2015–2016 Reward Schools Case Studies

Statewide Report

November 2016

Texas Education Agency

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Acknowledgments

This publication is part of a series of reports produced in 2016–17 about seven Reward School campuses that participated in a case study project. This report was developed with collaboration from the Texas Comprehensive Center (TXCC) at American Institutes for Research, the Texas Education Agency (TEA), and the Texas Center for District and School Support (TCDSS) at the Region 13 Education Service Center (ESC). The following staff collaborated as a team on this project: Mark Baxter (TEA), Deborah Brennan (TCDSS), Grace Fleming (TXCC), Lisa Gonzales (TEA), Angelica Herrera (TXCC), Cody Huie (TCDSS), Allison Ivey (TCDSS), Barry Link (TCDSS), CoCo Massengale (TXCC), Anne Post (Region 16 ESC), and Trent Sharp (TXCC). For additional information about the case study project, please contact Lisa Gonzales at Lisa.Gonzales@tea.texas.gov.

The team extends its sincerest appreciation and gratitude to the principals, teachers, students, and district staff who participated in the interviews we conducted at Daingerfield Junior High School, Glenmore Elementary School, Hudson Middle School, KIPP SHINE Preparatory, Lancaster Elementary School, Vista Del Futuro Elementary School, and Walcott Elementary School. Thank you for welcoming us and sharing with us your best practices.

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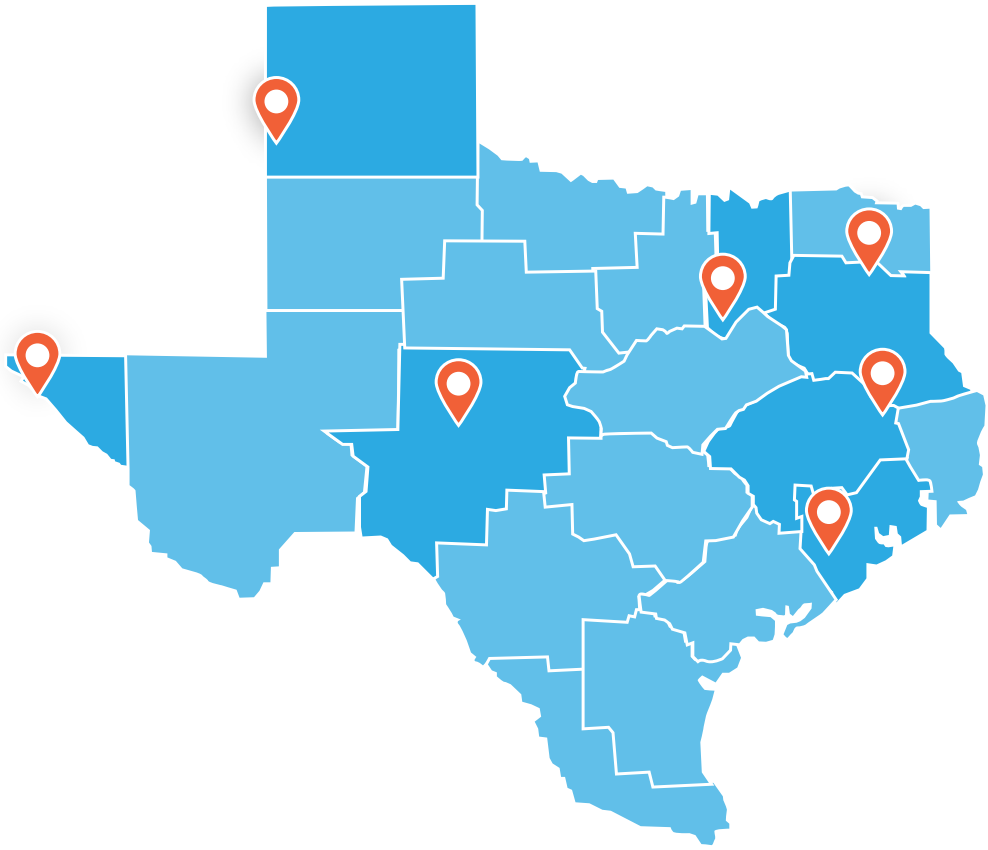

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This report was produced by the Texas Comprehensive Center with funds from the U.S. Department of Education under cooperative agreement number S283B120040. The content does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Education, and no endorsement by the Federal Government should be assumed. The Texas Comprehensive Center is administered by American Institutes for Research.

Executive Summary

Because eligibility for Title I funding is dependent on the financial needs of schools' populations, many Title I schools face significant barriers to student achievement. Decades of research have shown that poverty has a strong negative impact on student academic performance (Herbers et al., 2012), and Title I schools frequently serve students living at and below the poverty line. Despite these challenges, 148 Title I schools in the state of Texas received both the High Performing and High Progress distinctions in the 2013–14 school year.[1] These thriving campuses, or Reward Schools, are the focus of this study.

The purpose of this report is to share the best practices from seven Reward Schools that participated in the 2015–16 case studies project. The underlying framework for the Reward Schools Case Studies Project is based on the Texas Education Agency's (TEA's) theory of action for turning around low-performing schools: Texas Accountability Intervention System (TAIS). TAIS aligns with the U.S. Department of Education's school turnaround principles through seven critical success factors (CSFs). The CSFs guided the development of the research design and instruments for this case study project. The TAIS conceptualization of district support systems also informed the design of the study; in addition to interviewing school staff and students, the research team interviewed regional governing staff and district staff from central offices to learn how the district supports the case study schools. School leaders, principals, teachers, and students reported on practices aligned with the CSFs during interviews and focus groups. The research team also conducted school climate walkthroughs at each school. The full report includes the detailed results of the quantitative and qualitative analyses. The following is a summary of the key findings from the study organized by CSF and district support systems.

- **CSF 1: Academic Performance.** The schools in this case studies project have established schoolwide instructional strategies and high expectations for student performance. The instructional strategies are evidence based, and the expectations for student performance are reinforced through visual representations as well as staff verbalizations.
- **CSF 2: Use of Quality Data to Drive Instruction.** The case study schools set specific data use expectations for both staff and students, use data to make classroom-level and schoolwide decisions, and leverage a variety of data sources when measuring student and school performance. The study found that frequent data use in a collaborative environment is a common practice in these case study schools.
- **CSF 3: Leadership Effectiveness.** Principals at the Reward Schools have a specific vision for their campuses that they communicate to staff, students, and families. Participating principals effectively distribute leadership responsibilities among staff members, contributing to a sense of collective ownership in the schools' success. The leaders cultivate open, two-way communication with their staff and create multiple channels for staff to share concerns and successes and to participate in school decisions.

[1] These distinctions as based on overall school performance on the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR). Results from the 2013–14 school year can be found online: https://rptsvr1.tea.texas.gov/perfreport/tapr/2014/download.html

- **CSF 4: Increased Learning Time.** The case study schools leverage two distinct strategies to increase student learning time. First, schools have modified their schedules by either extending their school days or by building in time for uninterrupted blocks of core instruction. Second, schools have increased learning time by offering opportunities for student learning beyond the school day—typically through frequent, structured afterschool tutoring sessions and Saturday school for struggling students.
- **CSF 5: Family and Community Engagement.** The case study schools use multiple channels to communicate with families about their students. These efforts include social media, e-mail, texts, and phone calls, as well as home visits, parent–staff meetings, and school events. These schools have built and leveraged community partnerships, engaging their community members in school- and community-based events and programs.
- **CSF 6: School Climate.** Participating Reward Schools focus their efforts on developing positive relationships between adults and students that are centered on trust and behavior accountability. These schools create opportunities for students to build relationships with staff and other adults in their communities, typically through structured mentorship programs. Case study schools have established explicit, high behavioral expectations for their students with an emphasis on recognizing and rewarding positive behavior. The team studied the schools' climates through the following activities:
    - S**tudent interviews.** The students in this study have positive perceptions of the safety at their schools and are positively engaged with their teachers and learning. All of the interviewed students responded that they feel safe in their classrooms, and 100 percent reported that they believe their teachers care about them.
    - **Climate walkthroughs.** The school climate walkthroughs revealed several items observed at all seven schools:
        - The main offices had orderly and well-managed environments;
        - The physical environments were welcoming and supportive of learning for all students (e.g., well-lit, graffiti-free, painted walls), and classrooms were warm and supportive of learning;
        - Staff members were respectful to students and to one another; and
        - Movement during transitions was orderly (e.g., all students appeared to be heading to class with minimal horseplay).
- **CSF 7: Teacher Quality.** The schools included in this report make hiring decisions based on candidates' passion for teaching and belief that all students can learn. School leadership and staff take time to introduce new staff to the schools' unique culture and practices. The Reward Schools emphasize teacher professional development based on the needs of their staff at both the team and individual levels.
- **District Support Systems.** The Reward Schools operate within supportive districts or regional governing bodies. These organizations provide professional development to the participating schools and permit school leadership sufficient autonomy to run their campuses according to their needs.

Overview of the Reward Schools Case Studies Project

The state of Texas is home to more than 5 million primary and secondary public school students. From districts in major urban centers such as Houston and Dallas to those in rural areas far from cities, TEA serves schools and students of all backgrounds. Similar to schools across the country, many Texas schools face difficult circumstances, including poverty and high rates of student mobility. Schools that receive Title I funding are especially likely to face these and other challenges. The objective of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is for the U.S. Department of Education (ED) to help address the greater educational challenges facing high-poverty communities by targeting additional resources to school districts and schools with high concentrations of poverty (ESEA of 1965). Decades of research have shown that poverty has a strong and negative impact on student academic performance (Arnold & Doctoroff, 2003; Herbers et al., 2012).

Despite significant obstacles, 6 percent of Title I public schools in Texas have gone beyond meeting state standards to earning the distinction of Reward School status. Reward Schools share many similarities with low-performing schools in terms of student socioeconomic status and other demographic characteristics. However, Reward Schools have implemented practices that have allowed the schools to overcome these challenges and become high-performing learning institutions. TEA and the Texas Comprehensive Center (TXCC) developed an initiative in 2014–15 to implement a best practices case study project with the goal of recognizing the extraordinary accomplishments of Reward Schools and providing an opportunity for them to share their success stories with the state and other local educational agencies.

When the project began in 2014–15, eleven schools participated as case study sites (TEA, 2015). In 2015–16, seven new schools were selected to participate in the project. The purpose of this report is to present the findings from the seven newly participating schools. In addition to staff from TEA and TXCC, staff from the Texas Center for District and School Support (TCDSS) at the Region 13 Education Service Center (ESC) joined the project and assisted with the fieldwork at the case study schools. TCDSS representatives also interviewed and videotaped school staff and students from three of the participating Reward School case study sites to produce short videos.[2]

[2] Clips from the videos are available here: http://www.taisresources.net. They are under the under the heading Critical Success Factors and are titled “Teacher Quality,” “Academic Performance,” “School Climate,” and “Quality Data to Drive Instruction.”

