Exploratory Study of the HOPE Foundation© Courageous Leadership Academy: Summary of Findings

Authors: Seth Brown, KC Choi, and Becki Herman

March 1, 2011

Overview

The HOPE Foundation (HOPE) commissioned the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to conduct an exploratory study of the implementation and impact of the Courageous Leadership Academy (CLA). In this report, we introduce the school reform model, describe the study methodology, present findings for each of the three research questions explored, and discuss the implications for the intervention and additional research.

This school reform model builds on the principles in Failure is Not an Option (FNO) Six Principles to structure and inform the thoughtful development and use of School Leadership Teams (SLT) functioning as professional learning communities (PLC) and embedded professional development to build school staff as change leaders. The FNO Six Principles[1] are:

1. Developing core mission, vision, values, and goals

2. Ensuring achievement for all students: Systems for intervention and prevention

3. Collaborative teaming focused on teaching and learning

4. Using data to guide decision making and continuous improvement

5. Gaining active engagement from family and community

6. Building sustainable leadership capacity

CLA involves a three-phase process of (1) taking stock, learning the FNO Six Principles, and building a professional learning community; (2) developing and implementing a plan to improve instruction; and (3) institutionalizing the practices (see Exhibit 1). Full implementation is designed to occur over three years, and involves selected staff from participating schools working across the district and within their home schools.

The first step is to develop an accurate understanding of the current state of readiness, needs, and goals in the district as well as the commitment of district and site leadership to provide resources to support full implementation. After setting goals in the first CLA session, the leadership team revisits Instructional SMART Goal checkpoints, held during each of the four CLA sessions per year.[2] Each school leadership team, facilitated by HOPE faculty, identifies high priority Instructional SMART Goals, and discusses data and progress towards their goals. A critical agenda item at this meeting is to monitor progress of the CLA participants and make customized adjustments, as indicated by their data.

In the first year, "CLA I," school leadership teams from participating schools join into a district-wide professional learning community to learn together about the FNO Six Principles and work together implementing them. The four professional learning sessions that year cover: (1) setting the stage for accelerated learning; (2) focusing on collaborative teaming and instruction; (3) building a professional development (PD) plan and communicating progress; and (4) reflecting on what participants have learned and reporting results.

In the second year, "CLA II," school leadership teams integrate additional tools and strategies in planning at their schools. The school leadership teams usually consists of 5-8 members,

---

[1] See Appenix 1 for the Hope Foundation's description of these principles.
[2] SMART goals are "specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely."
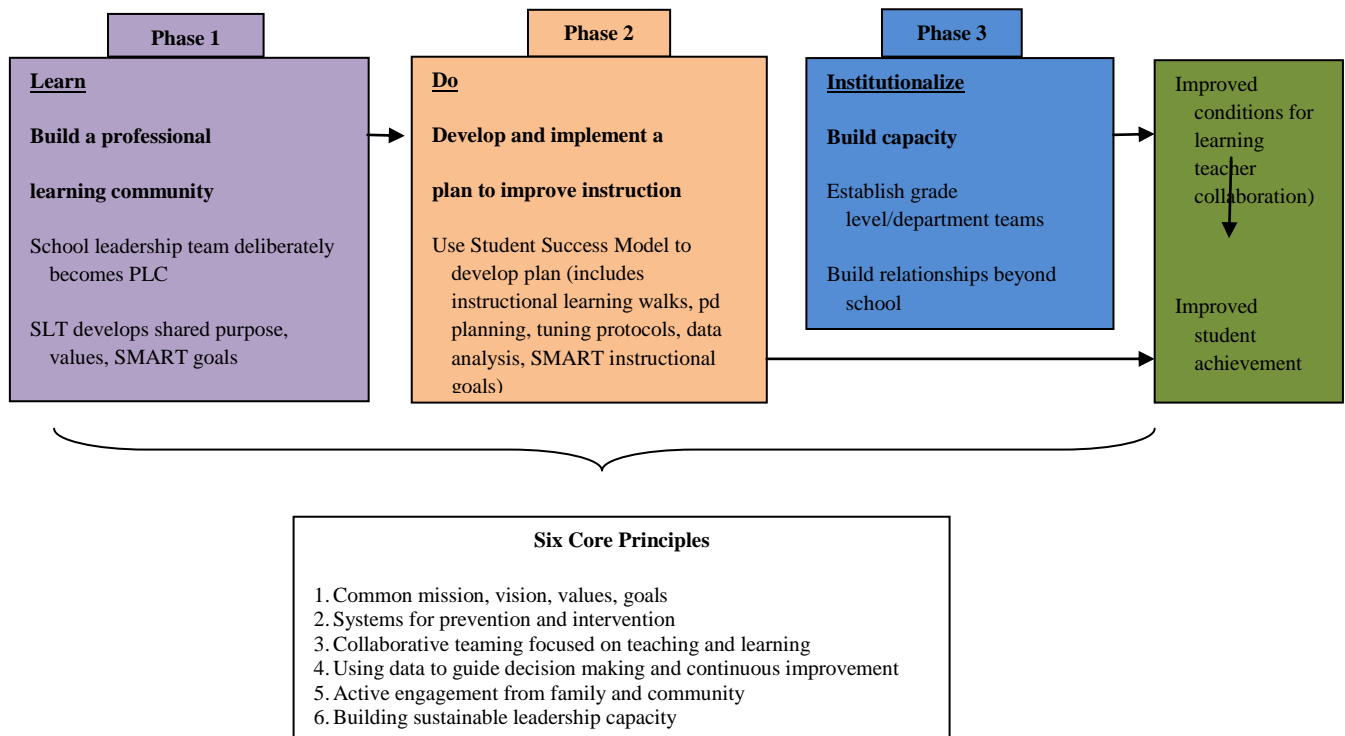
including the principal and department leads (in middle and high schools), and other teachers identified as leaders by the district and site administrators along with HOPE faculty. The four professional learning sessions that year cover: (1) becoming a high performing team; (2) engaging in collegial practices for instructional improvements; (3) communicating progress monitoring; and (4) maintaining FNO Six Principles to sustain high performing teams.

In the third year, "CLA III," the school leadership teams work on institutionalizing the learning and structures developed the previous year. The four professional learning sessions that year cover: (1) leading the school's PLC; (2) facilitating change to achieve commitment; (3) sustaining leadership across the school and district; and (4) sustaining the collegial culture. Each professional learning session lasts a full school day (≈8am-3pm), and is led by two HOPE faculty members: a faculty lead and a project lead. The faculty lead is responsible for facilitating the CLA session, while the project lead coordinates the planning and facilitation of the session in addition to working with the district and site administrators to provide ongoing support.

