# UNIVERSITY OF
# SOUTH CAROLINA

# Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools
# PK-8 Transition Study

Year 2 Evaluation Report

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Leigh Kale D'Amico, EdD

Kassie Mae Miller, MPH

Julia Dixon, MEd

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# Acknowledgements

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## Executive Summary

Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) has joined a number of school districts across the country implementing the K-8 model of education. In the 2011-2012 academic year, eight CMS elementary schools integrated middle grades to become PK-8 schools. These schools are part of an evaluation to identify effective practices in the transition process, stakeholder perceptions, best practices, and the impact of this model on student achievement, attendance, and behavior.

Two years of data collection and analysis have occurred. Findings indicate that the transition process was somewhat challenging for schools, especially when all three middle grades were integrated in one year. The most challenging aspects were 1) adapting facilities, 2) hiring and integrating teachers into a new culture, and 3) assisting middle school students in the transition. While the transition presented challenges, stakeholders, particularly *school leaders*, identified opportunities presented by the PK-8 structure including relationship building within the school community. In Year 1, *parent*, *student*, and *teacher* perceptions of the PK-8 structure were mixed with some sharing positive examples and others indicating concerns with the new structure. Detailed findings are in the Year 1 report (D'Amico, Dickenson, Miller, & Tison, 2012).

In Year 2, the evaluation focused on best practices in K-8 settings and stakeholder perceptions related to student achievement, attendance, and behavior. A number of best practices were identified including: maintaining high expectations for students, developing a welcoming school environment suitable for all grades, and encouraging participation from teachers in the transition.

Stakeholder attitudes and perceptions related to the PK-8 model appear to be more positive in Year 2 compared to Year 1. Overall, *school leaders* noted the academic benefits of a PK-8 again in Year 2. Almost 70% of *parents* who participated in the Year 2 evaluation indicated that they like the PK-8 model. *Teachers* also appear to have an improved outlook about the opportunities provided in a PK-8 environment, and many *students* see positive benefits of attending a PK-8 school, including being in the same school as their older or younger family members and developing lasting relationships with teachers.

While best practices have been integrated at some of the schools and stakeholder perceptions appear to be improving, there are continuing challenges identified by all stakeholder groups. These challenges are related to school facilities and lack of curricular and extracurricular activities, particularly exposure to a variety of coursework and accessibility of sports programs.

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# Overview

In the 2011-2012 academic year, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) transformed eight elementary schools into PK-8 schools. Table 1 highlights the eight PK-8 schools impacted by this decision.

*Table 1. Student Populations at PK-8 Schools*

| School | Enrollment 2010-2011 | Enrollment 2011-2012* | Increase in Enrollment |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ashley Park PreK-8 School | 275 | 515 | +240 |
| Berryhill School | 334 | 535 | +201 |
| Bruns Avenue Academy | 542 | 745 | +203 |
| Druid Hills Academy | 378 | 604 | +226 |
| Reid Park Academy | 432 | 699 | +267 |
| Thomasboro Academy | 379 | 703 | +324 |
| Walter G. Byers School | 396 | 552 | +156 |
| Westerly Hills Academy | 255 | 506 | +251 |

*Does not include Pre-Kindergarten

Data related to the impact of PK-8 schools on students continue to emerge based on the growing number of school districts with PK-8 schools. These findings were reported in detail in the *Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools PK-8 Transition Study: Year 1 Evaluation Report* (D'Amico, Dickenson, Miller, & Tison, 2012) and are highlighted in Table 2. Additional studies that have been identified since the first report are denoted with an asterisk.

*Table 2.  Research Findings on K-8 Schools*

## ◯ Achievement

| | |
|---|---|
| Byrnes & Ruby (2007) | Established K-8 schools perform significantly better than middle schools; however, newer K-8 schools did not show the same gains |
| Connolly, Yakimowski-Srebnick, & Russo (2002) | Increased student achievement in K-8 schools based on achievement metrics; students in K-8 schools have less opportunity to take college preparation courses such as algebra or foreign language |
| *Dove, Pearson, & Hooper (2010) | No relationship between academic achievement and grade span configuration for Grade 6 students |
| *Hough (2009) | Middle level students in K-8 schools had higher academic achievement than students attending middle school |
| Offenburg (2001) | Higher overall performance on standardized tests in K-8 schools |
| Poncelet & Metis Associates (2004) | Positive math/reading outcomes for students in K-8 schools |
| Rockoff & Lockwood (2010) | Declines in math/English achievement associated with transition to middle school; middle school students continue to fall behind K-8 peers over time |
| *Schwartz, Stiefel, Rubenstein, & Zabel (2011) | Higher academic performance for students attending a K-8 school or middle school with grades 5-8 compared to students attending middle schools starting in Grades 6 or 7 |
| Weiss & Baker-Smith (2010) | Students who attended middle school showed declines in grade point averages in Grade 9 compared to those who attended K-8 schools |
| Weiss & Kipnes (2006) | No achievement differences between students in middle and K-8 schools |
| *West & Schwerdt (2012) | Drop in achievement from elementary to middle school in Grade 6 or 7 occurs in cities and rural areas and persists through Grade 10 |
| Whitley, Lupart, & Beran (2007) | No achievement differences between Grade 7 students who transitioned to middle school and those who remained at same school |

## Behavior

| | |
|---|---|
| Arcia (2007) | Grade 6 and 7 students at middle schools had higher rates of suspension than their counterparts at K-8 schools |
| *Booth, Sheehan, & Earley (2007) | Students in K-8 schools reported higher levels of self-esteem than students in other grade configurations, with the traditional grade configurations having a more negative impact on girls than boys |
| Connolly, Yakimowski-Srebnick, & Russo (2002) | Students at middle schools perceived as demonstrating less courtesy and respect than their K-8 counterparts |
| Farmer et al. (2011) | Bullying more frequent in K-8 schools than middle schools |
| *Hough (2009) | Middle level students in K-8 schools had fewer behavior referrals than students attending middle school |
| Weiss & Baker-Smith (2010) | Former K-8 students have less delinquent behavior in Grade 9 than their middle school counterparts |

## Attendance

| | |
|---|---|
| Connolly, Yakimowski-Srebnick, & Russo (2002) | No relationship between daily school attendance and type of school |
| Rockoff & Lockwood (2010) | Middle school students miss slightly more days than their K-8 peers |
| *Schwerdt & West (2011) | Students entering middle school have more absences and higher rates of Grade 10 dropouts compared to other grade configurations |
| Weiss & Baker-Smith (2010) | Greater number of student absences in Grade 9 among students coming from middle schools; no differences when controlling for additional factors (i.e., magnet school) |

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## Study Questions

Based on previous research findings and district-level interests, questions were developed by Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools to evaluate the PK-8 transition. The Office of Program Evaluation (OPE) in the College of Education at the University of South Carolina is collaborating with CMS on a multi-year evaluation related to these research questions.

1) What challenges and best practices were identified during the transition to PK-8 schools?
   a) What happened in the schools over the course of the transitional years (2011-2014)?
   b) What factors were perceived to have greatest impact, both positive and negative, on the success of the transition?

2) What are the efficiencies that resulted from this transition?

3) How do PK-8 schools perform in terms of proficiency, growth, and Adequate Yearly Progress relative to the previously existing elementary and middle schools?

4) What is the impact of PK-8 schools on academic achievement, attendance, and student behavior?
   a) How does this differ, if at all, for those students who were moved from middle school to PK-8 schools?
   b) How does this differ, if at all, for those students who previously participated in middle school athletics but no longer have access to those programs?
   c) How does this differ for schools that provide students with after-school enrichment programs?

## Evaluation Methods

Evaluation methods in Year 1 focused on understanding the transition process and its impact on these schools and students, primarily on 1) student achievement, 2) student attendance, and 3) student behavior.  In Year 1, interviews were conducted with principals at each of the new PK-8 schools, the former principals of the three middle schools that closed, and the zone superintendent overseeing these schools.  To gain more in-depth information, four schools were identified through a representative sampling process for intensive study.  Interviews and focus groups were conducted with teachers, students, and parents at these four schools.  Finally, a survey was distributed to teachers in the PK-8 schools.