Method

Case Study Sampling Procedure

In 2015–16, the research team developed a sampling strategy that permitted targeting Reward Schools in geographic areas TEA had identified as locations of interest. The criteria for selection included a Reward School's proximity to large clusters of low-performing schools—those the state had rated as Improvement Required. In 2013–14, there were 8,646 schools in Texas (TEA, 2014). Of those, 610 schools (7 percent) received an Improvement Required rating, 218 schools (3 percent) received a High Performing distinction, and 256 schools (3 percent) received a High Progress distinction. Of the 474 schools that received either the High Performing or High Progress distinction, 148 schools earned both distinctions. These 148 schools made up the sample of potential case study sites for this project. For more information about the method employed, which included using geographic information system (GIS) software and publically available school data to locate and select the schools for this case study project, please see Appendix A. Exhibit 1 shows the location of the 148 Reward Schools on a map of the state and the location of Improvement Required schools.

The GIS visualization helped the team select the seven schools in the 2015–16 study sample based not only on their proximity to large clusters of Improvement Required schools but also on the schools' diversity. The seven 2015–16 sites represented diverse regions, school sizes, school types (i.e., charter and traditional public schools), and locations in urban and rural areas (as shown in the snapshot sidebar).

Snapshot Description of the Reward School Case Study Sample

Number of participating schools: 7

School, district, and county name:

- Daingerfield Junior High School, Daingerfield-Lone Star Independent School District (ISD), Morris County
- Glenmore Elementary School, San Angelo ISD, Tom Green County
- Hudson Middle School, Hudson ISD, Angelina County
- KIPP SHINE Preparatory, KIPP Houston Public Schools, Harris County
- Lancaster Elementary School, Lancaster ISD, Dallas County
- Vista Del Futuro Elementary School, Burnham Wood Charter District, El Paso County
- Walcott Elementary School, Walcott ISD, Deaf Smith County

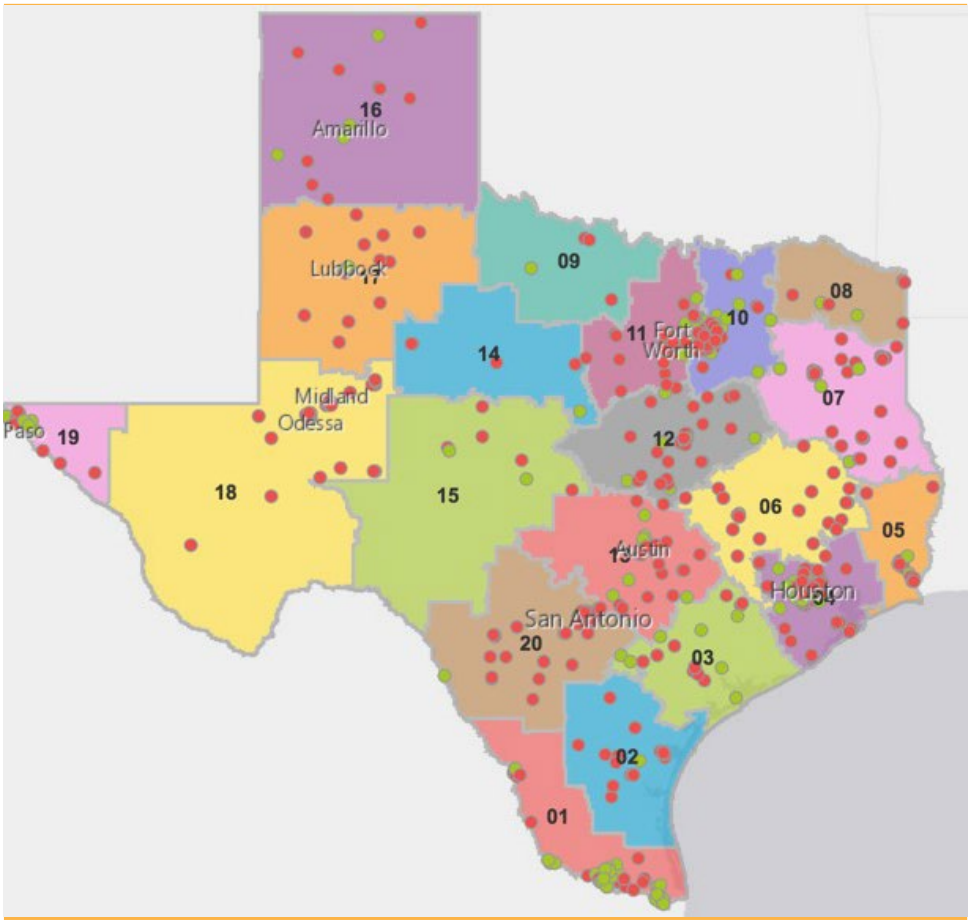
Number of students served by participating schools: 3,097 (average number by school: 442)

Grade span: PK–8 (five elementary schools and two middle schools)

Student demographics (average across the schools):

- 69% economically disadvantaged (i.e., students eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunch)
- 15% English language learners
- 6% special education
- 14% student mobility rate
- 24% African American
- 36% Hispanic
- 21% White

Exhibit 1. Texas Reward Schools and Improvement Required Schools

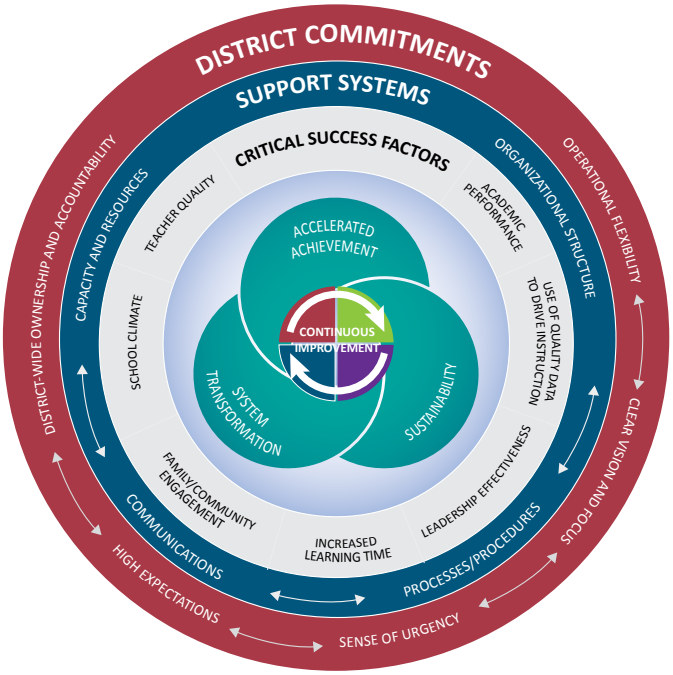


Note. Green dots on the map represent Reward Schools, and red dots represent Improvement Required schools. Texas has 20 ESCs, which are represented by the colored regions and numbers (e.g., Region 1 is along the southern border with Mexico and is labeled "01").

Study Design

The underlying framework for the Reward Schools Case Studies Project is based on TAIS, TEA's theory of action for turning around low-performing schools. TAIS aligns with the ESEA school turnaround principles through seven CSFs (Exhibit 2). The CSFs guided the development of the research design and instruments for this case studies project, specifically the development of interview and focus group protocols for school leadership, principals, teachers, and students. The TAIS conceptualization of district support systems (in the outer ring of the TAIS figure) also informed the design of the study. In addition to interviewing school staff and students, the research team interviewed regional governing staff and district staff from central offices to learn about how the district supports the schools included in this case study. Research has shown that effective support systems at the district level are key to school improvement and increasing student academic achievement (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010).

Exhibit 2. The Texas Accountability Intervention System



As shown in Exhibit 2, the CSFs used to inform the interviews with school staff and students are:

1. **Academic Performance**
2. **Use of Quality Data to Drive Instruction**
3. **Leadership Effectiveness**
4. **Increased Learning Time**
5. **Family and Community Engagement**
6. **School Climate**
7. **Teacher Quality**

In the second year of the study, the team decided to shift from collecting data on all seven CSFs at every school to focusing on two or three CSFs at each case study site. This method allowed the team to ask participants detailed and highly specific questions about practices related to each CSF. In addition, in 2015–16, the team added new measures and sought to include students' voices and perspectives about their school. The team collected data from students through one-on-one student interviews and conducted school climate observations using a school climate walkthrough tool (see Appendix B). The student interviews and walkthroughs provided additional evidence for CSF 6: School Climate.

After identifying and recruiting the seven schools, the team conducted brief phone interviews with the principal at each school. The notes from these interviews helped identify which of the CSFs the research team would focus on during the site visits (Exhibit 3). Although there was evidence that the seven schools were implementing practices from all seven CSFs, the team decided to concentrate on two or three CSFs at each school. This ensured that the interviews and focus groups could be conducted in a reasonable amount of time and the team would not overburden the study participants by asking too many questions in an effort to cover all seven CSFs.

This report presents the results from qualitative analyses of the interviews with district staff and the school principals, as well as teacher focus groups, and captures information about the CSFs. The report presents the aggregate findings of the analysis from the seven participating schools, organized by CSF, with all seven CSFs represented. Because the student interviews and school walkthroughs focused on school climate, the findings from the analyses of those data are presented in the CSF 6: School Climate section. To show how districts support the Reward Schools, findings from an analysis of the district staff interviews are presented at the end of the report, as is a summary of the overall findings from all participating schools. To maintain the participants' privacy and confidentiality, participants are not named.

Exhibit 3. Critical Success Factors Examined at Each Reward School

	CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
SCHOOL	Academic Performance	Use of Quality Data to Drive Instruction	Leadership Effectiveness	Increased Learning Time	Family and Community Engagement	School Climate	Teacher Quality
Daingerfield Junior High School					✓	✓	
Glenmore Elementary School	✓	✓					✓
Hudson Middle School	✓	✓		✓			
KIPP SHINE Preparatory		✓			✓	✓	
Lancaster Elementary School			✓	✓			✓
Vista Del Futuro Elementary School		✓	✓			✓	
Walcott Elementary School			✓				✓

Participants

The participants in this study included leadership from every school—including the principals at all seven schools and the entire leadership team at KIPP SHINE Prep, one or two district or governing body staff members (e.g., superintendent, curriculum and instruction specialist) for each school, teachers, and students from Grades 2–8.

Data Collection

All data collection activities took place on-site at each of the schools. Each school visit took place over two days from February through April 2016. The site visits involved two research team pairs (one from TXCC and the other from TEA or TCDSS). Data collection activities consisted of interviews, focus groups, and a school walkthrough. Interviews with school leadership, district or governing body staff, and teacher focus groups typically lasted about an hour. The interviews consisted of open-ended questions designed to determine the existing systems and structures the schools use to achieve and maintain their success.

Interviews with students took up to 20 minutes to complete. For more technical information about data collection activities and instruments, please see Appendix A.

Approach to Data Analysis and Reporting

The research team analyzed the student interviews and school climate walkthrough data using descriptive statistics. Because the sample of student participants at each school was small (10 students or fewer), as was the sample of schools the research team observed using the school climate walkthrough tool (N = 7), the results of the student interviews and school walkthroughs are aggregated across the seven schools. This report presents these findings. The research team analyzed staff interview and focus group data using NVivo qualitative software. Team members coded the transcriptions from the adult interviews and focus groups according to the seven CSFs, including related themes and indicators, and performed interrater reliability checks, finding interrater agreement in over 90 percent of the interviews for the qualitative data coded.

