



Structuring and Sustaining Freshman Academies in the South Bend Community Schools

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Executive Summary

With the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2002, school reform has become the focus not just of scholarly research, but of government intervention. The law requires schools to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) toward the goal of ensuring that all students are proficient in reading and math by the year 2014, and to track and report the progress of various subgroups of students. Schools and school districts are held accountable for the progress of each subgroup, as well as the student body as a whole, through penalties that are imposed for failing to make adequate yearly progress.

In this environment of accountability, school systems have employed various strategies to improve student achievement and avoid such penalties. Many of these efforts have focused on comprehensive, or whole-school reform models. One comprehensive reform that has shown promise is the creation of small learning communities (SLCs) within schools. There are several types of small learning communities, with each designed to improve academic achievement, attendance, and behavior by increasing the level of personalization experienced by students. This project details the efforts of the South Bend Community Schools Corporation (SBCSC) to establish small learning communities in its four high schools, and suggests ways those communities might be improved and sustained in the future.

SBCSC originally piloted an SLC structure called a freshman academy at one high school in 2005-2006, and subsequently applied for and received a federal SLC grant to fund freshman academies at all of its high schools. The school corporation was awarded approximately \$2 million over three years, and the term and amount were eventually increased to \$3.5 million over five years. The goals of the small learning

community grant were to encourage the implementation of structures and strategies that foster personalization; to provide professional development in innovative teaching methods; and to implement strategies to include parents and other citizens of the community in the SLC (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

With the expiration of the grant looming at the end of the 2010-2011 school year, the school corporation would like to determine key aspects that will be necessary to sustain and improve the freshman academies. Given the goals of the federal SLC grant program and the objectives of SBCSC, we focus on three project questions:

1. What are the principal strategies that have been implemented in connection with the federal SLC grant? How have these strategies affected the personalization of the high school experience for freshman?
2. What professional development has been provided to school staff as part of the federal SLC grant? How has this professional development changed teaching methods and practices?
3. What types of partnerships have been developed with parents and other community resources as a result of the federal SLC grant? How have these external partnerships created links between students and their communities?

We designed a qualitative study to answer these questions. Our data comes from two sources. The first is documents related to the SLC program. These include minutes from SLC meetings at all four high schools during the time frame between the grant award and implementation, professional development records, emails, the grant application, and annual performance reports related to the grant. The second data source is from interviews we conducted with administrators, teachers, and students at three of the four high schools in the district. Based on all of the data collected and analyzed, we produce the following sets of findings and recommendations.

Finding 1 – *Teaming has improved teachers' understanding of students and the challenges they face.*

Recommendation 1 – *Team planning time must be built into the schedule, without cost, to be sustainable.*

Finding 2 – Teachers and students differ on whether teaming has resulted in improved teacher-student relationships.

Recommendation 2 – Allow teachers to opt-in to freshman academy teaching assignments in order to increase the likelihood of teacher buy-in to the concept.

Finding 3 – Team purity seems to be the single most significant factor in building effective teams.

Recommendation 3 – Maximize team purity through the master scheduling process.

Finding 4 – Team meetings have focused more on the needs of individual students and less on building instructional capacity.

Recommendation 4 – Use team planning time to build instructional capacity.

Finding 5 – The advisory period/peer mentoring program is not fulfilling its intended purpose.

Recommendation 5 – Incorporate significant changes to improve the effectiveness of the advisory period/peer mentoring program. Use the time to increase the social engagement of students.

Finding 6 – The impact of professional development related to freshman academies has been mixed. It has not led to widespread changes in teaching practices.

Recommendation 6 – Utilize teacher collaboration as a primary form of professional development to combat the lack of time and money dedicated to this purpose.

Finding 7 – Despite the presence of two large universities and a still active business community in South Bend, external partnerships in the freshman academy are virtually nonexistent.

Recommendation 7 – Engage the community and create partnerships that result in the utilization of community resources in efforts to improve and sustain the freshman academies.

We make additional recommendations for sustainability based on a framework developed by Fullan (2005). These include taking actions that further the moral purpose of the school corporation, such as putting freshman teams together in a way that creates heterogeneous socioeconomic groups so that all students can benefit from the experiences and social capital of their classmates, and

changing the context in which the freshman academies operate by making sure there are no provisions in the collective bargaining agreement that prevent the effective implementation of freshman academies.



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Introduction and Project Questions

School reform has become the focus not just of scholarly research, but of government intervention. The No Child Left Behind Act (United States Congress, 2002), enacted by the federal government in 2002, requires states to assess students in reading and math each year in grades 3-8, and once in high school, in order to measure student progress in these areas. The law requires schools to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) toward the goal of ensuring that all students are proficient in reading and math by the year 2014. It also requires schools to track and report the progress of various subgroups of students, including the economically disadvantaged, limited English proficient, students with disabilities, and those who belong to racial or ethnic groups monitored by the state in which they live. Any school having a population of at least 30 students in any of these subgroups must track and report their progress as a group. Schools and school districts are held accountable for the progress of each subgroup, as well as the student body as a whole, through penalties that are imposed for failing to make adequate yearly progress. These penalties grow in severity over time, and can rise to the level of state takeover of schools.

In this environment of accountability, school systems have employed various strategies to improve student achievement and avoid such penalties. Many of these efforts have focused on comprehensive, or whole-school reform models. Comprehensive school reforms typically address every aspect of a school, including curriculum; instruction; governance; scheduling; professional development; assessment; and parent, family, and community involvement (Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center, 2006). There are literally hundreds of comprehensive school reform models being implemented in

the American schools today, although results of these reforms have varied greatly (Desimone, 2000).

One comprehensive reform that has shown promise is the creation of small learning communities (SLCs) within schools. SLCs were originally established in response to growing concerns about students getting lost and alienated in large, impersonal high schools, as well as concerns about student safety and low levels of achievement and graduation (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). There are several types of small learning communities, but the common premise behind the various structures is that increasing the level of personalization experienced by students will improve attendance and achievement, and decrease the likelihood that students will drop out of school (Raywid, 1997; Cotton, 2001). At their core, small learning communities are designed to increase personalization.

In the early-to-mid 2000's, the South Bend Community Schools Corporation (SBCSC), located in South Bend, IN, had exhibited many of the issues that SLCs were designed to address. Discipline referral rates, course failure rates and dropout rates were high. Attendance rates, scores on state achievement tests, and enrollment in honors and AP courses were low (South Bend Community Schools Corporation, 2006). Table 1 summarizes academic and behavioral indicators for freshman at all four high schools in South Bend for the time period 2003-2006.

A desire to improve performance on these indicators led the school corporation to pilot an SLC structure called a freshman academy at one high school in 2005-2006. During this initial pilot, the school corporation also applied for and received a federal SLC grant to fund freshman academies at all of its high schools. These grants targeted student populations in need of intervention, and were typically given to large schools with a higher percentage of minority enrollment compared with other high schools of at least 1,000 students in the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). We tend to see freshman academies in large, urban high schools or in smaller cities like South Bend with high at-risk populations.

The school corporation was awarded approximately \$2 million over three years, and the term and amount were eventually increased to \$3.5 million over five years. The school corporation used the SLC grant to establish an additional freshman academy pilot of 98 students during the 2006-2007 school year, and to conduct teacher professional

Table 1.
Academic and Behavioral Indicators in SBCSC High Schools (2003-2006)

	Adams	Clay	Riley	Wash.
Average freshman attendance rate	90.4%	91.2%	86.9%	89.2%
Average loss of students from grade 9 to grade 10	14.5%	25.9%	26.6%	11.2%
Number of freshmen suspended out-of-school	141 (29%)	202 (42.2%)	206 (41%)	176 (39%)
Number of freshmen suspended in-school	89 (22%) ¹	160 (33.4%)	167 (34%)	252 (57.8%)
Average freshman GPA	2.24	2.22	1.83	1.86
Percent of freshmen passing language arts course	81.8% ¹	81.3%	76.2% ¹	74.8%
Percent of freshmen passing math course	79.4% ¹	79%	65.5% ¹	70.5%
Percent of freshmen passing science course	82% ¹	80.1%	73.5% ¹	75.9%
Percent of freshmen passing social studies course	82.9% ¹	81.7%	72.7% ¹	76.8%
Number and percent of 'F' grades among freshmen	1003 (15%)	1245 (19%)	1603 (23%)	1186 (19%)
Number of freshmen receiving 1 'F' grade	69 (14%)	75 (16%)	65 (13%)	83 (17%)
Number of freshmen receiving more than 1 'F' grade	205 (46%)	236 (49%)	306 (61%)	258 (52%)
Number of freshmen enrolled in AP courses	58 (10%)	62 (10.7%)	43 (7%)	56 (8.3%)
Number of freshmen passing ISTEP language arts	243 (56%)	235 (54.5%)	209 (52%)	179 (44.5%)
Number of freshmen passing ISTEP math	228 (57%)	291 (57%)	235 (56%)	192 (48%)
Percent of students taking SAT²	51%	55.7%	56%	46.6%

Notes:

1. Data represent 2003-04. Data at Adams and Riley are incomplete for 2004-06.
2. Includes all students eligible to take SAT

(Source: Kretovics, 2008)

development in preparation for full implementation at all high schools in 2007-2008.

This project details the efforts of SBCSC to establish small learning communities within its four high schools in connection with the federal grant. We discuss the specifics of the grant and present findings related to the design and implementation of the structures and strategies employed. We also suggest ways to improve the effort and sustain the academies in the future. We begin, however, by discussing

the local context within which the school corporation operates.

The City of South Bend and SBCSC

South Bend, Indiana is a town of 100,842 (U.S. Census 2008 estimate) located in North Central Indiana just below the Indiana-Michigan border. The seat of St. Joseph County, South Bend has a young population (median age 33.9) of mostly middle or working class families with a median household income of \$35,706. Educational attainment in South Bend is roughly on par with the State of Indiana as a whole with 80.6% of the population having at least a high school diploma and 22.5% having at least a bachelor's degree. These numbers may be inflated, however, by the presence of two major universities and their faculties. Subtracting this segment of the population would likely decrease the median household income and educational attainment figures. South Bend, like many cities across the industrial Midwest, has been hit hard by the economic recession. As of February 2010, the Indiana Department of Workforce Development estimated the unemployment rate in St. Joseph County at 11.9%, above the Indiana rate of 10.7%, but only the 37th highest county rate in the state (of 92), which underscores the economic depression in the area.

The South Bend Community School Corporation is the fourth-largest school corporation in the state of Indiana. Enrollment for the 2009-10 school year was 21,217 students, down 353 from the previous year. There are 35 total schools, including the four high schools. The school system has a population that is more diverse than the South Bend population as a whole with 40 percent of the students identifying as White, 35 percent as African-American, 15 percent Hispanic, and 10 percent other races or self-identifying as multi-racial. Trend data for SBCSC and the state of Indiana as a whole is presented in Table 2.

Small Learning Communities Grant

The goals of the small learning community grant were to encourage the implementation of structures and strategies that foster personalization; to provide professional development in innovative teaching methods; and to implement strategies to include parents and other citizens of the community in the SLC (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). The grant allowed school systems to choose from

Exhibit 1. Small Learning Community Structures and Strategies

SLC Structures (Comprehensive Restructuring)

Career Academies organize curricula around one or more careers or occupations. They integrate academic and occupation-related classes.

Freshman Academies are designed to bridge middle and high school. They respond to the high ninth-grade dropout rate in some high schools.

House Plans are composed of students assembled across all grades or by grade level (e.g., all 11th- and 12th-graders) with their own disciplinary policy, student activity program, student government, and social activities.

Schools-Within-a-School break large schools into individual schools, which are multiage and may be theme-oriented; they are separate and autonomous units with their own personnel, budgets, and programs.

Magnet Schools generally have a core focus (e.g., math and science, the arts). They usually draw their students from the entire district.

SLC Strategies (Complement Structures)

Block Scheduling: Class time is extended to blocks of 80-90 minutes, allowing teachers to provide individual attention and to work together in an interdisciplinary fashion on a greater variety of learning activities.

Career Clusters, Pathways and Majors: These are broad areas that identify academic and technical skills students need as they transition from high school to postsecondary education and employment.

Adult Advocates or Mentors: Trained adult advocates meet with students individually or in small groups on a regular basis over several years, providing support and academic and personal guidance.

Teacher Advisory Program: The homeroom period is changed to a teacher advisory period, assigning teachers to a small number of students for whom they are responsible over three or four years of high school.

Teacher Teams: Academic teaming organizes teachers across subjects so that teacher teams share responsibility for curriculum, instruction, evaluation, and discipline for the same group of 100 to 150 students.

(Source: South Bend Community Schools Corporation, 2006)

Exhibit 2. Objectives of SBCSC SLC Grant

Domain 1: Creating Smaller Learning Communities

- 1.1: Restructure professional development for all staff that is high quality, job-embedded with a focus on academic and interdisciplinary teams
- 1.2: Expand and enhance the freshman experience for all incoming freshmen
- 1.3: Restructure the resource period to create and implement an adult advocate system so that each child is known well by at least one adult
- 1.4: Enhance and expand the peer mentoring program
- 1.5: Create and implement career academies

Domain 2: Increasing Academic Achievement

- 2.1: Increase the percentage of freshmen passing core subjects
- 2.2: Increase the percentage of students enrolled in honors/AP courses
- 2.3: Increase the percentage of students receiving college credit in high school
- 2.4: Increase the opportunities for students to connect high school coursework and activities to postsecondary plans through capstone projects, internships, placements, etc.
- 2.5: Increase the percentage of students graduating by 10% at the end of the grant
- 2.6: Increase the percentage of students passing the language arts and math components of the ISTEP

Domain 3: Improve Student Behavior

- 3.1: Reduce dropouts by 2% per year
- 3.2: Increase freshman attendance to 96%
- 3.3: Decrease the number of freshman referrals by 5% each year
- 3.4: Decrease the number of 9th and 10th grade suspensions by 2% each year

Domain 4: Improve School Climate

No specific objectives for this domain

(Source: South Bend Community Schools Corporation, 2006)

Table 2.
SBCSC 3-year Statistical Comparison

Indicator	06-07	07-08	08-09	State of IN
Student Enrollment	21,824	21,715	21,750	1,047,119
Per-student Expenditure	\$12,500	\$12,700	\$12,800	\$10,700
Min. Teacher Salary*	\$29,823	\$30,806	\$31,186	\$24,133
Max. Teacher Salary*	\$61,264	\$61,264	\$68,895	\$84,686
Special Education (%)	24.6	24.3	23.7	17.5
Gifted/Talented (%)	11	10	11	14
FARM (%)	67	72	72	44
LEP (%)	9.7	11.1	11.4	4.2

*Figures reflect teacher's classroom salary only and do not include supplemental salary derived from other school duties. Maximum salary reflects a teacher with a Doctoral Degree who has reached the highest experience step.

(Source: Indiana Department of Education, 2010)

among the SLC structures and strategies listed in Exhibit 1. SBCSC chose to implement freshman academy and career academy structures, as well as the teacher teams, teacher advisory, and peer mentoring strategies. In applying for the grant, the school corporation listed several objectives, divided into four domains as indicated in Exhibit 2.

Although not implemented as part of the grant, another structure that exists at each high school is a magnet program. Each magnet program has a particular focus, as follows:

Adams: International Baccalaureate (IB)

Clay: Fine and performing arts

Riley: Math, science, and engineering

Washington: Health sciences

Because the magnet programs are available to freshmen, there is some programmatic overlap between the two structures. We explore this in more detail in our findings and recommendations sections.

The focus of this study is on the freshman academy component of the SLC grant. With the expiration of the grant looming at the end of the 2010-2011 school year, the school corporation would like to determine key aspects that will be necessary to sustain and improve the freshman academies.

Given the goals of the federal SLC grant program and the objectives of SBCSC, our three project questions are:

1. What are the principal strategies that have been implemented in connection with the federal SLC grant? How have these strategies affected the personalization of the high school experience for freshman?
2. What professional development has been provided to school staff as part of the federal SLC grant? How has this professional development changed teaching methods and practices?
3. What types of partnerships have been developed with parents and other community resources as a result of the federal SLC grant? How have these external partnerships created links between students and their communities?



