundational academic and study skills.
 - (T_12b) Prepare all students to leave the middle grades on track to pass the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE).
 - (T_12c) Prepare all students to leave the middle grades ready to begin taking courses required for UC/CSU eligibility ("A-G" courses).

20th–35th Percentile SCI band ONLY

Principal Responses

P-8

School uses student progress and achievement data as part of teacher evaluations. (1 item)

- (P_45g) To what extent do you agree with the following statements about teacher evaluations? Our school uses student progress and achievement data as part of teacher evaluations.

Teacher Responses

T-2a

Teachers report that district communicates high expectations that schools will meet or exceed state and federal accountability targets. (1 item)

- (T_43c) To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements about your district or CMO? Your district or CMO: Communicates high expectations that the school will meet or exceed state and federal accountability targets.

T-12

Teachers report that instructional time in their classrooms is protected from unnecessary interruptions. (1 item, T_10k)

70th–85th Percentile SCI band ONLY

Teacher Responses

T-9

Teachers frequently communicate with parents about middle-grade academic standards and their student's progress, and provide ways for parents to support their students' academic achievement. (7 items)

- How frequently have you done the following during this school year?
 - (T_07a) Informed parents about the academic standards their students will be expected to meet.
 - (T_07b) Required students to have their parents sign off on homework.
 - (T_07c) Assigned homework that required direct parent involvement or participation.
 - (T_07d) Sent home examples of excellent student work to serve as a model.
 - (T_07e) Provided parents with specific activities they can do to improve their student's academic achievement.
 - (T_07f) Contacted parents about students' academic progress.
- How much do you agree with the following statement?
 - (T_10l) Our teachers review CST scores with students and parents.

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Subdomain Findings from Longitudinal Analyses, With Survey Items

The Middle Six Domains (Grouping #2)

Gaining Ground in the Middle Grades: Why Some Schools Do Better

Subdomain Findings from Longitudinal Analyses

Domain D

Coherent and aligned standard-based instruction and curricula

Superintendent Responses

S-5

District expects MG schools to consider a range of factors when placing non-newcomer EL students in English language arts and mathematics classes. (10 items)

- Regarding EL students (non-newcomers), to what extent does the district or CMO expect its middle grades schools to consider each of the following in determining EL students' placement in math or ELA classes?
 - (S_19a) Amount of time in a California school.
 - (S_19b) Language proficiency in English.
 - (S_19c) Language proficiency in native language.
 - (S_19d) Knowledge of academic subjects.
 - (S_19e) Previous academic performance as demonstrated by class grades.
 - (S_19f) Recommendations from prior school/teacher.
 - (S_19g) CELDT scores.
 - (S_19h) CST scores.
 - (S_19i) Other district assessments.
 - (S_19j) Input from parents.

Principal Responses

P-1 (See also Domain J, P-12)

The principal reports that the district leads decisions about the school's 6th-8th grade curriculum program adoption in English language arts. (1 item)

- (P_29abcde_1) Who makes the curriculum program adoptions?
 - (A_1) District-wide (or charter management organization) adoption.
 - (B_1) District (or charter management organization) with school input.
 - (C_1) School staff with district (or charter management organization) approval.
 - (D_1) Individual teachers make their own decisions.
 - (E_1) Other(please specify): _____.

P-7

The school has well defined plans for instructional improvement and assesses their effectiveness regularly. (2 items)

- To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements?
 - (P_11l) Our school has well defined plans for instructional improvement.
 - (P_11m) Our school assesses the effectiveness of our instructional improvement plans on an ongoing basis.

P-8

School's English language arts and mathematics instruction is closely guided by state academic standards and state adopted curriculum programs, takes into account English Language Development standards, and emphasizes key standards in each grade and core subject. (4 items)

- To what extent do you agree with the following about your school's overall ELA and Math instruction?
 - (P_37a) Classroom instruction is closely guided by state academic standards.
 - (P_37b) Classroom instruction is closely guided by state adopted textbooks/curriculum programs.
 - (P_37c) Our school emphasizes select key standards at each grade and in each core subject.
 - (P_37d) Instruction for EL students also takes into account state English Language Development (ELD) standards.

P-13

The school has a structured program to promote literacy across the grade 8 curriculum. (1 item)

- (P_38E_8) Please indicate which of the following apply to the middle grades reading and ELA instructional practices at your school: Our school has a structured program to promote literacy across the curriculum.

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P-14 (See also Domain I, P-18)

Principal expects the school's English language arts teachers to use the school's adopted English language arts curriculum frequently. (1 item)

- (P_30) As a principal, how often to you expect your school's ELA teachers to use the school's adopted English Language Arts curriculum program?
 - No requirement.
 - Weekly.
 - 3-4 times per week.
 - Daily.
 - No expectation for text use, but do expect teachers to align instruction to state content standards.

P-15 (See also Domain I, P-19)

Principal expects the school's mathematics teachers to use the school's adopted mathematics curriculum program frequently. (1 item)

- (P_31) As a principal, how often to you expect your school's math teachers to use the school's adopted mathematics curriculum program?
 - No requirement.
 - Weekly.
 - 3-4 times per week.
 - Daily.
 - No expectation for text use, but do expect teachers to align instruction to state content standards.

Teacher Responses

T-2a

Teachers augment the adopted mathematics curriculum. (2 items)

- How often do you do the following?
 - (T-33d) Augment your school's curriculum program with additional instructional materials of your own choosing.
 - (T-32e) Augment your school's curriculum program with additional instructional materials provided by the school/district.

T-6

Teachers collaborate on curriculum pacing, common benchmark assessments, and instruction. (3 items)

- Overall, to what extent do teachers collaborate to do the following?
 - (T-39i) Discuss curriculum pacing, scope, and sequence.
 - (T-39j) Develop common benchmarks and assessments.
 - (T-39k) Discuss how common benchmarks and assessments relate to instruction.

T-7

Teachers report that the school assesses the effectiveness of its instructional improvement plans on an ongoing basis. (1 item, T_10j)

T-8a

School's mathematics teachers closely align instruction with the California academic content standards and CSTs, emphasize key standards, and work together to break down prerequisite skills. (4 items)

- To what extent do you agree with the following?
 - (T_31a) Our school's teachers closely align instruction with the California academic content standards in mathematics.
 - (T_31b) Our school's teachers closely align instruction with the CSTs in mathematics.
 - (T_31c) Our school emphasizes selected key standards that teachers prioritize at each grade level.
- Overall, to what extent do teachers in your school collaborate to do the following?
 - (T_39c) Work together to "break down" the state content standards (e.g., identify prerequisite student skills). (Mathematics' teachers response only)

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T-9

Teachers report that district communicates high expectations that instruction will closely align with state standards. (1 item)

- To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your district or Charter management Organization (CMO)?
 - (T-43b) Communicates high expectations that instruction will closely align with state standards.

70th–85th Percentile SCI band ONLY

Superintendent Responses

S-1

The district leads decisions about schools' 6th-8th grade curriculum program adoptions in English language arts. (1 item)

- (S_12) Who makes decisions about your school's 6th-8th grade English language arts curriculum program adoptions? (Check one)
 - District-wide or charter management organization-wide adoption.
 - District with school input.
 - Each school individually with district approval.
 - Individual teachers make their own decisions.
 - Other (please specify): _____.

S-3

The district leads decisions about schools' 6th-8th grade curriculum program adoptions in mathematics. (1 item)

- (S_13) Who makes decisions about your school's 6th-8th grade mathematics curriculum program adoptions? (Check one)
 - District-wide or charter management organization-wide adoption.
 - District with school input.
 - Each school individually with district approval.
 - Individual teachers make their own decisions.
 - Other (please specify): _____.

Principal Responses

P-4

The school has explicit written criteria for placing students in mathematics classes, department chairs revise math placements for academic appropriateness, and the administrative team reviews placements to ensure wide access to a rigorous math curriculum. (3 items)

- Please tell us about your school's placement policies for math: (yes-no)
 - (P_32a_2) Does your school have explicit written criteria?
 - (P_32b_2) Are student placements reviewed by department chairs for academic appropriateness?
 - (P_32c_2) Are student placements reviewed by the administrative team to ensure wide access to rigorous curriculum?

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Subdomain Findings from Longitudinal Analyses

Domain E

Extensive use of data to improve instruction and student learning

Principal Responses

P-1 (See also Domain I, P-21)

Principal reports using assessment data extensively and in multiple ways to improve student learning and teacher practice. (6 items)

- How often do you use assessment data of any type to do the following?
 - (P_20a) Set goals for the achievement of selected students.
 - (P_20b) Develop strategies to help selected students reach achievement goals.
 - (P_20c) Follow-up on the progress of selected students.
 - (P_20d) Examine our school's teachers' practices and content knowledge.
 - (P_20e) Determine the professional development needs of individual teachers, or of all teachers in a subject area.
 - (P_20f) Identify areas for schoolwide improvement.

P-1a (See also Domain I, P-22)

Principal meets with teachers individually, by grade, and by subject to review CST results (including subgroups), and meets with the active school to review schoolwide CST scores. (5 items)

- With regard to your use of assessment data, to what extent do you do the following?
 - (P_19a) I meet with individual teachers to review: CST results, including subgroups.
 - (P_19d) I meet with grade level teachers to review: grade level CST results, including subgroups.
 - (P_19g) I meet with English and/or math teachers by department to review: CST results, including subgroups.
 - (P_19j) I meet with other school administrators to review: schoolwide CST scores.
 - (P_19m) I meet with the entire school staff to review: schoolwide CST scores.

Teacher Responses

T-3

School uses CST scores for placement, promotion, and/or intervention. (1 item, T_10m)

T-5

Teachers receive individual CST data for all students they teach, as well as data disaggregated by skill and subgroup, and summarized across grade levels. (4 items)

- In what forms do you receive CST data? (check all that apply)
 - (T_15a) Individually for all my students.
 - (T_15b) Disaggregated by specific skill/academic content for all my students.
 - (T_15c) Disaggregated by student subgroup (e.g., racial/ethnic, EL) for all my students.
 - (T_15d) A summary for all students across the grade level(s) I teach.

T-6

Teachers frequently administer benchmark, diagnostic, and classroom-based assessments of student learning to inform their teaching. (3 items)

- How frequently do you administer the following kinds of assessments to inform your teaching?
 - (T_13a) Benchmark assessments, which assess whether students are meeting particular academic standards.
 - (T_13b) Diagnostic assessments, which assess what students know and the nature of their misconceptions (such as placement or intervention needs).
 - (T_13c) Classroom-based assessments, which assess students throughout a course and guide instruction.

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T-7

Teachers use assessment data to evaluate individual student achievement, set measurable goals, help students see progress, correct gaps in instruction, and identify effective instructional practices. (5 items)

- How often do you use student assessment data (of any kind) to do the following?
 - (T_14a) Evaluate individual student achievement.
 - (T_14b) Set measurable goals for individual student achievement.
 - (T_14g) Help students see steady and measurable progress in their learning.
 - (T_14h) Identify and correct gaps in my instruction.
 - (T_14g) Analyze student assessment data to identify effective instructional practices.

T-8 (See also Domain J, T-15)

Teachers report that the district supports their data analysis by providing schools with timely CST data and a user-friendly information system, and emphasizing regular teacher use of benchmark and/or diagnostic assessments. (3 items)

- The district or Charter Management Organization (CMO):
 - (T_43d) Provides schools with timely CST student achievement data on all students.
 - (T_43e) Provides a user-friendly computer information system to enable school staff to review student data.
 - (T_43f) Emphasizes regular teacher use of benchmark and/or diagnostic assessments.