In Year 2, similar methods were used.  An interview was conducted with the zone superintendent.  Focus groups were conducted with the school leadership team and parents at one school, identified based on performance data from Year 1 and consultation with district personnel.  In addition, student focus groups were conducted with students in Grades 4-8 at the four intensive study schools.  In Year 1, the majority of parent feedback at the study schools was gathered through focus groups, with attendance ranging from 5 to 15 parents at each school.  At one school, interviews during a school event and during morning drop-off were piloted and led to more parent responses; therefore, in Year 2, parent feedback was collected at all study schools during the drop-off process using a survey-like form.  Finally, principal survey items were developed and included in a principal survey administered by CMS.  The teacher survey developed in Year 1 was administered again in Year 2 and distributed to teachers via principals at the eight schools.  Protocols for interviews and focus groups were developed in Year 1 and modified as necessary in Year 2 for each group.  These protocols are provided in Appendix B.

In addition to these methods, interviews were conducted with four urban school districts that were selected primarily based on citation in the K-8 literature.  Across the four school districts, there was an average of 58 K-8 schools with a range of approximately 20 to 100 K-8 schools per district.  Three of the schools had moderately smaller student populations compared to CMS, and one school had a substantially larger student population than CMS.  A semi-structured interview protocol was used to gather information from district-based informants.

Audio-recordings and notes from all focus groups and interviews were independently analyzed by three Office of Program Evaluation staff members. Domain and taxonomic analyses were conducted with these data to understand and classify predominate themes and sub-themes (Sprandley, 1980). After an independent analysis, the three evaluators collaborated to determine overall themes based on a preponderance of evidence. Themes were repeated across multiple schools and multiple stakeholder groups unless otherwise noted.

For the parent interviews that occurred during student drop-off, a survey-like form (Appendix B) was developed in Year 2 to capture reactions to the PK-8 structure. This allowed evaluators to calculate the number of parents who responded in a particular way to the structure. Quantitative survey data were analyzed using SPSS. In Year 1, teacher responses to open-ended survey items were classified as positive, negative, or neutral. In Year 2, teacher responses were included in the domain and taxonomic analyses. Only one principal survey was received; therefore, results were used only to triangulate with other findings from the school leader interviews and focus groups. Table 3 highlights approximate number of participants by stakeholder group.

*Table 3. Participation by Stakeholder Group in Years 1 and 2*

| Stakeholder Group | Year 1 | Year 2 | Approximate Total* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Teachers | *205 | 117 | 322 |
| Parents | 60 | 240 | 300 |
| Students | 95 | 50 | 145 |
| Principals | 11 | 2 | 13 |
| Other School Administrators | 0 | 6 | 6 |
| Zone Superintendent | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Other Districts (K-8 model) | 0 | 4 | 4 |

*May Represent Single Participant More than Once

Participants were not randomly selected; therefore, findings are representative of only individuals who responded to surveys and participated in focus groups and interviews. The evaluators did not collect participants' names; therefore, the same participants may or may not be represented more than once during the two-year period. Students who participated in focus groups were identified by schools to minimize school disruptions and protect student data. In

addition, teacher survey responses rates were low in Years 1 and 2 (approximately 25% to 35% of the estimated population). Responses to the principal items included in the CMS Principal Survey were very low (13% of the population) and were only used to triangulate with other data.

## Best Practices for PK-8 Model

To identify best practices within the PK-8 model, OPE staff reviewed literature and conducted interviews with CMS school leaders. OPE staff also contacted four urban school districts that were cited in literature related to K-8 schools. These four school districts were located across the country and had approximately 60,000 or more students. The average number of K-8 schools across these four districts was 58 with a range of approximately 20 to 100 PK-8 schools per district. Administrators interviewed from these districts included a principal, chief academic officer, program director, and a network leader with specialized knowledge on the K-8 model. The following predominant themes emerged from the literature review and interviews with CMS school leaders and leaders from other districts.

### ● High Expectations

The Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE; 2010), Yecke (2006), and CMS school leaders recommended setting clear, intentional, rigorous expectations about procedures and boundaries. CMS school leaders suggested continuing the same school-wide expectations that worked before the transition. They also mentioned that the incidence of behavior problems will likely rise at the beginning of each year due to increased enforcement of high expectations, but these problems will decrease as students meet expectations.

### ● Structured Interactions Between Students

According to Yecke (2006), CMS school leaders, and administrators in other districts with PK-8 schools, separating elementary and middle levels in different wings allows school leaders and

teachers to keep interactions between grades meaningful and purposeful.  Alternatively, some CMS school leaders emphasized some benefits of not segregating students by grade levels and integrating all students, regardless of age.

## ● Welcoming School Culture

CMS school leaders communicated the importance of being intentional about the school culture and making all students feel welcome.  Adding one grade level at a time may be helpful (Pardini, 2002), as it gives more time for the schools to adjust (Yecke, 2006).  Other districts noted that helping faculty welcome the merge can also be a challenge.  Guesno (2012) and AMLE (2010) recommend that leaders help faculty and staff welcome change and maintain unity by involving faculty in the new design process.  Guesno (2012) also suggests providing opportunities for the merging faculty to create relationships and respectfully share differences.

## ● Staff Training and Collaboration

Juvonen, Le, Kaganoff, Augustine, & Constant (2004) and school leaders in similar districts mentioned how departmental changes during merges may lead to challenges with teacher licensure and a lack of necessary content knowledge.  Professional development is needed to support teacher collaboration and learning about students in other grade levels (AMLE, 2010).  CMS school leaders recommended school-wide staff development opportunities on topics that pertain to grade span and promote the development of a common academic language.

Erb (2006) and Juvonen et al. (2004) recommend using interdisciplinary teams, or looping, to facilitate teachers sharing the same group of students and planning together to provide students the necessary guidance.  To support interdisciplinary planning, school leaders in similar districts across the country recommended using creative scheduling and allowing single-strand teachers to collaborate with other local schools or work within a team.

## ● *Implementing a Middle-Level Philosophy*

Several studies and administrators from similar school districts across the country mentioned the need to distinguish sixth through eighth grade students as developmentally different from their elementary counterparts and that they require appropriate support (AMLE, 2010; Bean & Lipka, 2006; Erb, 2006; Hough, 2005; Institute for School Improvement, 2004).  CMS school leaders, as well as administrators in similar districts, also noted that middle level students desire an identity within the school, and some recommendations included designating a separate location within the school with a different name, and providing lockers, clubs, athletics, and electives for middle school students.  Another way to provide support for middle grade students is through adult mentors (AMLE, 2010; Juvonen et al., 2004).  CMS leaders recommended pairing students who need extra support with teachers in a buddy system and coaching eighth graders individually about the transition to high school.

*Table 4.  Recommended Practices from Literature*

## ◯ Recommended Practices

| | |
|---|---|
| Implement a middle level philosophy to address developmentally different needs | ▪ Association for Middle Level Edu, 2010<br>▪ Bean & Lipka, 2006<br>▪ Erb, 2006<br>▪ Hough, 2005<br>▪ Institute for School Improvement, 2004<br>▪ Pardini, 2002 |
| Use interdisciplinary teams, vertical alignment, and common planning times | ▪ Association for Middle Level Edu, 2010<br>▪ Erb, 2006<br>▪ Hough, 2005<br>▪ Juvonen et al., 2004 |
| Include staff and faculty throughout the transition process | ▪ Association of Middle Level Edu, 2010<br>▪ Guesno, 2012 |
| Provide professional development for teachers to compensate for structural changes | ▪ Association for Middle Level Edu, 2010<br>▪ Juvonen et al., 2004 |
| Provide academic and social support for students through adult mentors | ▪ Association for Middle Level Edu, 2010<br>▪ Juvonen et al., 2004 |
| Transition one grade level at a time | ▪ Pardini, 2002<br>▪ Yecke, 2006 |
| Separate elementary and middle levels within the K-8 school | ▪ Yecke, 2006 |
| Hold students to high academic and behavioral expectations | ▪ Yecke, 2006 |

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## Key Findings

Key findings related to the perceptions of parents, school leaders, students, and teachers currently in PK-8 schools within Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools are presented in this section.