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Research Design

A qualitative design was implemented in order to adequately address the project questions. Quantitative data related to student achievement, attendance, and discipline had already been collected as part of a requirement to file annual performance reports related to the SLC grant. This data is helpful in determining outcomes, but it does not provide explanations from which future decisions about program improvement and sustainability can be based. To make recommendations for improvement and sustainability, we needed to learn how program strategies affected personalization for students, how teacher professional development changed the practice of teachers, and how external partnerships led to community connections for students. Our questions required in-depth, qualitative data to gain a thorough understanding of the relationships between program inputs and outcomes. Patton (2002, pg. 5) highlights the value of qualitative data by stating, "The themes, patterns, understandings, and insights that emerge from the fieldwork and subsequent analysis are the fruit of qualitative analysis."

School Selection

Time and resource constraints led us to limit our school selection to three of the four high schools in South Bend. The demographics for each of the high schools are summarized in Table 3.

Each of the schools selected had unique characteristics that made them appropriate study sites. Washington was chosen for two reasons. First, it has the highest percentage of minority and economically disadvantaged students in the district, which are populations targeted by the SLC grant program. Second, it is the pilot school for a trimester

Table 3.
Demographics of SBCSC High Schools

	Adams	Clay	Riley	Washington
Students	1682	1403	1434	1391
Grad. Rate	68.6%	74.3%	62.3%	69.0%
White	44%	56%	56%	32%
Black	33%	33%	27%	48%
Hispanic	17%	4%	11%	15%
Other	7%	6%	5%	4%
Econ. Dis.	55%	58%	55%	69%
AYP Factors	7/29	9/21	5/25	3/21

(Source: Indiana Department of Education, 2009)

schedule and we were interested in the effect this schedule had on different aspects of the freshman academy. Adams was selected because it has a relatively experienced staff in terms of tenure, and Riley because there has been some resistance to the freshman academy concept among teaching staff.

Although Clay was not included in our study, we believe our findings and recommendations apply there as well. Clay is similar to Adams and Riley in terms of student demographics, and the ISTEP and AYP results are fairly consistent across all four high schools. Furthermore, attendance and discipline rates are comparable at all the high schools, as are graduation rates. Teachers at all four high schools attended the same professional development sessions related to the freshman academies, and all four schools implemented the same strategies. In terms of these variables, freshman academy implementation was remarkably similar at all of the high schools in South Bend.

Interviews

Structured interviews were conducted at the three schools and at the SBCSC Central Office in February, 2010. We interviewed administrators, teachers, and students at each of the three schools in our study. A total of 42 interviews were conducted. All interviews were audio-taped and transcribed. Follow-up questions with some adult subjects were conducted via e-mail. Each school provided a quiet conference room setting for the interviews, which lasted from 30 minutes to an hour. A summary of the interviews conducted is presented in Table 4.

Administrators were interviewed individually.

Administrator interviews were held with the assistant principal in charge of the academy at each of the three schools as well as one school administrator who was previously involved in the planning and implementation of a freshman academy, and a central office administrator responsible for the management of the grant.

Table 4.
Summary of Interviews Conducted

	Asst. Principals	Teachers	Students	SBCSC Administrators
Adams	1	6	7	-
Riley	1	4	8	-
Washington	1	6	6	-
Total	3	16	21	2

Interviews with teachers were limited to those currently teaching in a freshman academy who had been teaching 9th grade in South Bend since prior to the inception of the academies. Targeting this group of teachers allowed us to talk to people who had a comparative perspective from the period prior to the existence of freshman academies. We also attempted to interview at least one teacher from each freshman team at each of the three high schools in our study.

Students were interviewed in pairs or groups of three (with the exception of one student who was interviewed alone due to time constraints in the student's schedule). All students were either sophomores or juniors who had been through the freshman academy in South Bend as 9th graders.

Artifacts

Artifacts analyzed included archived documents from the initial planning period in 2006-2007. These documents included district meeting minutes, professional development records, emails, and documents related to the federal grant. School-wide student achievement data (not individual data), state school report cards, school and district websites, and items posted in classrooms and throughout the schools, as well as background information on each school from the Indiana Department of Education, were also examined.

Limitations

Our original intent was to conduct purposeful sampling of students and teachers. Our goals were to select students

with varying characteristics in terms of race, socioeconomic status, motivation, and achievement; and teachers who varied according to experience, subject, and freshman team.

We ended up interviewing approximately the number of students we had intended, but the fact that there were only 22 students who returned consent forms raised concerns about possible lack of variation in the types of students returning the forms. Had all the students been honors students of a particular race or socioeconomic status, for example, the validity of our study would have been threatened. As it turned out, the racial balance of the students fairly accurately reflected that of the schools as a whole. There were other indicators that there were variations among students in achievement level, aspirations, participation in school activities, and level of parental involvement in school, based on student answers to our interview questions. In the end, we believe that the limitations on selecting students did not have a significant impact on the study.

The sample of teachers included at least one teacher from each team at each school. Teachers from all core subject areas, as well as special education, were represented. The teacher tenure varied from four years to over 30 years. In these respects, the teacher sample was representative of the freshman teacher population.



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Project Findings

Our project findings are based upon qualitative data gathered from interviews and documents such as email, meeting agendas and minutes, the grant application and annual performance reports related to the grant. From these sources we gained an understanding of the local implementation of freshman academies and of issues and concerns related to the program from the perspectives of students, teachers and administrators.

In our findings we compare and contrast perspectives within and between these stakeholder groups, highlighting patterns and inconsistencies. On some questions we find nearly unanimous agreement within and between groups, while other issues bring varying levels of disagreement, particularly between groups.

We take the same approach to analyze the consistency of implementation of SLC strategies within and between schools. Although there were similarities between the three schools we studied in terms of strategies adopted and professional development undertaken, the actual implementation varied somewhat due to differences in the profiles of the student bodies and variances in the attitudes and dispositions of teachers and administrators. Despite these differences, we heard remarkably similar stories from students, teachers, and administrators across the district about which strategies were working, which weren't, and why. In the paragraphs that follow, we will detail what we learned about freshman academies in South Bend as we present findings related to each of our three project questions.

Project Question 1:

What are the principal strategies that have been implemented in connection with the federal SLC grant? How have these strategies affected the personalization of the high school experience for freshman?

Our first project question examines personalization strategies the school corporation has implemented in connection with freshman academies. The definition of personalization can vary depending on the people involved and the school situation, so it is important to define personalization in the context of our study. Keefe (2007) defines personalization as creating an environment in which each student matters and tailoring the learning process to each student's needs and capacities. Other scholars agree that personalization simply involves focusing on the needs of individual students (DiMartino & Miles, 2006). The South Bend SLC grant suggests personalization can be thought of as an environment where each child is known well by at least one adult (South Bend Community Schools Corporation, 2006). The common denominator in each of these definitions is the individual student. Personalization amounts to understanding and meeting individual students' needs. With this in mind we present several findings related to personalization efforts in the freshman academies.

Finding 1 – Teaming has improved teachers' understanding of students and the challenges they face.

Teaming is intended to form students into distinct groups and distribute those groups among a common set of four core subject teachers (English, math, social studies, and science). Most of the freshman teams in South Bend have a fifth teacher, usually an elective teacher or special education teacher, as well. Sharing the same students for an entire school year with other members of a team has allowed teachers to gain a better understanding of individual students. Team planning time is often used to develop intervention plans for students who are falling behind or are otherwise at-risk. Many teams also use their common planning time to meet with parents in an effort to involve them in the process of developing solutions that meet their child's unique needs. One teacher said that meeting with parents was “an effort to learn more about the student's

Finding 1 – Teaming has improved teachers' understanding of students and the challenges they face.

“[Teaming] helps foster relationships with children and colleagues with the intent of better knowing the kids...”

– Teacher

“During team meetings, I learned things about students that helped me understand them and how I can better reach them.”

– Teacher

Finding 2 – Teachers and students differ on whether teaming has resulted in improved teacher-student relationships.

home life and to intervene with at-risk students earlier.” Another teacher told us that “[teaming] helps foster relationships with children and colleagues with the intent of better knowing the kids. It keeps kids from falling through the cracks.” A third teacher said, “during team meetings, I learned things about students that I didn’t know that helped me understand them and how I can better reach them.” All of this indicates that teaming has increased the level of personalization for students in terms of focusing on individual needs and creating an environment where each student matters.

Increased personalization appears to have had a positive effect on student retention and discipline. In the four years prior to the implementation of freshman academies, the number of students dropping out of school between freshman and sophomore years averaged between 11.2% and 26.6%. After just one year of teaming, all four schools had reduced this total to fewer than six percent and one school (Adams) had reduced the total to just 1.7%. Additionally, all four schools reported a reduction in the number of office referrals and expulsions, although the number of suspensions, both in and out of school, remained stable. The reduction in office referrals could be attributable to an increase in the number of minor incidents being handled in the classroom. Many teachers noted that freshman teams have some autonomy over discipline procedures for minor infractions.

These results do not necessarily point to teaming as the sole cause of the improvements in these areas, but the association is encouraging.

Finding 2 – Teachers and students differ on whether teaming has resulted in improved teacher-student relationships.

A roadblock to increased personalization has been the perception among students that some teachers are not interested in building quality relationships with them. One student said, “Most of the teachers tell you they aren’t here to be your friend.” Many students told us their relationships with teachers were better in 8th grade than they were in 9th grade.

Teachers take a more positive view of the quality of their relationships with students. In a teacher survey that was conducted during the first full year of academy implementation (2007-2008), the vast majority of teachers indicated that the quality of teacher-student relationships

“Most of the teachers tell you they aren’t here to be your friend.”

– Student

“There were some teachers that tried to know us and be friendly with us so that we would never be afraid to ask them a question,”

– Student

had stayed about the same or improved since the inception of freshman academies. In fact, on every survey question on the teacher-student relationship subscale, at least 77% of teachers responded either “more than last year” or “stayed about the same” when asked to describe some positive aspect or indicator of teacher-student relationships. The combined survey responses on this subscale are presented in Table 5 and the complete survey results for each of the four high schools can be found in Appendix B. The survey data, along with our teacher and student interview data, suggest a disconnect between the perceptions of teachers and students on this issue.

There was a consensus among the students we interviewed that some teachers are happy to be teaching in the freshman academy and others are not. Administrators reported that during the implementation phase they had trouble getting teachers to volunteer to be on freshman teams. As a result, some teachers were placed in the academies against their will, and carried a negative attitude into those classrooms. Also, a few teachers told us that they didn’t have a lot of input into the implementation of freshman academies in the formative years. “I think there have been parts of the implementation that have been

**Table 5.
Teacher Perceptions of Teacher-Student Relationships**

	More than last year	Stayed about the same	Less than last year	Did not teach at this school last year
Teachers care about students	59 (23%)	169 (65.8%)	5 (1.9%)	24 (9.3%)
Teachers listen to students	60 (23.6%)	166 (65.4%)	4 (1.6%)	24 (9.4%)
Teachers involve students in decision-making	38 (14.8%)	186 (72.7%)	8 (3.1%)	24 (9.4%)
Teachers treat all students with dignity and respect	36 (14%)	186 (72.4%)	11 (4.3%)	24 (9.3%)
Teachers believe that all students can be successful	39 (15.3%)	180 (70.6%)	12 (4.7%)	24 (9.7%)
Teachers are available to help students before or after school	62 (24.1%)	157 (61.1%)	14 (5.4%)	24 (9.4%)
Teachers work effectively with ethnic, social, and economically diverse students	36 (14.1%)	187 (73.3%)	8 (3.2%)	24 (9.4%)
Teachers communicate regularly to students through email	28 (10.9%)	171 (66.5%)	31 (12.1%)	27 (10.5%)
Positive relationships between teachers and students	58 (22.7%)	157 (61.3%)	17 (6.7%)	24 (9.3%)

(Source: Kretovics, 2008)

pretty good,” said one teacher. “But we need to get teacher input into what’s working and concentrate on that.”

To be fair, students were able to provide examples of friendly and caring teachers as well. For example, the comment, “There were some teachers that tried to know us and be friendly with us so that we would never be afraid to ask them a question,” was repeated in a similar fashion by several students.

Granted, we are talking about student perceptions, but clearly the effort to increase personalization through relationship-building is a teacher-by-teacher proposition. There will always be teachers who, through natural personality traits, are better at building relationships than others. However, in a structure based on the premise of increasing personalization, the student perceptions about student-teacher relationships are concerning.

Finding 3 – Team purity seems to be the single most significant factor in building effective teams.

Finding 3 – Team purity seems to be the single most significant factor in building effective teams.

Team purity refers to the degree to which a team of teachers share a common set of students and assume collective responsibility for their educational progress (Oxley, 2005). As an example, if a team of five teachers has 95% of their students in common, that team is considered 95% pure. Teachers and administrators were nearly unanimous in their emphasis of the importance of team purity. One teacher, who generally liked the teaming concept, told us that, “Every drawback of the team approach ties back to a lack of purity.” An administrator, talking about the importance of relationships and personalization in freshman academies, added, “If you really want teachers to know what children are doing and you are going to expect them to build relationships with students, you need to make sure they have those children in common.”

To the extent that teams are pure, teachers on a team can discuss the needs of individual students because all the teachers have those students in common. Purity also allows team teachers to plan cross-curricular instructional units. For example, if an English teacher and a social studies teacher developed an interdependent unit on the history and culture of Native Americans, they could be assured that all students would experience both parts of the unit if the team was 100% pure.

“Every drawback of the team approach ties back to a lack of purity.”

– Teacher

“If you really want teachers to know what children are doing and you are going to expect them to build relationships with students, you need to make sure they have those children in common.”

– Administrator

Finding 4 – Team meetings have focused more on the needs of individual students and less on building instructional capacity.

“We meet and we are able to discuss students. We talk about the good and the bad going on within our classrooms.”

– Teacher

The goal is to create teams that are as close to 100% pure as possible. During the first year of the academy, only Clay High School reported purity levels over 90%. Washington quickly built up to that level, but creating team purity has been a challenge for them this year with the piloting of a new trimester schedule. Trimesters create longer class periods and fewer classes per day for students, which results in less scheduling flexibility for the school. Because of the extended class periods, teachers have fewer sections of each course in a given trimester, and this makes it more difficult to schedule all of the students on the team with all of the team teachers in the same trimester.

Purity concerns were not limited to Washington. Teachers at Riley and Adams expressed a desire for more team purity as well. One teacher said, “Our master schedule has so many components now. Something has to be given priority and I’m not privy to that decision. It has become more difficult to accommodate everything.” Other teachers listed magnet classes, honors classes, electives that have to be scheduled at particular times, and students who need to repeat classes as scheduling obstacles to team purity. The master scheduling philosophy employed at each school ultimately determines the level of team purity that can be achieved. To the extent that the scheduler gives priority to the freshman academy, greater team purity results.

Finding 4 – Team meetings have focused more on the needs of individual students and less on building instructional capacity.

All of the schools have made team planning time a priority and most have accomplished this with at least the four core subject teachers on each team. Teachers generally agree that there is a need for common planning time and nearly every teacher interviewed said that team planning has resulted in a better understanding of students’ individual needs. “We meet and we are able to discuss students,” said one teacher. “We talk about the good and the bad going on within our classrooms. It’s good to see another side of the kids that you don’t normally see.”

Although team meetings have helped teachers consider the unique circumstances of some students, they haven’t been used to build instructional capacity. “We are seeing a lot of the teams focusing on student-centered concepts,” said one administrator. “They are working on the relationship piece and there is nothing wrong with that, it’s

“We are seeing a lot of the teams focusing on student-centered concepts,” said one administrator. “They are working on the relationship piece and there is nothing wrong with that, it’s part of what they are supposed to be doing. The issue, though, is that we aren’t seeing a lot of the instructional piece being addressed. You have to do both.”

– Administrator

Finding 5 – The advisory period/peer mentoring program is not fulfilling its intended purpose.

part of what they are supposed to be doing. The issue, though, is that we aren’t seeing a lot of the instructional piece being addressed. You have to do both. Changing the way we teach goes a long way towards building those relationships. Some teachers are deeply resistant to that.”