20th–35th Percentile SCI band ONLY

Superintendent Responses

S-9

District gives middle grades staff discretion over developing, determining the need for, and analyzing the results of diagnostic assessments. (3 items)

- Which of the following are true about your district or CMO role related to diagnostic and/or placement tests? (check all that apply)
 - (S_09b) Our district allows schools to develop their own diagnostic assessments aligned with the state standards by grade and subject for the middle grades.
 - (S_09d) Our district allows educators in our middle grades to determine the need for diagnostic assessments.
 - (S_09f) Our district allows school staff to do their own analysis of the results of diagnostic student assessment data.

Principal Responses

P-3

Principal reports that teachers regularly monitor student grades and class test scores to rapidly report student intervention needs, discuss and use data to evaluate the achievement of different student groups, and set measurable student goals. (5 items)

- To what extent do you agree with the following statements?
 - (P_05h) Our teachers regularly monitor student grades and class test scores to rapidly report students for needed intervention.
- To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements about the use of subgroup assessment data by your school's ELA and Math teachers?
 - (P_21a) Teachers use data to analyze student achievement by subgroup.
 - (P_21b) Teachers use data to evaluate EL students' English language proficiency.
 - (P_21c) Teachers set measurable goals for student achievement by subgroup.
 - (P_21d) Our school dedicates time at staff meetings to discuss student achievement by subgroup.

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Subdomain Findings from Longitudinal Analyses

Domain F

Early and proactive academic interventions

Principal Responses

P-5 (See also Domain J, P-17)

Principal reports that the district emphasizes early identification of students needing academic support and addresses the needs of students two or more years behind grade level. (2 items)

- Your school district:
 - (P_53h) Emphasizes early identification of students needing academic support.
 - (P_53k) Addresses the needs of students who are two or more years below grade level.

P-7

School staff and parents meet to develop intervention plans for individual students at risk of failure this year. (1 item)

- Which of the following strategies does your school use to provide academic support for the following types of students?
 - (P_40A_1) Meetings where teacher, parent, and staff develop an intervention plan for an individual student – students at risk of failure this year.

P-8

School staff and parents meet to develop intervention plans for individual students identified for intensive intervention. (1 item)

- Which of the following strategies does your school use to provide academic support for the following types of students?
 - (P_40A_2) Meetings where teacher, parent, and staff develop an intervention plan for an individual student – students identified for intensive intervention.

P-9

School staff and parents meet to develop intervention plans for individual EL students. (1 item)

- Which of the following strategies does your school use to provide academic support for the following types of students?
 - (P_40A_3) Meetings where teacher, parent, and staff develop an intervention plan for an individual student – EL student.

P-10

School employs a range of required intervention strategies for students at risk of failure this year. (4 items)

- Which of the following strategies does your school use to provide academic support for the following types of students? (check all that apply for each group) – students at risk of failure this year.
 - (P_40B_1) Extra instructional time required during the regular school day, perhaps in place of an elective.
 - (P_40C_1) Short term required interventions that run concurrent with class.
 - (P_40D_1) Required intervention time outside the regular school day.
 - (P_40F_1) Required intersession or summer courses.

P-11

School employs a range of required intervention strategies for students identified for intensive intervention. (4 items)

- Which of the following strategies does your school use to provide academic support for the following types of students? – students identified for intensive intervention.
 - (P_40B_2) Extra instructional time required during the regular school day, perhaps in place of an elective.
 - (P_40C_2) Short term required interventions that run concurrent with class.
 - (P_40D_2) Required intervention time outside the regular school day.
 - (P_40F_2) Required intersession or summer courses.

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P-13

School provides voluntary academic support (during non-classroom time, AVID, online tutorials) for students at risk of failure this year. (3 items checked)

- Which of the following strategies does your school use to provide academic support for the following types of students? – students at risk of failure this year.
 - (P_40e_1) Voluntary academic support offered during non-classroom time (e.g. lunch, after school).
 - (P_40g_1) AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination).
 - (P_40h_1) An online tutorial or intervention program.

Teacher Responses

T-1a

Teachers use differentiated instruction and flexible grouping in the classroom. (2 items)

- To what extent do you use each of the following instructional practices with your students?
 - (T_34d) Differentiated teaching for individuals or groups of students during regular instruction.
 - (T_34e) Flexible student groupings.

T-7

Staff and parents meet to develop intervention plans for individual students at risk of failure this year. (1 item, T_35_a1)

T-10

School employs a range of required intervention strategies for students at risk of failure this year. (4 items)

- Which of the following strategies does your school use to provide academic support to the following types of students? (check all that apply for each group) – students at risk of failure this year.
 - (T_35b_1) Extra instructional time required during the regular school day, perhaps in place of an elective.
 - (T_35c_1) Short term required interventions that run concurrent with class.
 - (T_35d_1) Required intersession or summer courses.
 - (T_35e_1) Required intervention time outside the regular school day.

20th–35th Percentile SCI band ONLY

Teacher Responses

T-1c (See also Domain I, T-26)

Teachers report that principal assigns teachers to ensure students with the greatest need are served well. (1 item, T_42p)

70th–85th Percentile SCI band ONLY

Teacher Responses

T-1

Teachers pre-teach lessons (e.g., lead some students through a lesson the day before) (1 item, T_34a)

T-5

District ensures that policies and resources are in place to serve EL students. (1 item, T_43j)

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Subdomain Findings from Longitudinal Analyses

Domain H

Teacher competencies, evaluation, and support

Principal Responses

P-1

Principal reports that a high proportion of the school's mathematics and English language arts teachers are able to use student assessment data to improve learning, able to raise student achievement, able to map curriculum standards to instruction, understand adolescent development issues, and have other characteristics. (14 items)

- What proportion of your current 6th-8th grade ELA and Math teachers have the following characteristics? (none-all)
 - (P_41a) Ability to use student assessment data to improve learning.
 - (P_41b) Knowledge of California state standards.
 - (P_41c) Fit well into your school culture.
 - (P_41d) Ability to raise student achievement.
 - (P_41e) Strong subject area knowledge.
 - (P_41f) Ability to map curriculum standards to instruction.
 - (P_41g) Likely to remain in the teaching field.
 - (P_41h) Enjoy teaching at the middle grades level.
 - (P_41i) Understand adolescent developmental issues.
 - (P_41j) Taught at this school last year.
 - (P_41k) Ability to collaborate effectively with peers.
 - (P_41l) Ability to make personal connections with students.
 - (P_41m) Well prepared by their teacher credential program (new teachers).
 - (P_41n) Expertise working with EL students.

P-11 (See also Domain J, P-21)

Principal reports that district provides useful professional development for teachers. (1 item, P_52f)

Teacher Responses

T-6

Teacher report that principal provides meaningful teacher evaluation and supports teachers' professional growth. (5 items)

- To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your principal? Your school principal:
 - (T_42e) Understands and acknowledges excellent teaching.
 - (T_42g) Arranges for evaluation of my teaching skills by teacher leaders.
 - (T_42h) Ensures that evaluations of my teaching are substantive and meaningful.
 - (T_42i) Ensures that teachers receive effective professional development to improve instruction.
 - (T_42k) Builds strong relationships with teachers and staff.

70th–85th Percentile SCI band ONLY

Teacher Responses

T-4

Teachers report middle grades are current first choice of teaching assignment. (1 item, T_46)

Gaining Ground in the Middle Grades: Why Some Schools Do Better

Subdomain Findings from Longitudinal Analyses

Domain I

Principal leadership and competencies

Principal Responses

P-1

Principal's priorities for schoolwide improvement are influenced by expectations from superintendent/school board, CST scores, and state accountability measures. (5 items)

- To what extent do the following influence your priorities for schoolwide improvement?
 - (P_12a) Expectations from my superintendent/school board.
 - (P_12b) CST scores.
 - (P_12f) School statewide ranking on the API.
 - (P_12g) Similar schools ranking on the API.
 - (P_12j) Requirements that come from categorical funding programs.

P-18 (See also Domain D, P-14)

Principal expects the school's English language arts teachers to use the school's adopted English language arts curriculum program frequently. (1 item)

- (P_30) As a principal, how often do you expect your school's ELA teachers to use the school's adopted English language arts curriculum program?
 - No requirement.
 - Weekly.
 - 3-4 times per week.
 - Daily.
 - No expectation for text use, but do expect teachers to align instruction to state content standards.

P-19 (See also Domain D, P-15)

Principal expects the school's mathematics teachers to use the school's adopted mathematics curriculum program frequently. (1 item)

- (P_31) As a principal, how often do you expect your school's math teachers to use the school's adopted mathematics curriculum program?
 - No requirement.
 - Weekly.
 - 3-4 times per week.
 - Daily.
 - No expectation for text use, but do expect teachers to align instruction to state content standards.

P-22 (See also Domain E, P-1a)

Principal meets with teachers individually, by grade, and by subject to review CST results (including subgroups), and meets with the entire school staff to review schoolwide CST scores. (5 items)

- With regard to your use of assessment data, to what extent do you do the following?
 - (P_19a) I meet with individual teachers to review: CST results, including subgroups.
 - (P_19d) I meet with grade level teachers to review: grade level CST results, including subgroups.
 - (P_19g) I meet with English and/or math teachers by department to review: CST results, including subgroups.
 - (P_19j) I meet with other school administrators to review: schoolwide CST scores.
 - (P_19m) I meet with the entire school staff to review: schoolwide CST scores.

P-23

Principal meets with teachers individually, by grade, and by subject to review benchmark test results, and meets with the entire school staff to review schoolwide benchmark scores. (5 items)

- With regard to your use of assessment data, to what extent do you do the following?
 - (P_19b) I meet with individual teachers to review: benchmark test results.
 - (P_19e) I meet with grade level teachers to review: benchmark test results.
 - (P_19h) I meet with English and/or math teachers by department to review: benchmark test results.
 - (P_19k) I meet with other school administrators to review: benchmark test scores.
 - (P_19n) I meet with the entire school staff to review: benchmark test scores.

Gaining Ground in the Middle Grades: Why Some Schools Do Better

Teacher Responses

T-16

Principal regularly communicates the importance of high expectations for student achievement and holds teachers accountable for common planning time to focus on student achievement. (3 items)

- (T_42a) Principal regularly communicates the importance of high expectations for the achievement of all students.
- (T_42b) Principal has clear expectations that teachers will meet academic achievement goals for students.
- (T_42f) Principal holds teachers accountable for using common planning time to focus on student achievement.

20th–35th Percentile SCI band ONLY

P-9 (See also Domain J, P-1)

Principal meets with district administrators to review the school's CST scores, benchmark test scores, AYP and API progress, and grades and/or grading policy. (4 items)

- With regard to your use of assessment data, to what extent do you do the following?
 - (P_19p) I meet with district administrators to review: our school's CST scores.
 - (P_19q) I meet with district administrators to review: our school's benchmark test scores.
 - (P_19r) I meet with district administrators to review: our school's AYP and API progress.
 - (P_19s) I meet with district administrators to review: our school's grades and/or grading policy.

P-10

District supports the principal if she/he wants to replace the school administrative and/or instructional leadership team. (1 item)

- To what extent do you agree with the following statements?
 - (P_52c) The district supports me if I want to replace the school administrative and/or instructional leadership team.