The HOPE Foundation faculty work closely with leadership teams from multiple schools within the district, and supports the leadership teams in developing staff in their home schools.[3]

The anticipated ultimate outcome of CLA is improved student achievement. CLA is designed to improve student achievement by creating a collaborative professional community that functions to improve instruction and school climate. Therefore, changes in teacher collaboration, instruction, and other conditions for learning could be considered proximal outcomes.

Exhibit 1: Courageous Leadership Academy Theory of Action

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	
Learn **Build a professional** **learning community** School leadership team deliberately becomes PLC SLT develops shared purpose, values, SMART goals	**Do** **Develop and implement a** **plan to improve instruction** Use Student Success Model to develop plan (includes instructional learning walks, pd planning, tuning protocols, data analysis, SMART instructional goals)	**Institutionalize** **Build capacity** Establish grade level/department teams Build relationships beyond school	Improved conditions for learning teacher collaboration) Improved student achievement

Six Core Principles

1. Common mission, vision, values, goals
2. Systems for prevention and intervention
3. Collaborative teaming focused on teaching and learning
4. Using data to guide decision making and continuous improvement
5. Active engagement from family and community
6. Building sustainable leadership capacity

[3] For more information on the Corageous Leadership Academies, see http://www.hopefoundation.org/programs/courageous-leadership-academy.html

Methodology

This exploratory study is designed to address the following research questions:
- Research Question 1: To what extent have school staff built a professional learning community?
- Research Question 2: Does higher level of implementation correspond to higher achievement?
- Research Question 3: Has student achievement improved?

The study examines extant data to identify potential relationships among CLA implementation and student scores. As such, it is limited to retrospective data available from the sites implementing CLA. The study sample contains 34 schools in the Mansfield Independent School District, in Texas.[4] Almost all schools in this district participate in the CLA, although they began at different times. For this study, we consider two cohorts of schools: the 14 intermediate, middle, and high schools that began implementing the CLA in 2007-08 (Cohort 1) and the 20 elementary schools that began implementing in 2008-09 (Cohort 2).[5]

This study examines two types of extant data: the Failure is Not an Option (FNO) Readiness Survey and the school-level percent proficient on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) mathematics and reading scores. To look at progress towards building a professional learning community, we drew on data from the Failure is Not an Option[©] (FNO) Readiness Survey, administered by the HOPE Foundation as part of the intervention. The FNO Readiness Survey asks four questions for each of the FNO Six Principles. Two questions relate to understanding and use of the principle (Knowledge/Skill Development) and two relate to readiness to implement protocols, new practices, and strategies to advance priority goals (Commitment and Action).[6]

In the 2009-10 school year, HOPE staff began administering this survey to school leadership team members in CLA schools twice annually, once in Fall 2009 ("pre-test" survey) and once in Spring 2010 ("post-test" survey). Because all the schools in the sample have been implementing the CLA for at least a year before the FNO was administered, we could not consider either survey a "pre-test", since neither were administered before implementation. Therefore, we focused only on the "post-test" survey administered in Spring 2010.

As with any study using extant data, interpretations are limited by the nature of the data. For example, a pre-intervention measure of the FNO Readiness Survey was not available, so it is not possible to look at changes in understanding and use of CLA over time, or to make conclusive statements about causality. Because the study was limited to existing measures, some aspects of implementation and types of outcomes (e.g., schoolwide changes in conditions for learning) could not be analyzed in this exploratory study.

---

[4] While there are currently 40 schools in the Mansfield Independent School District, only the 34 schools with FNO survey data and with student data from 2008-09 and 2009-10 were included.
Appendix 4 contains demographic information on Mansfield ISD, and Texas.
[5] Note that some schools which opened after CLA began started using CLA somewhat later than the rest of their cohort. See Appendix 2 for a brief summary of the sample.
[6] Information on scale reliability was not available.

For student achievement data, Mansfield ISD provided AIR with student level data sets for six years: 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09 and 2009-10. The student data included the students' school name, grade, and the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) mathematics and reading scores. In Texas, students are tested in grades 3-12. Therefore, we had test score data for grades 3-4 in elementary schools, 5-6 for intermediate schools, 7-8 for middle schools, and 9-12 for high schools.

These scores were provided in three formats: raw score, scale score, and a "met standard" indicator variable. Many studies of school reforms use scale scores as their outcomes. In this case, changes in the scaling in 2009-10 complicate longitudinal analysis of scale scores. The percent proficient metric, which is calculated determining the percent of students in the school who "met standards" is acceptable for longitudinal analysis.[7] Therefore, this analysis used two percentage based proficiency measures: percent of the school proficient in reading and percent proficient in mathematics. If a student has met the state standard in mathematics or reading, then the state assumes "student has learned, understood, and is able to apply the important concepts and skills expected at each tested grade level. (http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/src/2010/definitions.html)"

Research Question 1: To what extent have school staff built a professional learning community, including:

> a. ***learning and internalizing the FNO Six Principles of the CLA?***
> b. ***achieving common purposes, goals, and values?***
> c. ***building a culture of trust, mutual accountability, and continuous improvement?***

First, this study looks at progress towards building a professional learning community, using data from the FNO Readiness Survey. Scores on this survey indicate readiness in terms of (1) Knowledge and Skills Development and (2) Commitment and Action.

Table 1.1 presents the descriptions of the Knowledge and Skills, and the Commitment and Action Readiness Levels. Both scales have a range of 0 to 48. Tables 1.2 and 1.3 present the total number of schools in Mansfield ISD, by cohort, by readiness level.[8]

---

[7] Percent proficient is not affected by the change in the scale schools. For example, if the original scale range was 200-1500 (range) and had a "proficient" cutpoint of 1100, and the rescaled scale range was200-800 with a cutpoint of 650, a student who achieved just above the cutpoint (was "proficient") with a score of 1100 on the first scale would have earned a score of 650 (was "proficient") on the second scale.

[8] For a full list of each schools readiness scores, as well as their Knowledge and Skills, and their Commitment and Action readiness levels, see Appendix 3.