**1**     **Improved Outlook on PK-8 Model**

***Stakeholders (parents, students, and teachers in particular) reported more positive comments in Year 2 than in Year 1.*** School leaders identified the benefits, particularly related to achievement, of a PK-8 configuration across both years. Parents, teachers, and students reported more benefits of the PK-8 model in Year 2. The majority of parents interviewed in Year 2 (n=230) at the four study schools indicated that they liked the PK-8 structure (Figure A). While a direct comparison of the quantitative data from Year 1 to Year 2 could not be made due to differing methods for parent feedback across both years, general parent comments were more positive in Year 2. Common reasons cited for liking the structure were 1) having siblings, cousins, or other family members together at the same school and 2) consistency with the same school through middle school.

**A)**     **Most parents like the PK-8 structure.**



Like
69%

Don't Like
24%

Neutral
7%

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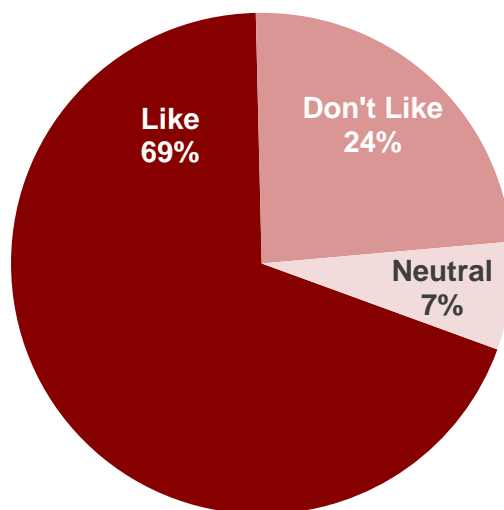
Teachers who responded to the survey reported that the students in their classrooms were adjusting well to the new structure, with 75% indicating a positive response in Year 2 compared to 40% in Year 1.  In addition, teachers were also asked if their students like the PK-8 model.  As shown in Figure B, the majority of teachers who responded to the survey also reported that students like being at a PK-8 school, increasing by 36% from Year 1.

**B)**

**In Year 2, more teachers agree that students like being at a PK-8 school.**



**Agreement**

60%

24%

Year 1          Year 2

n= 38          n= 70

**Disagreement**

44%

20%

Year 1          Year 2

n= 70          n= 23
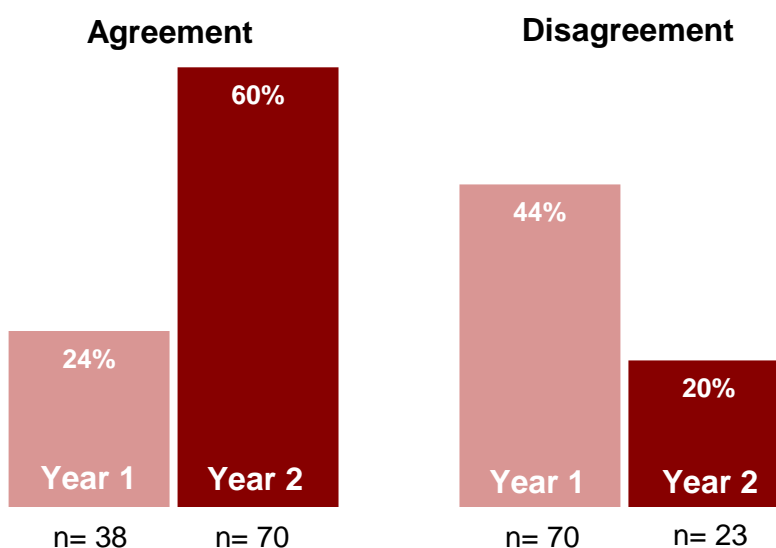
*\*Neutral responses were not included in this figure*

***Compared to Year 1, fewer teachers and students commented on middle level students' resentment towards returning to what had previously been their elementary school***.  In Year 1, some of the middle grade (Grade 6-8) student focus groups had a negative tone towards the PK-8 model.  Although some of the same issues arose for middle grade students in Year 2, such as returning to their elementary schools and not being treated as traditional middle school students, fewer students shared about these topics, which was interpreted as positive adjustment to the PK-8 setting.

According to responses on the teacher survey in Year 2, ***elementary and middle school students had more positive interactions and teachers across grade levels appeared to be interacting more frequently than in Year 1***. Additionally, more teachers in Year 2 indicated that they enjoy working in a PK-8 school compared to Year 1 (Figure C).

**C)**

**Teachers' agreement increased for the following statements from Year 1 to Year 2.**

**Elementary and middle grades teachers frequently interact about student learning.**

12% → 32%

**I enjoy working at a PK-8 school.**

44% → 63%

**I would rather work in a PK-8 school than a non-PK-8 school.**

19% → 40%
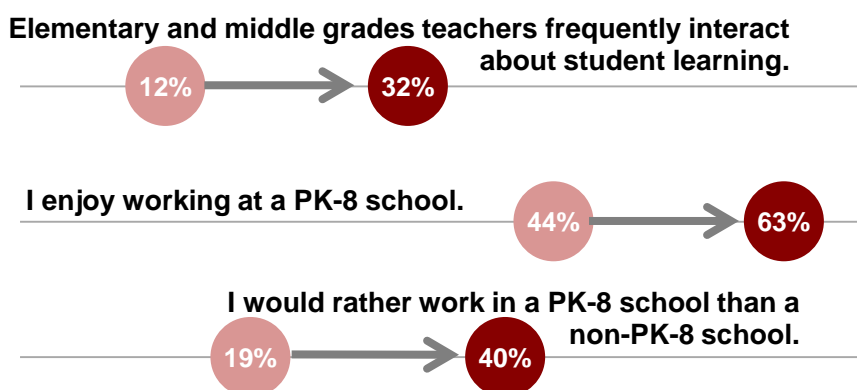
**2** Student Achievement

● Perceptions on Learning

*Stakeholders, particularly school leaders, perceived that the PK-8 structure improved or had potential to improve learning, and six of the eight schools met or exceeded growth targets in Year 1 (Figure D).*

**D)**

Growth

**2** schools — **Exceeded Growth**

**4** schools — **Met Growth**

**2** schools — **Did Not Meet Growth**
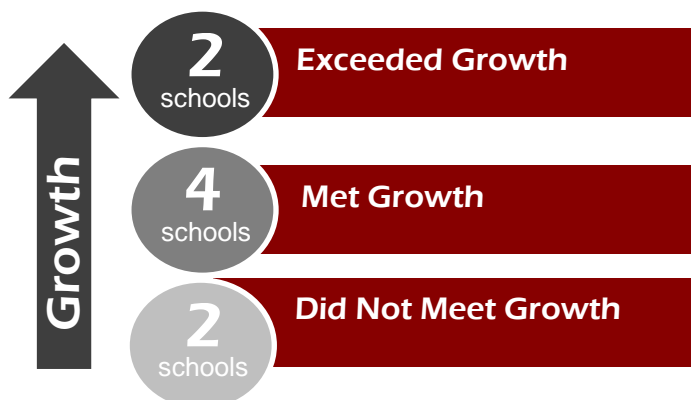
As shown in Figure E below, the percent of teachers who reported positive benefits of the PK-8 structure on their students' learning increased from 17% in Year 1 to 38% in Year 2.  Although more teachers see the benefits of the PK-8 model, 37% of teachers in Year 2 perceived that the PK-8 structure does not impact student learning.  Teachers were also asked if the PK-8 structure impacts their students' test scores on the North Carolina End of Grade tests and they similarly perceived no impact (39%) in Year 2.