P-21 (See also Domain E, P-1)

Principal reports using assessment data extensively and in multiple ways to improve student learning and teacher practice. (6 items)

- How often do you use assessment data of any type to do the following?
 - (P_20a) Set goals for the achievement of selected students.
 - (P_20b) Develop strategies to help selected students reach achievement goals.
 - (P_20c) Follow-up on the progress of selected students.
 - (P_20d) Examine our school's teachers' practices and content knowledge.
 - (P_20e) Determine the professional development needs of individual teachers, or of all teachers in a subject area.
 - (P_20f) Identify areas for schoolwide improvement.

Teacher Responses

T-26 (See also Domain F, T-1c)

Teachers report that principal assigns teachers to ensure students with the greatest need are served well. (1 item, T_42p)

70th–85th Percentile SCI band ONLY

Principal Responses

P-5

Principal has been trained in the evaluation of instruction for EL students, understands the principles of EL second language acquisition, and is comfortable conversing in a language other than English. (3 items)

- To what extent do you agree with the following statements?
 - (P_59f) Principal received training in the evaluation of instruction for ELs.
 - (P_59g) Principal understand the principles of EL second language acquisition.
- (P_64) Principal is comfortable conversing in a language other than English.

Gaining Ground in the Middle Grades: Why Some Schools Do Better

Subdomain Findings from Longitudinal Analyses

Domain J

Superintendent leadership and district support

Superintendent Responses

S-4

District's priorities for middle grades improvement are influenced by analysis of student CST scores and progress on other measures, and by published statewide ranking of schools. (3 items)

- To what extent do the following influence your district's or CMO's priorities for middle grades improvement?
 - (S_06c) Analysis of student achievement on CSTs.
 - (S_06d) Analysis of student progress on other assessment measures.
 - (S_06f) Published statewide rankings of schools.

S-6

District's priorities for middle-grade improvements are influenced by categorical funding requirements and private grant expectations. (2 items)

- To what extent do the following influence your district's or CMO's priorities for middle grades improvement?
 - (S_06g) Requirements that come from categorical funding programs.
 - (S_06h) Expectations that come from private grant funding.

S-7

Superintendent evaluation is based in part on middle-grade academic outcomes. (4 items)

- As a superintendent or CMO executive, to what extent is your own annual evaluation based upon the following?
 - (S_27e) Improvements in district-wide middle grades student achievement on California Standards Tests.
 - (S_27f) Ensuring more middle grades students are prepared to pass the California High School Exit Exam.
 - (S_27g) Ensuring more middle grades students are prepared for a college preparatory ("A-G") high school curriculum.
 - (S_27h) Improvements in the performance (AYP/API) of middle grades schools.

Principal Responses

P-10

Principal reports that district emphasizes improving student achievement across all CST levels, closing CST subgroup achievement gaps, and getting as many students to proficient as possible. (3 items)

- To what extent do you agree with the following statements? Your school district:
 - (P_53c) Emphasizes improving student achievement across all the CST performance levels.
 - (P_53d) Emphasizes closing achievement gaps on the CST between specific student subpopulations.
 - (P_53e) Emphasizes getting as many students to the CST "Proficient" level as possible.

P-12 (See also Domain D, P-1)

Principal reports that district leads decisions about the school's 6th-8th grade curriculum program adoption in English language arts. (1 item)

- (P_29abcde_2) Who makes the curriculum program adoptions?
 - (A_2) District-wide (or charter management organization) adoption.
 - (B_2) District (or charter management organization) with school input.
 - (C_2) School staff with district (or charter management organization) approval.
 - (D_2) Individual teachers make their own decisions.
 - (E_2) Other (please specify): _____.

P-17 (See also Domain F, P-5)

Principal reports that district emphasizes early identification of students needing academic support and addresses the needs of students two or more years behind grade level. (2 items)

- To what extent do you agree with the following statements? Your school district:
 - (P_53h) Emphasizes early identification of students needing academic support.
 - (P_53k) Addresses the needs of students who are two or more years below grade level.

Gaining Ground in the Middle Grades: Why Some Schools Do Better

P-21 (See also Domain H, P-11)

Principal reports that district provides useful professional development for teachers. (1 item, P_52f)

Teacher Responses

T-14 (See also Domain D, T-9)

Teachers report that district communicates high expectations that instruction will closely align with state standards. (1 item)

- To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your district or Charter Management Organization (CMO)?
 - (T_43b) Communicates high expectations that instruction will closely align with state standards.

T-15 (See also Domain E, T-8)

Teachers report that the district supports their data analysis by providing schools with timely CST data and a user-friendly information system, and emphasizing regular teacher use of benchmark and/or diagnostic assessments. (3 items)

- To what extent do you agree with the following statements? My district or CMO:
 - (T_43d) Provides schools with timely CST student achievement data on all students.
 - (T_43e) Provides a user-friendly computer information system to enable school staff to review student data.
 - (T_43f) Emphasizes regular teacher use of benchmark and/or diagnostic assessments.

T-21

Teachers report that district provides useful professional development for teachers. (1 item, T_43h)

20th–35th Percentile SCI band ONLY

P-1 (See also Domain I, P-9)

Principal meets with district administrators to review the school's CST scores, benchmark test scores, AYP and API progress, and grades and/or grading policy. (4 items)

- With regard to your use of assessment data, to what extent do you do the following?
 - (P_19p) I meet with district administrators to review: our school's CST scores.
 - (P_19q) I meet with district administrators to review: our school's benchmark test scores.
 - (P_19r) I meet with district administrators to review: our school's AYP and API progress.
 - (P_19s) I meet with district administrators to review: our school's grades and/or grading policy.

T-4

Teachers report that the district provides the financial and human resources necessary for the school to meet its goals and visits the school at least once a year. (2 items)

- To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements about your district or charter management organization (CMO)?
 - (T_43a) Provides financial and human resources necessary for our school to achieve its goals.
 - (T_43i) Ensures that district staff visits our school at least once a year.

Gaining Ground in the Middle Grades: Why Some Schools Do Better

Subdomain Findings from Longitudinal Analyses, With Survey Items

The Bottom Three Domains (Grouping #3)

Gaining Ground in the Middle Grades: Why Some Schools Do Better

Subdomain Findings from Longitudinal Analyses

Domain A

A positive, safe, engaging school environment

Principal Survey

P-1

Principal enforces a comprehensive set of strategies to ensure a safe and positive school environment. (7 items)

- Which of the following are true about your school this year?
 - (P_04i) Students are required to maintain minimum performance standards (e.g., behavior, academic, participation) to remain at your school.
- To what extent are the following in effect at your school?
 - (P_10a) A clearly defined dress code that is strictly enforced.
 - (P_10b) A strictly-enforced, zero tolerance policy for drugs and weapons on campus.
 - (P_10c) A strictly-enforced, zero tolerance policy for any type of bullying.
 - (P_10d) Adult supervision is present during all passing and lunch periods.
 - (P_10i) Teachers and administrative staff continuously monitor student behavior to identify students in need of intervention.
 - (P_10j) Students receive incentives (e.g., front of line passes, parties, or special events) to reward positive behaviors.

P-4

A high proportion of students participate in extracurricular activities and course electives. (4 items)

- Please estimate how many of your students participate in the following classes or activities:
 - (P_08a) One or more extracurricular activities.
 - (P_08b) Course electives: Music, drama, art, dance.
 - (P_08c) Course electives: Exploratory wheel or mini-courses.
 - (P_08d) Course electives: Other.

Teacher Survey

T-1

Teachers report school enforcement of comprehensive safety strategies and that they feel safe in their school. (5 items)

- To what extent are the following in effect at your school?
 - (T_08b) Our school has a clearly defined dress code that is strictly enforced.
 - (T_08c) Our school has a strictly enforced, zero tolerance policy for drugs and weapons on campus.
 - (T_08d) Our school has a strictly enforced, zero tolerance policy for any type of bullying.
 - (T_08e) Our school has adult supervision during all passing and lunch periods.
- To what extent do you agree with the following statement?
 - (T_09b) You feel safe in your school.

T-3

Teachers report that the school clearly communicates policies on student behavior and the importance of attendance to students and parents, and that teachers collaborate to develop strategies to address issues. (5 items)

- To what extent are the following in effect at your school?
 - (T_08a) Our school clearly communicates rules and policies on student behavior to students and parents.
 - (T_08g) Excellent behavior and/or attendance by students gets classroom and/or schoolwide public recognition.
 - (T_08h) The importance of attendance and the consequences of frequent absenteeism, such as academic failure, are clearly communicated to students and parents.
- To what extent do you agree with the following statement?
 - (T_09a) A great deal of your time in class is spent managing student behavior.
- (T_39h) Overall, to what extent do teachers in your school collaborate to do the following? - Develop strategies to address student behavior and/or attendance issues.

Gaining Ground in the Middle Grades: Why Some Schools Do Better

20th–35th Percentile SCI band ONLY

P-3

Principal reports that school staff accept shared responsibility for improving student attendance, such as by personally contacting students who cut classes and requiring detention for tardy students. (4 items)

- To what extent do you agree with the following statements:
 - (P_05j) Our school requires tardy students to spend lunch or similar time (non-instructional) in detention.
- To what extent are the following in place at your school?
 - (P_09a) Our teachers and administrative staff accept shared responsibility for improving student attendance.
 - (P_09e) Our teachers personally contact students who cut their classes.
 - (P_09f) Excellent attendance by students gets classroom and/or schoolwide public recognition.

P-6a

School staff regularly analyzes suspension data to ensure criteria are fairly applied to all students. (1 item, P_10g)

Gaining Ground in the Middle Grades: Why Some Schools Do Better

Subdomain Findings from Longitudinal Analyses

Domain C

School organization of time and instruction

Principal Survey

P-2a

The school adjusts the amount of instructional time provided to EL students in English language arts, mathematics, and/or English language development based on students' level of fluency, with "reasonably fluent" EL students spending less instructional time in these subjects than EL students with "less than reasonable" fluency.

- Sum of 3 indicators showing whether more ELA, math, and ELD instruction is provided to EL students with "less than reasonable fluency" vs. EL students with "reasonable fluency." (ELA: P_28A_3 vs. P_28A_4 / Math: P_28B_3 vs. P_28B_4 / ELD: P_28C_1 vs. P_28C_2)

P-7

Amount of time allocated per month for common planning time in grade 7. (1 item)

- (P_49A_7) Please estimate the following about your ELA and math teacher's time: Number of minutes per month teachers have for common planning time.

P-8

Amount of time allocated per month for common planning time in grade 8. (1 item)

- (P_49A_8) Please estimate the following about your ELA and math teacher's time: Number of minutes per month teachers have for common planning time.

Teacher Survey

T-1

School has subject matter department chairs in English language arts and mathematics. (1 item, T_05)

Gaining Ground in the Middle Grades: Why Some Schools Do Better

Subdomain Findings from Longitudinal Analyses

Domain G

Attention to student transitions

Teacher Survey

T-1

School administrative staff and teachers review prior CST scores, grades, attendance and behavior reports of students entering the middle grades and communicate with elementary teachers. (5 items)

- Related to incoming students from the elementary grades, to what extent do administrative staff and/or teachers in your school do the following?
 - (T_11a) Review prior CST scores for students entering the middle grades.
 - (T_11b) Review prior language arts and math grades for students entering the middle grades.
 - (T_11c) Review prior attendance records for students entering the middle grades.
 - (T_11d) Review prior behavior reports for students entering the middle grades.
 - (T_11f) Communicate with elementary teachers about any students entering the middle grades with low CST scores, failing language arts or math grades, poor behavior reports, or poor attendance records.

