

JCPS Change Framework

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The JCPS Change Framework represents the major components of the Jefferson County school district's approach to advancing student learning. The framework is comprised of four major areas that are critical to sustaining the systemic initiatives that have been put in place:

- **Care**- Students must be ready to learn. They learn best when they are known, valued, cared for and supported.
- **Student Engagement** - Students must be intellectually and emotionally engaged. Instruction must be designed to meet their needs and interests.
- **Diagnostic Approach to Teaching**- We must diagnose what each student knows, gaps in their learning, and how they are progressing in relation to learning targets and then to use that information to move their learning forward.
- **Community Engagement**- We need to engage with the community to support high-quality diverse schools for every student.

The following document describes the JCPS Change Framework in more detail. A brief research summary on each component is followed by the specific benchmarks/performance metrics by which each component is assessed. Following the performance metrics is an overview of the JCPS programs associated with the component and the outcomes of the programs thus far. A summary of the framework, performance metrics, and strategies is shown on page 30.

School Climate and Academic Achievement: Research Summary

Background

Educational experts agree that school climate is an important component to the academic outcomes of students. Though definitions vary, most researchers agree that school climate encompasses the “norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching, learning, leadership practices, and organizational structures” in a school community (NSCC, p. 5, 2007). In many ways, it should be common sense that the promotion of a positive, safe, and healthy school climate would be related to the academic outcomes of students. Yet in a standards-based accountability system, school climate is often lost in the shuffle of education reforms and test scores.

Given that over the past two decades, research has systematically shown that school climate and academic achievement are intertwined, the lack of attention to school climate in public policy is surprising. Not only has school climate been shown to impact student achievement, but a positive school climate has been shown to be related to a variety of outcomes, including reduced student absenteeism, reduced suspensions and behavior problems, lower rates of alcohol use, reduced psychopathology, and increased student connectedness to school (Battistich, Solomon, & Watson, 1998; Battistich, Solomon, Kim, Watson, & Schaps, 1995; Kasen, Johnson, & Cohen, 1990; Pianta & Stuhlman, 2004; Reid, 1982; Schaps & Solomon, 1990; Solomon, Battistich, Kim, & Watson, 1997; Wu, Pink, Crain, & Moles, 1982).

Key Literature on School Climate and Academic Achievement

The most comprehensive meta-analysis on the impact of a supportive school environment on academic achievement was recently completed by Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, and Schellinger (2011). They examined over 200 school-based programs (involving over 270,000 students) that aimed to improve social and emotional climate. All the studies reviewed had a control group, and about half of the studies utilized a randomized design. The meta-analysis found that compared to controls, students in schools that promoted a supportive school climate demonstrated on average a 11 percentile point gain in academic achievement.

A series of studies on the impact of a caring school climate has also been conducted by the Search Institute, a non-profit group focused on the well-being of young people. In their studies, a caring school climate was associated with higher grades, higher engagement, and lower grade retention rates (Scales & Leffert, 1999). There is also evidence that extended focus on improving school climate yields greater academic gains. A study by Rimm-Kaufman and colleagues (2007) found that a responsive classroom approach in elementary schools lead to significant gains in reading and math, with the greatest impact being in those schools that had utilized the responsive classroom approach for at least 3 years.

Finally, many experts point out that it is not simply the impact on test scores that matter, but the impact on student motivation that is the ultimate outcome to forming successful life-long learners (Cohen, 2006). A positive school climate has been shown to increase academic motivation to learn (Goodenow & Grady, 1993), whereas a less supportive school climate has been shown to decrease student motivation (Eccles et al., 1993). The degree to which students feel safe, respected, and connected to school has a profound impact on whether students are able to and desire to learn (NSCC, 2007).

Challenges and Implications for Public Policy

One of the challenges to encouraging schools and districts to intentionally monitor and improve their school climate is that accountability systems do not directly and explicitly address school climate in their assessment models. The National School Climate Center, the Center for Social and Emotional Education, and the National Center for Learning and Citizenship at Education Commission of the States collectively have produced a series of recommendations for public policy makers to help states and districts monitor and assess school climate including 1) bringing education experts to a consensus on a definition of school climate, 2) developing standards for school climate assessments, and 3) formulating data-driven tracking systems of school climate to support practice and research (NSCC, 2007).