**E)**

**Teachers' perceptions about the impact of the new curriculum on student learning improved.**

**2013**

**2012**

| | 2012 | | 2013 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Improved | 17% | | 38% |
| No Impact | 39% | | 37% |
| Declined | 35% | | 13% |
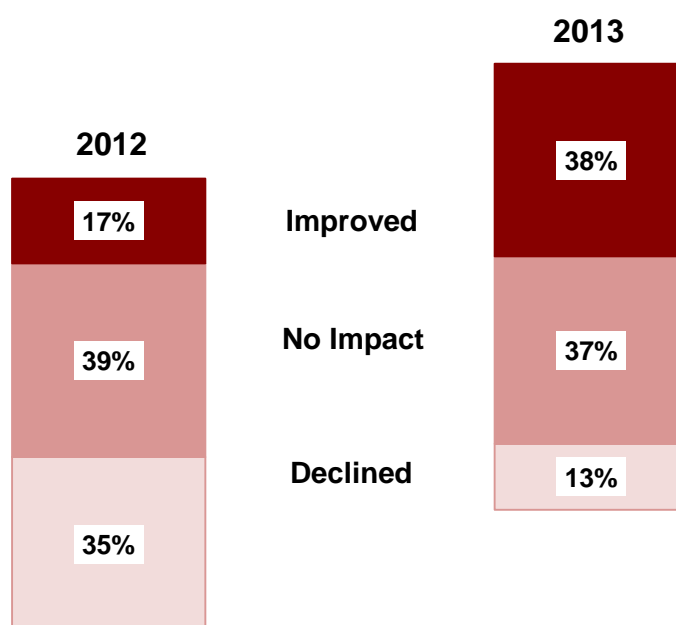
*"I Don't Know" responses were not included in this figure*

Across the four intensive study schools, students expressed that they like their teachers and the learning experience.  When asked, "What do you like about your school?" students from different grade levels mentioned their teachers, education components, and electives.  Students described teachers as nice, helpful, caring, dedicated, respectful, and creative.  Students also seem to have a general positive regard for the learning experience, sharing comments about the benefits of this model centering on "education" and "learning."  They also expressed appreciation for programs like Right Moves for Youth.

## ● Project LIFT

Five of the eight PK-8 schools are also involved in the Project LIFT initiative. Project LIFT provides schools with additional resources to extend learning opportunities, recruit and retain quality teaching staff, provide access to technology, and engage parents. While it is early in the process, ***some stakeholders reported the added benefits of Project LIFT layered with the PK-8 structure***. School leaders and students were most likely to identify the connection between Project LIFT and the PK-8 structure. While some students expressed dissatisfaction with aspects related to Project LIFT (e.g., the longer school year), others saw the opportunities to learn more and be better prepared for high school and college.

## ● Teacher Collaboration

***Stakeholders, particularly schools leaders and teachers, perceive that the PK-8 model provides opportunities to collaborate across grade levels to enhance student learning and better address student needs.*** With the new model, teachers and school leaders identified the benefits of having more staff resources for curriculum planning and integration and the availability of teachers on all levels to assist with students as they progress, both academically and socially. Teachers were more likely to report that interactions between elementary and middle grade teachers positively impact their students' learning in Year 2. Some parents were also aware of the benefits of teacher collaboration, noting improvements in their student's academic performance.

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● **Long-Term Relationships with Staff**

***All stakeholder groups, parents, school leaders, students, and teachers, noted the benefits of teachers and other school staff building long-term relationships with students.*** Some students identified relationships with their teachers as important to their progress in school. Parents and staff members shared the positive influence of enduring relationships between teachers and students. One parent said,

"They grow up **knowing** the teachers,

and the teachers **know** them,

they **know** their issues from an early age..."

● **Fewer Student Transitions**

***Many informants across stakeholder groups noted the benefits of fewer transitions in the PK-8 model.*** By eliminating the middle school transitions, students stay in a consistent and stable environment. Teachers and school leaders identified the benefits of eliminating the middle school transition, sharing that students can see further along their educational trajectory, and make long-term education goals. Consistency of the PK-8 structure and length of time spent in the same school were among the top benefits cited by parents and students.

● **Reduced Curricular Opportunities**

***Compared to traditional middle schools in CMS, all stakeholder groups perceived that the PK-8 schools provide fewer curricular opportunities.*** School leaders, teachers, and students cited a lack of certain courses, electives, and clubs. Students especially noted the desire for more curricular choices and frequently noted being among the same peers in every class. School leaders also highlighted the challenges of staffing for elective opportunities, with the current teachers stretching to meet the needs of middle schools students.

**3**   *Student Attendance*

***At this point, attendance does not appear to be impacted, positively or negatively, by the PK-8 structure***. While a few stakeholders mentioned the ability to better understand family patterns and address attendance issues, limited evidence related to the PK-8 impact on attendance is available. Approximately half of the responding teachers reported that the PK-8 model does not impact attendance (Figure F), and 23% were unsure of the structure's impact on attendance. However, it is important to explore official attendance rates and transience rates of students at these schools to determine if there is an impact. If parents and students feel more connected to the school, this may have a long-term impact on transience.

**F)**

**Most teachers do not think the PK-8 model has an impact on student attendance.**



| Improved | No Impact | Declined | Don't Know |
|----------|-----------|----------|------------|
| 16% | 56% | 5% | 23% |
| n=19 | n=65 | n=6 | n=27 |
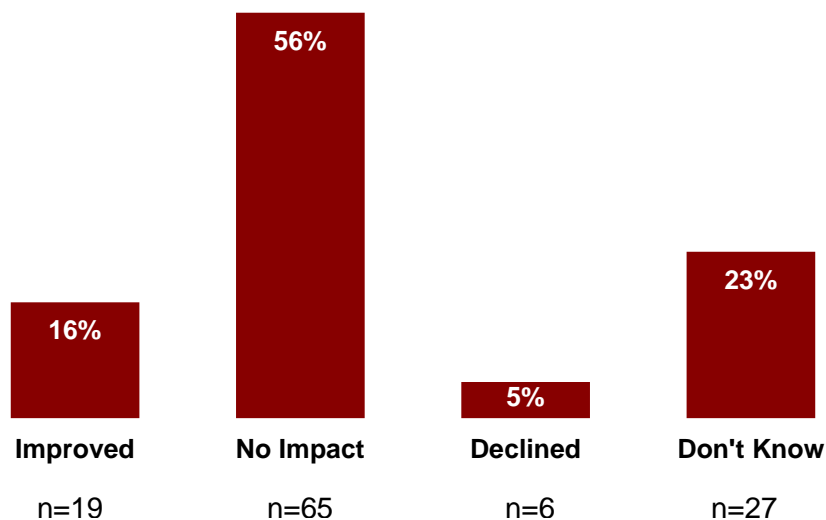
## 4 Student Behavior

***Stakeholders indicated trends toward improved student behavior, but noted concerns related to the large differences in ages and the needs of students across all grade levels.*** Stakeholder groups, particularly parents and students, expressed some concerns having early elementary students in the same building as adolescents based on their potential negative influence (e.g., fighting, use of inappropriate language). School leaders and some teachers reported the use of promising practices such as maintaining high behavior expectations and providing clear structure and procedures for students. School leaders generally reported students rising to meet expectations. Despite improvements, behavior continues to be a challenge at the new PK-8 schools, according to some stakeholders. Teachers cited both positive and negative influences of the PK-8 model on student behavior.