Table 1.1 Descriptions of Knowledge/Skills and Commitment/Action Readiness Levels

Knowledge/Skills Level & Scores	Ability Level Descriptions
Frustration Level *12 or less*	Learners lack experience and an adequate understanding of the background knowledge and skills to perform or engage at a meaningful level
Awareness & Learning *13 to 24*	The learner has some initial understanding of the foundational concept/knowledge
Partial Work Environment Integration *25 to 36*	The learner has had some experience with the concept and exhibits application in their work.
Infused into the Work Culture *37 to 48*	The learner is at a high level of integration and has incorporated a concept and skill into their repertoire.
Commitment/Action Level & Scores	**Willingness Level** Descriptions
Direction to begin process *12 or less*	The leader needs explicit direction to understand and apply the concept. Their current ability level can develop further with direct instruction and short-term goals – followed by observation and feedback.
Coaching and mediation to practice and learn *13 to 24*	The leader is about to take some initiative for facilitating and engaging others, supported by dialogue and feedback from a coaching relationship. This could be part of a team effort or one-on-one coaching depending, on the circumstances.
Support and follow-up to sustain progress *25 to 36*	The leader has successfully implemented new practices and exhibited a high level of commitment to the shared purpose and mission.
Check-points to maintain and continually improve *37 to 48*	The leader has advanced to a level of independence.

Table 1.2: Total number of schools for Knowledge and Skills, by Cohort

	Cohort 1	Cohort 2
Frustration Level	0	0
Awareness & Learning	0	0
Partial Work Environment Integration	5	2
Infused into the Work Culture	9	18

Table 1.3: Total number of schools for Commitment and Action, by Cohort

	Cohort 1	Cohort 2
Direction to begin process	0	0
Coaching and mediation to practice and learn	0	0
Support and follow-up to sustain progress	4	1
Check-points to maintain and continually improve	10	19

Findings

By Spring 2010, most CLA schools in Mansfield indicated very high levels of knowledge and skills, as well as commitment and action, for the core principles. No school scored below the third (of fourth) levels on either Knowledge and Skills Readiness Levels or Commitment and Action Readiness Levels.

- 64% (9/14 schools) of Cohort 1 scored at the top level for knowledge and skills
- 71% (10/14 schools) of Cohort 1 scored at the top level for commitment and action
- 90% (18/20 schools) of Cohort 2 scored at the top level for knowledge and skills
- 95% (19/20 schools) of Cohort 2 scored at the top level for commitment and action

Only four of 34 schools—Emma Nash, Danny Jones, Mansfield, and Mansfield Timberview—scored below the top level for both measures

Looking across groups of schools, we find that Cohort 2 schools appeared to be more consistent about implementing at high levels. This may appear counterintuitive, given that Cohort 1 had an additional year to reach high levels of implementation. We suggest—but cannot test with this data set—several possible explanations:

- Cohorts are confounded with school level. The higher level of implementation for Cohort 2 might reflect differences in implementation in elementary school (Cohort 2) versus intermediate, middle, and high school (Cohort 1). Educational research suggests that implementing reforms is more difficult in middle and high schools than in elementary schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). To test this hypothesis, additional analysis might look at CLA implementation in districts where cohorts are not defined by school levels. If this is the issue, HOPE might consider additional measures to support implementation in upper school levels.

- Early implementers might lose energy after several years of implementation. CLAs require substantial commitment and work on the part of the school leadership teams and other staff. It may be that after several years, schools lag in their effort. To test this hypothesis, additional analysis might look at the Mansfield schools in 2010-11. If Cohort 2 shows a drop in implementation, this would reinforce the hypothesis. If this is the issue, HOPE might consider strategies to maintain and build enthusiasm at this critical juncture.

- A related hypothesis is that the district—and perhaps the HOPE Foundation—improved processes and tools for implementation between the Cohort 1 and Cohort 2. Thus, the second cohort would benefit from the learning experiences of the first. The HOPE Foundation may have information about the evolution of their tools and processes which lend credence to this hypothesis. If this is the issue, then the patterns of implementation

would suggest that changes to processes and tools were, in fact, improvements, and would validate HOPE's current direction.

Research Question 2: Does higher level of implementation correspond to higher achievement?

School reform research typically shows that level of implementation moderates effects. Therefore, this study examines whether there is a relationship between the level of implementation and student outcomes. Using the data described in Research Question 1 and percent proficient metrics in mathematics and reading[9], we considered the relationship between level of implementation and student achievement. Table 2.1 shows the correlations between mathematics test percent proficient and the two measures of implementation from the FNO Readiness Survey (Knowledge and Skills and Commitment and Action), for the period between school year 2004-05 and school year 2009-10. Table 2.2 shows the corresponding data for reading test percent proficient. In both tables, the period of CLA implementation is highlighted. That is the period in which one would expect the implementation measure to most strongly correlate to achievement. Finally, we examined the relationship between specific questions on the FNO Readiness Survey and achievement, to explore the relationships among those items most closely related to teacher community and student achievement.

Table 2.1. Correlations between Percent Proficient in Mathematics with Knowledge and Skills Score and Commitment and Action Score, by Cohort

	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Cohort 1						
Knowledge and Skills				*CLA I*	*CLA II*	*CLA III*
Coefficient estimate	0.60	0.69	0.52	0.51	0.57	0.25
P Value	0.05	0.02*	0.07	0.06	0.03*	0.39
Commitment and Action						
Coefficient estimate	0.62	0.69	0.58	0.52	0.60	0.30
P Value	0.04*	0.02*	0.04*	0.06	0.02*	0.30
Cohort 2						
Knowledge and Skills					*CLA I*	*CLA II*
Coefficient estimate	0.41	0.10	0.07	0.26	0.54	0.41
P Value	0.15	0.71	0.80	0.29	0.01*	0.07
Commitment and Action						
Coefficient estimate	0.39	0.05	0.03	0.22	0.48	0.35
P Value	0.17	0.87	0.91	0.37	0.03*	0.12

Statistical significance at the p ≤ .05 level is indicated by an asterisk (*).

---

[9] The two percent proficient metrics are described in more detail in the discussion on Research Question 3.

Table 2.2. Correlations between Percent Proficient in Reading with Knowledge and Skills Score and Commitment and Action Score, by Cohort

	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Cohort 1						
Knowledge and Skills				*CLA I*	*CLA II*	*CLA III*
Coefficient estimate	0.69	0.24	0.38	0.26	0.16	-0.44
P Value	0.02*	0.48	0.21	0.37	0.58	0.12
Commitment and Action						
Coefficient estimate	0.67	0.19	0.39	0.25	0.17	-0.46
P Value	0.02*	0.57	0.19	0.40	0.55	0.10
Cohort 2						
Knowledge and Skills					*CLA I*	*CLA II*
Coefficient estimate	0.43	0.31	0.31	0.27	0.57	0.48
P Value	0.13	0.25	0.21	0.26	0.01*	0.03*
Commitment and Action						
Coefficient estimate	0.45	0.26	0.28	0.25	0.50	0.42
P Value	0.10	0.34	0.26	0.30	0.03*	0.07

Statistical significance at the $p \leq .05$ level is indicated by an asterisk (*).