T-4

School administrative staff and teachers implement classroom and intervention strategies to address academic weaknesses among incoming students. (1 item, T_11g)

T-7

School administrative staff and teachers review prior CELDT scores and other English proficiency information for entering EL students. (1 item, T_11e)

20th–35th Percentile SCI band ONLY

Principal Survey

P-1

School administrative staff and teachers reviews prior CST scores, grades, attendance and behavior of students entering the middle grades and communicate with elementary teachers. (5 items)

- Related to incoming students from the elementary grades, to what extent do administrative staff and/or teachers in your school do the following?
 - (P_13a) Review prior CST scores for students entering the middle grades.
 - (P_13b) Review prior language arts and math grades for students entering the middle grades.
 - (P_13c) Review prior attendance records for students entering the middle grades.
 - (P_13d) Review prior behavior reports for students entering the middle grades.
 - (P_13f) Communicate with elementary teachers about any students entering the middle grades with low CST scores, failing language arts or math grades, poor behavior reports, or poor attendance records.

Gaining Ground in the Middle Grades: Why Some Schools Do Better

**Subdomain Findings from Cross-Sectional Analyses,
With Survey Items**

**The Top Domain
(Grouping #1)**

Gaining Ground in the Middle Grades: Why Some Schools Do Better

Subdomain Findings from Cross-Sectional Analyses

Domain B

An intense, school-wide focus on improving academic outcomes

Principal Responses

P-2

Principal places a priority on meeting AYP subgroup targets, and meeting and exceeding API growth targets. (3 items)

- To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements?
 - (P_11a) Meeting our school’s AYP subgroup targets is a priority for me.
 - (P_11b) Meeting our school’s API growth target is a priority for me.
 - (P_11c) Our school sets measurable goals that exceed the API growth target.

P-3

School emphasizes improving achievement across all CST performance levels, and setting goals by grade and subject. (2 items)

- To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements?
 - (P_11d) Our school emphasizes improving student achievement across all the CST performance levels (from “Far Below Basic” through “Advanced”).
 - (P_11f) Our school sets measurable goals for CST scores by grade level and subject area.

P-3a (See also Domain J, P-10)

Principal reports that district emphasizes improving student achievement across all CST levels, closing CST subgroup achievement gaps, and getting as many students to proficient as possible. (3 items)

- To what extent do you agree with the following? Your school district:
 - (P_53c) Emphasizes improving student achievement across all the CST performance levels.
 - (P_53d) Emphasizes closing achievement gaps on the CST between specific student subpopulations.
 - (P_53e) Emphasizes getting as many students to the CST “Proficient” level as possible.

P-4

School sets measurable goals for improving district benchmark test scores. (1 item, P_11k)

P-9

School regularly communicates to students the importance of middle grades achievement to their future and of taking responsibility for their learning, and communicates to parents the importance of their role in setting high expectations for student academic success. (7 items)

- To what extent do you agree with the following statements?
 - (P_05b) Our teachers regularly communicate with students the importance of middle grade achievement to doing well in high school.
 - (P_05c) Our teachers regularly communicate with students the importance of middle grade achievement to future college goals.
 - (P_05d) Our school faculty tells all students they can do well in school if they work hard.
 - (P_05f) Our school communicates to students the importance of taking responsibility for their own learning by attending classes, doing homework, trying their best, and asking for help when needed.
 - (P_05g) Our school communicates to parents the importance of their role in setting high expectations for student learning and behavior.
- Has your school implemented any of the following?
 - (P_06b) Parent outreach to explain the school’s academic expectations and the parent/student role in student success.
 - (P_06g) Classroom or schoolwide recognition for improved and/or high student achievement.

Gaining Ground in the Middle Grades: Why Some Schools Do Better

P-10

School's curriculum and instruction are designed to prepare students for a rigorous high school curriculum. (3 items)

- School's instruction and curriculum designed to:
 - (P_16a) Prepare all students to leave the middle grades on track to pass the California High School Exit Exam.
 - (P_16b) Prepare all students to leave the middle grades ready to begin taking high school "A-G" courses (required for UC/CSU eligibility).
 - (P_16c) Prepare all students to leave the middle grades with strong foundational academic and study skills.

P-13

School has requirements or contracts for parent participation. (1 item, P_04f)

Teacher Responses

T-2

Teachers report that meeting and exceeding AYP and API targets are a school priority. (3 items)

- How much do you agree with the following statements?
 - (T_10a) Our school's AYP subgroup targets are a priority.
 - (T_10b) Our school's API growth target is a priority.
 - (T_10c) Our school sets measurable goals that exceed the API growth target.

T-9

Teachers communicate with parents about middle grades academic standards and their student's progress, and provide ways for parents to support their students' academic achievement. (7 items)

- How frequently have you done the following during this school year?
 - (T_07a) Informed parents about the academic standards their students will be expected to meet.
 - (T_07b) Required students to have their parents sign off on homework.
 - (T_07c) Assigned homework that required direct parent involvement or participation.
 - (T_07d) Sent home examples of excellent student work to serve as a model.
 - (T_07e) Provided parents with specific activities they can do to improve their student's academic achievement.
 - (T_07f) Contacted parents about students' academic progress.
- How much do you agree with the following statement?
 - (T_10l) Our teachers review CST scores with students and parents.

T-10

School's curriculum and instruction are designed to prepare students for a rigorous high school curriculum. (3 items)

- Related to students leaving your middle grades to enter high school, to what extent are your school's instruction and curriculum designed to:
 - (T_12a) Prepare all students to leave the middle grades with strong foundational academic and study skills.
 - (T_12b) Prepare all students to leave the middle grades on track to pass the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE).
 - (T_12c) Prepare all students to leave the middle grades ready to begin taking courses required for UC/CSU eligibility ("A-G" courses).

T-12

Teachers report that instructional time in their classrooms is protected from unnecessary interruptions. (1 item, T_10k)

20th–35th Percentile SCI band ONLY

Teacher Responses

T-2a

Teachers report that district communicates high expectations that schools will meet or exceed state and federal accountability targets. (1 item)

- (T_43c) Your district or Charter Management Organization (CMO) communicates high expectations that your school will meet or exceed state and federal accountability targets.

Gaining Ground in the Middle Grades: Why Some Schools Do Better

**Subdomain Findings from Cross-Sectional Analyses,
With Survey Items**

**The Middle Six Domains
(Grouping #2)**

Gaining Ground in the Middle Grades: Why Some Schools Do Better

Subdomain Findings from Cross-Sectional Analyses

Domain D

Coherent and aligned standards-based instruction and curricula

Principal Responses

P-7

The school has well defined plans for instructional improvement and assesses their effectiveness regularly. (2 items)

- To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements?
 - (P_11l) Our school has well defined plans for instructional improvement.
 - (P_11m) Our school assesses the effectiveness of our instructional improvement plans on an ongoing basis.

Teacher Responses

T-1a

English language arts teachers modify or augment the adopted English language arts curriculum with additional materials to meet needs of students. (3 items)

- How often do you do the following?
 - (T_24c) Modify a lesson plan provided in your school's curriculum program to better fit the needs of your students.
 - (T_24d) Augment your school's curriculum program with additional instructional materials of your own choosing.
 - (T_24e) Augment your school's curriculum program with additional instructional materials provided by the school/district.

T-4

School considers a range of factors in placing students into general mathematics classes in grades 7 and 8. (9 items)

- Regarding grade 7 and 8 mathematics courses (General Math), to what extent is each of the following considered for determining student placement?
 - (T_29a) A placement or basic skills test developed outside the school district, such as by a textbook publisher or university.
 - (T_29b) A placement or basic skills test developed by the department, school, or district.
 - (T_29c) Teacher recommendation.
 - (T_29d) Student prior academic performance.
 - (T_29e) Student CST scores.
 - (T_29f) Parent request and/or perspective.
 - (T_29h) A review by school's lead mathematics teachers.
 - (T_29i) A review by administrative team to ensure the widest appropriate access for all students.
 - (T_29j) Explicit criteria for placement set by school.

T-7

Teachers report that the school assesses the effectiveness of its instructional improvement plans on an ongoing basis. (1 item, T_10j)

T-8

School's English language arts teachers closely align instruction with the California academic content standards and CSTs, emphasize key standards, and work together to break down prerequisite skills. (4 items)

- To what extent do you agree with the following statements?
 - (T_23a) Our school's teachers closely align instruction with the California academic content standards in English language arts.
 - (T_23b) Our school's teachers closely align instruction with the California Standards Tests (CSTs) in English language arts.
 - (T_23c) Our school emphasizes selected key standards that teachers prioritize at each grade level.
- (T_39c) Overall, to what extent do teachers in your school collaborate to do the following? Work together to "break down" the state content standards (e.g., identify prerequisite student skills). (English language arts' teachers response only)

Gaining Ground in the Middle Grades: Why Some Schools Do Better

T-8a

School's mathematics teachers closely align instruction with the California academic content standards and CSTs, emphasize key standards, and work together to break down prerequisite skills. (4 items)

- To what extent do you agree with the following?
 - (T_31a) Our school's teachers closely align instruction with the California academic content standards in mathematics.
 - (T_31b) Our school's teachers closely align instruction with the CSTs in mathematics.
 - (T_31c) Our school emphasizes selected key standards that teachers prioritize at each grade level.
- (T_39c) Overall, to what extent do teachers in your school collaborate to do the following? Work together to “break down” the state content standards (e.g., identify prerequisite student skills). (Mathematics' teachers response only)

T-13

English language arts teachers hold students accountable for reading outside of class and teach strategies for writing. (2 items)

- To what extent do you do the following as part of reading and writing instruction in your classes?
 - (T_27b) Hold students accountable for reading done outside of class (e.g., through discussion, grades).
 - (T_27c) Explicitly teach students strategies for planning, evaluating, and revising their writing.

20th–35th Percentile SCI band ONLY

Teacher Responses

T-6

Teachers collaborate on curriculum pacing, common benchmark assessments, and instruction. (3 items)

- Overall, to what extent do teachers in your school collaborate to do the following?
 - (T_39i) Discuss curriculum pacing, scope, and sequence.
 - (T_39j) Develop common benchmarks and assessments.
 - (T_39k) Discuss how common benchmarks and assessments relate to instruction.

Gaining Ground in the Middle Grades: Why Some Schools Do Better

Subdomain Findings from Cross-Sectional Analyses

Domain E

Extensive use of data to improve instruction and student learning

Superintendent Responses

S-9

District gives middle grades staff discretion over developing, determining the need for, and analyzing the results of diagnostic assessments. (3 items)

- (S_09b) Our district allows schools to develop their own diagnostic assessments aligned with the state standards by grade and subject for the middle grades.
- (S_09d) Our district allows educators in our middle grades to determine the need for diagnostic assessments.
- (S_09f) Our district allows school staff to do their own analysis of the results of diagnostic student assessment data.

Principal Responses

P-1 (See also Domain I, P-21)

Principal reports using assessment data extensively and in multiple ways to improve student learning and teacher practice. (6 items)

- How often do you use assessment data of any type to do the following?
 - (P_20a) Set goals for the achievement of selected students.
 - (P_20b) Develop strategies to help selected students reach achievement goals.
 - (P_20c) Follow-up on the progress of selected students.
 - (P_20d) Examine our school's teachers' practices and content knowledge.
 - (P_20e) Determine the professional development needs of individual teachers, or of all teachers in a subject area.
 - (P_20f) Identify areas for schoolwide improvement.