## ● Student Mentoring

***All stakeholder groups, including parents, school leaders, students, and teachers, perceived benefits of mentoring opportunities within the PK-8 model.*** The opportunity for older students to mentor younger students has been used for many different reasons across the schools: improving student behavior, providing positive role models, and improving academic performance. Stakeholders noted the advantage for younger students to see beyond the elementary grades for academic progress, and the positive influence that older students can have on younger students. Both older and younger students enjoy working together; the older students appreciate the opportunity to teach the younger students and act as mentors, while the younger students like the academic assistance. Stakeholders perceive mentoring to be an opportunity for mutual learning.

> "Having the students collaborate across the grade levels really **helps the younger students** understand the concepts and it's **very rewarding for the older students**."

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## ● Role Models

***Many stakeholders, particularly parents, students, and teachers, identified the influence (positive and negative) of older students on younger students.*** They indicated that older students act as positive role models for younger students and encourage younger students to behave. Several teachers saw these benefits extend into academics, as the younger students observed the success of the older students and the older students attempted to set a positive example. Conversely, other stakeholders believed that the older students were also modeling negative behaviors in front of the younger students, exposing them prematurely to inappropriate behavior. Across the levels, students also share the split beliefs, with some seeing the older students as positive role models and others seeing them as setting examples of inappropriate behavior.

## 5 Student Experience

## ● Sports Opportunities

***Providing sports for students in a PK-8 model continues to be a challenge according to parents, school leaders, students, and teachers***. One primary concern mentioned, particularly by school leaders, was the requirement for their students to travel to another school to play on a sports team and wear another school's uniform, which negatively impacted their school's culture. Teachers also noticed the impact of this challenge, sharing comments on the lack of opportunities and how it negatively impacts students' motivation to learn. Students and parents were concerned about not being part of a sports team and how it would impact future opportunities.

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## ● School Facilities

***Stakeholders in every group expressed ongoing concerns about the limitations of the existing school facilities to accommodate the PK-8 model***. The reconfiguration resulted in a significant addition of students at each of the schools (see Table 1 on page 2), and the fit of the existing schools for older students was questioned. School leaders indicated challenges in space planning and indicated that they use spaces not designed for classrooms for instructional purposes (e.g., conference rooms and former teacher workrooms). In addition, cafeterias, gymnasiums, and outdoor recreation space at some of these locations are not suited for the current size of the student body, according to the stakeholder groups. Some students reported overcrowding on their buses and within the school building. In the survey, 67% of teachers reported that the physical environment of their school does not meet the needs of their students. One teacher commented:

*"The students are great at working in*

**odd, cramped spaces,**

*but it isn't fair for us to ask them to*

**learn math in a closet."**

## ● School Community

School leaders, parents, and students noted benefits of students being in the same school for a longer period of time (Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 8). These benefits were particularly related to the developing long-term relationships with teachers and other students as well as having siblings or family members within the same school. Parents were most likely to comment about the advantages of having multiple children in one school environment, including ease of transportation and greater knowledge of school culture. Some students noted the benefits of having older or younger siblings, cousins, or other family members at the school to monitor, seek advice from, or visit with at certain times during the school day.

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## ● Preparation for High School

***Parents and students question the PK-8 preparation for high school as an alternative to the traditional middle school.*** These stakeholder groups mentioned the challenge of transitioning to high school, with a larger student body, class changes with different students, and less attention from faculty. The limited availability of courses and extracurricular activities including sports, as well as restricted freedoms perceived by some students and parents at the PK-8 schools appeared to be main concerns. The actual long-term impact of the PK-8 structure on high school transition and success is unclear. As more middle grade students transition into high school, follow-up evaluation can be conducted to track the full impact of their preparation.

> "My only concern is the middle school kids
> and [the] **transition into high school.**
> How is that going to be?"

## ● Traditional Middle School Experience

***Some students and parents indicated that they miss what they perceive to be the traditional middle school experience.*** Parents, teachers, and students commented on how the PK-8 model is not providing students with an experience unique to their middle school years. Students especially expressed a longing for the middle school experience, with more privileges and independence, and the opportunity to be treated as young adolescents. Students perceive privileges such as lockers and the freedom in the hallways (not lining up) and cafeteria to be available at traditional middle schools.

## Conclusions

Perceptions about the benefits of the PK-8 model appear to be shifting.  While school leaders cited academic benefits across both years, parents, students, and teachers involved in this evaluation were more likely to cite positive academic outcomes in Year 2 compared to Year 1.  Staff integration and collaboration appear to have increased in Year 2, and parents and students reported greater comfort levels with the attention and support that they were receiving.

While more benefits and a greater appreciation for the model were articulated in Year 2, similar challenges continue to be reported related to limitations of the school facilities, lack of curricular and extracurricular opportunities, particularly for middle school students, and the impact of the PK-8 model on high school preparation.  Many stakeholders indicated confidence in the academic preparation of students in PK-8 schools; however, there were concerns related to these students' preparation for high school based on the perceptions that some opportunities are not available in the PK-8 environments.  The Year 3 evaluation could investigate these perceptions in more detail and explore data on cohorts of middle grades students who attended PK-8 schools and traditional middle schools to better understand high school transition.

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### 1. I believe the students in my classroom like being at a PreK-8 school.

**All School Staff Feedback**

|                              | 2012 | 2013 |
|------------------------------|------|------|
| **n**                        | **160** | **117** |
| Agreement                    | 24%  | 60%  |
| Neither Agree nor Disagree   | 33%  | 21%  |
| Disagreement                 | 44%  | 20%  |

**Elementary and Middle School Teacher Feedback**

|                              | Elementary | | Middle | |
|------------------------------|------|------|------|------|
|                              | 2012 | 2013 | 2012 | 2013 |
| **n**                        | **87** | **61** | **41** | **30** |
| Agreement                    | 23%  | 64%  | 12%  | 57%  |
| Neither Agree nor Disagree   | 41%  | 23%  | 20%  | 10%  |
| Disagreement                 | 36%  | 13%  | 68%  | 33%  |

*Responses may not add to 100% due to rounding to the nearest whole number.
**The first table includes responses from all school staff, therefore sample sizes broken down by elementary and middle levels do not add up to all school staff sample size.

### 2. I believe that the students in my classroom have adapted well to the PreK-8 school environment.

|                              | 2012 | 2013 |
|------------------------------|------|------|
| **n**                        | **159** | **117** |
| Agreement                    | 40%  | 75%  |
| Neither Agree nor Disagree   | 21%  | 14%  |
| Disagreement                 | 38%  | 11%  |

|                              | Elementary | | Middle | |
|------------------------------|------|------|------|------|
|                              | 2012 | 2013 | 2012 | 2013 |
| **n**                        | **86** | **61** | **41** | **30** |
| Agreement                    | 38%  | 79%  | 39%  | 70%  |
| Neither Agree nor Disagree   | 23%  | 11%  | 15%  | 13%  |
| Disagreement                 | 38%  | 10%  | 46%  | 17%  |

### 3a. How do you think the PreK-8 structure impacts elementary students (PreK-5) at your school in each of the following areas? Attendance

|           | 2012 | 2013 |
|-----------|------|------|
| **n**     | **152** | **116** |
| Positive  | 18%  | 36%  |
| No Impact | 66%  | 59%  |
| Negative  | 16%  | 5%   |

|           | Elementary | | Middle | |
|-----------|------|------|------|------|
|           | **2012** | **2013** | **2012** | **2013** |
| **n**     | **87** | **60** | **34** | **30** |
| Positive  | 14%  | 35%  | 21%  | 37%  |
| No Impact | 66%  | 58%  | 71%  | 60%  |
| Negative  | 21%  | 7%   | 9%   | 3%   |

### 3b. How do you think the PreK-8 structure impacts elementary students (PreK-5) at your school in each of the following areas? Learning

|           | 2012 | 2013 |
|-----------|------|------|
| **n**     | **151** | **115** |
| Positive  | 21%  | 52%  |
| No Impact | 34%  | 36%  |
| Negative  | 44%  | 12%  |

|           | Elementary | | Middle | |
|-----------|------|------|------|------|
|           | **2012** | **2013** | **2012** | **2013** |
| **n**     | **85** | **60** | **35** | **30** |
| Positive  | 18%  | 52%  | 20%  | 53%  |
| No Impact | 27%  | 33%  | 54%  | 43%  |
| Negative  | 55%  | 15%  | 26%  | 3%   |