We took a closer look at the relationship between Failure is Not an Option[©] (FNO) Readiness Survey questions that asked specifically about professional learning communities (questions 5, 10 and 12), which is the heart of the CLA model, and Cohort 2 schools, which appear to be the stronger implementers.

> *The survey asks respondents how much do they agree or disagree with the following statements (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree):*

Question 5: Teachers and administrators are competent in working with one another to continuously build and sustain Professional Learning Communities, focused on instructional improvement.

Question 10: Teachers as learners consciously practice collaborative problem solving to improve professional learning outcomes.

Question 12: Effective team strategies are used for continual team learning and improvement which are monitored over time to assess progress and inform next steps.

Table 2.3. Cohort 2 Correlations between Percent Proficient in Mathematics with FNO Survey Questions 5, 10 and 12

	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Question 5					*CLA I*	*CLA II*
Coefficient estimate	0.38	-0.03	0.04	0.17	0.38	0.34
P Value	0.19	0.92	0.88	0.49	0.09	0.14
Question 10						
Coefficient estimate	0.43	0.26	0.31	0.37	0.59	0.43
P Value	0.13	0.32	0.21	0.12	0.01*	0.06
Question 12						
Coefficient estimate	0.45	0.11	0.16	0.42	0.52	0.51
P Value	0.11	0.70	0.52	0.07	0.02*	0.02*

Statistical significance at the $p \leq .05$ level is indicated by an asterisk (*).

Table 2.4. Cohort 2 Correlations between Percent Proficient in Reading with FNO Survey Questions 5, 10 and 12

	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Question 5					*CLA I*	*CLA II*
Coefficient estimate	0.39	0.37	0.23	0.25	0.39	0.35
P Value	0.17	0.16	0.36	0.31	0.09	0.13
Question 10						
Coefficient estimate	0.43	0.36	0.49	0.32	0.63	0.57
P Value	0.12	0.17	0.04	0.18	0.00*	0.01*
Question 12						
Coefficient estimate	0.42	0.27	0.31	0.41	0.66	0.47
P Value	0.13	0.32	0.20	0.08	0.00*	0.04*

Statistical significance at the $p \leq .05$ level is indicated by an asterisk (*).

Findings

Cohort 2 schools (which on average had higher levels of implementation than Cohort 1) that had agreed more with these questions also had higher levels of proficiency in mathematics and reading (See tables 2.3 and 2.4). These data are correlation and cannot establish a causal relation. However, they suggest that there may be a testable relationship between the development of professional learning communities and student achievement, which is consistent with some other research (Bryk & Driscoll, 1988; Lee & Smith, 1995, 1996). A study that looks prospectively at this relationship, with a rigorously matched comparison group, could provide a clearer picture of whether CLA professional learning communities, done well, improve student achievement, and if combined with meditational analyses and/or qualitative data may help

unpack the reason for such a relationship.

The relationship between implementation and achievement was generally strong. Since the sample size was small, we did not expect to see statistically significant effects, even with very high correlations. During the years of implementation, correlations between implementation and mathematics achievement ranged from 0.25 to 0.60; during these same years, correlations between implementation and reading achievement ranged from -0.46 to 0.57.[10]

- For Cohort 1, implementation (measured in Spring 2010) had consistent, strong correlations with mathematics achievement (measured each year from 2005-2010).
- For Cohort 2, implementation correlated with mathematics achievement better after CLA implementation than before.
- For Cohort 1, implementation correlated with reading achievement better before CLA implementation than after.
- For Cohort 2, implementation consistently correlated strongly with reading achievement.
- For Cohort 2, schools that have agreed more with questions related to professional communities also had higher levels of proficiency in mathematics and reading.

Correlations of extant data are particularly susceptible to misinterpretation. In cases where the implementation (measured in Spring 2010) correlated strongly with achievement over the six-year span, the direction of causality is especially unclear. It is possible that schools with high achievement are more open to implementing CLA than schools with low achievement. To truly test causality, it is important to conduct a prospective study using random or well matched comparison groups, and to consider pre- and post-measures of both the implementation and outcome variables. The case where the relationship between implementation and achievement is strongest in the implementation period (Cohort 2, mathematics) suggests the possibility that strong implementation relates to higher achievement. Again, a strong prospective study would provide more confidence in the findings.

Research Question 3: Has student achievement improved?

Ultimately, the goal of CLA is to improve student learning and achievement through improved professional community and teaching. To explore this question, the study examined changes in test scores in schools implementing CLA.

Exhibit 3.1 presents mathematics achievement data, measured as percent proficient across the full sample of CLA schools, for Cohorts 1 and 2 from the 2004-5 school year through the 2009-10 school year. Exhibit 3.2 presents corresponding data for reading achievement. The state average is presented for comparison.

Of special interest is the difference between achievement before CLA (up to Fall 2007 for Cohort 1 and Fall 2008 for Cohort 2) and achievement after the CLA had been fully implemented (Spring 2010 for Cohort 1 and Spring 2011 for Cohort 2). Both exhibits have

---

[10] The only negative correlations with reading achievement occurred during the 2009-10 school year with the Cohort 1 schools, and were not significant.

indicators for when each cohort began CLA implementation. Due to the timing of this study, we can only examine outcomes for Cohort 2 mid-implementation (before the schools had gone through the full three years of implementation).