There are examples of teams that have utilized planning time to build instructional capacity. At one school, biology and life science teachers have worked with geography teachers to develop combined units about indigenous life in a particular part of the world. At another, teachers have developed themed units combining cultural and literary studies in social studies and English classes, respectively. Although district and school administrators have emphasized the development of cross-curricular units among teams and provided professional development activities for teachers related to this theme, the majority of teams have yet to embrace the concept. Approaches like this have been limited by lack of team purity (see Finding 3), by not having a full complement of core teachers in attendance at team meetings, or by a lack of buy-in among teachers. One veteran teacher said of the emphasis on cross-curricular units, “There was a little bit of pressure for us to come up with co-curricular units and we kind of resisted that. It’s just that our team, we couldn’t see sacrificing the content that we needed to get to, to experiment with something like that when the stakes are so high.” Overall, team planning around instructional concepts has been the exception rather than the rule.

Finding 5 – The advisory period/peer mentoring program is not fulfilling its intended purpose.

If there is one consensus among teachers, students, and administrators at all three schools, it is that the advisory period is not adding to the personalization experienced by freshmen students. The words “waste of time” were applied to this block of the schedule in nearly every conversation we had.

The purpose of the advisory period is fairly straightforward. It is supposed to further the goal of increasing personalization by making sure that every student is known well by at least one adult. The intent was for that one adult to be the advisory teacher; that this teacher would act as a mentor or advisor to each of his assigned students. There was also an intended curriculum for teachers to implement during the advisory period. Unfortunately, neither

“I’ll be honest, in my classroom, except on mentor days, the advisory period doesn’t amount to much. If any students want to talk to me about something, we’ll talk, but as far as an organized plan, there is none.”

– Teacher

“I think the advisory period is just pointless. It can be good for some people because they have work to do, but it’s only two days a week and I just don’t find any use for it.”

– Student

of these intentions have been fulfilled.

The rationale behind the advisory period is coherent and well thought-out, but the problem lies in the lack of buy-in from teachers. Most teachers see the time and effort required to implement the advisory curriculum as an extra preparation, for which they should be compensated. In their view, absent a stipend, the requirement to implement the advisory design is a violation of the terms of the collective bargaining agreement. This general refusal to participate has turned the advisory period into loosely organized, or unorganized time, depending on the teacher. Common activities during this period, according to both students and teachers, include working on homework, sleeping, socializing, listening to music, or playing games. Most teachers are willing to assist students with homework during advisory, and some allow students to visit other teachers for help as well, but there are virtually no organized activities designed to increase personalization. One teacher admitted, “I’ll be honest, in my classroom, except on mentor days, it doesn’t amount to much. If any students want to talk to me about something, we’ll talk, but as far as an organized plan, there is none.” This was a teacher, it is worth noting, who had positive comments about most of the other aspects of the academy. A student stated, “I think it’s just pointless. It can be good for some people because they have work to do, but it’s only two days a week and I just don’t find any use for it.” This comment echoed that of just about every student we interviewed. Based on our interviews with students and teachers, we believe it is a certainty that this time will continue to be unproductive without the buy-in and participation of teachers.

The only planned activity during the advisory period is the peer mentoring program. The design of the program is to train juniors and seniors to be peer mentors who can help freshmen navigate the pitfalls of their first year in high school. Peer mentors meet with freshman once per month. The goal is to increase personalization by forging strong interpersonal relationships between freshmen and upperclassmen.

Like other strategies, however, it has met with mixed success. We uncovered several reasons for this. First, a common complaint among teachers and students involved the peer-mentoring curriculum. There was a purchased, scripted collection of mentoring exercises that students found meaningless at times. One student observed, “They just come in and play these childish games. I guess it’s supposed

“Peer mentors just come in and play these childish games. I guess it's supposed to have a point and we're supposed to learn something about life and school, but it comes off as nothing.”

– Student

“It was frustrating. Here they are trying to tell us to do the right thing and they aren't even doing it themselves.”

– Student

to have a point and we're supposed to learn something about life and school, but it comes off as nothing.” The scripted curriculum failed to engage students for the most part, and the result was often inattentiveness. Many teachers complained about freshman behavior during the mentoring activities.

Another reason for the mixed success of the peer mentoring program is the attitude toward the program of some of the teachers themselves. Students, and some teachers, told us that there are teachers who don't like to be involved with the mentoring activities and don't create an expectation for students to be involved either. Some teachers repeated the idea that supervising the peer-mentoring program, like planning for the advisory period, constitutes an additional preparation period. These teachers simply decided they weren't going to get involved and they expected the peer mentors to take charge of the room. In these classrooms, with a lack of teacher supervision, it is not surprising that there were student behavioral issues at times. Based on our interviews, the level of student buy-in appears to be directly related to the level of teacher buy-in as well.

A third reason is the perception at all three high schools that the mentors were not screened carefully enough. Freshman students indicated that many juniors and seniors seemed more interested in having another line on their resume or college application than actually mentoring incoming freshmen. These students said that some mentors clearly weren't doing what they were supposed to do when they were in the class. “It was frustrating,” said one freshman. “Here they are trying to tell us to do the right thing and they aren't even doing it themselves.”

Overall, there was more buy-in on the part of faculty and students at some schools than there was at others. This was largely due to differences in implementation between the schools. Some schools were more creative in terms of programming. For example, the mentors at two schools, Washington and Riley, were given leeway to veer from the script to some extent. Washington also had a novel idea for bridging the expectation gap between teacher, mentor, and freshman. Once all the rising juniors and seniors had gone through the screening process to become mentors, the complete list was given to each freshman academy teacher. Teachers then selected their mentors for the next year. This ensured that at least some of the mentors were students with whom the teacher had already built a relationship and would

be more comfortable. "It lets you play a role in the mentoring program, which some teachers thought they didn't have," said one teacher. "I still think your role is to give up your classroom to the mentors, so I try to pick kids who are good talkers. I have one girl, she could get a tree to talk to her, but there are some kids who won't take to anything.'" This teacher believes that, when it works, the mentor program, is a good thing for freshmen and that freshmen can get more out of the mentor program than talking to "an old guy like me."

Project Question 2:

What professional development has been provided to school staff as part of the federal SLC grant? How has this professional development changed teaching methods and practices?

Our second project question looks specifically at teacher professional development related to freshman academies. We asked teachers and administrators about the quantity and quality of professional development offerings, as well as how these offerings have changed instructional practices of freshman teachers.

Finding 6 – *The impact of professional development related to freshman academies has been mixed. It has not led to widespread changes in teaching practices.*

Teachers have participated in a numerous professional development activities related to the freshman academy. These activities occurred both prior to implementation and after the academies were launched. They included out-of-state conferences, visits to other school districts, outside experts coming to South Bend, and gatherings of South Bend staff only. There were multiple topics related to freshman academy implementation.

In the run-up to freshman academy implementation, the SLC grant paid for eleven days of professional development where teachers were either pulled from classrooms (the grant paid for a substitute) or paid a stipend to attend a summer workshop (there were five days of these workshops). Three of the days were focused on career academies rather than freshman academies, but the rest dealt with issues of focus in the freshman academy construction, primarily the concept of teaming within the academies. Not all four schools attended every PD workshop. Some workshops were set up to offer the same session two days in a row, with freshman teachers from two of the four high schools assigned to each day.

Teachers, on the whole, were not pleased about attending the development sessions. Some were even less pleased when they discovered they would miss class time to do it. “I went kicking and screaming,” said one teacher. “At the time, I felt I was needed in the classroom. I don’t want to knock substitutes, I know being a sub is tough, but it’s not the

Finding 6 – *The impact of professional development related to freshman academies has been mixed. It has not lead to widespread changes in teaching practices.*

“I went kicking and screaming. At the time, I felt I was needed in the classroom.”

– Teacher

“Some of it was good and some was bad. The first year, it was brutal the amount of time we spent. It seemed like we were pulled out of the building once a month.”

-- Teacher

“For the most part, PD is best left to the school where they can determine what works best for them,”

-- Administrator

same as when the classroom teacher is there. Half the time, the assignment doesn't get done. It's tough to keep the ball rolling.”

Professional development continued during the first school year. There were ten designated PD sessions for freshman academies. Two pertained only to scheduling at the beginning of the year and the others were the two-day paired days where two schools would come one day and the other two the next. The pairs were rotated in order to make sure that schools were paired with each of the others during the sessions. Some of these were days where teachers were pulled out of classrooms, with subs paid for by the SLC grant. Others were designated half-days where the students left at the halfway point in the day and the remainder of the day was designated for PD sessions for all teachers. These half-days have been eliminated from corporation schedules by the State of Indiana for the current school year and there are no plans to replace them in the future.

Criticisms of Professional Development

A criticism of the early professional development program was that it was developed in a top-down fashion. Teachers would have liked to have had more input into the selection of workshops and presenters. “Some of it was good and some was bad,” said one teacher. “The first year, it was brutal the amount of time we spent. It seemed like we were pulled out of the building once a month.” Teachers also said that the activities, which were mostly focused around the teaming strategy, were “repetitive” and “wasteful.” In the 2008 teacher survey a majority of teachers disagreed with the statement, “teachers at my school have had input into the choice of professional development topics,” and a smaller majority disagreed with the statement, “professional development days at my school were an effective use of my time.” Table 6 breaks down teacher perceptions of professional development activities.

To counter these perceptions, the corporation this year introduced a limited form of autonomy over SLC professional development options. Each school, through the freshman academy administrator, wrote mini-grants for SLC grant funds to fund professional development activities for up to \$10,000. These mini-grants were submitted to the central office and evaluated by the Director of High School Programs, who determined the allocation for each of the four high schools. “The mini-grant program was much better,” said one

"I can't really think of anything that I have gone to that I have brought back to the classroom."

-- Teacher

"It was offered too late in the school year to have an impact. We had already done our lesson plans. It should have been offered before school, but not all teachers will come in during the summer."

-- Teacher

Table 6.
Teacher Perceptions of Professional Development

Professional Development During the Past Year...		
	Strongly Agree/Agree N(%)	Strongly Disagree/Disagree N(%)
... has been relevant to my teaching needs	101 (43.9)	129 (56.1)
... was an effective use of my time	118 (46.1)	138 (53.9)
... was created with teacher input and choice	101 (40.9)	146 (59.2)
... was adequate to support the school changes	146 (57.9)	106 (42.1)
... has been sustained and coherently focused	147 (59.5)	100 (40.5)
... has been short-term and unrelated to my needs	129 (51.8)	120 (48.2)
... has helped me understand my students	133 (54.2)	112 (45.8)

(Source: Kretovics, 2008)

administrator, "because teams could decide what they wanted to do." Another administrator agreed, "For the most part, PD is best left to the school where they can determine what works best for them." The mini-grants served the dual purpose of preparing schools for the expiration of the SLC grant, when most professional development activities related to freshman academies will have to be planned and funded at the building level. Referring to the mini-grants, an administrator told us, "We also did it for sustainability purposes. A lot of the things we are doing right now are things we are all going to have to figure out how to pay for in the future." The current plan is to reduce the amount to \$5,000 per building in 2010-2011, and \$0 in 2011-2012 due to the expiration of the grant.

Impact on Classroom Instruction

The majority of teachers we talked to said the impact on instruction has been minimal. One teacher said, "I can't really think of anything that I have gone to that I have brought back to the classroom." Another stated, "I don't mean to badmouth professional development because I like the people that have presented, but some teachers have their head in the clouds." A third teacher lamented the timing of the professional development, saying, "It was offered too late in the school year to have an impact. We had already done our lesson plans. It should have been offered before school, but not all teachers will come in during the summer."

The bottom line for any professional development

program is the affect it has on instruction, and ultimately, student achievement. If the offerings don't lead to changes in the classroom, then nothing has really been accomplished. We didn't find any evidence that classroom practice had changed much in South Bend as a result of professional development related to freshman academies. Some of the early PD related to topics such as scheduling and teaming may have been effective in helping the academies get off the ground, but the impact of professional development related instruction has been limited. The primary instructional topic was the creation of cross-curricular units, which coincides with the teaming concept. As we discussed in Finding 4 above, most of the freshman teams have yet to develop cross-curricular units. In our recommendations we will discuss a different approach to professional development that has the potential to produce better results.

Project Question 3:

What types of partnerships have been developed with parents and other community resources as a result of the federal SLC grant? How have these external partnerships created links between students and their communities?

Our final project question deals with school/community partnerships. Many higher education institutions, businesses, non-profits, and civic groups have resources that could help the school district. This is particularly true in South Bend, where there are two major universities and several smaller ones. The extent to which these partnerships can be developed can have a major impact on the current and future operation of the freshman academy. External partnerships become even more important in periods of declining resources. South Bend certainly faces that prospect with the expiration of the SLC grant and the decrease in state funding. Unfortunately, as our finding indicates, SBCSC has yet to take full advantage of the resources in its own back yard.

Finding 7 – *Despite the presence of two large universities and a still active business community in South Bend, external partnerships in the freshman academy are virtually nonexistent.*

Although some of the magnet programs in the high schools incorporate external partnerships into their programs, there are currently no partnerships that directly benefit the freshman academies. This is not due to a lack of potential partners in the community. The University of Notre Dame and the South Bend campus of Indiana University, as well as some smaller Catholic colleges, have resources, including students and teachers, financial resources, and community outreach programs that could be harnessed through cooperative agreements. There is also a moderate-sized business community that could help freshman academies in a number of ways. Despite these local resources, teachers and administrators were generally unaware of any external partnerships that had been formed in support of freshman academies.

The perception of teachers is that colleges and local businesses have made overtures to the schools, but they are met with indifference by school officials. “They (the colleges)

Finding 7 – *Despite the presence of two large universities and a still active business community in South Bend, external partnerships in the freshman academy are virtually nonexistent.*

“I think partnering with the colleges would be helpful. So many of our kids think that college is just one giant party. I think having real college kids talk to them would be helpful.”

-- Teacher

“There are people who just stand in the way. We haven’t been doing much with community or university partnerships. I don’t know the reasoning behind that. I wish I did.”

-- Administrator

“We need to open that up a little. Businesses and the higher education community want to be part of the school system, but they have been rebuffed. We’re trying to change that.”

-- Administrator

have tried,” said one science teacher. “It has been brought up in meetings about trying to connect with area merchants. I think that was about two years ago.”

Teachers have indicated they would welcome the external resources that community partners could bring. One teacher said, “I think partnering with the colleges would be helpful. So many of our kids think that college is just one giant party. I think having real college kids talk to them would be helpful.” The connection with IU-SB would seem to be of particular interest to Adams, which is directly adjacent to the campus. The teachers at Adams, however, noted that the relationship is weak. One said, “I know that last year some students from IU-SB came in and talked to some of our students and it seemed to go really well.” Another teacher added, “We have talked with the dean and some faculty at IU-SB. They have made some offers of things they can do. I don’t know who is blocking it, but it seems that doors have been shut without much consideration.”

This last comment reflects the thoughts of a few teachers, and at least one administrator, who seemed to think there was some trepidation on the part of some members of the Board of Education or district administration to partnering with colleges and universities. “There are people who just stand in the way,” said one administrator. “We haven’t been doing much with community or university partnerships. I don’t know the reasoning behind that. I wish I did.”

Regardless of the reason, the “town-gown” relationship in South Bend appears to be dysfunctional. There are those who understand the importance of external partnerships, particularly in the context of an expiring grant and declining state aid. Another administrator stated, “We need to open that up a little. Businesses and the higher education community want to be part of the school system, but they have been rebuffed. We’re trying to change that.”



Structuring and Sustaining Freshman Academies in the South Bend Community Schools

Recommendations and Discussion

Our recommendations align directly with our project questions and findings. We discuss ways to improve each of the personalization strategies implemented by the school corporation as well as ways to improve professional development and build community partnerships. All of our recommendations are fiscally sustainable. This is important given the fiscal context in which the school corporation will operate in the short-term. Two events in particular will have a major impact on fiscal sustainability. The first is the impending expiration of the SLC grant that has funded the freshman academies since 2006. This grant, which has amounted to \$3.5 million over five years, will expire in 2011. It has paid for virtually all expenditures related to the program, including professional development, stipends for teaming, and materials. The second is the 4.5% reduction of state education funding for the calendar years 2010-2011. This will result in a reduction of \$8.2 million to the SBCSC general fund over this time period. Thus, our recommendations will need to be fiscally sustainable to have any merit.