The following sections present the results from the case studies. The results consist of qualitative data as well as direct quotations from the interviews and focus groups shared with the on-site research team members. This report summarizes the findings across the case studies of the seven schools. The findings are shown at the CSF level, except for those related to district support systems. The findings from the qualitative analysis of the district or regional governing office staff interviews are shown at the end of the report. For more in-depth information about each CSF and school, please review the school-level reports.[3]

Results of the Case Studies

Critical Success Factor 1: Academic Performance

TEA considers Academic Performance to be a foundational factor aligned with the ESEA turnaround principle requiring schools to strengthen their instructional program based on student needs and ensuring that the instructional program is research based, rigorous, and aligned with state academic content standards (TEA & TCDSS, n.d.; ED, 2012). School turnaround literature asserts that successful implementation of schoolwide instructional practices should lead to improvements in student academic performance (Lutterloh, Cornier, & Hassel, 2016). Data from the site visits show the participating Reward Schools espoused the importance of Academic Performance on their respective campuses. Specifically, study participants discussed how they improved student academic performance primarily by doing the following:

- Establishing schoolwide instructional strategies and
- Maintaining high expectations and standards for student performance.

[3] The Reward Schools case study reports are available here: INSERT WHEN TEA PROVIDES LINK

Best Practice: Strategies for Reading Instruction

"Read the story. Read it again. Take some margin notes. Then go back and prove where you got your answers. In the upper grades, a lot of questions are inferred-type questions. If it's the entire passage that made you think that, you would put WP for 'It was the whole passage. I had to read everything and just glean from what I read to answer.' If it was an area or a paragraph that made you think that was the answer, then you would mark, 'That paragraph is where I found question number 2.'"

–Principal, Glenmore Elementary School

Best Practice: High Expectations

"Honestly, our goal when these kiddos leave us at the end of fifth grade, we want them to be the absolute strongest students they could possibly be in middle school. We show them, and we talk to them time and time again. Glenmore students will go to their middle school, and they'll be the leaders. They'll be the student council, they'll be the cheerleaders and the athletes and the head of the orchestra."

–Teacher, Glenmore Elementary School

Schoolwide Instructional Strategies

The schools in this case study have established evidence-based schoolwide instructional strategies for all teachers. For example, at Glenmore Elementary School, district leaders credited the principal with being one of the first in the district to establish rubrics and vertical alignment for all subjects across grade levels. The implementation of effective instructional practices across the campus has been thorough, and the Glenmore teachers now share their practices at professional development opportunities for other schools in the district. Prior to the principal assuming her position at the school, each grade level had its own strategy for reading instruction. Now the school has one strategy: read, again, prove (RAP). RAP is the process of reading a selection completely and then reading it again to find proof for answers to questions about the selection. Hudson Middle School also implemented a schoolwide instructional strategy focused on reading. Based on data indicating that many of its students were not reading at grade level, the principal and teachers worked together to determine what instructional practice they would use to address the problem. They decided to dedicate the first 15 minutes of the school's daily 45-minute tutorial period for sustained silent reading. Every day, students spend at least 15 minutes reading a book. This adjustment has had its intended effect, and the school has seen improvement in student reading scores.

High Expectations and Standards for Student Performance

The schools in this study have established specific academic standards and goals for their students and reinforce these expectations through visual representations as well as staff verbalization. At many of the sites—including Lancaster Elementary, KIPP SHINE Prep, and Daingerfield Junior High—teachers and classrooms display college insignias. The leadership at KIPP SHINE said such displays are designed to instill in their students—starting in prekindergarten—a sense of lifelong learning and achievement.

At Glenmore Elementary, teachers stated that they are goal oriented *"all across the board."* They engage in competitions in classes and across the school for academic performance, attendance, and other metrics. One teacher explained, *"We're only as good as the people we compete against, and we only get better when we're competing against people who think they are smarter than you or tougher than you."* This sense of friendly competition to bolster student and schoolwide achievement is also present at Lancaster, where the interviewed district staff member said the school sets its academic goals based on the achievement of the highest performing schools in the state.

From the interviews, it is evident that the school staff are highly committed to providing schoolwide instructional strategies focused on the needs of their students. For schools such as Glenmore and

Hudson, student academic performance—especially in reading—is a fundamental focus. Across grade levels and content areas, the principals and teachers implement consistent strategies that have resulted in improvements in student performance. Staff at all of the case study schools expressed high expectations for their students to be successful in and out of school. The case study data suggest that students in these schools are able to meet these expectations because of the teachers' and principals' efforts at building students' confidence in themselves and establishing high standards early on.

Critical Success Factor 2: Use of Quality Data to Drive Instruction

Data from the site visits indicate that the participating Reward Schools show strong evidence of using quality data to drive instruction and have provided an in-depth account of their procedures and processes for data use on their campuses. Research has shown that frequent examination of student data facilitates both educator accountability and improvements in student learning (Halverson, Grigg, Prichett, & Thomas, 2007). Existing literature on data use for instructional improvement asserts that providing teachers with easily accessible, timely student data and promoting its use through supported analysis helps schools leverage their data to improve student achievement (Kerr, Marsh, Ikemoto, Darilek, & Barney, 2006). The interviews and focus groups detailed how staff at the schools use data to improve student learning by doing the following:

- Setting data-use expectations,
- Using both classroom and schoolwide data, and
- Leveraging a variety of data sources.

Data Use Expectations

The case study schools set specific data use expectations for both staff and students for using data to make classroom-level and schoolwide decisions. At Vista Del Futuro Elementary School, the study participants spoke often of the principal's expectations for teachers to collect, review, analyze, and continuously use student data to inform and modify instructional practices. The principal stated that the training she provides on the methods the school uses to collect, review, and analyze student data is the first step. She noted that it is important that teachers receive proper training to *"understand the importance of the data, what to look for, how to interpret it, and how to align it not only to lessons but to tutoring."* Vista Del Futuro teachers also stated that they have the same high expectations for themselves and their colleagues related to data use.

Best Practice: Spreadsheets

"We do collect and review student data for every unit test that we take. We were required to create data sheets for students, and then once we see them we are able to go back to the TEKS [Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills] that we are struggling with."

–Teacher, Vista Del Futuro Elementary School

Best Practice: Data Use

"Any and every instructional decision [staff] make, whether it's a micro kind of changing a lesson in the moment in the day, or a much more macro [decision], like adjustment to a unit plan, or what are my intervention groups going to look like for the next 10 weeks? All of that is backed up by data."

–Leadership Team Member, KIPP SHINE Prep

To assist with student data review and analysis, Vista Del Futuro has a standardized Excel file teachers access online or print out on paper. The principal requires teachers to complete and submit the file on a weekly basis for all of the students in their classes. The spreadsheet includes student performance on benchmark and unit exams. Teachers use the Excel file to track and monitor student performance. Lead teachers also provide regular support to new teachers, helping them learn to use and interpret the Excel file. The research team reported that at Vista Del Futuro, ongoing collection, review, and analysis of student data is an integrated part of the school culture.

When asked what data use is expected at Glenmore Elementary, the principal answered, *"They [teachers] should constantly be looking at everything students are doing."* The teachers expressed an awareness of this expectation along with the principal's modeling of it. Several times in the interviews, there was reference to the principal's *"big book,"* where she keeps extensive data on each student in the school regarding lessons, tests, and other data such as attendance and discipline. Therefore, various kinds of data are combined and tracked for every student.

Classroom and Schoolwide Data Use

Research has shown that it is possible to use student achievement data to identify and replicate effective classroom practices (Kane, Taylor, Tyler, & Wooten, 2011). At KIPP SHINE Prep, focus group participants offered many examples of the ways classroom data are used to drive instruction. For example, teachers of Grades 2 through 4 use the computer-adaptive Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment data to appropriately level and group students. One member of the leadership team described how teachers used MAP data to determine how to meet the needs of KIPP SHINE students at every level: *"Instead of teaching in self-contained classrooms, [instructors] differentiated their math and reading classes in order to best reach those quartiles.... We try to strategically have smaller classes for our struggling students, or our lower quartiles in MAP, and the other classes are slightly bigger and they're moving faster, working more with enrichment questions and enrichment problem sets."* According to focus group participants, staff use data every day to make decisions about which students need more intervention or extra tutorials or how students will be grouped. One teacher said, *"Having the daily accessibility to something like Istation[4] really helps with [grouping]."* Teachers also use individual-level data to help students set goals and objectives for their own learning. One teacher said that after the class took a benchmark exam in the middle of the school year, he or she met with the students in small groups to discuss

[4] Istation is an e-learning program that includes curricula (reading and writing, mathematics, and Spanish), computer-adaptive assessments, and teacher data analysis tools.

their data: *"We have this program called IXL. It has every objective that we do in [their] grade. [Students] highlighted all the types of questions that they got wrong on their benchmark so they'll be working on those."* Interviewed staff at both the administrative and instructional levels agreed that data are the driving force behind all instructional decisions at KIPP SHINE. The school relies on frequent review of numerous data sources to ensure their students receive the best possible instruction.

Hudson Middle School also expects students to participate in data tracking. Each student knows his or her own Lexile reading level and uses it to set individual goals. Hudson also excels at using free online resources to collect data in the school and classrooms. Teachers use Google Docs and Google Classroom to develop, document, and track lessons and information. Like the staff at KIPP SHINE, Hudson uses technology to assist with collecting, storing, and analyzing data. School staff use a software program (DMAC Solutions) to manage the data.[5] DMAC allows Hudson staff to pull and analyze data.

Data Sources and Variety

Ongoing communication about student and school data provides the greatest opportunity for the data to have a positive impact on student learning outcomes (Hamilton et al., 2009). The principal and teachers at Vista Del Futuro discussed how staff review and interpret a variety of student data on a regular basis, including during the teachers' professional learning community and grade-level meetings. The principal also reviews the data on a weekly basis. She meets with the lead teachers and, as needed, teacher teams *"to review, and then we go over what exactly are we going to do, how are we going to address the [Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills] that are needing to be addressed."* The principal also described how the teachers and school staff collect nonacademic data from students—including daily attendance, notes from parent–teacher conferences, response-to-intervention forms, and discipline data.

In addition to using the district-developed reading and mathematics benchmark exams, teachers at Glenmore use their own tests to assess learning. Teachers introduce new lessons in their classrooms and set up learning stations where they can get a sense of how well students are learning. They will then use a few short questions to assess whether students need more time with a lesson or are ready to move to the next lesson. These formative assessments help teachers monitor student learning and establish effective pacing. Each year, teachers begin with the district benchmark data for students coming into their classes along with writing samples to familiarize themselves with each student. The teachers then spend the school year generating and analyzing data in their classrooms. The principal also uses a variety of data sources and, as previously described, combines them in her "big book," with extensive data on each student.

From the interviews, it is evident that the staff at the case study schools are expected to use student data to drive instruction. Teachers are able to meet this expectation because of the school culture and systems that facilitate the collection, review, analysis, and interpretation of student data. The leadership ensures that all teachers have the training, knowledge, and tools to effectively use student data to inform instruction and meet student needs. In addition, several of the Reward Schools from this study engage their students in personal data review, which contributes to a data-centered culture of achievement.

[5] DMAC Solutions is a suite of Web-based tools developed at the Region 7 ESC. According to the website, "The applications provided by DMAC exist to supply Texas educators with the tools and services necessary to develop and improve the quality of education provided to students" (https://www.dmac-solutions.net/about-us/).