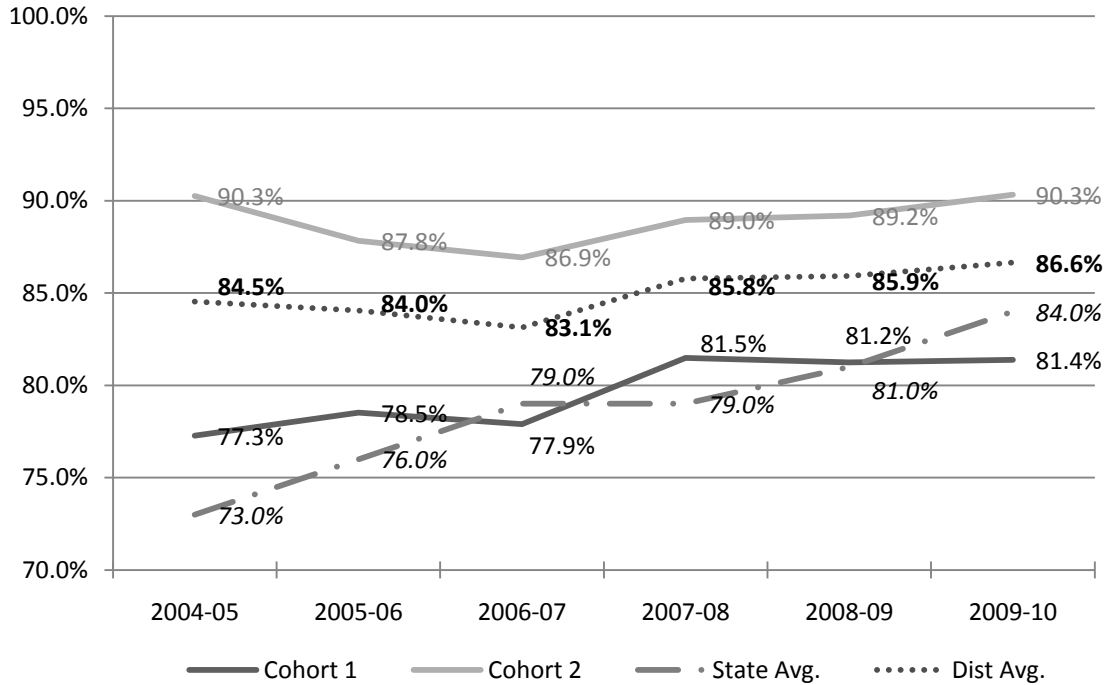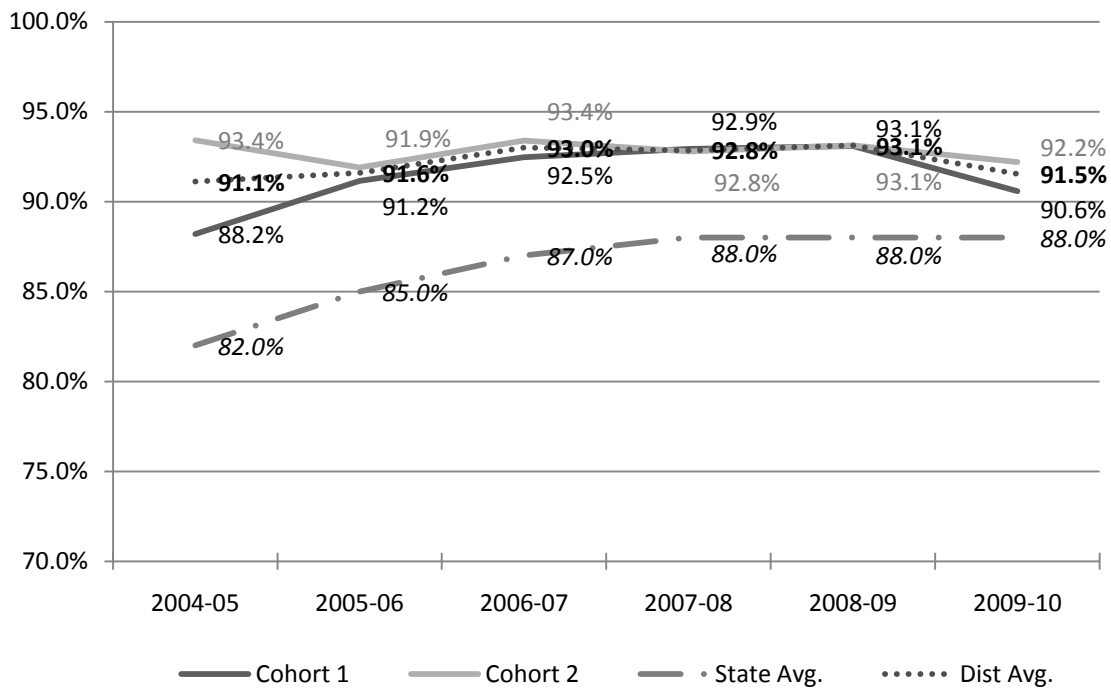**Exhibit 3.1. Math Proficiency by Cohort from 2004-05 to 2009-10**

Exhibit 3.2. Reading Proficiency by Cohort from 2004-05 to 2009-10

Findings
From the school year 2004-05 to the school year 2009-10,
- Mathematics and reading achievement improved for Cohort 1
- Mathematics and reading achievement were stable or dropped for Cohort 2
- Neither Cohort 1 nor Cohort 2 showed substantial gains in student achievement during the CLA implementation period, although Cohort 2 shows a slight rise in mathematics achievement in this period
- State test scores, especially in mathematics, rose during this five-year period

These findings are consistent with many studies of educational interventions, especially those that are designed to influence student learning indirectly, by improving pedagogical and organization conditions for learning. Research suggests that it is remarkably difficult to move student test scores, and may take three to five years to have an impact (Aladjem et al., 2006; Borman, Hewes, Overman, & Brown, 2003; Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center, 2006; Desimone, 2002).

However, the CLA approach targets areas which research suggests have the greatest likelihood of eventually improving learning. For example, research on the social organization of schools found that professional community—shared responsibility, collective decision making, common values—when focused on student learning relates to instruction and achievement (Newmann & Associates, 1996). Researchers also found relationships between organizational conditions—such as teacher collaboration, teacher teams, principal support for teachers, flexible scheduling—and student achievement (Bryk & Driscoll, 1988; Lee & Smith 1995, 1996). One "bottom line" emerges from this research on effective schools and organizations: instruction matters most, and other changes (e.g., leadership, resources) also relate to student achievement when they facilitate changes in instruction (Gamoran et al., 2000).

Further research might follow two paths: (1) examine student outcomes after four, five, or more years of implementation and (2) examine effects of CLA on instructional strategies and other conditions for learning proven to relate to student achievement. Neither body of data was available for this exploratory study.

It is also important to note that Cohort 2 began the study with very high levels of achievement in both subjects, and Cohort 1 began with very high levels of achievement in reading. It is possible that there is a ceiling effect; test scores were so high that it would be difficult to achieve higher regardless of the intervention. This is not atypical for studies using TAKS data. Future research might look at CLA achievement using other tests, to determine the degree to which a ceiling effect limits apparent impact.

Discussion

This exploratory study suggests that implementation of the CLA is generally strong, and that there may be a causal relationship between implementation and student outcomes. It is too early in the implementation to conclude that CLA improves student outcomes, and this exploratory study was not designed to make causal inferences or to make a definitive statement on impact.