We do not limit our definition of sustainability to financial considerations, however. Money is only one factor in sustainability, and the ability to pay for a program does not guarantee its success. Fullan (2005) has developed a framework that describes conditions necessary for sustainability. This framework is presented in Appendix A. Fullan's framework offers a more holistic view of sustainability than the one-dimensional focus on finances. Where appropriate, we refer to this framework in our recommendations.

Recommendation 1 – Team planning time must be built into the schedule, without cost, to be sustainable.

Project Question 1: Personalization Strategies

Finding 1 – Teaming has improved teachers' understanding of students and the challenges they face.

Recommendation 1 – Team planning time must be built into the schedule, without cost, to be sustainable.

One of the personalization strategies chosen by the school corporation was teacher teaming. Our findings indicated both positive and negative aspects of teaming as implemented in South Bend. While it appears to be the most effective strategy in terms of increasing personalization for students, there is room for improvement. Our biggest concern with the teaming approach is that there is no team planning time built into the schedule. Teachers currently receive stipends to meet as a team, even if the meeting takes place during contractual hours. This is because teachers give up personal planning time for team meetings. While we understand the need for personal planning time, we believe team planning time is essential to the overall success of the freshman academy program.

Teaming has given teachers greater insight into the needs of their students and it is imperative to the success of freshman academies that teaming continue. Given the financial challenges the district faces, however, we don't believe that paying teachers to collaborate as a team is a sustainable practice. One way to build team planning time into the schedule would be to adopt a trimester schedule, similar to the one being piloted at Washington, across all the high schools. The trimester implementation has experienced some difficulties related to scheduling, but it has allowed teacher teams to meet during the school day and still maintain the personal planning time required by the collective bargaining agreement. If the scheduling issues can be worked out, trimesters are a promising way to maintain the team collaboration time that is essential to increasing personalization for students.

Recommendation 2 –
Allow teachers to opt-in to freshman academy teaching assignments in order to increase the likelihood of teacher buy-in to the concept.

Finding 2 – *Teachers and students differ on whether teaming has resulted in improved teacher-student relationships.*

Recommendation 2 – *Allow teachers to opt-in to freshman academy teaching assignments in order to increase the likelihood of teacher buy-in to the concept.*

Freshman academies, and small learning communities in general, are built on a foundation of personalization and relationships (Oxley, 2005; Allen & Steinberg, 2004). For these structures to succeed, teachers must know students well enough to understand their individual circumstances and needs, and students must believe that teachers care about them as people. The vast majority of teachers are dedicated, caring professionals who do everything they can to help their students find success. Every person, including teachers, has strengths and weaknesses, however, and the freshman academy concept requires teachers who excel at building positive, caring relationships with students. We heard repeatedly from students that they could tell which teachers were happy to be teaching freshmen. They indicated that some teachers made the effort to get to know them well while others did not. Each student will have her own perceptions, but in this case perceptions are the students' reality. If they don't perceive a connection with a teacher, chances are it is not there. Though we might find similar perceptions across all grade levels in the school, the point here is that it is particularly important to minimize these perceptions in the freshman academy.

To attract teachers into the freshman academy that will be most effective in that setting, we suggest making staffing the freshman academy a key priority. The school corporation should actively recruit current teachers who are willing and able to increase personalization for students and build positive relationships, and then give those teachers freshman assignments. This will require an internal informational campaign that describes the freshman academy, its goals, and the characteristics that will make teachers successful. Painting a realistic picture up front will help ensure a proper fit between teachers and the position. Teacher effectiveness and job satisfaction may depend as much on this fit as on the teacher's general qualifications themselves (Liu & Johnson, 2006).

It is likely that SBCSC will have to search no further than

Recommendation 3 –
*Maximize team purity
through the master
scheduling process.*

its own secondary schools to find the right teachers for its four freshman academies, but it is occasionally necessary to bring in new teachers as well. When the need to hire new freshman teachers arises, the recruitment and selection processes are equally important. The discussion above about providing adequate information and creating a proper fit applies to new employees as well.

We also suggest including current freshman academy teachers and administrators in the hiring process. Doing so will create a more information-rich process for both the school and the applicant, which can lead to better decisions. Information-poor processes, in which hiring decisions are made without extensive interaction or knowledge exchange between the school and the candidate, often result in hiring decisions that create a poor fit (Liu & Johnson, 2006). Giving existing teachers a voice in the composition of their own team can help ensure that personalities mesh and that the team can function effectively as a unit.

Finding 3 – *Team purity seems to be the single most significant factor in building effective teams.*

Recommendation 3 – *Maximize team purity through the master scheduling process.*

As noted earlier, team purity seems to be the single most significant factor in building effective teams. It has ramifications for both personalization and instruction. Teacher collaboration around the needs of individual students and development of cross-curricular instructional units are both dependent on team purity.

The best advice offered in terms of achieving purity was from an administrator who said he was able to achieve 98% purity by prioritizing the freshman academy in the master scheduling process. The freshman academy schedule was built first, and then the rest of the master schedule was completed. In general, we believe that team purity is important enough that there should be a common approach taken at each of the four high schools. Master schedulers from all of the high schools should meet to discuss methods of achieving purity through scheduling. Based on archival documents we examined, it appears that the school corporation brought in a consultant with extensive experience building master schedules for freshman

Recommendation 4 –
Use team planning time to build instructional capacity.

academies and other small learning communities in 2006. The consultant helped each school build a master schedule at that time, and articulated a scheduling philosophy that would maximize purity. It appears that master scheduling approaches have diverged since then. The school corporation should consider revisiting this professional development and reinforcing the philosophy that stresses the importance of team purity in the freshman academies. All master scheduling should be done within the framework of this philosophy.

Finding 4 – *Team meetings have focused more on the needs of individual students and less on building instructional capacity.*

Recommendation 4 – *Use team planning time to build instructional capacity.*

By teachers' own admission, the majority of team planning time to this point has focused on the needs of individual students. Teachers use this time to compare notes about particular students, to conference with students and parents, and to discuss ways to address student needs that arise. These are all valuable activities that further the goal of creating a personalized experience for students. However, to increase student achievement, team planning must incorporate an instructional focus as well. The relationship between the quality of instruction and student achievement has been well-documented (e.g., Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002; Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000). Better instruction leads to better student achievement.

The school corporation could re-balance the focus of team planning time by building the instructional leadership capacity of its administrators. Instructionally-focused leadership has been identified as a defining characteristic of high-performing schools (Murphy, Elliott, Goldring, and Porter, 2007; Waters, Marzano, and McNulty, 2003; Knapp, Copland, and Talbert, 2003). The instructional leadership provided by the principal and the assistant principal charged with oversight of the freshman academy, in particular, will have a significant impact on the instructional focus and capacity of teachers. In practice, principals typically spend most of their time on management activities and little time analyzing instruction with teachers (Fink & Resnick, 2001). We did not investigate the allocation of administrators' time or the extent

Recommendation 5 – Incorporate significant changes to improve the effectiveness of the advisory period/peer mentoring program. Use the time to increase the social engagement of students.

to which they are currently acting as instructional leaders. We simply suggest here that building the instructional leadership capacity of school administrators should be a priority for the school corporation.

We heard little in our conversations with teachers to indicate that they are not willing to focus on instructional issues during team planning time. Some of the teacher teams have used common planning time to plan cross-curricular units. This is a good example of how common planning time can be used to boost instructional capacity. This was the exception rather than the rule, however, and the focus on instruction needs to be ongoing and pervasive. In our opinion, until administrators make it a priority, teachers won't either.

Finding 5 – The advisory period/peer mentoring program is not fulfilling its intended purpose.

Recommendation 5 – Incorporate significant changes to improve the effectiveness of the advisory period/peer mentoring program. Use the time to increase the social engagement of students.

The ways students use this period vary by teacher, with the determining factor being the philosophy or level of buy-in of the teacher him/herself.

The advisory period, and in some cases, the peer mentoring that occurs during this period, currently amount to unproductive time for many, if not most, freshmen students. On days when there is no visit from peer mentors, some students use the advisory period to do homework or visit teachers for help. Others play games, listen to music, or talk to friends. The ways students use this period vary by teacher, with the determining factor being the philosophy or level of buy-in of the teacher him/herself. The root of the issue seems to be contractual in nature. Many teachers see the preparations necessary to follow the intended curriculum for the advisory period as an additional prep. Viewed in this manner, the requirement to participate is at odds with the terms of the collective bargaining agreement. The resulting situation in many homerooms is a 30-minute block of time, either once or twice a week, that is largely spent without teacher participation. This is concerning for many reasons, not the least of which is the loss of valuable instructional time during the school day. Student achievement is directly related to the amount of time students are engaged in productive learning activities (Rangel, 2007; Clark & Linn,

Including unproductive time in the freshman academy schedule is incompatible with the goal of improving student achievement.

The intended designs of the advisory period and peer mentoring program have been loosely interpreted and even ignored in some cases.

2003). Including unproductive time in the freshman academy schedule is incompatible with the goal of improving student achievement.

The implementation of the peer mentoring program that occurs once a month during the advisory period also appears to vary by teacher. Some teachers require participation and respect for peer mentors on the part of their homeroom students, and some teachers are less involved. Peer mentoring has shown promise, but its value across homerooms is inconsistent.

We believe the advisory period and peer mentoring program can be valuable tools for increasing personalization for students, but both must be implemented with a higher degree of fidelity to the program design. It is not unusual for programs to fail due to implementation that is inconsistent with intended design (Rossi, Lipsey, & Freeman, 2004). That appears to be the case here, where the intended designs of the advisory period and peer mentoring program have been loosely interpreted and even ignored in some cases. We have several suggestions for improving these strategies so they can add to the personalization experienced by freshman students in South Bend.

Our first recommendation is to redesign the time so that it does not include anything that could be construed as an extra prep by teachers. If there is one certainty related to the advisory period/peer mentoring, it is that teacher participation and buy-in are essential. If students sense that teachers don't think these programs are important, students won't think they are important either. There are many useful activities that could be conducted during activity period without the necessity of additional teacher preparation. Examples include expanding the peer mentoring program; bringing in community partners such as college students, business owners, police officers, or civic leaders to speak about topics of interest to students; allowing the guidance department to use the time for guidance programs or scheduling activities; or allowing members of clubs and activities to present information or hold meetings for members. None of these options require anything from teachers other than a commitment to monitor their class and uphold expectations for participation and respect. These are responsibilities that would be expected of them even in the absence of the advisory period altogether. They are considered typical responsibilities and add nothing to the workload of teachers.

If there is one certainty related to the advisory period/peer mentoring, it is that teacher participation and buy-in are essential. If students sense that teachers don't think these programs are important, students won't think they are important either.

Student engagement stands as a mediating variable between school corporation efforts and initiatives, and student achievement.

Our next suggestion is to create a better screening process for peer mentors. Some students suggested that their peer mentors were good and that they legitimately cared about their "mentees." Others told us that there were mentors who really shouldn't be mentors, and the perception was that kids were signing up to be mentors to have filler material for college or job applications. In the latter cases, students told us that mentors would just come in, make a very short presentation, and then sit down and talk to people they know for the rest of the period. It goes without saying that this would not increase personalization for the majority of students who did not know the mentors well. There is a useful analogy here. Just as it is important to have the right teachers in the freshman academy, it is also important to have the right mentors in the mentoring program. Relationships are the foundation of success in both situations.

A final recommendation to improve peer mentoring would be to assign one mentor to five mentees in order to create smaller groups and more interpersonal interaction. This recommendation is based on the feedback of students, who told us that mentors often failed to gain the respect and attention of freshmen when they stood at the front of the class and tried to talk to the entire group of homeroom students at once. In these scenarios, freshmen became disruptive and disrespectful, making it difficult for the mentors to conduct their program. This reinforces the importance of the participation of the teacher in maintaining order. Teacher participation is equally important on days when mentors are in the homeroom during advisory as when they aren't.

We believe the recommendations in this section will not only improve personalization for students, but allow the time to be used to improve social engagement as well. Student engagement stands as a mediating variable between school corporation efforts and initiatives, and student achievement. Price (2008, p. 11) defines disengaged students as "those who lose interest in school and virtually give up trying to learn, achieve, and acquire essential skills, even though they technically remain enrolled." Schools must keep students engaged if we want them to achieve. Social engagement is one of the primary dimensions of student engagement. It can be thought of as the extent to which students feel a sense of belonging and participate in school life (Willms, Friesen & Milton, 2009). One staple of school life in the freshman academies in South Bend is the teams that students

are assigned to. Another is the extracurricular and co-curricular clubs and organizations that exist at the schools. Teams and activities can increase student engagement by creating a sense of belonging and by giving students groups of teachers and fellow students to identify with. The interview data indicate that there was a definite lack of social engagement among freshmen in South Bend. The majority of students in our study reported that neither they, nor their friends, were involved in school activities of any kind. Some could not tell us which team they were on during their freshman year. None indicated that they felt a strong connection to their freshman team, the freshman academy in general, or the school as a whole.

SBCSC has seen a corresponding increase in attendance and decrease in the rate at which freshmen drop out of school with the implementation of freshman academies. The National Research Council (2003) has concluded that while indicators such as these are valuable, they don't by themselves fully explain the level of student engagement at school. More must be done to engage students, and team-building activities and school clubs are two avenues to accomplish this.

Team-building activities might include friendly competitions such as spirit week activities leading up to the homecoming football game or field day activities in the spring. These types of activities can build team unity and increase personalization by helping students identify with a larger group. Team activities such as service learning projects could also reinforce the curricular program of the school.

One explanation for a lack of participation in clubs might be that students do not seem to be getting the information they need to learn about the available options. Students indicated that much of this information is currently conveyed through announcements on the P.A. system, but that many students don't pay attention to those announcements or can't hear them because of the noise level in the classroom. One method to get information about clubs into the hands of students is to hold a "club fair." This is a time set aside during the school day where all extracurricular and co-curricular clubs set up tables in a large area such as a gymnasium or cafeteria. Students are then brought into the area, perhaps in groups or teams, and are given the opportunity to visit the various tables to collect information or learn more about particular activities that they might be interested in. Another option for disseminating

One explanation for a lack of participation in clubs might be that students do not seem to be getting the information they need to learn about the available options.

information about clubs would be to use the advisory period, which leads us to our next recommendation.

Recommendation 6 –

Utilize teacher collaboration as a primary form of professional development to combat the lack of time and money dedicated to this purpose.

Question 2: Professional Development

Finding 6 – *The impact of professional development related to freshman academies has been mixed. It has not led to widespread changes in teaching practices.*

Recommendation 6 – *Utilize teacher collaboration as a primary form of professional development to combat the lack of time and money dedicated to this purpose.*

Earlier we discussed the relationship between the quality of teaching and student achievement. Effective professional development has been shown to improve the quality of teaching (Borko, 2004; Putnam & Borko, 2000; Fullan & Miles, 1992). Toward that end, the school corporation has a vested interest in building the skills and knowledge of teachers. There are two factors, though, that are conspiring to change the professional development landscape for freshman teachers in South Bend. The first is the elimination of half-days that have been used for professional development purposes in the past. The loss of this time has effectively eliminated any time designated specifically for professional development during contractual hours. The second is the expiration of the SLC grant in 2011. This grant has been used to fund professional development activities for freshman teachers since its inception. The combination of these factors will force the school corporation to reconceptualize the nature of professional development for freshman teachers going forward.

The news is not all negative, however. Teachers' views of past professional development offerings related to freshman academies are mixed. We found no evidence that professional development for freshman teachers has led to any widespread change in instructional practices. The loss of built-in time and money for professional development might actually be viewed as an opportunity for the school corporation to critically examine its professional development approach and make improvements that will lead to better results. SBCSC is certainly not alone in regards to professional development outcomes. Each year, schools and districts spend millions of dollars on in-service seminars and other forms of professional development that are fragmented, superficial, and do not take into account what we know

The loss of built-in time and money for professional development might actually be viewed as an opportunity for the school corporation to critically examine its professional development approach and make improvements that will lead to better results.