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Change Framework and Performance Metrics

School Climate

CDIP Strategies

- 3.1 Strengthen school culture and develop students' character and leadership skills
- 3.2 Enhance cultural competency
- 3.5 Enhance student and employee health and increase attendance

Initiatives

- CARE for Kids
- Freshman Academies
- Cultural Competence
- School Nurses

Performance Metrics

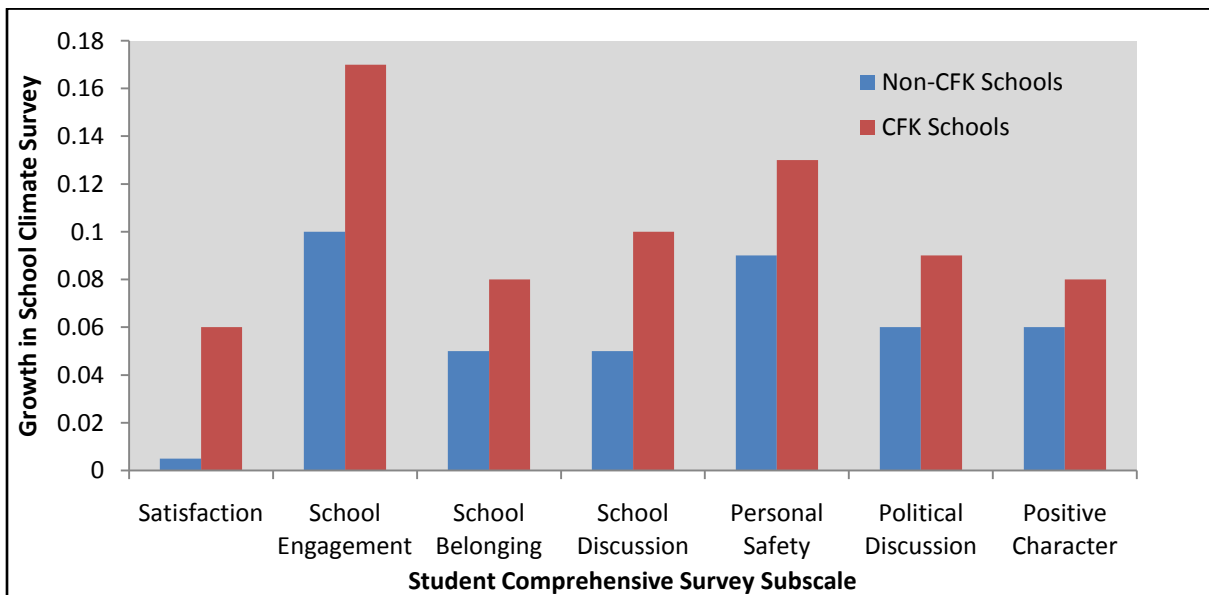
- Student and Teacher Attendance
- Suspensions
- KCCT Performance
- Student Retention
- Comprehensive School Survey
- Student and Teacher School Climate

School Climate and Academic Achievement: Strategies and Outcomes

CARE for Kids. CARE for Kids (CFK) is a district-wide social and emotional learning program aimed at providing significant and engaging learning opportunities that allow students to experience membership in a safe and caring community of learners. In the 2009-2010 school year (Year 2 of CARE for Kids roll-out), a total of 54 elementary schools and 21 middle schools were implementing the CARE for Kids program. Multi-methods were used to collect evaluation data including surveys, observations, and secondary data. District-wide Comprehensive Surveys were collected from all school staffs, intermediate elementary students, and all middle school students in February 2010 to assess school culture and climate.