Based on these preliminary findings, we suggest that a prospective study might provide more conclusive findings. This study should include pre- and post-intervention measures of implementation, should look at outcomes of the intervention after three years of implementation, and should use qualitative data to further explore the processes through which the intervention may affect the outcomes. Future research might also build on these preliminary findings by using more rigorous causal designs. For example, using carefully matched comparison groups—or even randomly assigning schools to CLA or a control condition—could provide a stronger case for the impact of CLA.

Finally, in addition to looking at student impact more rigorously, further research on CLA might look more closely at the less concrete, but still critically important, impacts on school and district functioning and culture. According to district staff, and verified by U.S. Department of Education statistics, the district has undergone greater-than-average growth in its school population (see Appendix 4). Not only was Mansfield's student population growth faster than the state average, but the district growth in students at risk (disadvantaged, limited English proficient, and/or minority students) was somewhat greater than the state average. The district feels that CLA was instrumental in building community and effective professional relationships under particularly trying circumstances. Additional research could explore the role of CLA in building community and the ways in which that may contribute to more effective district and school functioning.

Appendix 1: *Failure Is Not an Option*® Critical Success Factors

Six Principles That Guide Student Achievement in High-Performing Schools

Principle 1: Common Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals

What does this mean?

There is a consistency in daily activities, policies, processes, and priorities, reflecting the uniqueness of the school in support of their autonomy. Schools are also accountable for results and contribute towards a common and coherent focus as a district-wide system.

What does this look like?

- A representative stakeholder group is involved in the process of creating a mission statement.
- Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals are created through a process of consensus.
- The Mission, Vision, and Values guide decisions at all levels within the system.
- Actions and outcomes align with and support goals, values, and mission.
- There is an established communication process among and between schools to support and sustain system-wide efforts to accelerate student achievement.

Principle 2: Ensuring Achievement for ALL Students: Systems for Prevention and Intervention

What does this mean?

Through a system-wide learning community, the process of designing and sustaining a continuum of support and instructional interventions for all students is developed and implemented. This includes School Improvement Plans (SIP) that identifies targeted priorities for instructional interventions and professional development plans that support implementation and monitor results.

What does this look like?

- There are structures and processes to support capacity to build and sustain Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), focused on instructional improvements.
- Professional development supports building teacher capacity for instructional intervention strategies and expanding teachers' repertoires.
- Communication of student data between schools and with parents/guardians supports the development of learner-focused, instructional improvement plans for all students.
- Schools, as a community, share the responsibility for closing the achievement gaps and ensuring success for all students.

Principle 3: Collaborative Teaming Focused on Teaching and Learning

What does this mean?

Faculty and staff focus their collegial conversations and ongoing professional learning on teaching practices to ensure academic success for all students. PLCs working collaboratively to improve teaching practices, is the norm. Professional structures such as school improvement teams, faculty/department meetings, networks and committees - provide the opportunities for collaboration. Processes provide the guidance and support to ensure its effectiveness.

What does this look like?

- Teachers regularly open their classrooms to other teachers as opportunities to learn and improve their practice.
- SLTs display the characteristics of high performing teams and knowingly utilize structures and processes to support their team work.
- Effective team strategies used for continual team learning and improvement are monitored over time to assess progress and inform next steps.
- Collaborative problem-solving is embraced and seen as a vehicle to improve outcomes for every teacher and learner.

Principle 4: Using Data to Guide Decision Making and Continuous Improvement

What does this mean?

Decisions to identify instructional priorities are based on analyzing multiple sources of data. School Improvement Plans are informed, and progress monitored for targeted instructional interventions. This process includes professional collaborations to continually assess results and make adaptations with instructional strategies, as indicated.

What does this look like?

- Baseline data are used to identify SMART Goals as part of the instructional improvement planning process.
- Strategies are implemented and data collected using established procedures and protocols to monitor and evaluate progress.
- Decisions to revise, refine, or continue with instructional interventions are based on data analysis and the process for continuous improvement.
- Examining student work and observing teaching practices provides data, to continually inform instructional planning and professional development, is the norm.

Principle 5: Gaining Active Engagement from Family and Community

What does this mean?

School staff understands the importance of building positive relationships with their students' families. Staff gains a common understanding of conditions that affect students' learning and strategies for reaching out to the family and community to engage them in supporting their students' learning. There is a shared understanding of the importance of building a partnership focused on the education of their child in addition to the traditional parent volunteer role.

What does this look like?

- Communication practices between home and school are developed and utilized.
- Parents/guardians are represented in the School Improvement Plan process and are kept informed regarding baseline data and progress monitoring of results.
- A visible presence of school staff collaborating within the community is apparent.
- Family and community are involved in the school in a variety of ways that actively supports student learning.

Principle 6: Building Sustainable Leadership Capacity

What does this mean?

Leadership extends beyond the formal school leader and is recognized as a means of ensuring commitment to sustain a long term vision. Lateral leadership is valued and strengthened as a means to implement and sustain changes that continually improve student achievement.

What does this look like?

- There is a shared understanding of an established set of procedures, protocols, and resources to support continuous improvement over time.
- Job embedded professional development, to support courageous leadership development, at all levels of the school system, is part of the culture.
- Professional structures such as teams, networks, and committees, are audited to identify current collaborations including recommendations to review roles, membership, responsibilities, and impact.
- A plan for leadership succession is in place to assure sustainability of the established, collaborative culture.

Appendix 2: Sample Description

The sample consists of 34 of the 40 schools in the Mansfield Independent School District, in Texas. There are a total of 38,947 students in the data set (duplicate records have been deleted). We used data from grades 3-12; grades pre-kindergarten through 2 are not tested.

Cohort 2	Cohort 1		
Elementary Schools (Grades preK/K-4)	Intermediate Schools (Grades 5-6)	Middle Schools (Grades 7-8)	High Schools (Grades 9-12)
Alice Ponder	Cross Timbers	Brooks Wester	Mansfield
Anna May Dalton	Della Icenhower	Danny Jones	Mansfield Legacy
Carol holt	Donna Shepard	James Coble	Mansfield Timberview
Charlotte Anderson	Mary Lillard	Rogene Worley	Mansfield Summit
Cora Spencer	Mary Orr	T.A. Howard	
D.P. Morris			
Elizabeth Smith			
Erma Nash			
Glenn Harmon			
Imogene Gideon			
J.L. Boren			
Janet Brockett			
Kenneth Davis			
Louise Cabaniss			
Martha Reid			
Mary Jo Sheppard			
Roberta Tipps			
Tarver Rendon			
Thelma Jones			
Willie E. Brown			

Appendix 3: Failure is Not an Option Readiness Survey Levels

Table A3.1 presents the school average Knowledge and Skill Readiness Levels for all Mansfield HOPE Schools, organized by cohort, and Table A3.2 presents the Commitment and Action Readiness Levels. Both scales have a range of 0 to 48. Following the score is a label interpreting the meaning of the score, as assigned by Hope staff.