Creating a culture that fosters collaboration, both within and across schools, is the surest way to improve instructional capacity in the South Bend Community Schools.

about how teachers learn (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Putnam & Borko, 1997). Recent research on effective professional development does provide insight into ways that teachers learn and can be used to guide the creation of a professional development philosophy in the future.

Borko (2004), for example, finds that strong professional communities can foster teacher learning. Similarly, Wilson and Berne (1999) identify three common themes that emerge from recent professional development research. First, effective professional development involves communities of learners. Second, professional development is more effective if it helps teachers “activate” their existing knowledge instead of “delivering” new knowledge. Third, effective professional development builds collegiality through teacher interaction. Little (1993) reinforces the themes of collaboration and community by stating that teacher collaboration is a preferable alternative to the training model found in traditional professional development, and that teacher learning occurs when teachers are not only classroom experts, but productive and responsible members of a broader professional community. Fullan (2005) also speaks of the importance of community when he lists lateral capacity building as an essential element of sustainability. He specifically identifies strengthening peer relations and building networked learning communities across schools as ways to ensure that knowledge is shared and mutual commitment generated. Research on the benefits of teacher collaboration and professional learning communities is consistent over time. We believe that creating a culture that fosters collaboration, both within and across schools, is the surest way to improve instructional capacity in the South Bend Community Schools.

Fostering collaboration across schools will be difficult in an environment where pulling teachers out of class in large numbers is unaffordable. In the past, freshman academy teachers from different schools were able to meet periodically to discuss the implementation of the academies at their respective schools. This may no longer be possible, and many teachers questioned the effectiveness of these sessions anyway, stating that little collaboration took place. A more effective, and less costly solution, might be to use technology to allow teachers to collaborate. Many communication packages such as Microsoft Outlook contain tools that allow teachers to collaborate virtually, as do a variety of free online social networking solutions. While we

The extent to which team planning time can be used by teachers to engage in discussions around instructional issues will likely drive their level of professional growth and determine the amount of instructional improvement that takes place.

don't want to suggest specific solutions, we do suggest that district administrators explore options for creating online professional learning communities among freshman teachers.

Collaboration within schools will be easier to achieve. An advantage in this regard is that teachers already collaborate with other members of their team during team planning time. There is already a structure in place for this to occur. We have raised legitimate questions about the nature of the collaboration in our discussion of the content of team planning time, but we view the fact that it even exists as a positive. The points we made about planning time earlier apply here as well, and we will summarize by saying that the extent to which this time can be used by teachers to engage in discussions around instructional issues will likely drive their level of professional growth and determine the amount of instructional improvement that takes place. Training teachers to collaborate effectively is not always easy to accomplish (Little, 2003; Grossman, Wineburg, & Woolworth, 2001). It is a new paradigm for teachers and doesn't always come naturally. It will take time and effort for school leaders to build a culture of collaboration among teachers, but in the current context it will be essential for ongoing instructional improvement.

Recommendation 7 –

Engage the community and create partnerships that result in the utilization of community resources in efforts to improve and sustain the freshman academies.

Question 3: School/Community Partnerships

Finding 7 – *Despite the presence of two large universities and a still active business community in South Bend, external partnerships in the freshman academy are virtually nonexistent.*

Recommendation 7 – *Engage the community and create partnerships that result in the utilization of community resources in efforts to improve and sustain the freshman academies.*

Although the purpose here is to examine ways that community partnerships can benefit freshman academies, the benefits extend far deeper than the programs themselves. Community involvement in schools has a positive impact on the ultimate measure of school effectiveness; the academic performance of students (Epstein, 1995; Valdes, 1996). If communities are aggressively mobilized, they can transmit pro-achievement values to counteract student disengagement with school (Price, 2008). We have discovered that many South Bend freshmen are indeed disengaged from school, so establishing community partnerships is one way the school corporation can address that.

Arriaza (2004) distinguishes between constructivist approaches to school-community partnerships, which consider the community as a potential source of resources and services to be tapped, and adversarial approaches, which place blame for students' academic failure on the community they come from. Based on our interviews and findings, we believe there is some of both happening in South Bend. Some people we talked to were quick to blame students' problems on external factors. Others were enthusiastic about the potential of community partnerships. In some cases, the same person may have even fallen into both categories at different times of the interview.

It is well-established that external factors can impact students' readiness to learn. Poverty, in particular, often subjects students to risk factors that are difficult to overcome (Evans, 2004). Coleman (1966) echoed this fact when he found that student background and socioeconomic status are much more important in determining educational

outcomes than are measured differences in school resources. With 72% of students in South Bend eligible for free or reduced meals, there are certainly a large number of students of lower-socioeconomic status in the schools. As noted by many teachers we talked to, this provides hurdles in the effort to motivate and educate students. Blaming the external environment for lack of achievement, however, virtually guarantees that these hurdles will never be fully cleared. There will always be students of lower socioeconomic status attending South Bend schools and it is vital to the future of these students and the community at-large that they are adequately prepared for college or the workforce. There are numerous examples of schools that are overcoming the effects of poverty to post impressive achievement results. Common characteristics among these schools are a refusal to blame the background of students for a lack of progress and a belief that every child can succeed (Chenoweth, 2007). In our opinion, SBCSC would do well to tilt the scale toward a constructivist approach to school-community partnerships that embraces the value of resources that community partners could bring.

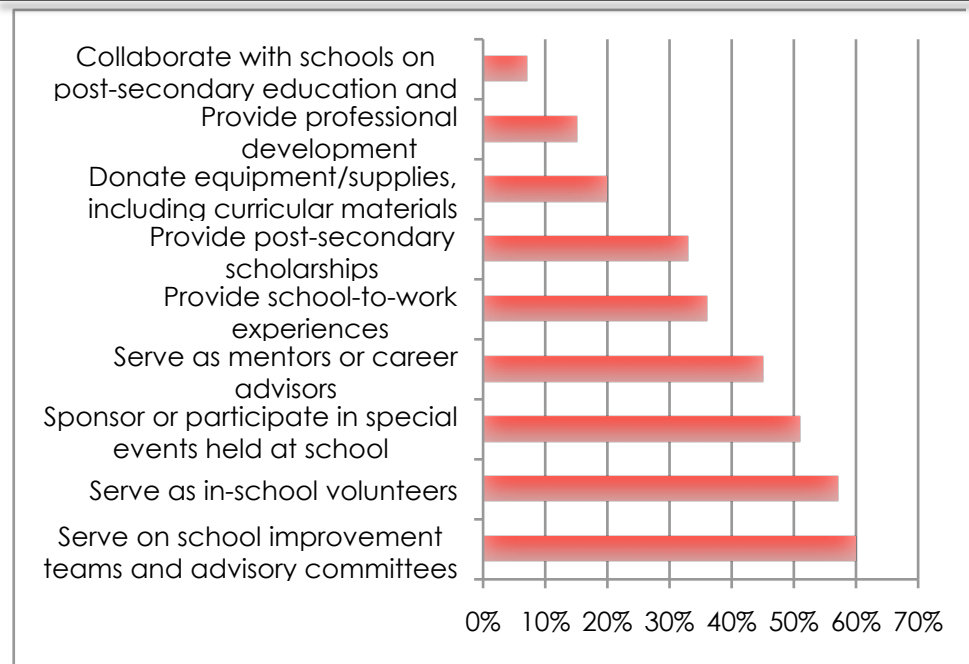
One way to accomplish this would be to take a more systemic approach. Teachers are more likely to embrace the idea of parent and community involvement if they believe their entire school is involved in the effort (Epstein, 2001). This suggests that the responsibility for identifying and developing parent and community partnerships at the school level begins with principals and assistant principals. As school leaders, principals are in a unique position to develop a school culture that values the participation of community stakeholders and to initiate efforts toward that end. Parental involvement is particularly important because it has been shown to improve student achievement (Lareau, 1987). Goldring & Hausman (1997) suggest that principals empower parents by building on their internal motivation to effect change in the outcomes for their children. This motivation can be used to form “partnerships,” where schools and families work together to share information, guide students, solve problems and celebrate successes (Epstein, 2001). Contact with parents must be initiated by the school, however. Many parents who are otherwise willing to participate in a partnership with the school won't do so if they are not contacted. Minority parents and parents of low socioeconomic status, in particular, often don't know how to participate effectively in the educational process and lack

the social capital to obtain information about how to do so (Lareau, 1987). Efforts to involve these parents would be especially helpful in closing achievement gaps as well (Jencks & Phillips, 1998).

At the district level, the involvement of top leaders at the central office is important in promoting freshman academies in the community and attracting external partners. In fact, we believe the Superintendent himself should be the program's biggest advocate in the community. An analogy can be made here to the work of Murphy & Meyers (2007), who identify the visibility and involvement of top leadership as a critical factor in school efforts to recover from failure. Although the context of school turnaround is different, the principle of leadership visibility and involvement transcends contexts and is applicable to the sustainability of freshman academies in South Bend as well. The superintendent and other top leaders could significantly boost the sustainability of the academies by developing a small number of key community leaders who can use their influence to generate additional support for the initiative

Exhibit 3.

Percentage of SLC Schools Reporting Various Benefits Provided to Their SLC Programs Through External Partnerships



(Source: United States Department of Education, 2008)

(Langford, 2007). The fact that there is little or no community interest in the freshman academies right now is problematic. Changing this reality should be a high priority for school and district leadership as the SLC grant nears expiration.

There are many ways community partnerships can help freshman academies succeed. Exhibit 3 lists some of these and shows the percentage of schools receiving the same SLC grant as South Bend that reported benefitting from each. Langford (2007) recommends determining whose support is needed, how it is needed, and developing vehicles for their involvement in the initiative. SBCSC leadership is the only group who can determine which types of partnership make the most sense in light of the other contextual variables, both internal and external, that exist.

We close this section with an observation from Fullan, Bertani, and Quinn (2004), who state that all improving districts that they know about have had active external partners, but that the presence of such partners does not guarantee success. They list other components that need to be in place to avoid a scenario where external partners become nothing more than overload. These other components are included in his sustainability framework (see Appendix A). We discuss some of them below.

Additional Recommendations

We now turn to the sustainability framework developed by Fullan (2005). Fullan's framework was developed specifically for K-12 environments and discusses sustainability in the context of leadership turnover. This framework seems particularly applicable to SBCSC given recent leadership changes in the district. These changes include the elimination of the Director of High School Programs position as part of a massive package of cuts enacted to offset the loss of state funding. The person in this position is currently responsible for oversight of the SLC grant that funded the freshman academies, as well as supervision of administrators who oversee the academies at the school level. This will likely have a significant effect on freshman academy implementation, as oversight will either need to be decentralized or assumed by a person who has not been intimately involved since the grant was originally awarded in 2006. At the least it will result in leadership discontinuity, which is often a primary cause of the decline of promising initiatives (Fullan, 2005). Other leadership changes include a superintendent who is new to the position, although not to the school corporation, a transfer of an assistant principal from Riley to Adams and another from Washington to Jefferson Intermediate. As a result of the transfers, all three of the high schools in our study have assistant principals that are either new to the position or to their current school. These are the people charged with primary oversight of the freshman academies at the school level.

Fullan's argument is that developing the elements of his framework increases the sustainability of programs in the face of leadership change. In the paragraphs that follow we highlight two of these elements and apply them to the context of South Bend freshman academies in order to make additional recommendations for sustainability.

Public service with moral purpose

One of the strengths of freshman academies is that they target student populations most in need of intervention. SBCSC implemented freshman academies in part to address the needs of their at-risk student population, and they should be commended for that. Furthermore, the freshman academies in South Bend were implemented consistently

across all schools and student populations. All freshman students participate in freshman academies. All teachers were offered the same professional development in the period leading up to initial implementation. Any differences in implementation were due primarily to differences in the leadership styles and abilities of school administrators or differences in the personalities and abilities of teachers. These are naturally occurring differences that will be found in virtually every school system in America, and they are largely unavoidable. In short, SBCSC took an affirmative step to address the needs of *all* of their students, which is consistent with Fullan's principle of service with a moral purpose.

Exploring this idea further, we see that Fullan specifically mentions the achievement gap in his discussion of moral purpose. Certainly, keeping students in school and in class are positive and necessary steps to closing achievement gaps. Although we have not explored a potential causal relationship between dropout and attendance rates in South Bend and the implementation of freshman academies, quantitative data do show an increase in retention rates and attendance for freshmen. It appears a positive first step has been taken, but we believe more could be done to decrease achievement gaps in South Bend.

Recommendation 8 – Review the method for assigning students to teams and create socioeconomically heterogeneous teams to the extent possible.

Finding 8 – Socioeconomic status of classmates has a powerful effect on academic achievement (Kahlenberg, 2001)

Recommendation 8 – Review the method for assigning students to teams and create socioeconomically heterogeneous teams to the extent possible.

An additional step would be to look at the method for assigning freshman students to teams. We heard various answers in response to questions about the way students are assigned to teams. Some teachers believe random assignment is used and others told us students are assigned based on ability. The answers varied by school so this appears to be a school-based decision. One of the most consistent findings in educational research is that the socioeconomic status of classmates has a powerful effect on academic achievement (Kahlenberg, 2001). It has been shown that students of low-socioeconomic status benefit

academically from significant interaction with students of higher-socioeconomic status, and that there is no harm to the higher-socioeconomic students from this interaction. Based on this finding, we believe it would be beneficial for the school corporation to review the method of assigning students to teams. Administrators and guidance counselors should be informed of the benefits of heterogeneous groups and assign students with this principle in mind to the extent possible. This is complicated to some extent in South Bend by the presence of the magnet programs at each high school. By all accounts, the magnets are effective in pushing the top students to higher levels of achievement and we do not advocate purposefully assigning students to the magnets to create a better mix of socioeconomic status. There are, however, three to four non-magnet teams in each high school and we believe those teams should be as socioeconomically diverse as possible.

We would be remiss to leave the magnet issue alone without some further discussion. To be consistent with the sustainable principle of *Public service with moral purpose*, we believe every effort should be made to get the right students into the magnet program. As it stands, there are currently no entrance requirements for the magnets. Admission to the programs is granted to the first students who apply until all the available spots have been taken. We heard repeatedly that this results in some students being admitted to the program who are not academically prepared for the accelerated curriculum. It also means that other students who may be able to take advantage of the magnet program get left out. Often, a distinguishing characteristic between these two groups of students is socioeconomic status. Many of the children left out are likely those of lower-socioeconomic status. Their parents lack social capital, meaning they don't have channels of information or the means to make good and timely decisions about their child's educational future. The current selection process puts these families at a distinct disadvantage and serves the needs of only a subset of students (those who have the means to acquire timely information about magnet programs). Magnet schools that serve the needs of *all* students overcome differences in social capital in part by providing information that is timely, accessible, and understandable to *all* parents (Smrekar & Goldring, 2000). A selection process that favors those with social capital and results in a mismatch between students and programs is inconsistent with the principle of *Public*

service with moral purpose and is not sustainable over time. The school district would do well to engage in an information campaign to make sure all parents were aware of their options. This campaign should begin as early as the 6th grade, and take into account the special needs of minorities and low-socioeconomic parents who do not typically communicate with the school in traditional ways.

Commitment to Changing Context at All Levels

Context is a broad term with even broader implications. In Fullan's discussion of this element of the framework, he observes that researchers are fond of saying "context is everything." Murphy & Meyers (2007, pg. 40), in their work on turning around failing schools, state that, "If there is anything close to a law in the literature on turnarounds, it is that context is critical." Webster's online dictionary ("Context," n.d., para. 1) defines context as "the interrelated conditions in which something exists or occurs." In SBCSC and most school districts, there are contextual variables at the local, state and federal levels that shape the interrelated conditions in which the school district and its stakeholders exist. When these variables negatively impact local conditions, Fullan believes there must be a commitment to change them.

Recommendation 9 - Administration and the teachers union should work together to ensure that the collective bargaining agreement supports the needs of the freshman academy.

Finding 9 - The working conditions set forth in the collective bargaining agreement affect the sustainability of the freshman academies more than any other single factor.

Recommendation 9 - Administration and the teachers union should work together to ensure that the collective bargaining agreement supports the needs of the freshman academy.