The 09-10 outcomes, thus far, have shown a significant impact of CARE for Kids on school climate at the elementary level, and a moderate impact on suspensions at the elementary and middle school levels. Specifically, at the elementary level, students who attended CARE for Kids schools showed more growth in the areas of School Satisfaction, School Engagement, School Belonging, School Discussion, Personal Safety, Political Discussion, and Positive Character than students at non-CARE for Kids schools (see chart below).

CARE for Kids and Growth in School Culture from 2007-2008 to 2009-2010

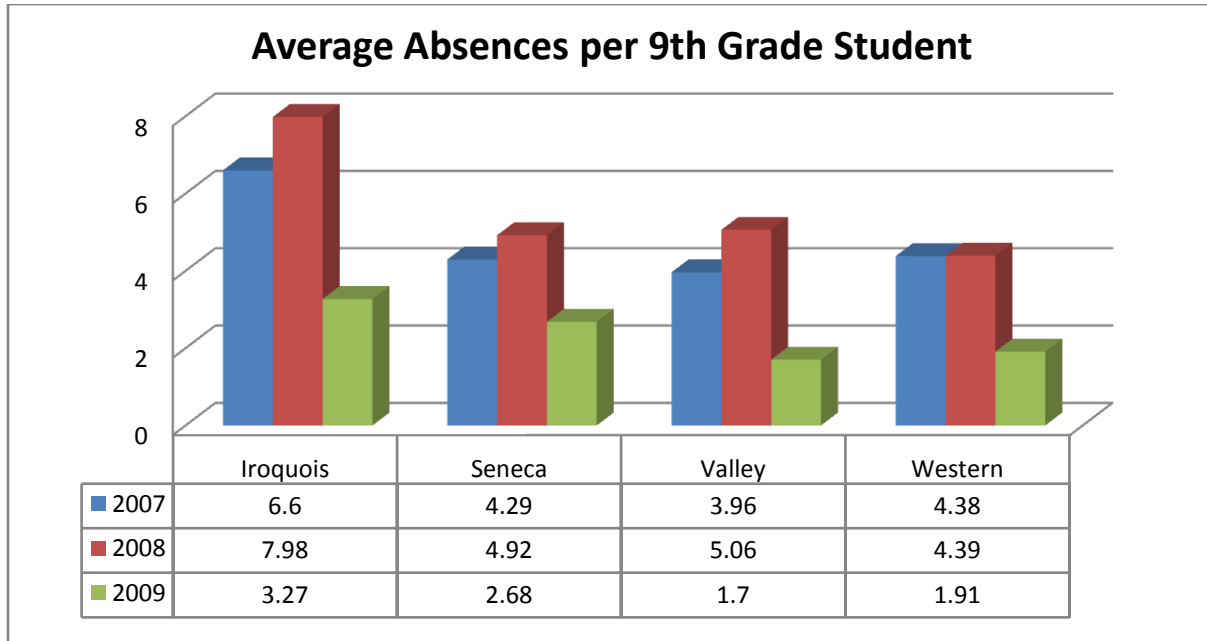


When examining attendance and suspensions for elementary schools, data show that there was a significant correlation between CARE for Kids implementation and attendance and suspensions. The higher the implementation of CARE for Kids, the more likely the schools were to increase in attendance and decrease their number of suspensions. At the middle school level the findings were similar with high implementers of CARE for Kids decreasing their suspensions by 1.6% and low implementers of CARE for Kids decreasing their suspensions by 0.55%. In terms of achievement, for elementary schools that have been implementing CARE for Kids 2 years, the 2010 KCCT data showed that the growth in achievement (in Reading, Social Studies, and Writing), outpaced a matched comparison group, as well as the district as a whole. For elementary schools that have been implementing CARE for Kids 1 year, high implementers significantly improved more in Reading and Math than low implementers. At the middle school level, high implementers (whole school, high implementation) of CARE for Kids were compared to the other middle schools. Implementation of CFK was related to higher academic achievement, though only Science was statistically significant.