Table A3.1 Knowledge and Skill Scores (Spring 2010)

	Score	Ability Level
Elementary Schools (Implementation started in 2008-09)		
Alice Ponder	39.4	Infused into the Work Culture
Anna May Dalton	40.6	Infused into the Work Culture
Carol Holt	40.7	Infused into the Work Culture
Charlotte Anderson	37.8	Infused into the Work Culture
Cora Spencer	40.9	Infused into the Work Culture
D.P. Morris	38.7	Infused into the Work Culture
Elizabeth Smith	43.9	Infused into the Work Culture
Erma Nash	35.7	Partial Work Environment Integration
Glenn Harmon	38.6	Infused into the Work Culture
Imogene Gideon	43.3	Infused into the Work Culture
J.L. Boren	41.3	Infused into the Work Culture
Janet Brockett	39.3	Infused into the Work Culture
Kenneth Davis	39.8	Infused into the Work Culture
Louise Cabaniss	38.0	Infused into the Work Culture
Martha Reid	40.3	Infused into the Work Culture
Mary Jo Sheppard	35.7	Partial Work Environment Integration
Roberta Tipps	44.7	Infused into the Work Culture
Tarver Rendon	39.9	Infused into the Work Culture
Thelma Jones	38.1	Infused into the Work Culture
Willie E. Brown	37.6	Infused into the Work Culture
Intermediate Schools (Implementation started in 2007-08)		
Cross Timbers	37.1	Infused into the Work Culture
Della Icenhower	38.1	Infused into the Work Culture
Donna Shepard	43.0	Infused into the Work Culture
Mary Lillard	35.3	Partial Work Environment Integration
Mary Orr	38.0	Infused into the Work Culture
Middle Schools (Implementation started in 2007-08)		
Brooks Wester	42.9	Infused into the Work Culture
Danny Jones	35.4	Partial Work Environment Integration
James Coble	39.3	Infused into the Work Culture

	Score	Willingness Level
Rogene Worley	39.4	Infused into the Work Culture
T.A. Howard	36.4	Infused into the Work Culture

High Schools (*Implementation started in 2007-08*)

Mansfield	30.9	Partial Work Environment Integration
Mansfield Legacy	35.1	Partial Work Environment Integration
Mansfield Summit	36.1	Infused into the Work Culture
Mansfield Timberview	33.2	Partial Work Environment Integration

All:	38.7	Infused into the Work Culture

Table A3.2 Commitment and Action Skill Scores (Spring 2010)

	Score	Willingness Level
Elementary Schools (Implementation started in 2008-09)		
Alice Ponder	40.3	Check-points to maintain/improve
Anna May Dalton	41.3	Check-points to maintain/improve
Carol holt	40.6	Check-points to maintain/improve
Charlotte Anderson	38.4	Check-points to maintain/improve
Cora Spencer	41.1	Check-points to maintain/improve
D.P. Morris	40.0	Check-points to maintain/improve
Elizabeth Smith	44.4	Check-points to maintain/improve
Erma Nash	35.1	Support/follow-up to sustain progress
Glenn Harmon	39.8	Check-points to maintain/improve
Imogene Gideon	43.1	Check-points to maintain/improve
J.L. Boren	41.6	Check-points to maintain/improve
Janet Brockett	40.6	Check-points to maintain/improve
Kenneth Davis	41.8	Check-points to maintain/improve
Louise Cabaniss	39.0	Check-points to maintain/improve
Martha Reid	40.6	Check-points to maintain/improve
Mary Jo Sheppard	36.7	Check-points to maintain/improve
Roberta Tipps	46.0	Check-points to maintain/improve
Tarver Rendon	41.3	Check-points to maintain/improve
Thelma Jones	39.7	Check-points to maintain/improve
Willie E. Brown	38.8	Check-points to maintain/improve

Intermediate Schools (*Implementation started in 2007-08*)

Cross Timbers	38.2	Check-points to maintain/improve
Della Icenhower	39.4	Check-points to maintain/improve
Donna Shepard	42.9	Check-points to maintain/improve
Mary Lillard	36.8	Check-points to maintain/improve

Mary Orr	38.9	Check-points to maintain/improve

Middle Schools (Implementation started in 2007-08)

Brooks Wester	42.6	Check-points to maintain/improve
Danny Jones	34.7	Support/follow-up to sustain progress
James Coble	39.3	Check-points to maintain/improve
Rogene Worley	41.9	Check-points to maintain/improve
T.A. Howard	36.3	Check-points to maintain/improve

High Schools (Implementation started in 2007-08)

Mansfield	31.3	Support/follow-up to sustain progress
Mansfield Legacy	36.7	Check-points to maintain/improve
Mansfield Summit	35.9	Support/follow-up to sustain progress
Mansfield Timberview	33.5	Support/follow-up to sustain progress

All:	39.4	Check-points to maintain/improve

Appendix 4: Mansfield ISD Growth

Table A4.1: Student demographics in Mansfield ISD, from 2006-07 to 2009-10

	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
ECE	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%
Pre-K	1.9%	2.2%	2.3%	2.4%
Kindergarten	7.7%	7.1%	7.4%	7.5%
1st	7.9%	7.9%	7.6%	7.7%
2nd	7.6%	7.8%	7.8%	7.4%
3rd	7.7%	7.6%	7.9%	7.8%
4th	7.6%	7.7%	7.6%	7.7%
5th	7.7%	7.6%	7.6%	7.6%
6th	7.8%	7.8%	7.6%	7.5%
7th	7.7%	7.8%	7.9%	7.7%
8th	7.6%	7.7%	7.8%	7.6%
9th	8.8%	9.1%	8.8%	8.8%
10th	7.6%	7.3%	7.3%	7.3%
11th	6.7%	6.8%	6.7%	6.9%
12th	5.7%	5.4%	5.4%	5.7%
African American	25.1%	26.3%	27.3%	27.5%
Hispanic	19.3%	20.3%	20.6%	21.0%
White	49.7%	47.1%	45.5%	44.4%
Native American	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.7%
Asian/Pac. Isl.	5.4%	5.8%	6.1%	6.5%
Econ. Disadv.	29.1%	30.3%	32.7%	36.2%
LEP	9.0%	9.8%	10.0%	10.4%
Disc. Placements	1.7%	1.8%	1.7%	16.3%
At Risk	33.2%	34.7%	33.7%	33.6%