**3c. How do you think the PreK-8 structure impacts elementary students (PreK-5) at your school in each of the following areas? Behavior**

| | 2012 | 2013 |
|---|---|---|
| n | 152 | 115 |
| Positive | 15% | 37% |
| No Impact | 14% | 14% |
| Negative | 71% | 50% |

| | Elementary | | Middle | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2012 | 2013 | 2012 | 2013 |
| n | 86 | 60 | 35 | 30 |
| Positive | 14% | 28% | 9% | 50% |
| No Impact | 9% | 15% | 29% | 23% |
| Negative | 77% | 57% | 63% | 27% |

**3d. How do you think the PreK-8 structure impacts elementary students (PreK-5) at your school in each of the following areas? Overall**

| | 2012 | 2013 |
|---|---|---|
| n | 151 | 115 |
| Positive | 22% | 51% |
| No Impact | 29% | 28% |
| Negative | 49% | 21% |

| | Elementary | | Middle | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2012 | 2013 | 2012 | 2013 |
| n | 86 | 60 | 35 | 30 |
| Positive | 17% | 43% | 23% | 63% |
| No Impact | 22% | 33% | 40% | 27% |
| Negative | 60% | 23% | 37% | 10% |

**4a. How do you think the PreK-8 structure impacts middle grades students (6-8) at your school in each of the following areas? Attendance**

| | 2012 | 2013 |
|---|---|---|
| n | 149 | 115 |
| Positive | 23% | 44% |
| No Impact | 49% | 41% |
| Negative | 28% | 15% |

| | Elementary | | Middle | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2012 | 2013 | 2012 | 2013 |
| n | 80 | 61 | 38 | 30 |
| Positive | 20% | 39% | 13% | 47% |
| No Impact | 53% | 46% | 53% | 40% |
| Negative | 28% | 15% | 34% | 13% |

**4b. How do you think the PreK-8 structure impacts middle grades students (6-8) at your school in each of the following areas? Learning**

| | 2012 | 2013 |
|---|---|---|
| n | 153 | 114 |
| Positive | 32% | 51% |
| No Impact | 28% | 31% |
| Negative | 40% | 18% |

| | Elementary | | Middle | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2012 | 2013 | 2012 | 2013 |
| n | 80 | 61 | 41 | 30 |
| Positive | 30% | 44% | 22% | 60% |
| No Impact | 30% | 39% | 34% | 20% |
| Negative | 40% | 16% | 44% | 20% |

**4c. How do you think the PreK-8 structure impacts middle grades students (6-8) at your school in each of the following areas? Behavior**

|  | 2012 | 2013 |
|---|---|---|
| **n** | **152** | **115** |
| Positive | 24% | 48% |
| No Impact | 20% | 20% |
| Negative | 56% | 32% |

|  | Elementary | | Middle | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 2012 | 2013 | 2012 | 2013 |
| **n** | **80** | **61** | **40** | **30** |
| Positive | 24% | 39% | 10% | 60% |
| No Impact | 23% | 30% | 23% | 7% |
| Negative | 54% | 31% | 68% | 33% |

**4d. How do you think the PreK-8 structure impacts middle grades students (6-8) at your school in each of the following areas? Overall**

|  | 2012 | 2013 |
|---|---|---|
| **n** | **150** | **114** |
| Positive | 26% | 54% |
| No Impact | 29% | 27% |
| Negative | 45% | 18% |

|  | Elementary | | Middle | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 2012 | 2013 | 2012 | 2013 |
| **n** | **79** | **60** | **40** | **30** |
| Positive | 24% | 43% | 18% | 70% |
| No Impact | 28% | 40% | 38% | 13% |
| Negative | 48% | 17% | 45% | 17% |

## 5. How has the PreK-8 structure impacted your students' daily attendance?

|              | 2012 | 2013 |
|--------------|------|------|
| **n**        | **155** | **117** |
| Improved     | 11%  | 16%  |
| No Impact    | 59%  | 56%  |
| Declined     | 11%  | 5%   |
| I don't know | 19%  | 23%  |

|              | Elementary | | Middle | |
|--------------|------|------|------|------|
|              | 2012 | 2013 | 2012 | 2013 |
| **n**        | **84** | **61** | **41** | **30** |
| Improved     | 5%   | 13%  | 7%   | 27%  |
| No Impact    | 67%  | 62%  | 59%  | 47%  |
| Declined     | 11%  | 7%   | 12%  | 3%   |
| I don't know | 18%  | 18%  | 22%  | 23%  |

## 7. The physical environment of my classroom meets the needs of my students (e.g. desk size, classroom size).

|                           | 2012 | 2013 |
|---------------------------|------|------|
| **n**                     | **158** | **115** |
| Agreement                 | 59%  | 50%  |
| Neither Agree nor Disagree | 6%  | 4%   |
| Disagreement              | 35%  | 45%  |

|                           | Elementary | | Middle | |
|---------------------------|------|------|------|------|
|                           | 2012 | 2013 | 2012 | 2013 |
| **n**                     | **87** | **61** | **41** | **30** |
| Agreement                 | 60%  | 52%  | 73%  | 57%  |
| Neither Agree nor Disagree | 7%  | 5%   | 0%   | 3%   |
| Disagreement              | 33%  | 43%  | 27%  | 40%  |

**8. The physical environment of my school meets the needs of my students (e.g. hallways, restrooms, gymnasium).**

|  | 2012 | 2013 |
|---|---|---|
| **n** | **159** | **115** |
| Agreement | 25% | 30% |
| Neither Agree nor Disagree | 5% | 3% |
| Disagreement | 70% | 67% |

|  | Elementary | | Middle | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | **2012** | **2013** | **2012** | **2013** |
| **n** | **87** | **61** | **41** | **30** |
| Agreement | 30% | 33% | 12% | 27% |
| Neither Agree nor Disagree | 6% | 7% | 5% | 0% |
| Disagreement | 64% | 61% | 83% | 73% |

**9. How has the PreK-8 structure impacted parent involvement in your classroom?**

|  | 2012 | 2013 |
|---|---|---|
| **n** | **153** | **115** |
| Improved | 27% | 30% |
| No Impact | 64% | 67% |
| Declined | 9% | 3% |

|  | Elementary | | Middle | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | **2012** | **2013** | **2012** | **2013** |
| **n** | **84** | **61** | **41** | **30** |
| Improved | 24% | 21% | 29% | 47% |
| No Impact | 65% | 75% | 68% | 47% |
| Declined | 11% | 3% | 2% | 7% |

## 10. How has the PreK-8 structure impacted your students' learning?

|  | 2012 | 2013 |
|---|---|---|
| n | 155 | 115 |
| Improved | 17% | 38% |
| No Impact | 39% | 37% |
| Declined | 35% | 13% |
| I don't know | 8% | 12% |

|  | Elementary | | Middle | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 2012 | 2013 | 2012 | 2013 |
| n | 86 | 61 | 40 | 30 |
| Improved | 14% | 30% | 18% | 50% |
| No Impact | 37% | 43% | 40% | 33% |
| Declined | 42% | 15% | 35% | 10% |
| I don't know | 7% | 13% | 8% | 7% |

## 12. How has the PreK-8 structure impacted your students' performance on classroom assessments?

|  | 2012 | 2013 |
|---|---|---|
| n | 152 | 113 |
| Improved | 13% | 27% |
| No Impact | 57% | 50% |
| Declined | 18% | 6% |
| I don't know | 12% | 17% |

|  | Elementary | | Middle | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 2012 | 2013 | 2012 | 2013 |
| n | 83 | 61 | 41 | 29 |
| Improved | 7% | 16% | 10% | 41% |
| No Impact | 64% | 64% | 56% | 34% |
| Declined | 14% | 3% | 27% | 14% |
| I don't know | 14% | 16% | 7% | 10% |