Critical Success Factor 3: Leadership Effectiveness

Research has shown that, of the school-level factors linked to student achievement, the impact of school leadership is second only to classroom instruction (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Existing literature on principal leadership effectiveness emphasizes the importance of uniting instructional staff and the greater school community around a common vision that supports stakeholders' understanding of the school's purpose to generate coherence for schoolwide programming (Lambert, 2002). In addition, sharing leadership responsibilities with staff is one way principals can build trust, buy-in, and commitment to community at their schools and create a culture that sustains best practices even in the face of administrative changes (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). Effective principal communication with staff can create a collaborative environment for instructional learning, support a healthy school climate, and ultimately bolster student achievement (Cosner, 2011). During site visits, participants in interviews and focus groups discussed Leadership Effectiveness in the following ways:

- Uniting under a common vision,
- Sharing leadership responsibilities, and
- Communicating with staff.

Common Vision

At Lancaster Elementary, the school's mission can be seen in the hallways and on classroom walls: *"We will be exemplary!"* The school day begins with the principal, over the intercom, encouraging students to do their best and be the best. The focus groups and interviews echoed this rhetoric. When one teacher focus group was asked to articulate the single goal the school was working toward, they responded simultaneously, *"Being the best!"* One teacher called the attitude of achievement at Lancaster *"contagious"* and reported telling students before each exam, *"You are going to be the best."* Interviewees described this attitude as a top-down process: The principal believes in her teachers, the teachers believe in their students, and the students believe in themselves.

The study participants at Walcott Elementary School also expressed having a common vision for their students. The principal stated it directly: *"Our goal is for our kids to be successful, not just on the STAAR [State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness] test, though, I mean in life. I talked to my kids all the time about it: 'You know, your parents are thinking that you might be one of their first children to graduate from college. That's what your parents' goal is. You're their baby and you're going to be the first one to graduate from college.'"* The superintendent voiced the vision with a focus on the teachers who carry it out daily. He said that the teachers *"really concentrate on their kids and their classroom. The week before school starts … we have a couple of meetings but not too much because we*

Best Practice: Common Vision

"I feel like the kids have high expectations for themselves, teachers have high expectations, master teachers have high expectations, and so does administration. I just feel like across the board, everybody has this standard set high and that we're all willing to meet it. That's why I feel like we're successful."

–Teacher, Lancaster Elementary School

know they want to get in that classroom and get it ready. The emphasis here is stay in your classroom with those children. That's what they want, and they feel they can do a better job. With the more time they have with the kids, they can do more with them." Teachers articulated the school's vision when they talked about how they spend a lot of time with their students because of the school's unique circumstance of needing to provide the majority of students with transportation to and from school.[6] During these bus rides, teachers get to know their students—not simply as learners in classrooms but also as whole persons with lives outside of school. The principal and teachers use their deep knowledge about their students to motivate them to exceed their goals in school and beyond.

Shared Leadership Responsibilities

At Lancaster Elementary School, the principal relies on frequent collaboration with her leadership team to share the major responsibilities associated with schoolwide instructional decision making. The leadership team is composed of the principal, assistant principal, and subject-area experts in mathematics, reading, and science. The team meets weekly to examine student data, make staffing decisions, and generally debrief about the week's events. Although the small leadership team assists the principal in major decision making and guiding instructional improvement, all teachers at Lancaster have the ability to pursue leadership at the school level. Teachers sign up for a minimum of two committees—everything from grant writing to technology—at the beginning of the school year. The culture of achievement and the ample opportunities to grow as a leader have yielded highly successful teachers. Many instructors at Lancaster are master teachers, and several are certified for school administration. One interviewee pointed to the low teacher turnover at the school, saying that when teachers do leave, it is to pursue leadership positions elsewhere: *"We've lost teachers this school year because they went to other campuses to be in leadership roles."* The number of Lancaster teachers who are qualified for leadership positions is a testament to the culture the current leadership has created through mentorship and opportunities to assume positions of authority at the school level.

Participants at Vista Del Futuro Elementary School described how sharing leadership responsibilities increased their commitment to working together to improve student academic performance. A teacher discussed how teachers at every grade level take on a particular content area: *"In third grade, one of us does math, one of us does English language arts, one of us does social studies; and then during the week, we'll meet every day, but weekly we'll say 'This is what we're going to do; these are the resources you need. This is what you need to make copies of. This is the tiered center for your low, middle, and high.' We explain it to each other and if anyone has questions, they just come ask you."* The Campus Improvement Team at Vista Del Futuro provides leadership with another opportunity to share responsibility. The team meets monthly, and staff assume responsibility for managing certain activities such as fundraising or tending the school garden. One teacher said, *"We also have the principal, parent, teacher, and member of the community: Campus Improvement Team. They focus on two things: how to better improve the communication between parents and how to better improve the school, especially with fundraisers, bringing back the library again, how we can do that too, or the playground."* As with the committees at Lancaster, many teachers at Vista Del Futuro are able to participate in schoolwide decision making through the Campus Improvement Team.

[6] The teachers and principal at Walcott have the unique opportunity to learn about their students' lives because they are the only school in their district and serve a geographically spread-out population. To ensure that students are able to attend school daily, staff have arranged a system to pick up students for school and drop them off themselves.

Best Practice: Communication

"I'm proud of how far we've gone, from the beginning to where we are now. It took a lot of hard work, a lot of dedication and buying into everybody's perspective. That's what I'm most proud of. That the teachers take ownership of how well the school is doing and they don't say, 'Well, we are not going to participate; this isn't our business,' but they make it their business."

–Principal, Vista Del Futuro Elementary School

Communication With Staff

Principals and other leaders at the Reward Schools expressed the importance of frequent, two-way communication with school staff, students, and families. The communication occurs through faculty meetings, horizontal and vertical team meetings, e-mails, newsletters, and informally through conversations. At Vista Del Futuro, the teachers in the focus groups discussed how the principal always walks in the hallways checking in with staff and students. The teachers said that the principal does not micromanage them; rather, she makes them aware of her support and commitment to helping teachers be effective. One teacher said, *"She really does make it known in the meetings, 'I'm not here to reprimand you.... I'm here to help you with whatever you need.'"* Another teacher discussed how the principal's communication is always clear: *"She will tell you exactly what she needs from you."*

At Lancaster Elementary, frequent opportunities for instructional staff to meet and collaborate with school leadership allow for a spirit of open communication throughout the school. Teachers participate in weekly "cluster" meetings, which serve as professional development, collaboration opportunities, and small-group time with members of the leadership team. This frequent interaction has fostered a sense of accessibility. As one teacher summarized, the administration has *"an open door policy. Anybody on the leadership team you feel like you need to talk to, you can talk to them."* Another interviewee echoed this sentiment: *"We know everybody's role, but we all feel like we have input."* Because all members of the leadership team are master teachers, cluster meetings are opportunities for instructional staff to learn from pedagogical experts. The interviews also revealed that teachers trust school leaders to understand their work: *"We have a true instructional leader. I've worked with principals who I've gone to and said, 'Hey, I'm having a problem with place values; can you come and show me?' It's like 'Um, what I'm going to do is I'm going to get someone to come in. If I was to go to [the principal], she will come right in. I think she's a true teacher's teacher. She understands how we feel."*

From interviews and focus groups, it is evident that the Reward School principals are effective leaders on their campuses. Interview and focus group participants were quick to attribute their school's success to the dedication of their principals. The principals clearly articulate a common vision, and teachers and students buy into that vision. In addition, the principals effectively delegate and share responsibilities among the teachers, and they communicate openly with their staff.

Critical Success Factor 4: Increased Learning Time

As shown in the literature, increasing academic learning time for students is correlated with increased student achievement and is a critical component of a healthy school (Gettinger & Seibert, 2002). Current research concludes that uninterrupted blocks of learning time are critical for student academic success; schools should avoid "fragmented instructional time" so they can optimize student learning (Canady & Rettig, 1995). Research on afterschool and extended-day learning programs to improve achievement for low-performing students asserts that programs run by certified teachers, one-on-one tutoring opportunities, and programs that follow specific curricula are most effective (Fashola, 1998; Slavin & Madden, 1989). The interviews and focus groups detailed two ways the case study schools have increased learning time:

- Developing a modified schedule and
- Providing learning opportunities beyond the school day.

Modified Schedule

The Lancaster Elementary leadership has built a daily schedule that minimizes disruption of core content instruction. Lancaster developed the current schedule after staff noticed that student performance data for mathematics and reading lagged when students received instruction after lunch. Staff concluded that their students needed core instruction while they were most alert: *"[If] we can just get through those core contents, especially reading, especially [in] the lower grades, that's so critical."*

The principal and staff participants at Hudson discussed their school's modified schedule by describing a 45-minute block at the end of the school day. The schedule reserves the last 45 minutes of each day for tutorials in which all students work on assignments and lessons that need attention. Teachers recognized that they could use this time to help students with identified needs in their classes with targeted guidance, so they dedicated one day a week for each of the core subjects to be highlighted. Mathematics, English language arts, science, and social studies each have one day designated each week so that students with challenges in a particular subject can return to that teacher's classroom for targeted teaching.

The Hudson participants also mentioned tutorial sessions offered to students during 15 minutes of sustained silent reading. All students who are not in designated subject tutorials take the first 15 minutes of tutorial time to read silently. Accountability is built into this practice because teachers and students know that the principal can show up in any classroom on any day during tutorials and take the book any student is reading to quiz him or her about the reading material. This practice is not a "gotcha" strategy to intimidate the students; rather, it is a respectful exchange between student and principal to emphasize the importance of being able to read well.

Best Practice: Modified Schedule

"We try not to do any interruption in core content, like reading and math. We look at where those are placed in the day.… For the upper grade levels, we try to do all of their [reading and mathematics] teaching prior to 12:00 or 1:00, prior to their lunch time."

–Principal, Lancaster Elementary School

Best Practice: Modified schedule

"We have a schedule within a schedule. We have certain days that are dedicated to math, ELAR [English language arts and reading], science, social studies. If we have a student who's struggling in math, we can put him with their math teacher for 45 extra minutes a day, or they can be with an ELAR teacher. If they're falling behind for me, I can call one of the other teachers and say, 'Hey, can I have so and so for tutorials this week?' or whatever. That's helpful having that flexibility to do that."

–Teacher, Hudson Middle School

Beyond modifying blocks of time within the school day, KIPP SHINE operates under an extended learning day—a common practice in all KIPP charter schools. At KIPP SHINE, the school day begins at 7:25 a.m., and the final bell rings at 4:15 p.m. The extended day allows for additional instruction. Upper-grade students at Vista Del Futuro (another charter school) also have an extended day, with instruction beginning at 7:45 a.m. and ending as late as 3:50 p.m. for sixth-grade students.

Learning Opportunities Beyond the School Day

At Lancaster Elementary, all teachers participate in an afterschool tutoring program in which an upper-grade teacher is paired with a lower-grade teacher—a system referred to as "accountability partners"—to meet the needs of students at all levels in tutoring interventions. In addition to yearlong afterschool tutoring, Saturday school provides a supplemental intervention for students in the lower performance tiers, as determined by their academic performance data. One staff member mentioned state-mandated summer programs for older students: *"We have a summer bridge program … for those kids who don't do well on STAAR"*—as well as an early-start program to acclimate prekindergarten students and prepare them for regular schooling.