P-3

Principal reports that teachers regularly monitor student grades and class test scores to rapidly report student intervention needs, discuss and use data to evaluate the achievement of different student groups, and set measurable student goals. (5 items)

- To what extent do you agree with the following statements?
 - (P_05h) Our teachers regularly monitor student grades and class test scores to rapidly report students for needed intervention.
- To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements about the use of subgroup assessment data by your school's ELA and Math teachers?
 - (P_21a) Teachers use data to analyze student achievement by subgroup.
 - (P_21b) Teachers use data to evaluate EL students' English language proficiency.
 - (P_21c) Teachers set measurable goals for student achievement by subgroup.
 - (P_21d) Our school dedicates time at staff meetings to discuss student achievement by subgroup.

P-8 (See also Domain J, P-15)

District provides schools with timely CST, CELDT, and district benchmark data; provides a computer-based data system and adequate staff training; and uses achievement data to improve and recognize teacher practice. (10 items)

- To what extent do you agree with the following statements? Your school district:
 - (P_54a) Provides schools with timely CST student achievement data.
 - (P_54b) Provides schools with timely CELDT data for EL students.
 - (P_54c) Provides a computer based system to enable school staff to access and review student data.
 - (P_54d) Provides adequate training to our staff to enable effective use of the data management software.
 - (P_54e) Uses student achievement data to identify needs for improved teacher practice.
 - (P_54f) Uses student achievement data to identify and recognize exemplary teacher practices.
 - (P_54g) Communicates clear expectations that instructional decisions will be data driven.
 - (P_54h) Has standards based benchmark tests in each grade and subject that it expects all schools to administer.
 - (P_54i) Analyzes benchmark test data and reports it back promptly to my school.
 - (P_54j) Uses student outcomes to influence school and instructional improvement.

Gaining Ground in the Middle Grades: Why Some Schools Do Better

Teacher Responses

T-3

School uses CST scores for placement, promotion, and/or intervention. (1 item, T_10m)

T-5

Teachers receive individual CST data for all students they teach, as well as data disaggregated by skill and subgroup, and summarized across grade levels. (4 items)

- In what forms do you receive CST data? (check all that apply)
 - (T_15a) Individually for all my students.
 - (T_15b) Disaggregated by specific skill/academic content for all my students.
 - (T_15c) Disaggregated by student subgroup (e.g., racial/ethnic, EL) for all my students.
 - (T_15d) A summary for all students across the grade level(s) I teach.

T-7

Teachers use assessment data to evaluate individual student achievement, set measurable goals, help students see progress, correct gaps in instruction, and identify effective instructional practices. (5 items)

- How often do you use assessment data (of any kind) to do the following?
 - (T_14a) Evaluate individual student achievement.
 - (T_14b) Set measurable goals for individual student achievement.
 - (T_14g) Help students see steady and measurable progress in their learning.
 - (T_14h) Identify and correct gaps in my instruction.
 - (T_14g) Analyze student assessment data to identify effective instructional practices.

T-8 (See also Domain J, T-15)

Teachers report that the district supports their data analysis by providing schools with timely CST data and a user-friendly information system, and emphasizing regular teacher use of benchmark and/or diagnostic assessments. (3 items)

- The district or Charter Management Organization (CMO)
 - (T_43d) Provides schools with timely CST student achievement data on all students.
 - (T_43e) Provides a user-friendly computer information system to enable school staff to review student data.
 - (T_43f) Emphasizes regular teacher use of benchmark and/or diagnostic assessments.

T-9

Teachers use assessment data to evaluate student achievement and set measurable goals by subgroup. (2 items)

- How often do you use student assessment data (of any kind) to do the following?
 - (T_14c) Evaluate student achievement by subgroup (e.g., racial/ethnic, EL).
 - (T_14d) Set measurable goals for student achievement by subgroup.

20th–35th Percentile SCI band ONLY

Principal Responses

P-1b (See also Domain I, P-23)

Principal meets with teachers individually, by grade, and by subject to review benchmark test results, and meets with the entire school staff to review schoolwide benchmark scores. (5 items)

- With regard to your use of assessment data, to what extent do you do the following?
 - (P_19b) Principal meets with individual teachers to review: benchmark test results.
 - (P_19e) Principal meets with grade level teachers to review: benchmark test results.
 - (P_19h) Principal meets with English and/or math teachers by department to review: benchmark test results.
 - (P_19k) Principal meets with other school administrators to review: benchmark test scores.
 - (P_19n) Principal meets with the entire school staff to review: benchmark test scores.

70th–85th Percentile SCI band ONLY

Teacher Responses

T-2

Attendance and/or behavior teams meet to review student data and devise solutions. (1 item, T_08f)

Gaining Ground in the Middle Grades: Why Some Schools Do Better

Subdomain Findings from Cross-Sectional Analyses

Domain F

Early and proactive academic interventions

Principal Responses

P-3 (See also Domain I, P-27)

Principal ensures common planning time is available for English language arts and mathematics teachers to meet with intervention teachers to coordinate instruction. (1 item, P_50g)

P-5 (See also Domain J, P-17)

Principal reports that the district emphasizes early identification of students needing academic support and addresses the needs of students two or more years behind grade level. (2 items)

- To what extent do you agree with the following statements? Your school district:
 - (P_53h) Emphasizes early identification of students needing academic support.
 - (P_53k) Addresses the needs of students who are two or more years below grade level.

P-6

Principal reports that the district emphasizes the importance of English language development and subject matter learning by EL students, and addresses the needs of EL students who are new immigrants. (3 items)

- To what extent do you agree with the following statements? Your school district:
 - (P_53f) Emphasizes the importance of English language development by EL students.
 - (P_53g) Emphasizes the importance of subject matter learning by EL students.
 - (P_53j) Addresses the needs of EL students who are new immigrants.

P-11

*School employs a range of **required** intervention strategies for students identified for intensive intervention. (4 items)*

- Which of the following strategies does your school use to provide academic support for the following types of students? – students identified for intensive intervention.
 - (P_40B_2) Extra instructional time required during the regular school day, perhaps in place of an elective.
 - (P_40C_2) Short term required interventions that run concurrent with class.
 - (P_40D_2) Required intervention time outside the regular school day.
 - (P_40F_2) Required intersession or summer courses.

Teacher Responses

T-1a

Teachers use differentiated instruction and flexible grouping in the classroom. (2 items)

- To what extent do you use each of the following instructional practices with your students?
 - (T_34d) Differentiated teaching for individuals or groups of students during regular instruction.
 - (T_34e) Flexible student groupings.

T-3

Subject area teachers meet with intervention teachers to coordinate instruction. (1 item, T_39a)

T-5

District ensures that policies and resources are in place to serve EL students. (1 item, T_43j)

T-7

Staff and parents meet to develop intervention plans for individual students at risk of failure this year. (1 item, T_35_a1)

T-8

Staff and parents meet to develop intervention plans for individual students identified for intensive intervention. (1 item, T_35_a2)

Gaining Ground in the Middle Grades: Why Some Schools Do Better

T-14

School provides voluntary academic support (during non-classroom time, AVID, online tutorials) for students identified for intensive intervention. (Any of 3 items checked)

- Which of the following does your school use to provide academic support for students identified for intensive intervention?
 - (T_35_f2) Voluntary academic support offered during non-classroom time (e.g., lunch, after school).
 - (T_35_g2) AVID tutorials and/or classes.
 - (T_35_h2) An online tutorial or intervention program.

20th–35th Percentile SCI band ONLY

Teacher Responses

T-1c (See also Domain I, T-26)

Teachers report that principal assigns teachers to ensure students with the greatest need are served well. (1 item, T_42p)

Gaining Ground in the Middle Grades: Why Some Schools Do Better

Subdomain Findings from Cross-Sectional Analyses

Domain H

Teacher competencies, evaluation, and support

Principal Responses

P-1

Principal reports that a high proportion of the school's mathematics and English language arts teachers are able to use student assessment data to improve learning, able to raise student achievement, able to map curriculum standards to instruction, understand adolescent development issues, and have other characteristics. (14 items)

- What proportion of your current 6th-8th grade ELA and Math teachers have the following characteristics?
 - (P_41a) Ability to use student assessment data to improve learning.
 - (P_41b) Knowledge of California state standards.
 - (P_41c) Fit well into your school culture.
 - (P_41d) Ability to raise student achievement.
 - (P_41e) Strong subject area knowledge.
 - (P_41f) Ability to map curriculum standards to instruction.
 - (P_41g) Likely to remain in the teaching field.
 - (P_41h) Enjoy teaching at the middle grades level.
 - (P_41i) Understand adolescent developmental issues.
 - (P_41j) Taught at this school last year.
 - (P_41k) Ability to collaborate effectively with peers.
 - (P_41l) Ability to make personal connections with students.
 - (P_41m) Well prepared by their teacher credential program (new teachers).
 - (P_41n) Expertise working with EL students.

P-11 (See also Domain J, P-21)

Principal reports that district provides useful professional development for teachers. (1 item, P_52f)

Teacher Responses

T-4

Teachers report middle grades are current first choice of teaching assignment. (1 item, T_46)

T-6

Teachers report that principal provides meaningful teacher evaluation and supports teachers' professional growth. (5 items)

- To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your principal? Your school principal:
 - (T_42e) Understands and acknowledges excellent teaching.
 - (T_42g) Arranges for evaluation of my teaching skills by teacher leaders.
 - (T_42h) Ensures that evaluations of my teaching are substantive and meaningful.
 - (T_42i) Ensures that teachers receive effective professional development to improve instruction.
 - (T_42k) Builds strong relationships with teachers and staff.

T-10

Teachers collaborate to evaluate lessons and discuss student work. (2 items)

- Overall, to what extent do teachers in your school collaborate to do the following?
 - (T_39e) Share and discuss student work.
 - (T_39f) Discuss particular lessons that were or were not successful.

Gaining Ground in the Middle Grades: Why Some Schools Do Better

70th–85th Percentile SCI band ONLY

Principal Responses

P-4

Teachers are surveyed to determine ranked preference of subject/grade-level assignments. (1 item, P_44a)

Teacher Responses

T-11 (See also Domain J, T-21)

Teachers report that district provides useful professional development for teachers. (1 item, T_43h)

Gaining Ground in the Middle Grades: Why Some Schools Do Better

Subdomain Findings from Cross-Sectional Analyses

Domain I

Principal leadership and competencies

Superintendent Responses

S-12

Superintendent evaluates middle grades principals on the effectiveness of academic interventions, improving student performance on district benchmarks and CSTs, improving EL students' English proficiency, and exceeding state and federal accountability targets. (5 items)

- To what extent do you evaluate your middle grades principals on the following?
 - (S_25c) The effectiveness of student academic intervention strategies.
 - (S_25k) Improving EL students' progress toward English proficiency.
 - (S_25l) Improving student performance on district benchmark assessments.
 - (S_25m) Improving student achievement on the California Standards Tests.
 - (S_25n) Exceeding state and federal accountability targets for student achievement.

Principal Responses

P-1

Principal's priorities for schoolwide improvement are influenced by expectations from superintendent/school board, CST scores, and state accountability measures. (5 items)

- To what extent do the following influence your priorities for schoolwide improvement?
 - (P_12a) Expectations from my superintendent/school board.
 - (P_12b) CST scores.
 - (P_12f) School statewide ranking on the API.
 - (P_12g) Similar schools ranking on the API.
 - (P_12j) Requirements that come from categorical funding programs.