### 13. How do you think the PreK-8 structure will impact your students' scores on the North Carolina EOG assessments?

|  | 2012 | 2013 |
|---|---|---|
| **n** | **153** | **113** |
| Improved | 18% | 27% |
| No Impact | 30% | 39% |
| Declined | 35% | 10% |
| I don't know | 17% | 25% |

|  | Elementary | | Middle | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | **2012** | **2013** | **2012** | **2013** |
| **n** | **85** | **60** | **40** | **30** |
| Improved | 11% | 12% | 20% | 47% |
| No Impact | 34% | 57% | 35% | 20% |
| Declined | 36% | 5% | 33% | 10% |
| I don't know | 19% | 27% | 13% | 23% |

### 15. I have access to resources to improve my students' learning based on the PreK-8 structure.

|  | 2012 | 2013 |
|---|---|---|
| **n** | **157** | **114** |
| Agreement | 44% | 57% |
| Neither Agree nor Disagree | 27% | 30% |
| Disagreement | 29% | 13% |

|  | Elementary | | Middle | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | **2012** | **2013** | **2012** | **2013** |
| **n** | **85** | **61** | **41** | **30** |
| Agreement | 42% | 54% | 34% | 63% |
| Neither Agree nor Disagree | 34% | 33% | 27% | 23% |
| Disagreement | 24% | 13% | 39% | 13% |

## 16. How has the PreK-8 structure impacted your students' behavior?

|          | 2012 | 2013 |
|----------|------|------|
| **n**    | **110** | **113** |
| Improved | 10%  | 30%  |
| No Impact| 25%  | 26%  |
| Declined | 66%  | 44%  |

|           | Elementary | | Middle | |
|-----------|------|------|------|------|
|           | **2012** | **2013** | **2012** | **2013** |
| **n**     | **59** | **60** | **30** | **30** |
| Improved  | 5%   | 13%  | 10%  | 57%  |
| No Impact | 29%  | 38%  | 23%  | 10%  |
| Declined  | 66%  | 48%  | 67%  | 33%  |

## 18. I have changed the way that I address behavior issues as a result of the PreK-8 structure.

|                              | 2012 | 2013 |
|------------------------------|------|------|
| **n**                        | **159** | **113** |
| Agreement                    | 44%  | 50%  |
| Neither Agree nor Disagree   | 23%  | 29%  |
| Disagreement                 | 23%  | 10%  |
| Not applicable               | 10%  | 11%  |

|                              | Elementary | | Middle | |
|------------------------------|------|------|------|------|
|                              | **2012** | **2013** | **2012** | **2013** |
| **n**                        | **87** | **61** | **41** | **30** |
| Agreement                    | 44%  | 34%  | 37%  | 63%  |
| Neither Agree nor Disagree   | 26%  | 39%  | 20%  | 20%  |
| Disagreement                 | 22%  | 11%  | 29%  | 10%  |
| Not applicable               | 8%   | 15%  | 15%  | 7%   |

**19. How often do elementary and middle grades students interact during the school day?**

| | 2012 | 2013 |
|---|---|---|
| **n** | **158** | **113** |
| Frequently | 18% | 27% |
| Sometimes | 36% | 38% |
| Infrequently | 46% | 35% |

| | Elementary | | Middle | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **2012** | **2013** | **2012** | **2013** |
| **n** | **86** | **61** | **41** | **30** |
| Frequently | 20% | 20% | 7% | 37% |
| Sometimes | 38% | 46% | 24% | 17% |
| Infrequently | 42% | 34% | 68% | 47% |

**20. Most of the interactions between elementary and middle level students are positive.**

| | 2012 | 2013 |
|---|---|---|
| **n** | **158** | **111** |
| Agreement | 38% | 60% |
| Neither Agree nor Disagree | 32% | 20% |
| Disagreement | 30% | 20% |

| | Elementary | | Middle | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **2012** | **2013** | **2012** | **2013** |
| **n** | **85** | **60** | **41** | **29** |
| Agreement | 27% | 50% | 51% | 79% |
| Neither Agree nor Disagree | 32% | 25% | 34% | 10% |
| Disagreement | 41% | 25% | 15% | 10% |

**21. How often do elementary and middle grades teachers interact professionally about student learning?**

|  | 2012 | 2013 |
|---|---|---|
| **n** | **156** | **112** |
| Frequently | 19% | 40% |
| Sometimes | 33% | 34% |
| Infrequently | 49% | 26% |

|  | Elementary | | Middle | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | **2012** | **2013** | **2012** | **2013** |
| **n** | **86** | **60** | **41** | **30** |
| Frequently | 16% | 32% | 15% | 37% |
| Sometimes | 35% | 40% | 22% | 33% |
| Infrequently | 49% | 28% | 63% | 30% |

**22a. How do you believe interactions between elementary and middle grade teachers at your school impact the following areas? Attendance**

|  | 2012 | 2013 |
|---|---|---|
| **n** | **150** | **113** |
| Positive | 21% | 41% |
| No Impact | 57% | 50% |
| Negative | 5% | 2% |
| I don't know | 18% | 8% |

|  | Elementary | | Middle | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | **2012** | **2013** | **2012** | **2013** |
| **n** | **84** | **61** | **39** | **30** |
| Positive | 20% | 36% | 10% | 43% |
| No Impact | 56% | 49% | 72% | 50% |
| Negative | 4% | 3% | 3% | 0% |
| I don't know | 20% | 11% | 15% | 7% |

## 22b. How do you believe interactions between elementary and middle grade teachers at your school impact the following areas? Learning

|                | 2012 | 2013 |
| -------------- | ---- | ---- |
| **n**          | **151** | **113** |
| Positive       | 47%  | 72%  |
| No Impact      | 29%  | 20%  |
| Negative       | 9%   | 4%   |
| I don't know   | 15%  | 4%   |

|                | Elementary | | Middle | |
| -------------- | ---- | ---- | ---- | ---- |
|                | **2012** | **2013** | **2012** | **2013** |
| **n**          | **85** | **61** | **39** | **30** |
| Positive       | 42%  | 70%  | 51%  | 73%  |
| No Impact      | 32%  | 18%  | 33%  | 20%  |
| Negative       | 11%  | 5%   | 3%   | 3%   |
| I don't know   | 15%  | 7%   | 13%  | 3%   |

## 22c. How do you believe interactions between elementary and middle grade teachers at your school impact the following areas? Behavior

|                | 2012 | 2013 |
| -------------- | ---- | ---- |
| **n**          | **151** | **113** |
| Positive       | 36%  | 58%  |
| No Impact      | 33%  | 27%  |
| Negative       | 17%  | 11%  |
| I don't know   | 15%  | 4%   |

|                | Elementary | | Middle | |
| -------------- | ---- | ---- | ---- | ---- |
|                | **2012** | **2013** | **2012** | **2013** |
| **n**          | **85** | **61** | **39** | **30** |
| Positive       | 33%  | 51%  | 33%  | 67%  |
| No Impact      | 35%  | 30%  | 38%  | 23%  |
| Negative       | 16%  | 13%  | 15%  | 7%   |
| I don't know   | 15%  | 7%   | 13%  | 3%   |

## 22d. How do you believe interactions between elementary and middle grade teachers at your school impact the following areas? Overall

|  | 2012 | 2013 |
|---|---|---|
| **n** | **149** | **112** |
| Positive | 41% | 63% |
| No Impact | 34% | 27% |
| Negative | 9% | 6% |
| I don't know | 16% | 4% |

|  | Elementary | | Middle | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | **2012** | **2013** | **2012** | **2013** |
| **n** | **83** | **60** | **39** | **30** |
| Positive | 39% | 58% | 36% | 70% |
| No Impact | 34% | 28% | 46% | 20% |
| Negative | 11% | 8% | 3% | 7% |
| I don't know | 17% | 5% | 15% | 3% |