Best Practice: Extended Learning

"There's something very powerful for children when they know an answer because they've been to Foundation and they've heard it early and they can say it ahead of the others in the class that they know are stronger math students. That's what I get the biggest charge out of, is watching my weakest students outmaneuver the other ones. They're all looking around: 'How did you know that?'"

–Teacher, Hudson Middle School

The principal and teachers interviewed at Hudson Middle School discussed their approach to providing after-school mathematics tutoring to struggling students. The staff at Hudson have developed an after-school program called Foundation Acceleration. Mathematics teachers identify students who are struggling and offer them Foundation Acceleration before they take benchmark assessments. Students remain in the afterschool program even after they are no longer struggling to understand certain concepts. The students then receive preinstruction on concepts and functions before they are taught in their regular mathematics classroom. The teachers recruited to teach Foundation Acceleration have to have a great deal of flexibility because they have to keep students' attention after a full day of school. Students in the program receive snacks every day, and they get to eat the snacks outdoors. Interviewees reported that the outside break is a great way to get students to settle back into learning mode for the remainder of their time in the after-school program. The program is both successful and popular with the students. The teachers reported that students do not want their inclusion in the program to end even when they are caught up in their coursework.

The data collected during the research team's site visit revealed several methods employed by school staff to provide their student populations with increased learning time. Most notably, the schools rely on student data to modify the daily schedule in a way that optimizes student learning. The schools also provide additional

instruction through tiered interventions: Students have access to afterschool tutoring, Saturday school, and summer programs. These efforts afford students numerous opportunities to increase their exposure to direct instruction, contributing to the overall high student achievement at these Reward Schools.

Critical Success Factor 5: Family and Community Engagement

As shown in the literature, family involvement in children's education both at home and in school is a significant indicator of student performance (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Recent research on the impact of community engagement with local schools has shown a positive relationship between engaging community members and student achievement (Kirby & DiPaola, 2011). Furthermore, research concludes that more parent involvement at elementary schools is associated with higher academic achievement (Lee & Bowen, 2006). The team's analysis of site visit data indicates that the participating schools engage families and their communities primarily by doing the following:

- Communicating frequently with students' families and
- Building community partnerships.

Frequent Communication With Students' Families

Interview and focus group participants at Daingerfield Junior High School described the effort staff make to engage the families of their students. In addition to regular parent events—*"open houses, meet the parents. They're always invited; [we] have an open-door policy"*—school leaders are present at a variety of sporting events, musical performances, and community gatherings. For example, one interviewee said at basketball games they *"set up a table at the gym door"* so when parents come in they're able to say hello and make contact. The leaders conduct home visits and attend community functions to increase visibility and demonstrate the school's commitment to its students.

Instructional staff also described a culture of frequent communication with families, primarily through *"constant phone calls."* Teachers said these calls vary widely in content and expressed a belief that parent contact *"doesn't always have to be negative; it doesn't always have to be positive. You try to get things out to the parents so they know what's going on."* In addition to phone calls, parents can receive updates about their students' classes and grades online. One teacher provides a website where students and their parents can learn content. Families who do not have Internet access at home can access the school's computer labs to *"look up their child's grades. They can look and see what's missing, what they need to do."* Parents also receive communication about the school through newsletters and fliers, all of which are made available in Spanish.

Best Practice: Communication

"When I can't get [ahold of parents], I know where they work, so I call their jobs. If I can't catch them there, I know where they live. I've been in areas I didn't even know existed in Dangerfield or in Lone Star or in our area because I would go to their homes. Then, if I can't catch them there, I catch them at their churches."

–Principal, Daingerfield Junior High School

The KIPP SHINE Prep principal and teachers described a *"unique level of parent–teacher collaboration at our school."* Much of teachers' communication is facilitated by cell phones that the school gives to all instructors for the explicit purpose of communicating with families. One teacher said that having a school-assigned cell phone and number makes communication with students' families easier: *"We're texting [parents] back and forth, calling them; calling, texting brothers, sisters, coaches."* Teachers provide parents with frequent updates about their students. One teacher reported that throughout the course of the day, teachers share a variety of information: *"It could be anything. Something happened behavior-wise or in academics. It could be positive or negative."* Teachers said they feel this level of communication not only builds relationships between themselves and parents but also helps *"kids see that it's not that school is this island over here and the rest of your life is over here. It's all one place that what you do over here does affect what you do over here and vice versa."* Beyond texting and phone calls, KIPP SHINE sends weekly notes and written communication home with their students, sharing school news and information about events. In addition, because many of KIPP SHINE's students come from homes in which Spanish is the primary language, each team has a Spanish speaker who can *"translate pretty much everything, all presentations, [and parent–teacher] conferences."*

Best Practice: Community Partnerships

"We're making sure that the people in Lancaster and in surrounding areas can see how they can help us.… Making those partnerships ensures that even if we don't have the dollars behind it, we have the people resource. The people resource will help us."

–Staff member, Lancaster ISD

Community Partnerships

As a school in a small community, Daingerfield Junior High School leadership and staff rely on adults in the surrounding area to encourage students and hold them accountable academically and behaviorally. To build community investment in its students, Daingerfield hosts events that are open to the public, especially around the holidays. In addition, the school enlists community members to serve in several mentoring programs at the school. One program, Brothers, Uncles, and Dads of Developing Youth (BUDDYs), comes regularly to meet with male students and to recognize their achievements. Similarly, the school enlists community members in a "watchdog" program in which prominent members of the community (e.g., pastors, firefighters) come in regularly to interact with the students, attend events, and deliver speeches about citizenship, success, and community. School events and opportunities to join the mentorship programs are advertised through a variety of channels, including the local newspaper and the school website. The leadership pointed out that Daingerfield staff often rely on *"word of mouth and on the billboard down by the administration building; [school leaders] put the major events on the sign so when you go by you can see the marquee."*

KIPP SHINE Prep has partnered with the nonprofit organizations Recipe for Success and Revolution Foods, which allow the school to provide two bags of fresh produce weekly to participating families. Through these partnerships, KIPP SHINE also provides cooking classes so families can learn new ways to prepare their produce. Lancaster's district has made connections with a local professional society made up of Black engineers. The district has cultivated a relationship with the organization so that its members can come into the schools and connect with students who may be interested in science, technology, and mathematics. Through relationships with these adults, students are able to see how their academic interests can become careers.

The data collected during the research team's site visits reveal several methods employed by the school administrative and instructional staff to engage their students' families and the surrounding community. These efforts range from recruitment of community members to participate in school events and mentorship programs to daily communication between parents and teachers through multiple channels. Staff reported that they believe family and community engagement is essential for a successful school.

Critical Success Factor 6: School Climate

Student achievement is higher in schools with healthy and positive learning environments (MacNeil, Prater, & Busch, 2009). Research on the impact of schoolwide positive behavioral supports in urban settings has shown that such systems have a positive impact on student performance and achievement and reduce discipline incidents (Lassen, Steele, & Sailor, 2006). Strong relationships between students and adults in the school setting have a positive effect on both student engagement and achievement (Roorda, Koomen, Spilt, & Oort, 2011). Research has shown that establishing and cultivating trusting relationships among school staff is essential to successful school improvement (Bryk & Schneider 2003). The interview and focus group data collected at the Reward Schools detailed healthy and supportive school climates, bolstered by several schoolwide practices, which include:

- Cultivating adult–student relationships and
- Maintaining high expectations and supports for student behavior.

This section also includes the perspectives of students and the research team's observations of the physical and social climate of the schools, which the team collected using a school climate walkthrough tool. The findings from the adult interviews and focus groups are presented first, and the findings from the analysis of the student interviews and school climate walkthrough data follow.

Adult–Student Relationships

Interacting constructively with students is a schoolwide expectation at Daingerfield Junior High School, and teachers are dedicated to building affirming relationships with their students. One teacher described how she engages her students, *"I constantly give pep talks.… I'm always building self-motivation, self-discipline because I realize those are two important keys you have to have to be successful."* Several other teachers described similar relationships with their students and emphasized that the cultivation of adult–student relationships is essential to the school's success. The staff models resiliency and demonstrates a commitment to the lives of their students.

The participants at Vista Del Futuro Elementary School described the efforts they take to create positive, trusting relationships between the staff and students. One teacher described how he makes an effort to develop positive relationships with students and their parents by decorating his room in a welcoming way, providing his phone number and e-mail address to parents, and making sure students have the materials they need to do well in class. Another teacher said, *"I want to get to know the students individually in the beginning of the year, so it's a lot of open discussion right away. 'How do you show respect and what do you*

think respect looks like? And how would you show that to somebody else that was in trouble or needed help?'" Another teacher discussed how all of the teachers know the names of all of the students in the school—not just the students in their class.

Students at KIPP SHINE Prep are able to participate in structured mentorships that foster positive relationships with adults at school. To promote positive adult–student relationships, all students are assigned an Excellence Mentor—typically a music, art, or physical education teacher—with whom they meet twice a week. According to school leaders, the purpose of the Excellence Mentorship Initiative is to provide students with an opportunity to connect with an adult who is not a parent or their classroom teacher. This mentor acts as a neutral party with whom students can discuss school-related or other concerns. One leadership team member mentioned, if *"something's going on at home that's stressing them out, they have the opportunity to talk with someone that they're comfortable with."* This initiative came about when staff saw a discrepancy in student achievement and discipline data: Some of the highest performing students were struggling with behavior. Now, students meet with their Excellence Mentor in both a group setting and one on one to promote behavioral accountability and social–emotional development. Beyond interactions with instructional staff and leadership, students at Daingerfield have opportunities to build affirming relationships with adults from the larger community. Mentors from the Watchdog and BUDDYs program come in and work with assigned students, assisting them academically and socially. For example, during the site visit, one interviewee reported that the *"BUDDYs group took some boys fishing on a Saturday,"* giving the participating students an opportunity to share a positive experience with an adult outside of the school building.

High Expectations and Supports for Student Behavior

The participants at Vista Del Futuro Elementary School described their schoolwide strategy for managing student behavior. They said they have high expectations that students behave appropriately, and they help students meet those expectations by rewarding positive behavior. The principal and teachers also discussed using rewards, such as treasure boxes, field trips, recognition, and free time to encourage positive student behavior. One teacher mentioned *"rewards and just recognizing [good behavior]. All students need is praise. All they need is the, 'You know what, that is so good.'"* Students reflect on negative behavior using a self-reflection planning (SRP) protocol. Students complete the SRP form, reflect, and discuss their behavior and responses to the SRP with their teacher and—depending on the severity of the incident—possibly the principal and their parents. Students as young as prekindergarten participate in the SRP (the principal said the younger students draw pictures to help them reflect on their behavior). Part of the SRP process involves students

Best Practice: Building Trusting Relationships With Students

"On day one, we [teachers and staff] all want to create that learning environment. A very welcoming room not only for the students, but for parents as well. 'Feel free to call me, this is my e-mail, etc.' You're accessible to them, but the students … just creating that safe environment, welcoming environment, that's the first thing. Then just making sure that everybody has what they need to do their work—from pencils, to paper, to everything."

–Teacher, Vista Del Futuro Elementary School

Best Practice: Adult–Student Relationships

"Regardless of what goes on beyond the four walls of this school, when [students are] here, they're fed, they're well taken care of, they're surrounded by people who believe they can achieve tremendous success."