There is one particular contextual variable we want to highlight at the local level. The collective bargaining agreement deserves special attention because of its pervasive effect on freshman academies. The working conditions set forth in this agreement probably affect the sustainability of the freshman academies more than any other single factor. Simply put, the collective bargaining agreement must not act as a barrier to the implementation

of strategies that are essential to the success of the freshman academy. If it does, leadership should seriously consider the possibility that the freshman academy is not the right solution in the given context. To the extent that teachers can point to the CBA as a legitimate reason for refusing to implement one or more of these strategies, the academies are going to be less sustainable. Freshman academies require targeted policies to meet their unique staffing and program needs (Raywid, Schmerler, Phillips & Smith, 2003). The administration and teachers union must work together to ensure that the collective bargaining agreement supports the needs of the freshman academy. School reform is a difficult endeavor under the best of circumstances. Trying to implement reform in the face of real obstacles provided by the collective bargaining agreement is next to impossible. It is our position that freshman academies must be fully implementable within the confines of the collective bargaining agreement if SBCSC hopes to sustain them.

It should be pointed out that we are not placing blame on teachers here. Questioning terms of the collective bargaining agreement is in no way an indictment of teachers in the school corporation. We fully understand the nature of collective bargaining. We know that it involves tradeoffs and we certainly don't pretend to be in a position to offer authoritative opinions related to terms of the agreement. Our intent is to simply indicate that the agreement has the potential to effectively kill the initiative, and this is an important contextual variable that needs to be addressed.



Structuring and Sustaining Freshman Academies in the South Bend Community Schools

SUMMARY

This study of freshman academies in South Bend provides the school corporation with valuable data about the effectiveness of the strategies being implemented as well as the thoughts and concerns of administrators, teachers and students in the schools. Our project questions directly address the goals of the federal SLC grant, which were to encourage the implementation of structures and strategies that foster personalization; to provide professional development in innovative teaching methods; and to implement strategies to include parents and other citizens of the community in the SLC (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

Our findings highlight positive aspects of the program as implemented in South Bend, as well as areas that could be improved. We also provide specific recommendations related to each of our findings that create a foundation from which the school corporation can build the academies and sustain the program beyond the cessation of the revenue stream from the federal SLC grant.

We hope the results of this study guide the efforts and actions of both central office and school leaders as they seek to fulfill their mission of "... achieving excellence in learning for each student (South Bend Community School Corporation, 2010)." Beyond these administrators, it is also our hope that our recommendations serve as an impetus for all stakeholders in SBCSC, including the superintendent, school board members, the South Bend business community, teachers and parents, to do what it takes to sustain this promising program. Through the coordinated and collaborative efforts of all of these groups, freshman academies can succeed in South Bend and students can successfully navigate the difficult transition to high school and the path toward graduation.

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Appendix A

8 Core Elements of Sustainability

Public service with moral purpose – a commitment to closing the achievement gap and ensuring that all schools and all students achieve

Commitment to changing context at all levels – give people new insights into what can and should be accomplished and build their capacity to succeed

Lateral capacity building through networks – strengthen peer relations across schools so that knowledge is shared and mutual commitment generated

Intelligent accountability and vertical relationships – build local ownership so that purpose is not driven exclusively by external accountability

Deep learning – develop processes for ongoing continuous improvement, adaptation and collective problem solving

Dual commitment to short-term and long-term results – focus on short-term, tangible results while simultaneously creating the conditions for long-term success

Cyclical energizing – balanced energy expenditure; intermittent energy spurts to push through plateaus

The long lever of leadership – develop the capacity of leaders throughout the school district

Source: Fullan (2005)

Appendix B

Summary of Teacher Responses to 2008 Teacher Survey

(source: Kretovics, 2008)

Adams High School

Student Engagement	More than last year N (%)	Stayed about the same N (%)	Less than last year N (%)	Did not teach at this school last year N (%)
The number of students coming to me with personal problems is	12 (22.6)	29 (54.7)	4 (7.5)	8 (15.1)
The number of students coming to me with academic problems is	18 (34)	23 (43.4)	5 (9.4)	7 (13.2)
The number of students in my class who participate in extracurricular activities is	7 (13.7)	31 (60.8)	6 (11.8)	7 (13.7)
The number of students at my school seeking academic assistance is	16 (32.7)	20 (40.8)	6 (12.2)	7 (14.3)
The climate of students' showing respect for each other is	8 (15.4)	19 (36.5)	18 (34.6)	7 (13.5)
Bullying incidents at my school are	6 (12.2)	25 (51)	11 (22.4)	7 (14.3)

School Climate	More than last year N (%)	Stayed about the same N (%)	Less than last year N (%)	Did not teach at this school last year N (%)
Students are frequently encouraged to give their ideas in class	13 (18.1)	49 (68.1)	1 (1.4)	9 (12.5)
Students are frequently encouraged to express opinions	17 (33.3)	27 (52.9)	0 (0)	7 (13.7)
I feel challenged to grow in my teaching	24 (46.2)	18 (34.6)	3 (5.8)	7 (13.5)
Teachers treat students with respect	9 (17.3)	35 (67.3)	1 (1.9)	7 (13.5)
Teachers help students when they do not understand	17 (32.7)	28 (53.8)	0 (0)	7 (13.5)
Teachers have high expectations of students	14 (26.9)	26 (50)	5 (9.6)	7 (13.5)
Teachers think that students are likely to graduate from high school	11 (21.2)	31 (59.6)	3 (5.8)	7 (13.5)
Teachers think that students would succeed in college	8 (15.4)	33 (63.5)	4 (7.7)	7 (13.5)
The school is a supportive and inviting place for students to learn	17 (32.7)	26 (50)	2 (3.8)	7 (13.5)
The school promotes academic success for all students	18 (35.3)	21 (41.2)	5 (9.8)	7 (13.7)
The school has well-defined learning expectations for all students	14 (28)	28 (56)	1 (2)	7 (14)
Students feel safe and welcome at school	9 (17.3)	33 (63.5)	3 (5.8)	7 (13.5)
There is a clear set of rules and expectations for student behavior	11 (21.2)	23 (44.2)	11 (21.2)	7 (13.5)
The consequences for student misbehavior are clear	9 (17.3)	21 (40.4)	15 (28.8)	7 (13.5)
The consequences for student misbehavior are consistent	6 (11.5)	23 (44.2)	16 (30.8)	7 (13.5)
The school is a supportive and inviting place for staff to work	9 (17.3)	25 (48.1)	11 (21.2)	7 (13.5)
Teachers in the school share a vision of teaching and learning	5 (9.6)	35 (67.3)	5 (9.6)	7 (13.5)
Teachers feel safe in school	6 (11.5)	31 (59.6)	8 (15.4)	7 (13.5)
The school is actively involved in school reform	15 (28.8)	30 (57.7)	0 (0)	7 (13.5)
The school building is kept clean and neat	18 (34.6)	25 (48.1)	2 (3.8)	7 (13.5)
Focus in the school reform efforts is clearly communicated	12 (23.5)	27 (52.9)	5 (9.8)	7 (13.7)
Teachers take steps to solve problems, not just talk about them	12 (23.1)	31 (59.6)	2 (3.8)	7 (13.5)

Teacher-Student Relationships	More than last year N (%)	Stayed about the same N (%)	Less than last year N (%)	Did not teach at this school last year N (%)
Teachers care about students	13 (25)	31 (59.6)	1 (1.9)	7 (13.5)
Teachers listen to students	12 (23.1)	32 (61.5)	1 (1.9)	7 (13.5)
Teachers involve students in decision making	12 (23.5)	32 (62.7)	0 (0)	7 (13.7)
Teachers treat all students with dignity and respect	7 (13.5)	36 (69.2)	2 (3.8)	7 (13.5)
Teachers believe that all students can be successful	8 (15.4)	35 (67.3)	2 (3.8)	7 (13.5)
Teachers are available to help students before or after school	26 (50.0)	19 (36.5)	0 (0)	7 (13.5)
Teachers work effectively with ethnic, social, and economically diverse students	8 (15.4)	37 (71.2)	0 (0)	7 (13.5)
Teachers communicate regularly to students through email	8 (18.2)	21 (47.7)	7 (15.9)	8 (18.2)
Positive relationships between teachers and students	16 (31.4)	26 (51)	2 (3.9)	7 (13.7)

Teacher-Teacher Relationships	More than last year N (%)	Stayed about the same N (%)	Less than last year N (%)	Did not teach at this school last year N (%)
Teachers support and treat each other with respect	9 (17)	31 (58.5)	6 (11.3)	7 (13.2)
Teachers believe they are involved in a professional learning community	10 (18.9)	24 (45.3)	12 (22.6)	7 (13.2)
Teachers trust each other	5 (9.6)	28 (53.8)	12 (23.1)	7 (13.5)
Teachers feel supported by colleagues to try new ideas	9 (17)	28 (52.8)	9 (17)	7 (13.2)
Teachers keep to themselves and do not welcome interaction	4 (7.5)	29 (54.7)	13 (24.5)	7 (13.2)
Teachers engage in a systematic analysis of student performance data	8 (15.1)	35 (66)	3 (5.7)	7 (13.2)
Teachers collect and use data to improve their teaching	14 (27.5)	27 (52.9)	3 (5.9)	7 (13.7)
Teachers share ideas on teaching with other teachers	17 (32.1)	26 (49.1)	3 (5.7)	7 (13.2)
Teachers stay up-to-date on research on teaching and learning	15 (29.4)	27 (52.9)	2 (3.9)	7 (13.7)
Teachers share and discuss student work with other teachers	19 (35.8)	24 (45.3)	3 (5.7)	7 (13.2)

Administrative Support	More than last year N (%)	Stayed about the same N (%)	Less than last year N (%)	Did not teach at this school last year N (%)
The principal encourages teachers to try new methods of instruction	16 (30.2)	27 (50.9)	3 (5.7)	7 (13.2)
The principal takes a personal interest in the professional development of teachers	15 (28.3)	27 (50.9)	4 (7.5)	7 (13.2)
The principal supports and encourages teachers to take risks	10 (19.6)	30 (58.8)	4 (7.8)	7 (13.7)
The principal is an effective instructional leader	10 (19.6)	26 (51)	8 (15.7)	7 (13.7)
The principal treats me with respect	17 (32.1)	22 (41.5)	7 (13.2)	7 (13.2)
The principal works to create a sense of community in the school	16 (31.4)	18 (35.3)	10 (19.6)	7 (13.7)
The principal is a strong leader in school reform	11 (21.2)	27 (51.9)	7 (13.5)	7 (13.5)
The principal communicates effectively	11 (21.6)	24 (47.1)	9 (17.6)	7 (13.7)
The principal supports shared decision-making	15 (28.8)	20 (38.5)	10 (19.2)	7 (13.5)
The principal ensures student learning is "bottom line" in this school	13 (24.5)	29 (54.7)	4 (7.5)	7 (13.2)
The principal holds teachers accountable for student achievement	12 (23.1)	31 (59.6)	2 (3.8)	7 (13.5)
The principal treats all students fairly	6 (11.8)	35 (68.6)	3 (5.9)	7 (13.7)
The administrative team communicates effectively with teachers	6 (11.8)	30 (58.8)	8 (15.7)	7 (13.7)
The administrative team involves teachers in decision-making	11 (21.2)	24 (46.2)	10 (19.2)	7 (13.5)
The administrative team listens to teacher concerns	15 (28.8)	22 (42.3)	8 (15.4)	7 (13.5)
The administrative team provides teachers with student achievement data	9 (17)	34 (64.2)	3 (5.7)	7 (13.2)
The building administrative team treats all students fairly	7 (13.2)	33 (62.3)	6 (11.3)	7 (13.2)
Central administration listens to the concerns of teachers	5 (10)	21 (42)	17 (34)	7 (14)
My perception of central administration is positive	5 (9.4)	25 (47.2)	16 (30.2)	7 (13.2)

Parent/Community Involvement	More than last year N (%)	Stayed about the same N (%)	Less than last year N (%)	Did not teach at this school last year N (%)
Parents are involved in school events or activities	20 (37.7)	25 (47.2)	1 (1.9)	7 (13.2)
The staff works hard to build trusting relationships with parents	12 (23.1)	32 (61.5)	1 (1.9)	7 (13.5)
Parents attend parent-teacher conferences	10 (18.9)	28 (52.8)	8 (15.1)	7 (13.2)
Parents are included in their students' education	8 (15.1)	37 (71.2)	0 (0)	7 (13.5)
Teachers and parents view each other as partners in the education of children	6 (11.8)	33 (64.7)	5 (9.8)	7 (13.7)
The school encourages parents to help their students succeed academically	9 (17)	37 (69.8)	0 (0)	7 (13.2)
I contact parents regularly	15 (28.3)	29 (54.7)	2 (3.8)	7 (13.2)
I believe it is important to communicate often with parents	16 (30.8)	28 (53.8)	1 (1.9)	7 (13.5)
I communicate often with parents about their child's progress	14 (26.4)	31 (58.5)	1 (1.9)	7 (13.2)
I communicate with parents often about class activities	6 (11.3)	36 (67.9)	4 (7.5)	7 (13.2)

Clay High School

Student Engagement	More than last year N (%)	Stayed about the same N (%)	Less than last year N (%)	Did not teach at this school last year N (%)
The number of students coming to me with personal problems is	17 (23.6)	43 (59.7)	4 (5.6)	8 (11.1)
The number of students coming to me with academic problems is	17 (23.6)	46 (63.9)	1 (1.4)	8 (11.1)
The number of students in my class who participate in extracurricular activities is	11 (15.3)	48 (66.7)	5 (6.9)	8 (11.1)
The number of students at my school seeking academic assistance is	15 (21.2)	39 (54.9)	9 (12.7)	8 (11.3)
The climate of students' showing respect for each other is	14 (19.4)	29 (40.3)	21 (29.2)	8 (11.1)
Bullying incidents at my school are	7 (9.9)	37 (52.1)	19 (26.8)	8 (11.1)

School Climate	More than last year N (%)	Stayed about the same N (%)	Less than last year N (%)	Did not teach at this school last year N (%)
Students are frequently encouraged to give their ideas in class	13 (18.1)	49 (68.1)	1 (1.4)	9 (12.5)
Students are frequently encouraged to express opinions	16 (22.5)	45 (63.4)	2 (2.8)	8 (11.3)
I feel challenged to grow in my teaching	24 (33.3)	35 (48.6)	4 (5.6)	9 (12.5)
Teachers treat students with respect	10 (14.3)	49 (70)	3 (4.3)	8 (11.4)
Teachers help students when they do not understand	14 (19.4)	49 (68.1)	1 (1.4)	8 (11.1)
Teachers have high expectations of students	11 (15.3)	48 (66.7)	5 (6.9)	8 (11.1)
Teachers think that students are likely to graduate from high school	4 (5.6)	56 (77.8)	4 (5.6)	8 (11.1)
Teachers think that students would succeed in college	3 (4.2)	56 (77.8)	5 (6.9)	8 (11.1)
The school is a supportive and inviting place for students to learn	11 (15.3)	49 (68.1)	4 (5.6)	8 (11.1)
The school promotes academic success for all students	12 (16.7)	48 (66.7)	4 (5.6)	8 (11.1)
The school has well-defined learning expectations for all students	13 (18.1)	46 (63.9)	5 (6.9)	8 (11.1)
Students feel safe and welcome at school	13 (18.1)	43 (59.7)	8 (11.1)	8 (11.1)
There is a clear set of rules and expectations for student behavior	11 (15.3)	36 (50)	17 (23.6)	8 (11.1)
The consequences for student misbehavior are clear	5 (6.9)	38 (52.8)	21 (29.2)	8 (11.1)
The consequences for student misbehavior are consistent	4 (5.6)	35 (48.6)	25 (34.7)	8 (11.1)
The school is a supportive and inviting place for staff to work	9 (12.7)	42 (59.2)	12 (16.9)	8 (11.3)
Teachers in the school share a vision of teaching and learning	12 (16.9)	45 (63.4)	6 (8.5)	8 (11.3)
Teachers feel safe in school	7 (9.9)	45 (63.4)	11 (15.5)	8 (11.3)
The school is actively involved in school reform	22 (30.6)	35 (48.6)	7 (9.7)	8 (11.1)
The school building is kept clean and neat	9 (12.5)	47 (65.3)	8 (11.1)	8 (11.1)
Focus in the school reform efforts is clearly communicated	19 (27.1)	33 (47.1)	10 (14.3)	8 (11.4)
Teachers take steps to solve problems, not just talk about them	15 (20.8)	40 (55.6)	9 (12.5)	8 (11.1)