## 23. I enjoy working at a PreK-8 school.

|  | 2012 | 2013 |
|---|---|---|
| **n** | **158** | **112** |
| Agreement | 44% | 63% |
| Neither Agree nor Disagree | 29% | 21% |
| Disagreement | 27% | 15% |

|  | Elementary | | Middle | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | **2012** | **2013** | **2012** | **2013** |
| **n** | **86** | **61** | **41** | **30** |
| Agreement | 35% | 49% | 54% | 77% |
| Neither Agree nor Disagree | 29% | 33% | 32% | 7% |
| Disagreement | 36% | 18% | 15% | 17% |

## 24. I would rather work in a PreK-8 school than a non-PreK-8 school.

|  | 2012 | 2013 |
|---|---|---|
| n | 157 | 112 |
| Yes | 12% | 32% |
| No | 41% | 27% |
| Doesn't Matter | 38% | 39% |
| I don't know | 9% | 2% |

|  | Elementary | | Middle | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 2012 | 2013 | 2012 | 2013 |
| n | 86 | 61 | 41 | 30 |
| Yes | 8% | 20% | 7% | 57% |
| No | 45% | 33% | 37% | 20% |
| Doesn't Matter | 37% | 48% | 46% | 23% |
| I don't know | 9% | 0% | 10% | 0% |

## 25. Overall, I have received the necessary professional development to work in a PreK-8 school.

|  | 2012 | 2013 |
|---|---|---|
| n | 158 | 111 |
| Agreement | 27% | 56% |
| Neither Agree nor Disagree | 32% | 32% |
| Disagreement | 41% | 12% |

|  | Elementary | | Middle | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 2012 | 2013 | 2012 | 2013 |
| n | 86 | 61 | 41 | 29 |
| Agreement | 29% | 48% | 24% | 72% |
| Neither Agree nor Disagree | 37% | 44% | 24% | 10% |
| Disagreement | 34% | 8% | 51% | 17% |

**26. I need additional professional development to effectively work in a PreK-8 school.**

|  | 2012 | 2013 |
|---|---|---|
| **n** | **157** | **109** |
| Agreement | 50% | 20% |
| Neither Agree nor Disagree | 32% | 47% |
| Disagreement | 19% | 33% |

|  | Elementary | | Middle | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | **2012** | **2013** | **2012** | **2013** |
| **n** | **86** | **58** | **40** | **30** |
| Agreement | 44% | 14% | 53% | 30% |
| Neither Agree nor Disagree | 36% | 47% | 30% | 47% |
| Disagreement | 20% | 40% | 18% | 23% |

**29. I receive the necessary support that helps me use my professional development to meet my students' needs.**

|  | 2012 | 2013 |
|---|---|---|
| **n** | **158** | **110** |
| Agreement | 51% | 70% |
| Neither Agree nor Disagree | 34% | 20% |
| Disagreement | 16% | 10% |

|  | Elementary | | Middle | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | **2012** | **2013** | **2012** | **2013** |
| **n** | **86** | **59** | **41** | **30** |
| Agreement | 51% | 69% | 49% | 73% |
| Neither Agree nor Disagree | 34% | 22% | 39% | 20% |
| Disagreement | 15% | 8% | 12% | 7% |

**30. The leadership at my school (e.g., principal, assistant principal) allows the PreK-8 structure to function as well as possible.**

|                            | 2012 | 2013 |
|----------------------------|------|------|
| n                          | 156  | 112  |
| Agreement                  | 65%  | 78%  |
| Neither Agree nor Disagree | 14%  | 13%  |
| Disagreement               | 21%  | 9%   |

|                            | Elementary | | Middle | |
|----------------------------|------|------|------|------|
|                            | 2012 | 2013 | 2012 | 2013 |
| n                          | 86   | 61   | 41   | 30   |
| Agreement                  | 59%  | 70%  | 66%  | 83%  |
| Neither Agree nor Disagree | 13%  | 20%  | 15%  | 7%   |
| Disagreement               | 28%  | 10%  | 20%  | 10%  |

**Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools PK-8 Transition Project**
**Regional Superintendent Interview Protocol**

1. The PK-8 schools are now in their second year.  What changes have happened since Year 1?

2. Are there emerging practices that seem to work well for PK-8 schools?
    a. Are there major differences in the way individual schools have approached the PK-8 school structure or environment?

3. What challenges are occurring within the PK-8 schools?
    a. Athletics
    b. Influence of middle grade students on elementary students
    c. Staffing—integration of elementary and middle school teachers
    d. Leadership—Are there enough principals/assistant principals?

4. Five of the eight PK-8 schools are also Project LIFT schools, how do you think that is impacting those five schools?

5. Are you seeing a difference in the schools overall based on PK-8 structure?
    a. Attendance
    b. Achievement
    c. Behavior

**Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools PK-8 Transition Project**
**School Leadership Group Protocol**

1. What effective strategies, ideas, or practices have you realized through these two years that could be replicated at other schools?

2. What have you done to encourage the integration of teachers, students, and parents with broad needs across grade levels?

3. What strategies have you used to reduce transiency/mobility?

4. What strategies have you used to increase students' academic performance?

5. Tell me about the ongoing challenges you face as a PK-8 school.

6. Please provide any other thoughts or comments.

**Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools PK-8 Transition Project**
**Student Focus Group Protocol**

1. What do you like about your school?
2. What are things that you don't like about your school?

**Elementary**

3. Do you like being in school with 6-8$^{th}$ grade students?
   a. Why?
4. How often do you see the 6-8 grade students?
5. Are you glad to stay at the same school through 8$^{th}$ grade?

**Middle**

6. Do you like being in school with elementary students?
   a. Why?
7. How often do you see the elementary students?
8. Are you glad to be at a PK-8 school?

**Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools PK-8 Transition Project**
**Parent Focus Group Protocol**

1. Tell me about your experiences being in a PK-8 school.

2. What do you like and dislike about the PK-8 structure?

3. Overall, are you happy your children are at a PK-8 school?

4. What are some differences in learning at a PK-8 school?

5. What are some differences in behavior at a PK school?

6. Has having fewer number of middle school age students has been helpful to learning and behavior?

7. Do you think you are more involved with the school because of the structure?  Do you feel there is more parental involvement overall?

8. Do you have any additional comments?

**Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools PK-8 Transition Project**
**Parent Drop-Off Interview Protocol**

| Do you like the PK-8 structure? | Student Grade | Please share any comments about the PK-8 structure. |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ Yes　☐ No<br>☐ Neutral　☐ I don't know<br>☐ Other _____ | ☐ PreK<br>☐ Elem<br>☐ Middle | |
| ☐ Yes　☐ No<br>☐ Neutral　☐ I don't know<br>☐ Other _____ | ☐ PreK<br>☐ Elem<br>☐ Middle | |
| ☐ Yes　☐ No<br>☐ Neutral　☐ I don't know<br>☐ Other _____ | ☐ PreK<br>☐ Elem<br>☐ Middle | |
| ☐ Yes　☐ No<br>☐ Neutral　☐ I don't know<br>☐ Other _____ | ☐ PreK<br>☐ Elem<br>☐ Middle | |

**Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools PK-8 Transition Project**
**Other K-8 District Personnel Interview Protocol**

1. Why did you decide to move to the K-8 model?

2. What practices are working well in these schools?
   a. Probe: Unique professional development

3. What challenges have they encountered?  How have you overcome these challenges?
   a. Probe: Facilities

4. Are you able to provide a full range of course offerings and extracurricular opportunities for sixth through eighth graders?

5. Have you noticed any improvements in achievement, behavior, and attendance as a result of the K-8 model?

6. Have you tracked any cost savings as a result of the K-8 model?