–Leadership team member, KIPP SHINE Prep

Best Practice: Reward Positive Behavior

"Students do misbehave or miss an assignment, or they are doing something not appropriate in the classroom.… The way the questions in the SRP have been, it's a reflection upon themselves, so they could go and rectify what they did wrong."

–Principal, Vista del Futuro

discussing their behavior with each other and with the principal or teacher facilitating the discussion, with the goal of resolving the situation.

The site visit participants at KIPP SHINE depicted a staff consistently using the LiveSchool platform to monitor student behavior in the second, third, and fourth grades. The school leaders spoke highly of the platform, which allows for flexible customization, stating that KIPP SHINE's LiveSchool program is *"all linked to our value system here. It's totally custom created by us."* Students' good behavior earns them reward dollars, which they receive every Friday in the form of a "paycheck," which they can save or spend at the school's on-site student store, the LiveSchool Bodega. Staff can enter and access real-time student behavior data through the LiveSchool application. The application is available on multiple platforms, but teachers most frequently use it on their school-provided cell phones. Teachers have found the rewards system effective. One focus group participant reported that he or she has *"seen a lot of kids turn [their behavior] around … because of LiveSchool Bodega."* The Bodega contains a variety of items for "purchase," ranging from snacks to school supplies to small toys.

The data collected during the research team's site visits indicate that Reward Schools are committed to cultivating healthy and supportive school climates through the development and ongoing implementation of trusting, positive student–staff relationships and the consistent implementation of schoolwide positive behavior plans.

Findings From Student Interviews

For this year's cohort of Reward School case study sites, the team decided to expand the sample of participants beyond school staff to include students. Students are the primary beneficiaries of the strategies and practices implemented by their schools, but their voices and perceptions of their schools are often missing from case studies on healthy schools. Although the sample of students in this study (N = 60) does not represent the student population of the schools, the findings on the students' perceptions of the climate at their school add a critical layer to understanding the practices implemented at the seven Reward Schools in the sample—especially practices related to CSF 6: School Climate.

The student interview questions were adapted from the 2012 Conditions for Learning Survey for the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (Osher & Poduska, 2013). To ensure that the interviews would not take more than 20 minutes to complete, questions focused on items in two domains: student engagement and safety. The Conditions for Learning Survey was informed by decades of research showing that safe and supportive schools create strong conditions for student learning, producing environments where students have

the following experiences: They feel physically and emotionally safe, they are connected to and supported by their teachers, they feel challenged and are engaged in learning, and they are equipped with social and emotional skills. Engagement includes several components of "school connectedness," such as the students' sense of belonging and their emotional involvement with the school (Marks, 2000). For this study, the research team defined engagement in terms of students' sense of belonging and their emotional involvement with their teachers. Positive relationships with teachers can contribute significantly to how much students value instruction (Blum, 2005), and positive student beliefs about how much their teachers support their efforts to succeed in school are related to a lower probability of students dropping out (Croninger & Lee, 2001).

Along with student engagement, emotional and physical safety are fundamental characteristics of high-quality schools (Dwyer & Osher, 2000). Schools where students feel safe are associated with higher academic performance (Osher & Kendziora, 2010), lower levels of student and teacher victimization, decreased truancy, higher levels of school attachment, and decreased disciplinary problems (Arseneault et al., 2006; Astor, Guerra, & Van Acker, 2010). Safe schools have a positive effect on school staff as well. Research suggests that the cumulative daily stress some teachers experience because of disrespectful student behavior and inappropriate remarks can have serious implications for their mental health (Gregory, Cornell, & Fan, 2012).

As Exhibits 4 and 5 show, the students in this study reported generally positive perceptions of the safety at their schools and are positively engaged with learning. For example, 100 percent of the students responded that they feel safe in their classroom. Only 7 percent of the students responded that they sometimes wish they went to a different school, whereas 93 percent responded that they do not wish to attend a different school. Moreover, Exhibit 5 shows, 100 percent of the students agree or strongly agree that their teachers care about them, and 99 percent of the students agree or strongly agree that the adults working at their school treat the students respectfully. The findings suggest the students perceive their relationships with their teachers to be positive, as 98 percent of the students agree or strongly agree that their teachers are available when they need to talk to them.

Exhibit 4. Student Perceptions of School Safety

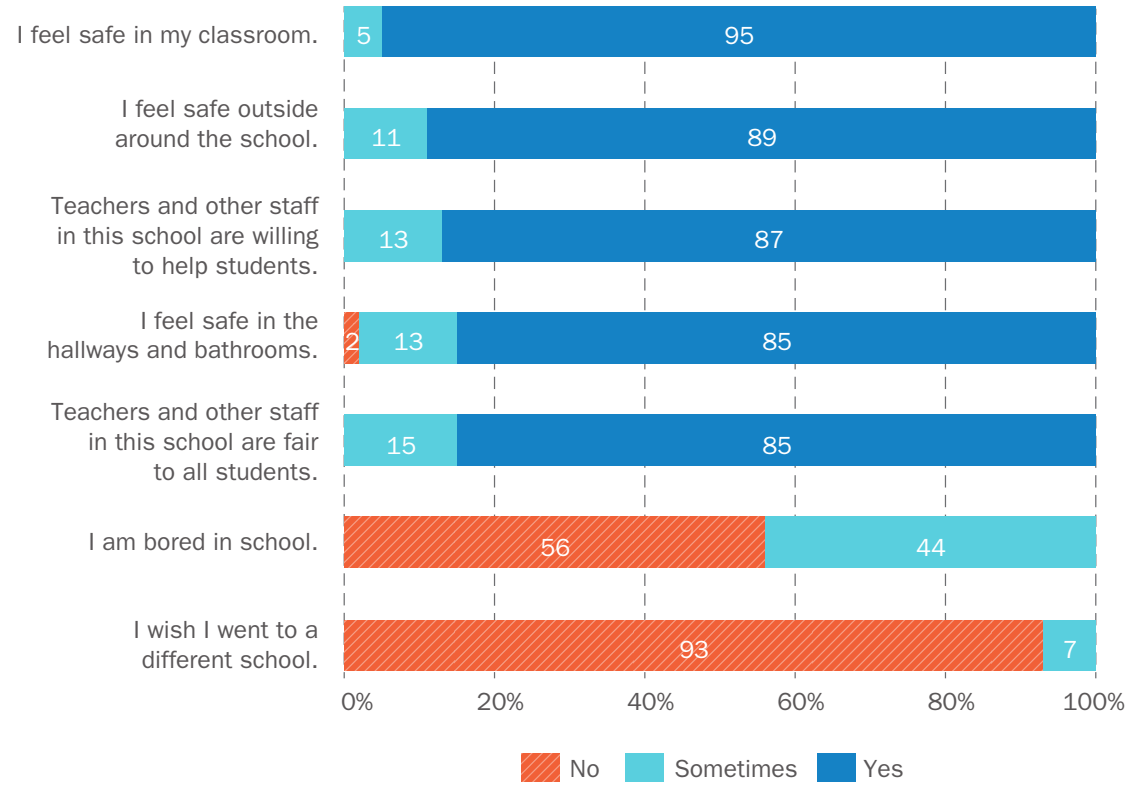
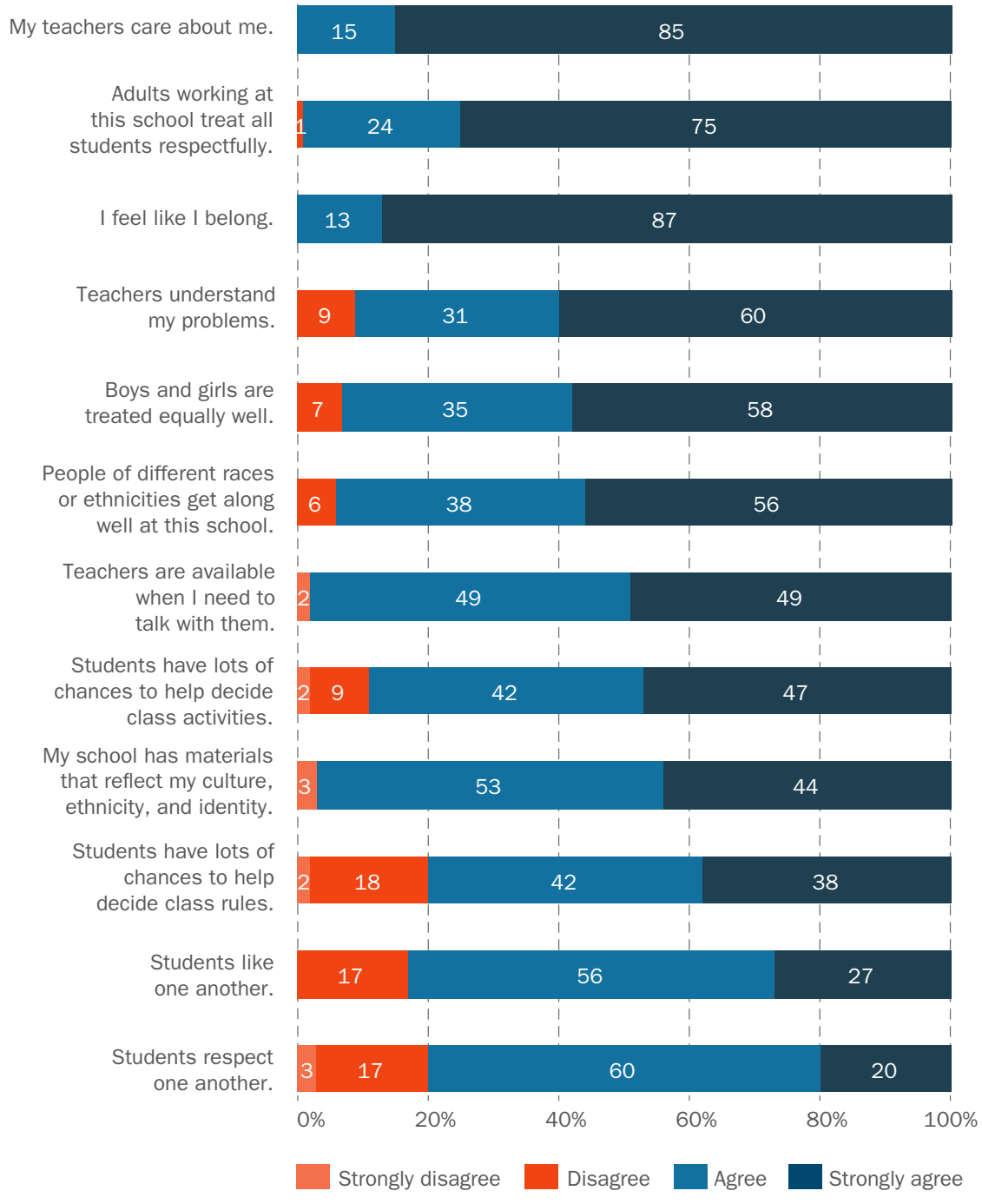


Exhibit 5. Student Engagement at School



When the research team members asked the students to elaborate on their responses to the item *"I wish I went to a different school,"* most said they did not have that wish because they like their teachers, friends, and the subjects they are learning at school: *"Here I have best friends and the best teachers."* When team members asked the students to elaborate on their responses to the item *"My teachers care about me,"* many of the students provided examples of how their teachers care for them by providing extra help when they are struggling with a particular assignment or when they are experiencing conflict with their peers. One student said, *"When I have trouble with homework, they are always available and willing to help. When a student is mean to me, the teacher helps."*

The findings from the student interviews show about 15 percent of the students reported that students do not respect one another or like each other. This is an area the schools in this study may want to explore. School leaders may want to consider examining and perhaps improving on their social–emotional practices focused on student relationships.