Table A4.2: Student demographics in Texas, from 2006-07 to 2009-10

	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
ECE	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%
Pre-K	4.1%	4.1%	4.2%	4.4%
Kindergarten	7.7%	7.7%	7.7%	7.6%
1st	8.1%	8.1%	8.0%	7.9%
2nd	7.7%	7.9%	7.9%	7.8%
3rd	7.6%	7.6%	7.8%	7.7%
4th	7.4%	7.4%	7.5%	7.6%
5th	7.4%	7.4%	7.5%	7.5%
6th	7.3%	7.2%	7.3%	7.3%
7th	7.2%	7.3%	7.3%	7.3%
8th	7.4%	7.1%	7.3%	7.2%
9th	8.7%	8.5%	8.2%	8.1%
10th	7.1%	7.1%	7.0%	6.9%
11th	6.3%	6.3%	6.4%	6.4%
12th	5.7%	5.8%	5.8%	5.9%
African American	14.4%	14.3%	14.2%	14.0%
Hispanic	46.3%	47.2%	47.9%	48.6%
White	35.7%	34.8%	34.0%	33.3%
Native American	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%
Asian/Pac. Isl.	3.3%	3.4%	3.6%	3.7%
Econ. Disadv.	55.5%	55.3%	56.7%	59.0%
LEP	16.0%	16.7%	16.9%	16.9%
Disc. Placements	2.4%	2.4%	2.2%	13.6%
At Risk	48.3%	48.4%	48.3%	47.2%

Table A4.3: Student growth rates in Mansfield ISD, from 2006-7 to 2009-10

	2006-07-> 2007-08	2007-08-> 2008-09	2008-09-> 2009-10
Total	6.0%	3.7%	3.0%
ECE	35.8%	30.6%	1.1%
Pre-K	25.5%	6.0%	7.5%
Kindergarten	-1.5%	7.8%	4.6%
1st	6.6%	-0.6%	4.1%
2nd	7.9%	3.8%	-2.5%
3rd	4.6%	7.5%	2.0%
4th	7.2%	3.3%	4.1%
5th	5.1%	3.8%	3.4%
6th	6.0%	0.3%	2.1%
7th	7.6%	4.5%	0.6%
8th	7.6%	4.9%	1.2%
9th	9.7%	1.1%	3.1%
10th	2.3%	3.7%	3.2%
11th	8.1%	3.1%	4.8%
12th	-0.6%	3.8%	9.1%
African American	11.0%	7.6%	3.6%
Hispanic	11.6%	5.2%	4.7%
White	0.5%	0.2%	0.4%
Native American	4.9%	2.6%	39.4%
Asian/Pac. Isl.	13.7%	9.2%	10.4%
Econ. Disadv.	10.5%	11.6%	14.2%
LEP	15.3%	6.1%	6.5%
Disc. Placements	8.4%	-0.9%	881.9%
At Risk	10.8%	0.8%	2.5%

Table A4.4: Student growth rates in Texas, from 2006-7 to 2009-10

	2006-7-> 2007-8	2007-8-> 2008-9	2008-9-> 2009-10
Total	1.6%	1.6%	2.0%
ECE	-1.7%	-0.8%	7.6%
Pre-K	3.2%	3.4%	7.0%
Kindergarten	1.1%	1.6%	2.0%
1st	0.9%	0.9%	1.1%
2nd	3.7%	1.3%	0.8%
3rd	2.6%	3.6%	1.4%
4th	1.7%	2.6%	3.5%
5th	2.6%	1.9%	2.5%
6th	0.6%	2.7%	1.9%
7th	2.7%	0.8%	2.4%
8th	-1.7%	3.3%	0.8%
9th	0.2%	-2.3%	1.0%
10th	1.7%	0.0%	0.8%
11th	1.5%	3.0%	2.2%
12th	3.3%	2.1%	3.6%
African American	0.4%	0.9%	1.1%
Hispanic	3.5%	3.2%	3.5%
White	-0.8%	-0.7%	-0.1%
Native American	2.9%	2.6%	13.5%
Asian/Pac. Isl.	6.0%	6.6%	6.0%
Econ. Disadv.	1.2%	4.3%	6.2%
LEP	5.9%	3.2%	2.0%
Disc. Placements	0.6%	-5.3%	533.4%
At Risk	1.9%	1.6%	-0.4%

Appendix 5: References

Aladjem, D. K., LeFloch, C., Zhang, Y., Kurki, A., Boyle, A., Taylor, J. E., Herrmann, S., Uekawa, K., Thomsen, K., Fashola, O. (2006). *Models matter—The final report of the national longitudinal evaluation of comprehensive school reform*. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research.

Borman, G. D., Hewes, G., Overman, L., & Brown, S. (2003). *Comprehensive school reform and student achievement: a meta-analysis*. Review of Educational Research, 73(2), 125–230.

Bryk, A., & Driscoll, M. (1988). *The high school as community: Contextual influences and consequences for students and teachers*. Madison: University of Wisconsin, National Center on Effective Secondary Schools.

Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center. (2005). *CSRQ Center report on elementary school comprehensive school reform models.* Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research

Desimone, L. (2002). *How can comprehensive school reform models be successfully implemented*? Review of Educational Research, 72(3), 433–479.

Gamoran, A., Secada, W. G., & Marrett, C. B. (2000). *The organizational context of teaching and learning: Changing theoretical perspectives*. In M. T. Hallinan (Ed.), Handbook of research in the sociology of education (pp. 37–63). New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum.

Lee, V. E., & Smith, J. B. (1995). *Effects of high school restructuring and size on early gains in achievement and engagement*. Sociology of Education, 68, 241–270.

Lee, V. E., & Smith, J. B. (1996). *Collective responsibility for learning and its effects on gains in achievement for early secondary school students*. American Journal of Education, 104, 103–147.

Newmann, F. M., & Associates. (1996). *Authentic achievement: Restructuring schools for intellectual quality*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Newmann, F. M., Smith, B., Allensworth, E., & Bryk, A. (2001). *Instructional program coherence: What it is and why it should guide school improvement policy*. Education Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 23(4), 297–321.

U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Under Secretary (2004), *Implementation and Early Outcomes of the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) Program,* Washington, D.C., 2004.