Teacher-Student Relationships	More than last year N (%)	Stayed about the same N (%)	Less than last year N (%)	Did not teach at this school last year N (%)
Teachers care about students	17 (23.9)	45 (63.4)	1 (1.4)	8 (11.3)
Teachers listen to students	17 (23.9)	45 (63.4)	1 (1.4)	8 (11.3)
Teachers involve students in decision making	10 (13.9)	52 (72.2)	2 (2.8)	8 (11.3)
Teachers treat all students with dignity and respect	10 (14.1)	51 (71.8)	2 (2.8)	8 (11.3)
Teachers believe that all students can be successful	8 (11.3)	52 (73.2)	3 (4.2)	8 (11.3)
Teachers are available to help students before or after school	7 (9.7)	53 (73.6)	4 (5.6)	8 (11.1)
Teachers work effectively with ethnic, social, and economically diverse students	8 (11.3)	52 (73.2)	3 (4.2)	8 (11.3)
Teachers communicate regularly to students through email	7 (10.8)	45 (62.2)	4 (6.2)	9 (13.8)
Positive relationships between teachers and students	12 (16.9)	47 (66.2)	4 (5.6)	8 (11.3)

Teacher-Teacher Relationships	More than last year N (%)	Stayed about the same N (%)	Less than last year N (%)	Did not teach at this school last year N (%)
Teachers support and treat each other with respect	14 (19.4)	44 (61.1)	6 (8.3)	8 (11.1)
Teachers believe they are involved in a professional learning community	10 (14.1)	47 (66.2)	6 (8.5)	8 (11.3)
Teachers trust each other	3 (4.2)	44 (62)	16 (22.5)	8 (11.3)
Teachers feel supported by colleagues to try new ideas	17 (23.9)	37 (52.1)	9 (12.7)	8 (11.3)
Teachers keep to themselves and do not welcome interaction	5 (7.0)	37 (52.1)	21 (29.6)	8 (11.3)
Teachers engage in a systematic analysis of student performance data	18 (25)	43 (59.7)	3 (4.2)	8 (11.1)
Teachers collect and use data to improve their teaching	18 (25)	42 (58.3)	4 (5.6)	8 (11.1)
Teachers share ideas on teaching with other teachers	22 (30.6)	39 (54.2)	3 (4.2)	8 (11.1)
Teachers stay up-to-date on research on teaching and learning	16 (22.5)	45 (63.4)	2 (2.8)	8 (11.3)
Teachers share and discuss student work with other teachers	26 (36.1)	33 (45.8)	5 (6.9)	8 (11.3)

Administrative Support	More than last year N (%)	Stayed about the same N (%)	Less than last year N (%)	Did not teach at this school last year N (%)
The principal encourages teachers to try new methods of instruction	26 (36.6)	37 (52.1)	0 (0)	8 (11.3)
The principal takes a personal interest in the professional development of teachers	20 (27.8)	39 (54.2)	5 (6.9)	8 (11.1)
The principal supports and encourages teachers to take risks	17 (23.6)	39 (54.2)	8 (11.1)	8 (11.1)
The principal is an effective instructional leader	14 (19.4)	43 (59.7)	7 (9.7)	8 (11.1)
The principal treats me with respect	15 (20.8)	44 (61.1)	5 (6.9)	8 (11.1)
The principal works to create a sense of community in the school	12 (16.7)	44 (61.1)	8 (11.1)	8 (11.1)
The principal is a strong leader in school reform	14 (19.4)	37 (51.4)	13 (18.1)	8 (11.1)
The principal communicates effectively	12 (16.9)	42 (59.2)	9 (12.7)	8 (11.3)
The principal supports shared decision-making	10 (14.1)	39 (54.9)	14 (19.7)	8 (11.3)
The principal ensures student learning is "bottom line" in this school	11 (15.5)	40 (56.3)	12 (16.9)	8 (11.3)
The principal holds teachers accountable for student achievement	9 (12.5)	53 (73.6)	2 (2.8)	8 (11.1)
The principal treats all students fairly	7 (9.7)	51 (70.8)	6 (8.3)	8 (11.1)
The administrative team communicates effectively with teachers	10 (13.9)	46 (63.9)	8 (11.1)	8 (11.1)
The administrative team involves teachers in decision-making	6 (8.3)	47 (65.3)	11 (15.3)	8 (11.1)
The administrative team listens to teacher concerns	8 (11.1)	46 (63.9)	10 (13.9)	8 (11.1)
The administrative team provides teachers with student achievement data	14 (19.4)	46 (63.9)	4 (5.6)	8 (11.1)
The building administrative team treats all students fairly	4 (5.6)	52 (72.2)	8 (11.1)	8 (11.1)
Central administration listens to the concerns of teachers	3 (4.3)	37 (52.9)	22 (31.4)	8 (11.4)
My perception of central administration is positive	7 (10)	32 (45.7)	23 (32.9)	8 (11.4)

Parent/Community Involvement	More than last year N (%)	Stayed about the same N (%)	Less than last year N (%)	Did not teach at this school last year N (%)
Parents are involved in school events or activities	10 (14.1)	46 (64.8)	7 (9.9)	8 (11.3)
The staff works hard to build trusting relationships with parents	19 (26.8)	44 (62)	0 (0)	8 (11.3)
Parents attend parent-teacher conferences	10 (13.9)	37 (51.4)	17 (23.6)	8 (11.1)
Parents are included in their students' education	5 (6.9)	56 (77.8)	3 (4.2)	8 (11.1)
Teachers and parents view each other as partners in the education of children	5 (6.9)	52 (72.2)	7 (7.9)	8 (11.1)
The school encourages parents to help their students succeed academically	11 (15.3)	49 (68.1)	4 (5.6)	8 (11.1)
I contact parents regularly	15 (20.8)	48 (66.7)	1 (1.4)	8 (11.1)
I believe it is important to communicate often with parents	17 (23.6)	47 (65.3)	0 (0)	8 (11.1)
I communicate often with parents about their child's progress	18 (25)	46 (63.9)	0 (0)	8 (11.1)
I communicate with parents often about class activities	5 (7)	54 (76.1)	3 (4.2)	9 (12.7)

Riley High School

Student Engagement	More than last year N (%)	Stayed about the same N (%)	Less than last year N (%)	Did not teach at this school last year N (%)
The number of students coming to me with personal problems is	10 (23.3)	24 (55.8)	7 (16.3)	2 (4.7)
The number of students coming to me with academic problems is	10 (23.3)	23 (53.5)	8 (18.6)	2 (4.7)
The number of students in my class who participate in extracurricular activities is	5 (11.9)	27 (64.3)	8 (19.0)	2 (4.8)
The number of students at my school seeking academic assistance is	7 (16.7)	23 (54.8)	10 (23.8)	2 (4.8)
The climate of students' showing respect for each other is	11 (25.6)	9 (20.9)	21 (48.8)	2 (4.7)
Bullying incidents at my school are	8 (21.1)	24 (63.2)	4 (10.5)	2 (5.3)

School Climate	More than last year N (%)	Stayed about the same N (%)	Less than last year N (%)	Did not teach at this school last year N (%)
Students are frequently encouraged to give their ideas in class	10 (23.8)	30 (71.4)	0 (0)	2 (4.8)
Students are frequently encouraged to express opinions	8 (19.5)	30 (73.2)	1 (2.4)	2 (4.9)
I feel challenged to grow in my teaching	14 (33.3)	16 (38.1)	10 (23.8)	2 (4.8)
Teachers treat students with respect	12 (28.6)	27 (64.3)	1 (2.4)	2 (4.8)
Teachers help students when they do not understand	13 (31)	27 (64.3)	0 (0)	2 (4.8)
Teachers have high expectations of students	10 (23.3)	28 (65.1)	3 (7.0)	2 (4.7)
Teachers think that students are likely to graduate from high school	6 (14.3)	29 (69)	5 (11.9)	2 (4.8)
Teachers think that students would succeed in college	3 (7.1)	28 (66.7)	9 (21.4)	2 (4.8)
The school is a supportive and inviting place for students to learn	6 (14.3)	30 (71.4)	4 (9.5)	2 (4.8)
The school promotes academic success for all students	8 (19)	26 (61.9)	6 (14.3)	2 (4.8)
The school has well-defined learning expectations for all students	5 (11.9)	26 (61.9)	9 (21.4)	2 (4.8)
Students feel safe and welcome at school	8 (19.5)	23 (56.1)	8 (19.5)	2 (4.9)
There is a clear set of rules and expectations for student behavior	8 (19.5)	20 (48.8)	11 (26.8)	2 (4.9)
The consequences for student misbehavior are clear	7 (17.1)	19 (46.3)	13 (31.7)	2 (4.9)
The consequences for student misbehavior are consistent	5 (12.5)	16 (40)	17 (42.5)	2 (5)
The school is a supportive and inviting place for staff to work	5 (11.9)	22 (52.4)	13 (31)	2 (4.8)
Teachers in the school share a vision of teaching and learning	6 (14.3)	22 (52.4)	12 (28.6)	2 (4.8)
Teachers feel safe in school	5 (11.9)	28 (66.7)	7 (16.7)	2 (4.8)
The school is actively involved in school reform	13 (31.7)	20 (48.8)	6 (14.6)	2 (4.9)
The school building is kept clean and neat	9 (21.4)	28 (66.7)	3 (7.1)	2 (4.8)
Focus in the school reform efforts is clearly communicated	4 (9.5)	24 (57.1)	12 (28.6)	2 (4.8)
Teachers take steps to solve problems, not just talk about them	5 (11.9)	24 (57.1)	11 (26.2)	2 (4.8)

Teacher-Student Relationships	More than last year N (%)	Stayed about the same N (%)	Less than last year N (%)	Did not teach at this school last year N (%)
Teachers care about students	9 (20.9)	31 (72.1)	1 (2.3)	2 (4.7)
Teachers listen to students	11 (26.2)	27 (64.3)	2 (4.8)	2 (4.8)
Teachers involve students in decision making	3 (7.0)	35 (81.4)	3 (7.0)	2 (4.7)
Teachers treat all students with dignity and respect	7 (16.3)	31 (72.1)	3 (7.0)	2 (4.7)
Teachers believe that all students can be successful	7 (17.1)	28 (68.3)	4 (9.8)	2 (4.9)
Teachers are available to help students before or after school	11 (26.2)	25 (59.5)	4 (9.5)	2 (4.8)
Teachers work effectively with ethnic, social, and economically diverse students	7 (16.3)	33 (76.7)	1 (2.3)	2 (4.7)
Teachers communicate regularly to students through email	3 (8.3)	23 (63.9)	8 (22.2)	2 (5.6)
Positive relationships between teachers and students	7 (16.3)	28 (65.1)	6 (14)	2 (4.7)

Teacher-Teacher Relationships	More than last year N (%)	Stayed about the same N (%)	Less than last year N (%)	Did not teach at this school last year N (%)
Teachers support and treat each other with respect	8 (18.6)	26 (60.5)	7 (16.3)	2 (4.7)
Teachers believe they are involved in a professional learning community	7 (16.7)	20 (47.6)	13 (31.0)	2 (4.8)
Teachers trust each other	3 (7.0)	28 (65.1)	10 (23.3)	2 (4.7)
Teachers feel supported by colleagues to try new ideas	5 (11.6)	24 (55.8)	12 (27.9)	2 (4.7)
Teachers keep to themselves and do not welcome interaction	8 (18.6)	25 (58.1)	8 (18.6)	2 (4.7)
Teachers engage in a systematic analysis of student performance data	1 (2.4)	30 (73.2)	8 (19.5)	2 (4.9)
Teachers collect and use data to improve their teaching	3 (7.3)	31 (75.6)	5 (12.2)	2 (4.9)
Teachers share ideas on teaching with other teachers	11 (26.2)	23 (54.8)	6 (14.3)	2 (4.8)
Teachers stay up-to-date on research on teaching and learning	4 (10)	32 (80)	2 (5)	2 (5)
Teachers share and discuss student work with other teachers	11 (26.2)	25 (59.5)	4 (9.5)	2 (4.8)

Administrative Support	More than last year N (%)	Stayed about the same N (%)	Less than last year N (%)	Did not teach at this school last year N (%)
The principal encourages teachers to try new methods of instruction	7 (17.1)	24 (58.5)	7 (17.1)	3 (7.3)
The principal takes a personal interest in the professional development of teachers	6 (14)	22 (51.2)	12 (27.9)	3 (7)
The principal supports and encourages teachers to take risks	5 (11.9)	25 (59.5)	9 (21.4)	3 (7.1)
The principal is an effective instructional leader	5 (11.6)	23 (53.5)	12 (27.9)	3 (7)
The principal treats me with respect	9 (20.9)	27 (62.8)	5 (11.6)	2 (4.7)
The principal works to create a sense of community in the school	10 (23.8)	20 (47.6)	9 (21.4)	3 (7.1)
The principal is a strong leader in school reform	9 (22)	21 (51.2)	8 (19.5)	3 (7.3)
The principal communicates effectively	4 (9.5)	22 (52.4)	13 (31)	3 (7.1)
The principal supports shared decision-making	6 (14.3)	23 (54.8)	10 (23.8)	3 (7.1)
The principal ensures student learning is "bottom line" in this school	7 (16.3)	23 (53.5)	10 (23.3)	3 (7)
The principal holds teachers accountable for student achievement	7 (16.7)	29 (69)	4 (9.5)	2 (4.8)
The principal treats all students fairly	5 (11.9)	26 (61.9)	9 (21.4)	2 (4.8)
The administrative team communicates effectively with teachers	3 (7)	25 (58.1)	12 (27.9)	3 (7)
The administrative team involves teachers in decision-making	5 (11.9)	23 (54.8)	11 (26.2)	3 (7.1)
The administrative team listens to teacher concerns	5 (11.6)	29 (67.4)	7 (16.3)	2 (4.7)
The administrative team provides teachers with student achievement data	3 (7.1)	28 (66.7)	9 (21.4)	2 (4.8)
The building administrative team treats all students fairly	3 (7.3)	25 (61)	11 (26.8)	2 (4.9)
Central administration listens to the concerns of teachers	1 (2.3)	23 (53.5)	16 (37.2)	3 (7)
My perception of central administration is positive	2 (4.7)	19 (44.2)	19 (44.2)	3 (7)

Parent/Community Involvement	More than last year N (%)	Stayed about the same N (%)	Less than last year N (%)	Did not teach at this school last year N (%)
Parents are involved in school events or activities	1 (2.4)	32 (76.2)	7 (16.7)	2 (4.8)
The staff works hard to build trusting relationships with parents	4 (9.5)	31 (73.8)	5 (11.9)	2 (4.8)
Parents attend parent-teacher conferences	6 (14)	29 (67.4)	6 (14)	2 (4.7)
Parents are included in their students' education	4 (9.3)	30 (69.8)	7 (16.3)	2 (4.7)
Teachers and parents view each other as partners in the education of children	2 (4.8)	37 (76.2)	6 (14.3)	2 (4.8)
The school encourages parents to help their students succeed academically	7 (16.7)	30 (71.4)	3 (7.1)	2 (4.8)
I contact parents regularly	8 (18.6)	30 (69.8)	3 (7)	2 (4.7)
I believe it is important to communicate often with parents	10 (23.3)	31 (72.1)	0 (0)	2 (4.7)
I communicate often with parents about their child's progress	9 (20.9)	31 (72.1)	1 (2.3)	2 (4.7)
I communicate with parents often about class activities	3 (7.3)	34 (82.9)	2 (4.9)	2 (4.9)