School Walkthrough Data

During the site visits, researchers conducted school walkthroughs (See Appendix B). These data complement other sources of data, such as staff and student interviews, focused on CSF 6: School Climate. The research team observed the physical and social environments at the schools. The school climate walkthrough tool consists of 18 items across the following five domains:

1. **School entrance:** Visitors are greeted by staff, the main office is orderly, and students are seated while waiting in the main office.
2. **Physical environment:** The physical environment is welcoming and free of graffiti, classrooms are supportive of learning, communal spaces (including the cafeteria) are not overcrowded, the physical space is secure, and the hallways and classrooms feature student work.
3. **Students and staff:** Students are respectful to each other and to staff, and staff members are respectful to students.
4. **Transitions:** Transitions are of appropriate length (5–10 minutes) and orderly, and support staff, teachers, and administrators are visible and engage with students during transitions.
5. **Other:** Adults supervise students during entry or dismissal, bathrooms are orderly, and the cafeteria is clean and well managed.

For each item in the tool, researchers indicated whether the item was "observed" or "not observed" or there was "no opportunity to observe." The results from the descriptive analyses of the data generated from the school walkthroughs corroborate the other findings showing that the schools in this case study project have positive school climates. Research teams observed almost all of the items and domains in the school walkthroughs. Some were not observed (e.g., orderly bathrooms, students with a hall pass at times other than transition times, adults supervising students during school entry or dismissal) because the researchers did not have the opportunity to observe those features. The school climate walkthroughs revealed several items the team observed at all seven schools:

- The main offices were orderly and well-managed environments;
- The physical environments were welcoming and supportive of learning for all students (e.g., well-lit, graffiti-free, painted walls), and classrooms were supportive of learning;
- Staff members were respectful to students and to one another; and
- Movement during transitions was orderly (e.g., all students appeared to be heading to class with minimal horseplay).

Exhibit 6 highlights some of the most frequently observed items from the school walkthroughs.

Exhibit 6. Commonly Observed Features From Reward School Walkthroughs

Critical Success Factor 7: Teacher Quality

Classroom instruction is the school-level factor with the greatest impact on student achievement (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Recent literature on the topic of teacher quality asserts that the most successful schools attract effective teachers, and the leadership thoughtfully assigns new teachers to appropriate students and classes (Loeb, Kalogrides, & Béteille, 2012). According to the research, the most effective professional development opportunities for teachers focus on content knowledge and incorporate active learning strategies (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001). Analysis of site-visit data indicate that the participating schools establish and maintain teacher quality through two primary practices:

- Hiring and onboarding new staff and
- Professional development.

Hiring and Onboarding for New Staff

Interviews with Lancaster Elementary staff provided a description of the school's selective hiring practices as well as its immersive onboarding process. When the school has a teaching vacancy, the leadership actively recruits qualified instructors: *"I reach out to universities, especially the University of North Texas. They have a great teachers' program. I call them.… I'm recruiting. I want to see those university-trained teachers first."* Although finding well-qualified teachers is a priority, the school leadership emphasized the ultimate importance of finding instructors who already embody the culture at Lancaster Elementary School. Interviewed respondents acknowledged that they have a student body population that faces many challenges, and when they go to fill a new position, they look for someone who is *"not going to be too timid or too shy to step into [the] role."* Successful candidates are adept classroom managers with a passion for instruction.

When a new teacher is hired at Lancaster Elementary, he or she takes part in an extensive onboarding process. New hires have several weeks to acclimate to the school culture and develop relationships with their colleagues because the administration feels that *"without the relationship piece there, anything you do is just not going to be productive."* Several new teachers participating in the February focus groups described the collaborative nature of the school's onboarding process, with one saying, *"I think when we came in, [the current teaching staff] welcomed us.… Anything we needed, they supported us."* In taking the time to thoroughly onboard new hires, Lancaster Elementary has found a process that both preserves and strengthens teacher quality.

The district leaders at San Angelo ISD attributed the high quality of teachers at Glenmore Elementary School partly to the principal's

Best Practice: Onboarding

"We spend a lot of time developing the relationships, coaching teachers, letting them go out of their classrooms to sit in the other teachers' classrooms, just to see what is it that we do."

–Principal, Lancaster Elementary School

professional network. With her connections across the state, people in other districts recommend their best teachers to Glenmore when teachers are moving into the San Angelo district. Teachers also described networking as key to the high teacher quality in the school. One teacher described the principal's practices this way: *"If she thinks there's going to be an opening, she is working to fill that spot with the absolute very best person possible."* When interviewing prospective hires, the principal looks for strengths such as good communication, amicability, and flexibility to be able to work with children effectively in the classroom. The principal explained that she looks not only at knowledge and experience but also at the applicant's potential for connecting and communicating with students. Glenmore leaders consider this potential to be more important than initial pedagogical knowledge because knowledge can be developed over time.

Professional Development

The interviewees at Walcott Elementary School expressed that their school's success with retaining the master-level teachers on staff has been a result of teachers relying on each other for input to improve their own teaching skills. The staff described how teachers at Walcott trust each other, and this trust leads to a schoolwide culture of informal professionalism. This culture also allows teachers to turn to each other to address problems that students are having as soon as the problems surface. One teacher explained, *"There is no time limit. If you have a problem today, it's like let me go over to kindergarten and ask this question. It's not, 'Oh, I've got to wait for her conference time or a certain meeting.'"* Another teacher elaborated on that thought saying, *"We don't really call special meetings. It might be in the hall, it might be at lunch, it might be at breakfast, it might be standing out loading [the buses].... It gets resolved, and it gets solved."*

The Walcott staff also discussed how teachers participate in schoolwide discussions of their professional development needs. They expressed how they insist that teachers always bring new knowledge and skills to students and build on what they have already taught the students. The teachers interviewed mentioned that when teachers identify an area where they need refresher training or training in new areas, they discuss those needs with their leaders. The result is almost always training through Region 16 ESC. The school relies heavily on Region 16 staff, who offer trainings during and between school semesters. Of Region 16, the principal said, *"I don't know how the Texas Panhandle would survive without our service centers."*

At Glenmore Elementary School, the interviewed teachers and principal discussed the professional development teachers receive as part of a book study. The principal chooses the books according to new practices and structures being established in the school; for instance, when the school implemented use of stations in all classrooms, it started with mathematics stations, which led to studying a book on mathematics stations. When the staff extended stations to reading, they read a book on reading stations. Another common opportunity for teachers is observing each other in their classrooms. The principal may see something in one classroom that needs to be strengthened, and she knows another teacher has mastered that technique, so she will send the teacher in need to observe the other teacher. To make this observation possible, the principal will cover the classroom while the teacher is out of the room. At other times, the principal will model for the teacher within the classroom.

At Lancaster Elementary School, the participants described how the master teachers at the school model instructional strategies for instructional staff—a system all interviewed staff reported as engaging and effective. The relationship between master teachers and regular instructional staff (some of whom are master teachers themselves) is one of trust, built by frequent collaboration during cluster meetings. Modeling goes beyond group instruction; instructional staff also receive one-on-one support from their master teachers. Interviewed staff attributed the quality of Lancaster Elementary teaching staff to this attitude of collaboration, embodied by the modeling system in place at the school.

The data collected during the research team's site visits indicate a commitment to cultivating and developing quality teachers. This process starts at the administrative level in a highly selective hiring process that emphasizes a culture fit, first and foremost. Extreme care is taken to onboard new staff, allowing ample time for new hires to acclimate to the schools' unique cultures. Beyond their first year, instructors continue to have access to both group and one-on-one targeted professional development, which contributes to the overall teacher quality at these schools.

District Support Systems

In addition to conducting interviews and focus groups with school building staff and students, the research team interviewed district staff members to learn about how districts support the schools in this project and the relationship between the schools and their districts. District participants included superintendents, curriculum specialists, and other staff (e.g., a regional representative for KIPP Houston Public Schools). Data from the site visits indicate that the districts provide a variety of supports directly to the schools. Although the offered supports are many and varied, interview data suggest the districts have been particularly helpful in supporting the schools' success in the following areas:

- Capacity and resources in the form of professional development and
- Organizational structures that promote school autonomy.

This section includes qualitative data from the interviews and focus groups shared with the research team while on-site at the Reward Schools. To obtain further details about the systems and structures in place at district and regional charter organizations, refer to the school-level reports.

Capacity and Resources: Professional Development

Study participants described the various supports Daingerfield-Lone Star ISD offers teachers to improve instruction and pursue professional development opportunities. Campus and district leadership collaborate to determine what training staff may need. Instructional staff are also encouraged to pursue professional development opportunities offered through Region 8 ESC. Focus groups revealed a general perception of support from the district. For example, one teacher said, *"I've never been told that I can't attend the workshop.… They support us going to regional and attending the workshops."* The school leadership echoed this sentiment, saying the district is willing to provide *"whatever we need. Our superintendent, our assistant superintendent—they are on hand. They're there."* In one instance, an interviewee said the district quickly processed a request for electronic dictionaries; in another instance, district staff were responsive to needs related to the school's computer labs. In all cases, interviewed stakeholders were emphatic about the district's willingness to meet the school's needs.

The district curriculum and instruction specialist who works with Vista Del Futuro Elementary School described how the district supports the school by providing ongoing, job-embedded professional development to teachers. The district staffer mentioned several times that she models instruction to teachers and provides coaching in the classroom. The district staff also mentioned how the district frequently supports and encourages teachers to participate in professional development provided by the district, Region 19 ESC, and universities.

Study participants at KIPP SHINE Prep frequently described the various supports KIPP Houston Public Schools offers teachers to improve instruction and pursue professional development opportunities. KIPP SHINE staff have access to numerous professional development opportunities offered through the regional office, as well as content specialists who assist with implementing mathematics and reading curricula. Beyond content support, the regional office provides funding for *"any kind of program"* the instructional staff are interested in implementing. Regional professional development sessions are designed to be

collaborative, in which staff from KIPP SHINE interact with, teach, and learn from instructional staff from other KIPP Houston Public Schools. Districts that participated in this project supported their schools by providing teachers and staff with access to collaborative professional development opportunities, content specialists, and funding for instructional resources.

Best Practice: District Support

"Autonomy lies with those [schools] that are achieving results. The ones that are not achieving results have more guardrails and more scrutiny from their [assigned] manager."

–Staff member, KIPP Houston Public Schools

Organizational Structure: School Autonomy

The San Angelo ISD district leaders interviewed expressed high confidence in the leadership and achievement at Glenmore to the extent that the principal is granted significant latitude for decision making at her school. The district staff described their approach in allowing their school principals who have demonstrated effective leadership and strong academic performance significant autonomy over their school. One district leader represented the district's view of the principal in the following way: *"We see the synergy she brings to the work that her teachers do, the focus that she brings with her teachers and on the kids, so we provide her a lot of room to do the things that she needs to."* The district stays informed about the principal's plans and offers support for their implementation. In addition, district staff members conduct walk-throughs of the campus three times each year and report the results to the school.