P-1a

Principal's priorities for schoolwide improvement are influenced by recommendations from an external Program Improvement provider. (1 item, P_12i)

P-5

Principal has been trained in the evaluation of instruction for EL students, understands the principles of EL second language acquisition, and is comfortable conversing in a language other than English. (3 items)

- To what extent do you agree with the following statements?
 - (P_59f) I received training in the evaluation of instruction for ELs.
 - (P_59g) I understand the principles of EL second language acquisition.
- (P_64) Are you comfortable conversing in a language other than English? (yes-no)

P-19

Principal expects mathematics teachers to use the school's adopted mathematics curriculum program frequently. (1 item)

- (P_31) As a principal, how often do you expect your school's math teachers to use the school's adopted mathematics curriculum program?
 - No requirement.
 - Weekly.
 - 3–4 times per week.
 - Daily.
 - No expectation for text use, but do expect teachers to align instruction to state content standards.

Gaining Ground in the Middle Grades: Why Some Schools Do Better

P-21 (See also Domain E, P-1)

Principal reports using assessment data extensively and in multiple ways to improve student learning and teacher practice. (6 items)

- How often do you use assessment data of any type to do the following?
 - (P_20a) Set goals for the achievement of selected students.
 - (P_20b) Develop strategies to help selected students reach achievement goals.
 - (P_20c) Follow-up on the progress of selected students.
 - (P_20d) Examine our school's teachers' practices and content knowledge.
 - (P_20e) Determine the professional development needs of individual teachers, or of all teachers in a subject area.
 - (P_20f) Identify areas for schoolwide improvement.

P-22

Principal meets with teachers individually, by grade, and by subject to review CST results (including subgroups), and meets with the entire school staff to review schoolwide CST scores. (5 items)

- With regard to your use of assessment data, to what extent do you do the following?
 - (P_19a) I meet with individual teachers to review: CST results, including subgroups.
 - (P_19d) I meet with grade level teachers to review: grade level CST results, including subgroups.
 - (P_19g) I meet with English and/or math teachers by department to review: CST results, including subgroups.
 - (P_19j) I meet with other school administrators to review: schoolwide CST scores.
 - (P_19m) I meet with the entire school staff to review: schoolwide CST scores.

P-23 (See also Domain E, P-1b)

Principal meets with teachers individually, by grade, and by subject to review benchmark test results, and meets with the entire school staff to review schoolwide benchmark scores. (5 items)

- With regard to your use of assessment data, to what extent do you do the following?
 - (P_19b) I meet with individual teachers to review: benchmark test results.
 - (P_19e) I meet with grade level teachers to review: benchmark test results.
 - (P_19h) I meet with English and/or math teachers by department to review: benchmark test results.
 - (P_19k) I meet with other school administrators to review: benchmark test scores.
 - (P_19n) I meet with the entire school staff to review: benchmark test scores.

P-27 (See also Domain F, P-3)

Principal ensures common planning time is available for English language arts and mathematics teachers to meet with intervention teachers to coordinate instruction. (1 item, P50g)

Teacher Responses

T-12

Principal ensures a clean, safe, and disciplined school environment. (3 items)

- To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements about your principal? My school principal:
 - (T_42d) Provides support for classroom discipline and management.
 - (T_42m) Ensures that school facilities are kept clean and operational.
 - (T_42n) Ensures a safe campus environment.

T-16

Principal regularly communicates the importance of high expectations for student achievement and holds teachers accountable for common planning time to focus on student achievement. (3 items)

- To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements about your principal? My school principal:
 - (T_42a) Regularly communicates the importance of high expectations for the achievement of all students.
 - (T_42b) Has clear expectations that teachers will meet academic achievement goals for students.
 - (T_42f) Holds teachers accountable for using common planning time to focus on student achievement.

20th–35th Percentile SCI band ONLY

Teacher Responses

T-26 (See also Domain F, T-1c)

Teachers report that principal assigns teachers to ensure students with the greatest need are served well. (1 item, T_42p)

Gaining Ground in the Middle Grades: Why Some Schools Do Better

Subdomain Findings from Cross-Sectional Analyses

Domain J

Superintendent leadership and district support

Superintendent Responses

S-2

Superintendent reports that district functions well across many dimensions (e.g., union, board, staffing, finance). (6 items)

- To what extent do you agree with the following concerning your school district or CMO?
 - (S_22a) District staff are highly skilled at curriculum and instruction.
 - (S_22b) District staff are highly skilled at financial management.
 - (S_22c) The district school board functions very effectively.
 - (S_22d) The district maintains constructive relationships with employee unions.
 - (S_22e) I am able to negotiate teacher union contracts that place a priority on improved student achievement.
 - (S_22f) District staff are very effective at working with middle grades school sites.

S-4

District's priorities for middle grades improvement are influenced by analysis of student CST scores and progress on other measures, and by published statewide rankings of schools. (2 items)

- To what extent do the following influence your district's or CMO's priorities for middle grades improvement?
 - (S_06c) Analysis of student achievement on CSTs.
 - (S_06d) Analysis of student progress on other assessment measures.
 - (S_06f) Published statewide rankings of schools.

S-7

Superintendent evaluation is based in part on middle grades academic outcomes. (4 items)

- As a superintendent or CMO executive, to what extent is your own annual evaluation based upon the following?
 - (S_27e) Improvements in district-wide middle grades student achievement on California Standards Tests.
 - (S_27f) Ensuring more middle grades students are prepared to pass the California High School Exit Exam.
 - (S_27g) Ensuring more middle grades students are prepared for a college preparatory ("A-G") high school curriculum.
 - (S_27h) Improvements in the performance (AYP/API) of middle grades schools.

Principal Responses

P-10 (See also Domain B, P-3a)

Principal reports that district emphasizes improving student achievement across all CST levels, closing CST subgroup achievement gaps, and getting as many students to proficient as possible. (3 items)

- To what extent do you agree with the following statements? Your school district:
 - (P_53c) Emphasizes improving student achievement across all the CST performance levels.
 - (P_53d) Emphasizes closing achievement gaps on the CST between specific student subpopulations.
 - (P_53e) Emphasizes getting as many students to the CST "Proficient" level as possible.

P-15 (See also Domain E, P-8)

District provides schools with timely CST, CELDT, and district benchmark data; provides a computer based data system and adequate staff training; and uses achievement data to improve and recognize teacher practice. (10 items)

- To what extent do you agree with the following statements? Your school district:
 - (P_54a) Provides schools with timely CST student achievement data.
 - (P_54b) Provides schools with timely CELDT data for EL students.
 - (P_54c) Provides a computer based system to enable school staff to access and review student data.
 - (P_54d) Provides adequate training to our staff to enable effective use of the data management software.
 - (P_54e) Uses student achievement data to identify needs for improved teacher practice.
 - (P_54f) Uses student achievement data to identify and recognize exemplary teacher practices.
 - (P_54g) Communicates clear expectations that instructional decisions will be data driven
 - (P_54h) Has standards based benchmark tests in each grade and subject that it expects all schools to administer.
 - (P_54i) Analyzes benchmark test data and reports it back promptly to my school.
 - (P_54j) Uses student outcomes to influence school and instructional improvement.

Gaining Ground in the Middle Grades: Why Some Schools Do Better

P-17 (See also Domain F, P-5)

Principal reports that district emphasizes early identification of students needing academic support and addresses the needs of students two or more years behind grade level. (2 items)

- To what extent do you agree with the following statements? Your school district:
 - (P_53h) Emphasizes early identification of students needing academic support.
 - (P_53k) Addresses the needs of students who are two or more years below grade level.

P-21 (See also Domain H, P-11)

Principal reports that district provides useful professional development for teachers. (1 item, P_52f)

Teacher Responses

T-4

Teachers report that the district provides the financial and human resources necessary for the school to meet its goals, and visits the school at least once a year. (2 items)

- District or Charter Management Organization (CMO):
 - (T_43a) Provides financial and human resources necessary for our school to achieve its goals.
 - (T_43i) Ensures that district staff visits our school at least once a year.

T-15 (See also Domain E, T-8)

Teachers report that the district supports their data analysis by providing schools with timely CST data and a user-friendly information system, and emphasizing regular teacher use of benchmark and/or diagnostic assessments. (3 items)

- The district or Charter Management Organization (CMO):
 - (T_43d) Provides schools with timely CST student achievement data on all students.
 - (T_43e) Provides a user-friendly computer information system to enable school staff to review student data.
 - (T_43f) Emphasizes regular teacher use of benchmark and/or diagnostic assessments.

20th–35th Percentile SCI band ONLY

T-14

Teachers report that the district communicates high expectations that instruction will closely align with state standards. (1 item, T_43b)

70th–85th Percentile SCI band ONLY

Principal Responses

P-13

Principal reports that the district leads decisions about the school's 6th-8th grade curriculum program adoption in mathematics. (1 item)

- (P_29abcde_2) Who makes decisions about your school's 6th–8th grade curriculum program adoptions?
 - District-wide (or charter management organization) adoption.
 - District (or charter management organization) with school input.
 - School staff with district (or charter management organization) approval.
 - Individual teachers make their own decisions.
 - Other.

Teacher Responses

T-21 (See also Domain H, T-11)

Teachers report that district provides useful professional development for teachers. (1 item, T_43h)

Gaining Ground in the Middle Grades: Why Some Schools Do Better

**Subdomain Findings from Cross-Sectional Analyses,
With Survey Items**

**The Bottom Three Domains
(Grouping #3)**

Gaining Ground in the Middle Grades: Why Some Schools Do Better

Subdomain Findings from Cross-Sectional Analyses

Domain A

A positive, safe, engaging school environment

Principal Survey

P-1

Principal enforces a comprehensive set of strategies to ensure a safe and positive school environment. (7 items)

- Which of the following are true about your school this year?
 - (P_04i) Students are required to maintain minimum performance standards (e.g., behavior, academic, participation) to remain at your school.
- To what extent are the following in effect at your school?
 - (P_10a) A clearly defined dress code that is strictly enforced.
 - (P_10b) A strictly-enforced, zero tolerance policy for drugs and weapons on campus.
 - (P_10c) A strictly-enforced, zero tolerance policy for any type of bullying.
 - (P_10d) Adult supervision is present during all passing and lunch periods.
 - (P_10i) Teachers and administrative staff continuously monitor student behavior to identify students in need of intervention.
 - (P_10j) Students receive incentives (e.g., front of line passes, parties, or special events) to reward positive behaviors.

P-4

A high proportion of students participate in extracurricular activities and course electives. (4 items)

- Please estimate how many of your students participate in the following classes or activities:
 - (P_08a) One or more extracurricular activities.
 - (P_08b) Course electives: Music, drama, art, dance.
 - (P_08c) Course electives: Exploratory wheel or mini-courses.
 - (P_08d) Course electives: Other.

Teacher Survey

T-1

Teachers report school enforcement of comprehensive safety strategies and that they feel safe in their school. (5 items)

- To what extent are the following in effect at your school?
 - (T_08b) Our school has a clearly defined dress code that is strictly enforced.
 - (T_08c) Our school has a strictly enforced, zero tolerance policy for drugs and weapons on campus.
 - (T_08d) Our school has a strictly enforced, zero tolerance policy for any type of bullying.
 - (T_08e) Our school has adult supervision during all passing and lunch periods.
- To what extent do you agree with the following statement?
 - (T_09b) You feel safe in your school.

T-3

Teachers report that the school clearly communicates policies on student behavior and the importance of attendance to students and parents, and that teachers collaborate to develop strategies to address issues. (5 items)

- To what extent are the following in effect at your school?
 - (T_08a) Our school clearly communicates rules and policies on student behavior to students and parents.
 - (T_08g) Excellent behavior and/or attendance by students gets classroom and/or schoolwide public recognition.
 - (T_08h) The importance of attendance and the consequences of frequent absenteeism, such as academic failure, are clearly communicated to students and parents.
- To what extent do you agree with the following statement?
 - (T_09a) A great deal of your time in class is spent managing student behavior.
- (T_39h) Overall, to what extent do teachers in your school collaborate to do the following? - Develop strategies to address student behavior and/or attendance issues.