Washington High School

Student Engagement	More than last year N (%)	Stayed about the same N (%)	Less than last year N (%)	Did not teach at this school last year N (%)
The number of students coming to me with personal problems is	23 (25.3)	56 (61.5)	6 (6.6)	6 (6.6)
The number of students coming to me with academic problems is	23 (25.3)	53 (58.2)	9 (9.9)	6 (6.6)
The number of students in my class who participate in extracurricular activities is	19 (22.1)	46 (53.5)	13 (15.1)	8 (9.3)
The number of students at my school seeking academic assistance is	14 (15.6)	56 (62.2)	13 (14.4)	7 (7.8)
The climate of students' showing respect for each other is	27 (30.0)	33 (36.7)	24 (26.7)	6 (6.7)
Bullying incidents at my school are	8 (9.0)	47 (52.8)	28 (31.5)	6 (6.7)

School Climate	More than last year N (%)	Stayed about the same N (%)	Less than last year N (%)	Did not teach at this school last year N (%)
Students are frequently encouraged to give their ideas in class	27 (31)	52 (59.8)	1 (1.1)	7 (8)
Students are frequently encouraged to express opinions	26 (29.9)	53 (60.9)	1 (1.1)	7 (8)
I feel challenged to grow in my teaching	42 (47.2)	37 (41.6)	2 (2.2)	8 (9)
Teachers treat students with respect	21 (23.9)	57 (64.8)	3 (3.4)	7 (8)
Teachers help students when they do not understand	18 (20.5)	61 (69.3)	2 (2.3)	7 (8)
Teachers have high expectations of students	27 (30.7)	49 (55.7)	5 (5.7)	7 (8)
Teachers think that students are likely to graduate from high school	23 (26.1)	53 (60.2)	5 (5.7)	7 (8)
Teachers think that students would succeed in college	13 (14.8)	58 (65.9)	10 (11.4)	7 (8)
The school is a supportive and inviting place for students to learn	35 (39.3)	37 (41.6)	10 (11.2)	7 (7.9)
The school promotes academic success for all students	34 (38.6)	37 (42)	10 (11.4)	7 (8)
The school has well-defined learning expectations for all students	31 (34.8)	43 (48.3)	8 (9)	7 (7.9)
Students feel safe and welcome at school	29 (33)	37 (42)	15 (17)	7 (8)
There is a clear set of rules and expectations for student behavior	41 (46.1)	30 (33.7)	11 (12.4)	7 (7.9)
The consequences for student misbehavior are clear	27 (30.3)	39 (43.8)	16 (18)	7 (7.9)
The consequences for student misbehavior are consistent	17 (19.3)	46 (52.3)	18 (20.5)	7 (8)
The school is a supportive and inviting place for staff to work	19 (21.3)	50 (56.2)	13 (14.6)	7 (7.9)
Teachers in the school share a vision of teaching and learning	23 (26.4)	44 (50.6)	13 (14.9)	7 (8)
Teachers feel safe in school	18 (20.5)	40 (45.5)	23 (26.1)	7 (8)
The school is actively involved in school reform	47 (54)	31 (35.6)	2 (2.3)	7 (8)
The school building is kept clean and neat	28 (31.5)	48 (53.9)	6 (6.7)	7 (7.9)
Focus in the school reform efforts is clearly communicated	24 (27.3)	48 (54.5)	9 (10.2)	7 (8)
Teachers take steps to solve problems, not just talk about them	24 (27.6)	52 (59.8)	4 (4.6)	7 (8)

Teacher-Student Relationships	More than last year N (%)	Stayed about the same N (%)	Less than last year N (%)	Did not teach at this school last year N (%)
Teachers care about students	20 (22.0)	62 (68.1)	2 (2.2)	7 (7.7)
Teachers listen to students	20 (22.0)	62 (68.1)	2 (2.2)	7 (7.7)
Teachers involve students in decision making	13 (14.4)	67 (74.4)	3 (3.3)	7 (7.8)
Teachers treat all students with dignity and respect	12 (13.2)	68 (74.7)	4 (4.4)	7 (7.7)
Teachers believe that all students can be successful	16 (17.6)	65 (71.4)	3 (3.3)	7 (7.7)
Teachers are available to help students before or after school	18 (19.8)	60 (65.9)	6 (6.6)	7 (7.7)
Teachers work effectively with ethnic, social, and economically diverse students	13 (14.6)	65 (73.0)	4 (4.5)	7 (7.9)
Teachers communicate regularly to students through email	10 (12.2)	52 (63.4)	12 (14.6)	8 (9.8)
Positive relationships between teachers and students	23 (25.3)	56 (61.5)	5 (5.5)	7 (7.7)

Teacher-Teacher Relationships	More than last year N (%)	Stayed about the same N (%)	Less than last year N (%)	Did not teach at this school last year N (%)
Teachers support and treat each other with respect	24 (26.7)	55 (61.1)	4 (4.4)	7 (7.8)
Teachers believe they are involved in a professional learning community	28 (31.1)	43 (47.8)	12 (13.3)	7 (7.8)
Teachers trust each other	17 (19.1)	58 (65.2)	7 (7.9)	7 (7.9)
Teachers feel supported by colleagues to try new ideas	28 (31.8)	47 (53.4)	6 (6.8)	7 (8.0)
Teachers keep to themselves and do not welcome interaction	11 (22.2)	36 (40.0)	36 (40.0)	7 (7.8)
Teachers engage in a systematic analysis of student performance data	22 (25.3)	53 (60.9)	5 (5.7)	7 (8.0)
Teachers collect and use data to improve their teaching	23 (26.4)	52 (59.8)	5 (5.7)	7 (8.0)
Teachers share ideas on teaching with other teachers	34 (38.6)	40 (45.5)	7 (8.0)	7 (8.0)
Teachers stay up-to-date on research on teaching and learning	18 (20.5)	56 (63.6)	7 (8.0)	7 (*.0)
Teachers share and discuss student work with other teachers	33 (37.1)	40 (44.9)	8 (9.0)	8 (9.0)

Administrative Support	More than last year N (%)	Stayed about the same N (%)	Less than last year N (%)	Did not teach at this school last year N (%)
The principal encourages teachers to try new methods of instruction	21 (23.9)	54 (61.4)	5 (5.7)	8 (9.1)
The principal takes a personal interest in the professional development of teachers	21 (23.3)	52 (57.8)	9 (10)	8 (8.9)
The principal supports and encourages teachers to take risks	19 (21.1)	53 (58.9)	10 (11.1)	8 (8.9)
The principal is an effective instructional leader	14 (15.6)	62 (68.9)	6 (6.7)	8 (8.9)
The principal treats me with respect	23 (25.6)	52 (57.8)	7 (7.8)	8 (8.9)
The principal works to create a sense of community in the school	32 (36)	47 (52.8)	3 (3.4)	7 (7.9)
The principal is a strong leader in school reform	35 (39.8)	43 (48.9)	2 (2.3)	8 (9.1)
The principal communicates effectively	22 (25)	48 (54.5)	10 (11.4)	8 (9.1)
The principal supports shared decision-making	16 (18.2)	55 (62.5)	9 (10.2)	8 (9.1)
The principal ensures student learning is "bottom line" in this school	15 (17)	59 (67)	6 (6.8)	8 (9.1)
The principal holds teachers accountable for student achievement	18 (20.2)	59 (66.3)	4 (4.5)	8 (9)
The principal treats all students fairly	12 (13.6)	57 (64.8)	12 (13.6)	7 (8)
The administrative team communicates effectively with teachers	20 (22.7)	49 (55.7)	12 (13.6)	7 (8)
The administrative team involves teachers in decision-making	20 (22.5)	50 (56.2)	12 (13.5)	7 (7.9)
The administrative team listens to teacher concerns	21 (23.9)	49 (55.7)	11 (12.5)	7 (8)
The administrative team provides teachers with student achievement data	20 (22.5)	55 (61.8)	7 (7.9)	7 (7.9)
The building administrative team treats all students fairly	12 (13.6)	61 (69.3)	8 (9.1)	7 (8)
Central administration listens to the concerns of teachers	11 (12.5)	40 (45.5)	30 (34.1)	7 (8)
My perception of central administration is positive	15 (16.9)	40 (44.9)	27 (30.3)	7 (7.9)

Parent/Community Involvement	More than last year N (%)	Stayed about the same N (%)	Less than last year N (%)	Did not teach at this school last year N (%)
Parents are involved in school events or activities	17 (19.1)	56 (62.9)	9 (10.1)	7 (7.9)
The staff works hard to build trusting relationships with parents	26 (29.2)	55 (61.8)	1 (1.1)	7 (7.9)
Parents attend parent-teacher conferences	19 (21.3)	50 (56.2)	13 (14.6)	7 (7.9)
Parents are included in their students' education	14 (15.9)	56 (63.6)	11 (12.5)	7 (8)
Teachers and parents view each other as partners in the education of children	12 (13.6)	54 (61.4)	15 (17)	7 (8)
The school encourages parents to help their students succeed academically	23 (25.8)	55 (61.8)	4 (4.5)	7 (7.9)
I contact parents regularly	25 (28.7)	55 (63.2)	0 (0)	7 (8)
I believe it is important to communicate often with parents	28 (32.2)	51 (58.6)	1 (1.1)	7 (8)
I communicate often with parents about their child's progress	30 (34.1)	49 (55.7)	3 (3.4)	6 (6.8)
I communicate with parents often about class activities	11 (12.8)	63 (73.3)	5 (5.8)	7 (8.1)

Appendix C

Interview Protocols

Students

I. Strategies/Personalization

1. What grade are you currently in?
2. Did you attend South Bend schools as a 9th grader? Which school?
3. How many school activities did you participate in as a freshman?
4. Are there sufficient opportunities for freshman to participate in activities if they would like to?
5. Were students organized into teams during your freshman year?
6. How many teachers were in your assigned team? How many students?
7. Did this team structure have any effect on the quality and quantity of your personal relationships with other students? With teachers?
8. How many teachers did you know well during your freshman year?
9. How often did you have individual conversations with teachers or other adults in the building?
10. Did teachers make an effort to get to know you as a person? Explain.
11. What is the resource period? What kinds of activities occur during this period?
12. Is the resource period helpful? In what ways?
13. Do you have any experience with the peer mentoring program?
14. Was this program helpful? In what ways?
15. Are your learning experiences at school relevant to your everyday life?
16. Are your learning experiences at school rigorous? Do your teachers have high expectations? Explain?
17. To what extent did freshman have an identity separate and distinct from the rest of the school?
18. Did your opinion of school change from the 8th grade to the 9th grade? In what ways?

II. Professional Development/Teaching Methods

III. Parent/Community Partnerships

19. What is your parent(s)/guardian(s) attitude toward your education?
20. What was the nature of your parent(s)/guardian(s) involvement with your education prior to your freshman year?
21. What was the nature of your parent(s)/guardian(s) involvement with your education during your freshman year?
 - a. (If there was any change) What do you attribute this change to?
 - b. (If there was any change) What benefit did you derive from this change in parental

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- involvement?
22. Did you perceive any additional effort on the part of teachers or other school employees to involve parents in school activities or the freshman academy during your freshman year?
 23. Did your parent(s)/guardian(s) mention any effort on the part of the school to encourage involvement in school activities or the freshman academy?
 24. Were parents or other community members/organizations present in any classes or other school events during the school day during your freshman year? In what capacity?
 25. Were parents or other community members/organizations present at any school functions outside of the school day during your freshman year? In what capacity?
 26. Did you benefit from the presence of parents or community organizations at school during your freshman year? How?
 27. Did any of your friends or classmates benefit from the presence of parents or community organizations at school during your freshman year? How?

Teachers

I. Strategies/Personalization

28. How many years have you been a teacher? How many as a high school teacher? How many years in South Bend?
29. How long have you been involved with Freshman Academies in SBCSC?
30. Describe the structure and function of the teacher teams that have been implemented as part of the Freshman Academy program.
31. Are there benefits and/or drawbacks to the teaming approach? Is this approach effective?
32. How is common planning time utilized by team members? Has common planning time had any effect on teachers? Students?
33. Have there been any changes in freshman curriculum in conjunction with the Freshman Academy?
34. Describe the resource period. Has it changed since the implementation of the Freshman Academy. What is your role during this period?
35. Describe the peer mentoring program. What role do teachers play in this program?
36. Are there any other strategies or practices that have been implemented as part of the Freshman Academy program? Explain.
37. What impact have these strategies had on the level of personalization experienced by freshman students?
38. What impact have these strategies had on the level of adult/student interaction?
39. How would you characterize the level of involvement and commitment of students in the educational process? Are students engaged? Always? Sometimes? Rarely?
40. Are students given a voice in matters that affect the academic and social culture and climate of the school (policy, rules, curriculum, etc)? In what ways?
41. Are there any other specific efforts that have been made to foster personalization?
42. To what extent has the Freshman Academy been able to create an identity for itself that is separate and distinct from the rest of the school? What steps have been taken in this regard?

II. Professional Development/Teaching Methods

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43. How many hours of professional development specifically related to Freshman Academies did teachers participate in prior to the implementation of these academies?
 44. Were the professional development offerings required or optional?
 45. What was the nature of the offerings (time, frequency, format)?
 46. Were any incentives offered to teachers for participating?
 47. What topics were offered?
 48. Do teachers at different high schools collaborate with each other on issues related to the Freshman Academies? How often? In what ways?
 49. Do teachers engage in serious, ongoing conversation about issues of teaching and learning related to the freshman academy?
 50. Has there been any professional development related specifically to methods of engaging students?
 51. What professional development topics related to freshman academies have been/would be useful to you?
 52. How would you characterize the effectiveness of professional development offerings related to Freshman Academies at your school?
 53. How could professional development offerings related to Freshman Academies be improved?
 54. Have teaching methods and practices changed as a result of professional development activities related to freshman academies? How?

III. Parent/Community Partnerships

55. Are there any external partners involved with the freshman academy implementation? If so, what is the role of these external partners?
56. What effect have these external partners had on students in terms of career or community opportunities?
57. Has the freshman academy program had an effect on the level of parent involvement at the school? What types of partnerships have been developed with parents?
58. How has parental participation affected career and community opportunities for students?

Administrators

I. Strategies/Personalization

59. How long have you been involved with Freshman Academies in SBCSC? How long in your current position specifically?
60. What are your responsibilities related to the Freshman Academy in your current position?
61. What percentage of freshman are enrolled in the freshman academy program? Has this percentage changed over time?
62. Which strategies and practices have been implemented in connection with the Freshman Academies?
63. Why were these strategies selected?

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64. What is your role in the implementation of these strategies?
 65. What factors facilitate or inhibit the success of these strategies?
 66. Which strategies have been added/discontinued since the inception of the SLC grant? Why?
 67. What impact have these strategies had on the level of personalization experienced by freshman students?
 68. How would you characterize the level of involvement and commitment of students in the educational process? Are students engaged? Always? Sometimes? Rarely?
 69. Are students given a voice in matters that affect the academic and social culture and climate of the school (policy, rules, curriculum, etc)? In what ways?
 70. Are there any school-based leadership groups? What is their role? Do they have a voice in school policy/procedures?
 71. What impact have these strategies had on the level of adult/student interaction?
 72. Are there any other specific efforts that have been made to foster personalization?
 73. To what extent has the Freshman Academy been able to create an identity for itself that is separate and distinct from the rest of the school? What steps have been taken in this regard?

II. Professional Development/Teaching Methods

74. Who is responsible for planning professional development related to freshman academies?
75. What process is used for determining the content and delivery method of this professional development?
76. How have the content and delivery of professional development offerings specifically related to Freshman Academies changed since the inception of the SLC grant?
77. What factors facilitate or inhibit the success of professional development related to freshman academies?
78. What professional development is available to staff new to the district or new to the Freshman Academy?
79. Is professional development for these staff members required or optional?
80. Do you collaborate with administrators at other high schools on issues related to the Freshman Academies? How often? In what ways?
81. Are there any efforts made to build the capacity of teachers specifically in the area of student engagement? Describe.
82. What impact has professional development related to freshman academies had on instruction?

III. Parent/Community Partnerships

83. Are there any external partners involved with the Freshman Academy implementation? If so, what is the role of these external partners?
84. What is the extent and nature of parental involvement in school activities in general and in the Freshman Academy in particular?
85. Who is responsible for engaging parents and other external partners? What efforts are undertaken in this regard?
86. What benefits has SBCSC realized from the participation of these partners?
87. Has the participation of parents and external partners resulted in additional career or community opportunities for students? If so, what is the nature of these opportunities?