Interviewees from the KIPP Houston Public Schools emphasized that KIPP SHINE Prep's governing body allows the KIPP SHINE administrative team to exercise autonomy and make schoolwide decisions without extensive oversight. One teacher noted that the school is permitted to use the instructional methods that work best for their students, noting that *"if something is not working, even if it is something that is being pushed by the region, the fact that if it doesn't work for us, we're able to actually make the change."* The KIPP Houston Public Schools staff member agreed that the charter's philosophy dictates that the regional office place high trust in its effective leaders.

The data collected during the research team's site visits indicate that the districts of the case study schools are dedicated to providing the resources and supports the schools need to be successful. The staff interviewed at the Reward Schools expressed feelings of support from their district. The districts provide professional development in the forms of trainings and job-embedded coaching and modeling. In addition, the districts show confidence in the school leaders—enough to allow the schools to have autonomy in their decision-making processes. These district-level practices have facilitated the schools' ability to reach Reward School status.

Limitations

Although the findings from the Reward Schools that participated as case study sites highlight strong school practices, readers must take note of the limitations involved with the case-study approach. The seven schools selected for participation are diverse in terms of geographical location, school size, and school type (traditional public and charter schools), but the schools are not statistically representative of the entire population of Reward Schools across Texas. To present a statistically accurate representation of the population of Reward Schools, researchers would need to draw on a larger sample of participating schools, which is beyond the scope of this project. Therefore, the findings presented in this report are not generalizable beyond the seven schools included in this study and are not intended to represent all Reward Schools, Title I schools, or Texas schools in general. Instead, the findings of this report present the practices of seven highly successful Texas Title I schools that have established systems and structures to support exemplary student achievement in the face of significant challenges, including student economic disadvantage.

Conclusion

These case studies detail the best practices of seven Reward Schools across the state: Daingerfield Junior High School, Glenmore Elementary School, Hudson Middle School, KIPP SHINE Preparatory, Lancaster Elementary School, Vista Del Futuro Elementary School, and Walcott Elementary School. These campuses—selected for their distinctions, diversity, and proximity to struggling schools—each implement a variety of practices that align with the TAIS CSFs for school turnaround. Many of these Title I schools have experienced successful turnaround themselves, having been designated as Improvement Required schools in the past. These schools serve as examples of resilience and commitment to high achievement in spite of challenging circumstances. The findings from this case study present the common strategies these Reward Schools use to ensure that each of the TAIS CSFs are in place on their campuses.

The participating Reward Schools have established instructional strategies and high expectations for student achievement, and they continually reinforce those expectations both visually and verbally. These schools frequently collect and analyze student data from a variety of sources and use data collaboratively to make instructional decisions. Each of the schools is headed by a highly effective principal who shares leadership responsibilities and communicates openly with staff. The participating Reward Schools have modified their daily schedules and offer additional learning opportunities beyond the school day to increase student learning time. The schools also have established and leveraged community partnerships, and they communicate frequently with students' families, engaging family and community members in social, academic, and community events. Common across the seven campuses is a commitment to fostering healthy and supportive relationships between students and adults. These relationships are frequently facilitated through teachers creating positive, trusting relationships with their students and school leadership developing structured mentorships for students with either building staff or community members. Finally, all schools are committed to developing and maintaining quality instructional staff—starting with hiring practices and continuing through frequent, targeted professional development opportunities. The findings from this case study also indicate that the seven Reward Schools operate within supportive districts or regional governing bodies that provide staff with professional development and trusted school leadership to run their campuses according to their needs.

The student interview data provide further evidence in support of strong adult–student relationships and a positive school climate. Although there may still be room to improve student-to-student relationships, most interviewed students reported a sense of belonging to their school community, and 93 percent would not want to switch schools. These variables, among others, indicate that the participating Reward Schools have created strong, positive school climates. This finding is reinforced by school climate walkthrough data.

This report highlights the achievements of the seven participating Reward Schools as well as their best practices. The research team was impressed by the effective leadership and dedicated, knowledgeable instructional staff on each campus. Staff and students reported a deep love and appreciation for their respective schools, and this passion is reflected in student academic achievement and the schools' attainment of distinctions and state recognition. The combined efforts of school leadership, instructional staff, district or governing body staff, and students contribute to the extraordinary achievements of the seven schools showcased in this report. These dedicated individuals have worked diligently to cultivate a culture of achievement and support, earning the seven schools the Reward School distinction. These schools serve as model institutions for both Title I and other schools in the state who may seek to replicate the systems and structures that have contributed to these Reward Schools' success.

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Appendix A: Technical Report

Case Study Sampling Procedure

In 2015–16, the research team developed a sampling strategy that permitted the targeting of Reward Schools in geographic areas that TEA had identified as locations of interest. The data used for school selection are from school year 2013–14. The criteria for selection included a Reward School's proximity to large clusters of low-performing schools—those the state has rated as Improvement Required. In 2013–14, there were 8,646 schools in Texas (TEA, 2014). Of those, 610 schools (7 percent) were rated Improvement Required, 218 (3 percent) schools received the High Performing distinction, and 256 (3 percent) schools received the High Progress distinction. Of the 474 schools that received either the High Performing or High Progress distinction, 148 schools earned both distinctions. These 148 schools made up the sample of potential case study sites for this project. The team used GIS software and publically available school data to locate and select the schools for this case study project. Exhibit 1 shows the location of the 148 Reward Schools on a map of the state. This map also identifies the location of Improvement Required schools (TEA, 2014).

The GIS visualization allowed the team to select the seven schools for the 2015–16 study sample based not only on their proximity to large clusters of Improvement Required schools but also on the schools' diversity. The seven 2015–16 sites represented diverse regions, school sizes, school types (i.e., charter and traditional public schools), and locations in urban and rural areas.

Data Collection

All data collection activities took place on-site at each of the schools. Each school visit took place over two days, during which two research team pairs (one from TXCC and the other from TEA or TCDSS) would receive written consent from the adult participants. Interviews with school leadership, district or governing body staff, and teacher focus groups typically lasted about an hour. Interview and focus groups consisted of open-ended questions designed to determine the existing systems and structures the schools used to achieve and maintain their success. For example, principals were asked to describe the instructional strategies implemented schoolwide or to give examples of how they support instructional improvement on their campus. Other questions included asking teachers to describe opportunities to assume leadership roles at their school or how their instructional teams collaborated in developing units of instruction and materials.

The research team received written parental consent for and student assent from participating students, and student interviews took up to 20 minutes to complete. The student interviews mostly consisted of closed-ended questions in which students were asked to select a response from a scale with the options *"No," "Yes,"* and *"Sometimes"* or *"Strongly Agree"* to *"Strongly Disagree."* Some of the interview questions included answers such as *"Teachers and other staff in this school are fair to all students," "I wish I went to a different school," and "I feel safe in the hallways and bathrooms of the school."* The research team included a few open-ended questions to allow the students to elaborate on their scale responses, such as *"You said teachers are fair to all of the students at your school. Please tell me more about that. Share with me an example or experience you've had at this school that makes you think teachers are fair."*

In addition to interviewing staff and students, the research team conducted a school walkthrough to observe and note the physical space and climate of the school (see Appendix B). The school walkthrough consisted of a checklist on which the team members indicated whether they observed, did not observe, or did not have an opportunity to observe certain features of the school environment. One example item was *"The main office is an orderly and well-managed environment."* School walkthroughs typically took about 30 minutes to complete.

Approach to Data Analysis and Reporting

Student interviews and school climate walkthrough data were analyzed using descriptive statistics; the results from these analyses are included in the Findings From Student Interviews and the School Climate Walkthrough Data sections of this report. Staff interview and focus group data were analyzed with the assistance of the qualitative NVivo software. Research team members coded the transcriptions from the adult interviews and focus groups according to the seven CSFs, including related themes and indicators. The research team performed interrater reliability checks and found an interrater agreement in over 90 percent for the qualitative data coded.

Because the sample of student participants at each school was small (10 students or fewer), as was the sample of schools the research team observed using the school climate walkthrough tool (N = 7), the results of the student interviews and school walkthroughs are aggregated across the seven schools. The report presents these findings. To maintain the participants' privacy and confidentiality, participants are not named in any of the reports.

Appendix B: School Climate Walkthrough Tool

The school climate walkthrough tool used in this study was adapted from the School Climate Walkthrough Form, developed by the Baltimore City Public Schools, available publically online at www.baltimorecityschools.org.

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SCHOOL CLIMATE WALKTHROUGH FORM

Observer: It will take about 30 to 45 minutes to complete this form. Please visit and observe all of the areas indicated in the form. When you select "Not Observed" or "No Opportunity to Observe" write a note in the "Comments" column explaining why you made that selection. Please be descriptive.

School Name: _____ Date: _____

Time Walk Started: _____ Timed Walk Ended: _____

Observer Name: _____

	Observation	Observed	Not Observed	No Opportunity to Observe	Comments
School Entrance	1. Visitors (including yourself) are greeted by staff, provided with a visitor's pass, and directed to the appropriate location upon entering the building.				
	2. The main office is an orderly and well-managed environment.				
	3. The main office has students seated while waiting to be attended. Note in the comments if the same students were in the office when you departed, and what the students were doing.				
Physical Environment	4. The physical environment is welcoming and supportive of learning for all students (e.g., well-lit, graffiti-free, painted walls).				
	5. Classrooms are supportive of learning and are included within the school community; classrooms are not identified as 'special education' or 'SPED.'				

		Observed	Not Observed	No Opportunity to Observe	Comments
	6. The physical, communal spaces (e.g., cafeteria, library, and outdoor space) is utilized effectively (i.e., not overcrowded or underutilized) and routinely checked by staff for students lingering or loitering.				
	7. The physical school environment is secure (i.e., outside doors are kept closed and locked or monitored, and outside student activities and transitions are monitored).				
	8. The hallways include current examples of student work, accolades, or recognition, as well as expectations of student behavior.				
	9. The classrooms include current examples of student work, accolades, or recognition, as well as expectations of student behavior, including rewards system and/or positive reinforcement.				
Students & Staff	10. Students are being respectful to one another and to staff members. Provide examples in the comments section.				
	11. Staff members are being respectful to students and to one another. Provide examples in the comments section.				
Transitions	12. Transition times are of appropriate length (e.g., 5-10 minutes) and are effectively monitored by school staff.				
	13. Movement during transitions is orderly (e.g., all students appear to be heading to class with minimal horseplay).				
	14. Students have a hall pass at times other than transition times, and students are actively checked for hall passes.				
	15. Support staff, teachers, and administrators are visible and engaging with students during transitions and at other times in the day.				

		Observed	Not Observed	No Opportunity to Observe	Comments
Other	16. If you are present at entry or dismissal, observe whether adults are actively supervising students. Note if students are left outside and alone during these times.				
	17. The bathrooms are an orderly environment (i.e., doors on stalls, appropriately stocked and no trash on the floor or students congregating in groups).				
	18. The cafeteria is clean, orderly, well-managed and with appropriate student groupings (e.g., 1st graders are separated from 5th graders).				