Gaining Ground in the Middle Grades: Why Some Schools Do Better

Subdomain Findings from Cross-Sectional Analyses

Domain C

School organization of time and instruction

Principal Survey

P-4

Extended instructional time. (1 item)

- (P_26) Does your school exceed the state's minimum annual requirements for instructional minutes/days?

Teacher Survey

T-1

School has subject matter department chairs in English language arts and mathematics. (1 item, T_05)

20th–35th Percentile SCI band ONLY

Principal Survey

P-8

Amount of time allocated per month for common planning time in grade 8. (1 item)

- (P_49A_8) Please estimate the following about your ELA and math teachers' time: Number of minutes per month teachers have for common planning time.

70th–85th Percentile SCI band ONLY

Principal Survey

P-2a

The school adjusts the amount of instructional time provided to EL students in English language arts, mathematics, and/or English language development based on students' level of fluency, with "reasonably fluent" EL students spending less instructional time in these subjects than EL students with "less than reasonable" fluency.

- Sum of 3 indicators showing whether more ELA, math, and ELD instruction is provided to EL students with "less than reasonable fluency" vs. EL students with "reasonable fluency." (ELA: P_28A_3 vs. P_28A_4 / Math: P_28B_3 vs. P_28B_4 / ELD: P_28C_1 vs. P_28C_2)

Gaining Ground in the Middle Grades: Why Some Schools Do Better

Subdomain Findings from Cross-Sectional Analyses

Domain G

Attention to student transitions

Principal Survey

P-1

School administrative staff and teachers reviews prior CST scores, grades, attendance and behavior of students entering the middle grades and communicate with elementary teachers. (5 items)

- Related to incoming students from the elementary grades, to what extent do administrative staff and/or teachers in your school do the following?
 - (P_13a) Review prior CST scores for students entering the middle grades.
 - (P_13b) Review prior language arts and math grades for students entering the middle grades.
 - (P_13c) Review prior attendance records for students entering the middle grades.
 - (P_13d) Review prior behavior reports for students entering the middle grades.
 - (P_13f) Communicate with elementary teachers about any students entering the middle grades with low CST scores, failing language arts or math grades, poor behavior reports, or poor attendance records.

Teacher Survey

T-1

School administrative staff and teachers review prior CST scores, grades, attendance and behavior reports of students entering the middle grades and communicate with elementary teachers. (5 items)

- Related to incoming students from the elementary grades, to what extent do administrative staff and/or teachers in your school do the following?
 - (T_11a) Review prior CST scores for students entering the middle grades.
 - (T_11b) Review prior language arts and math grades for students entering the middle grades.
 - (T_11c) Review prior attendance records for students entering the middle grades.
 - (T_11d) Review prior behavior reports for students entering the middle grades.
 - (T_11f) Communicate with elementary teachers about any students entering the middle grades with low CST scores, failing language arts or math grades, poor behavior reports, or poor attendance records.

T-4

School administrative staff and teachers implement classroom and intervention strategies to address academic weaknesses among incoming students. (1 item, T_11g)

T-7

School administrative staff and teachers review prior CELDT scores and other English proficiency information for entering EL students. (1 item, T_11e)

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APPENDIX C - Statistical Comparisons Across Study Domains—Figures C-1–C-4

The following four charts compare the relative strength of the study domains—across all outcomes—with respect to:

- *Longitudinal Teacher and Principal subdomains*
- *Longitudinal Teacher and Principal and Superintendent subdomains*
- *Cross-sectional Teacher and Principal subdomains*
- *Cross-sectional Teacher and Principal and Superintendent subdomains*

Each set of figures contains a comparison table that tests whether differences between the domains are statistically significant followed by a bar chart illustrating the relative strength of the domains in standard deviation units. The shading on comparison charts illustrates which subsets of domains did not differ significantly in explanatory power (pink), those which differed at $p < .05$ but not at $p < .01$ (yellow), and those that differed at $p < .01$ (green). Cell entries are p-values. Standardized standard deviations (SSDs) are shown in the column head “Std Dev” and also along the top of the figure. Domains are ordered from highest to lowest SSD. (For full technical details, see Appendix A – Statistical Comparisons Across Study Domains).

Taken together, these figures show that the ten research domains fell into three “groupings” with respect to their relative predictive strength within these models in differentiating higher-performing middle grade schools in our sample.

- ***The domain with the greatest predictive strength*** across most of the cross-sectional and longitudinal analyses—especially for all CST outcomes combined and in mathematics, whether for the entire sample or the two different SCI bands—was Domain B, “A school-wide focus on improving academic outcomes.”
- ***Six domains*** consistently followed Domain B in terms of predictive strength. Relative to one another, their predictive strength varied depending on the analysis, and there were relatively few statistically significant differences between them. These domains pertain to standards-based instruction and curricula; extensive use of data; proactive academic interventions; teachers; principal leadership; and superintendent leadership.
- ***Three domains***, although they ***did*** differentiate schools with higher CST scores and higher gains in CST scores, did so with less predictive strength than the other seven domains studied in almost every analysis conducted. These three domains pertain to the school environment; the organization of time and instruction; and attention to student transitions.

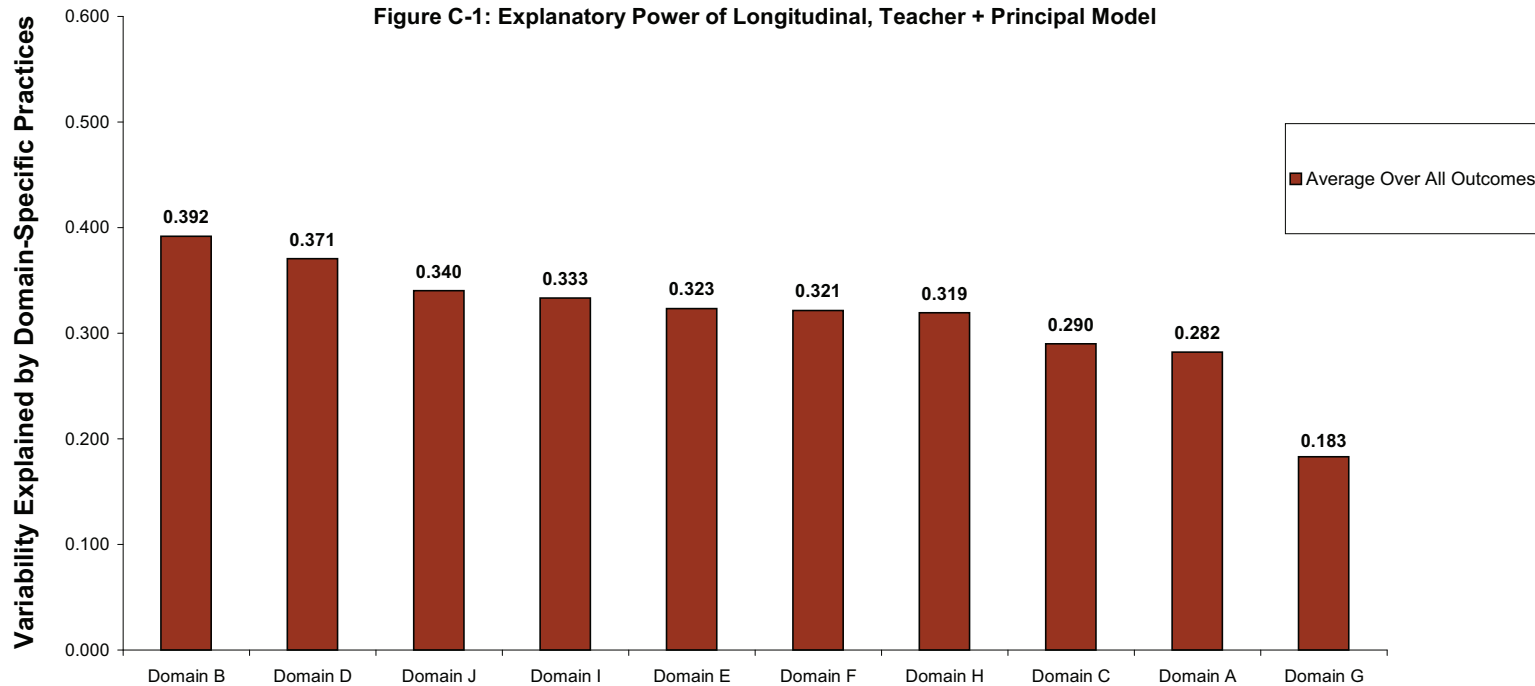
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Appendix C: Statistical Comparisons Across Study Domains—Figures C-1–C-4

Figure C-1: Domain Comparisons—Longitudinal, Teacher + Principal Models: Pooled Sample - All Outcomes by Domain

All Outcomes		Pooled Domain	Domain B	Domain D	Domain J	Domain I	Domain E	Domain F	Domain H	Domain C	Domain A	Domain G
		Std Dev	0.392	0.371	0.340	0.333	0.323	0.321	0.319	0.290	0.282	0.183
highest	Domain B	0.392	--	0.044	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Domain D	0.371	0.044	--	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Domain J	0.340	0.000	0.001	--	0.445	0.059	0.034	0.019	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Domain I	0.333	0.000	0.000	0.445	--	0.249	0.182	0.141	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Domain E	0.323	0.000	0.000	0.059	0.249	--	0.829	0.679	0.001	0.000	0.000
	Domain F	0.321	0.000	0.000	0.034	0.182	0.829	--	0.816	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Domain H	0.319	0.000	0.000	0.019	0.141	0.679	0.816	--	0.001	0.000	0.000
	Domain C	0.290	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.001	--	0.357	0.000
	Domain A	0.282	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.357	--	0.000
lowest	Domain G	0.183	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	--

Figure C-1: Explanatory Power of Longitudinal, Teacher + Principal Model



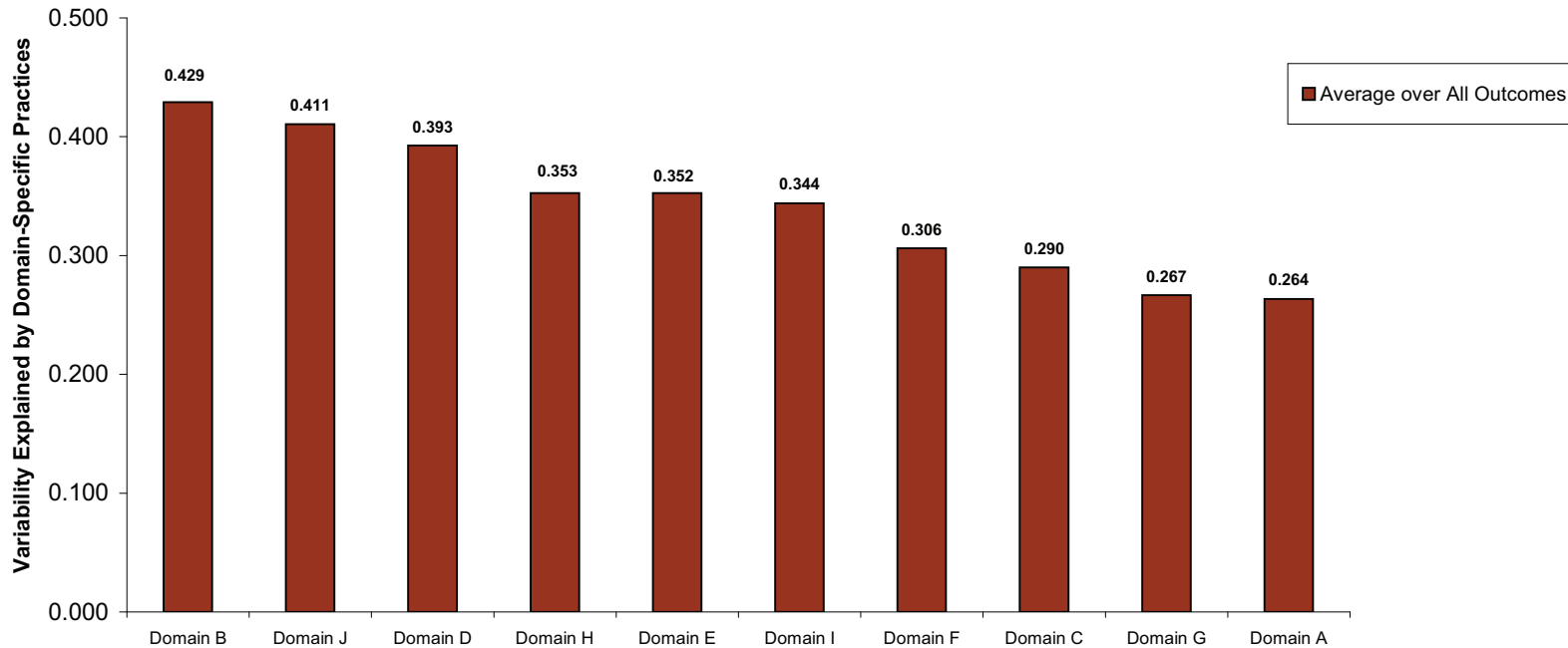
Gaining Ground in the Middle Grades: Why Some Schools Do Better

Figure C-2: Domain Comparisons—Longitudinal, Teacher + Principal + Superintendent Models: Pooled Sample - All Outcomes by Domain

All Outcomes

Pooled Domain		Std Dev	Domain B	Domain J	Domain D	Domain H	Domain E	Domain I	Domain F	Domain C	Domain G	Domain A
			0.429	0.411	0.393	0.353	0.352	0.344	0.306	0.290	0.267	0.264
highest	Domain B	0.429	--	0.171	0.005	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Domain J	0.411	0.171	--	0.152	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Domain D	0.393	0.005	0.152	--	0.003	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Domain H	0.353	0.000	0.000	0.003	--	0.987	0.459	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Domain E	0.352	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.987	--	0.432	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Domain I	0.344	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.459	0.432	--	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Domain F	0.306	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	--	0.098	0.000	0.000
	Domain C	0.290	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.098	--	0.029	0.004
lowest	Domain G	0.267	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.029	--	0.768
	Domain A	0.264	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.004	0.768	--

Figure C-2: Explanatory Power of Longitudinal, Teacher + Principal + Superintendent Model

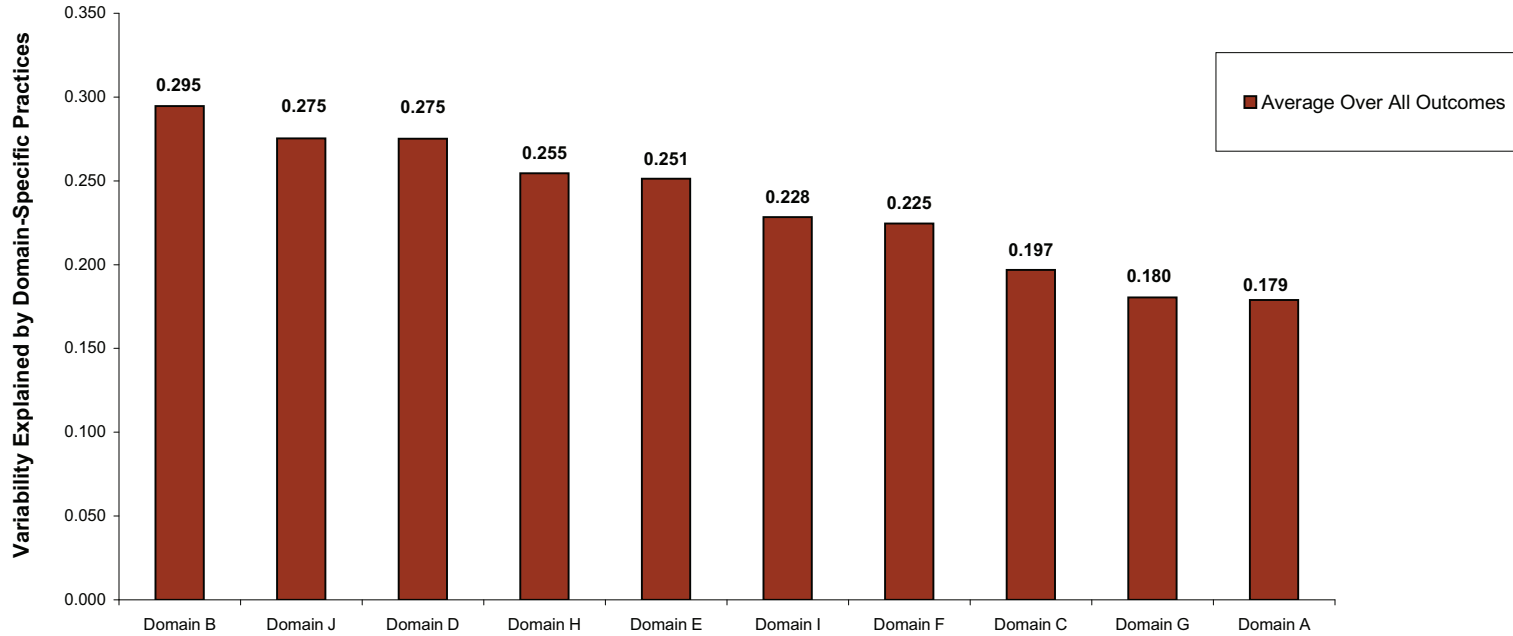


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Figure C-3: Domain Comparisons—Cross-Sectional, Teacher + Principal Models: Pooled Sample - All Outcomes by Domain

All Outcomes			Domain B	Domain J	Domain D	Domain H	Domain E	Domain I	Domain F	Domain C	Domain G	Domain A
	Pooled Domain	Std Dev	0.295	0.275	0.275	0.255	0.251	0.228	0.225	0.197	0.180	0.179
highest	Domain B	0.295	--	0.048	0.022	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Domain J	0.275	0.048	--	0.980	0.012	0.004	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Domain D	0.275	0.022	0.980	--	0.009	0.003	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Domain H	0.255	0.000	0.012	0.009	--	0.676	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Domain E	0.251	0.000	0.004	0.003	0.676	--	0.004	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Domain I	0.228	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.004	--	0.583	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Domain F	0.225	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.583	--	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Domain C	0.197	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	--	0.015	0.003
	Domain G	0.180	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.015	--	0.797
lowest	Domain A	0.179	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.003	0.797	--

Figure C-3: Explanatory Power of Cross-Sectional, Teacher + Principal Model

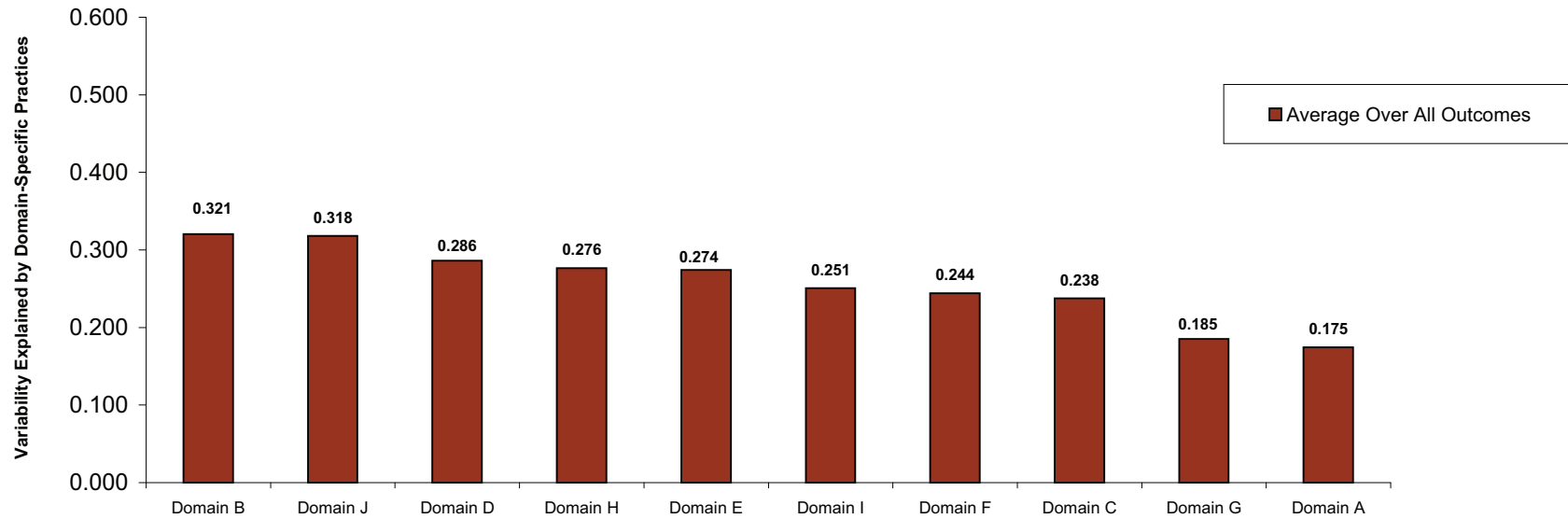


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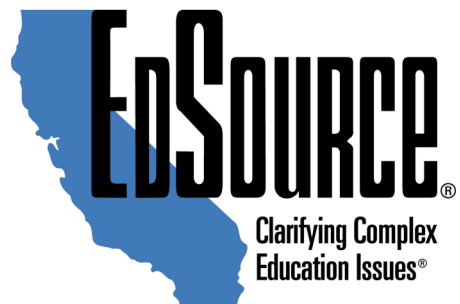
Figure C-4: Domain Comparisons—Cross-Sectional, Teacher + Principal + Superintendent Models: Pooled Sample - All Outcomes by Domain

All Outcomes		Pooled Domain	Domain B	Domain J	Domain D	Domain H	Domain E	Domain I	Domain F	Domain C	Domain G	Domain A
		Std Dev	0.321	0.318	0.286	0.276	0.274	0.251	0.244	0.238	0.185	0.175
highest	Domain B	0.321	--	0.815	0.002	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Domain J	0.318	0.815	--	0.003	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Domain D	0.286	0.002	0.003	--	0.315	0.232	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Domain H	0.276	0.000	0.000	0.315	--	0.806	0.003	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Domain E	0.274	0.000	0.000	0.232	0.806	--	0.005	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Domain I	0.251	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.003	0.005	--	0.443	0.123	0.000	0.000
	Domain F	0.244	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.443	--	0.474	0.000	0.000
	Domain C	0.238	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.123	0.474	--	0.000	0.000
	Domain G	0.185	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	--	0.139
lowest	Domain A	0.175	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.139	--

Figure C-4: Explanatory Power of Cross-Sectional, Teacher + Principal + Superintendent Model



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