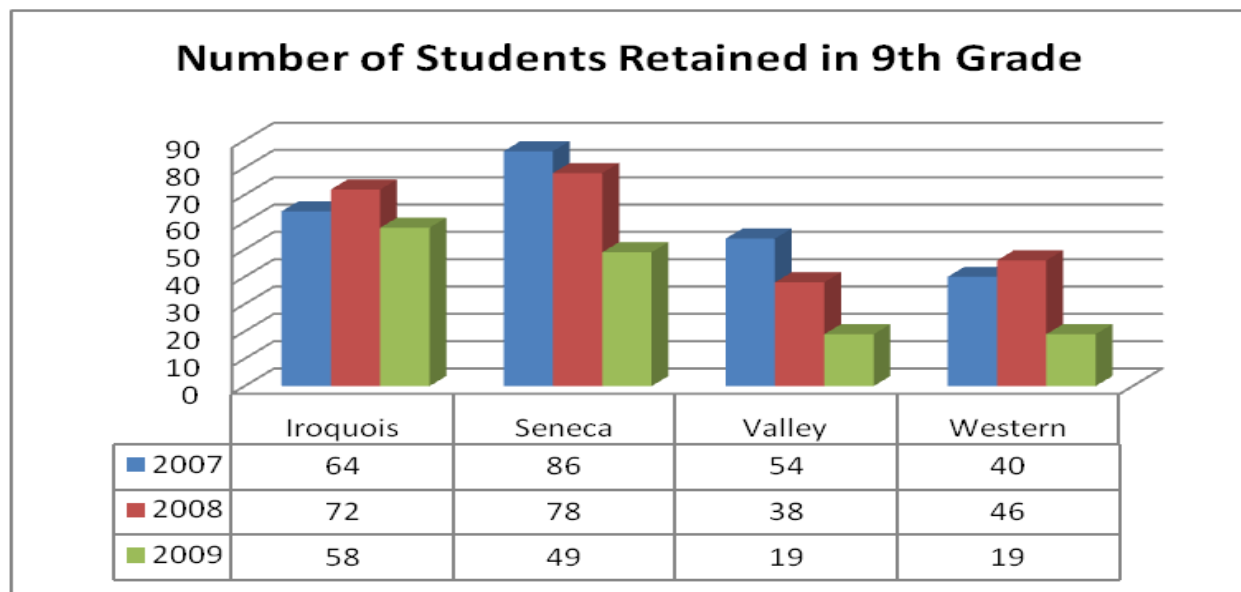
Freshman Academies. Freshman Academies are designed to improve the transition from middle school to high school which is an important moment in a child's educational life. The events of the high school freshman year can determine a student's academic trajectory in high school and later success in postsecondary education. In particular, failure in a couple of courses during the ninth-grade year can affect the chances of a freshman student graduating high school on time or at all. A key strategy to a successful transition to high school is personalization of learning. Freshman students want to be part of the new high school experience and they want to know that they belong in the school. Freshman academies (FA) are designed to assist students in the transition from middle school to high school in hopes of promoting a more successful high school experience. These FA programs focus on decreasing the number of 9th grade retentions, increasing graduation rates, and creating positive, personalized learning environments. Improved academic achievement and successful graduation are the ultimate goals.

Findings indicate that a continuum of FA adoption exists in JCPS. This continuum does not imply a "right" or "wrong" method of academy adoption, but indicates that each school adopts a structure unique to its own characteristics. Each school's effort at building the FA community is a key component to creating a sense of belonging or emotional engagement for freshman students. Community building activities, providing a separate space for the academy, utilizing an advisor program, using a common lunch period, providing special events for freshman students, building teacher ownership, and connecting students with at least one significant adult are all strategies the academies are using to build community within the academy. Each school's approach took a variety of avenues in addressing community; however, one significant finding held true for every school site: every student interviewed made a connection with at least one significant adult associated with the school. These adults were usually FA teachers, but in a few schools, students had the connection with a non-academy teacher or other adult. This finding is significant since relationships forge the building of community within the academy, leading to a more personalized learning environment for students.

Launched three years ago, the Freshman Academy initiative has brought improvements in attendance and a decrease in discipline problems. If freshman students have a strong sense of belonging and connection to the academy, then it would follow that these students would attend school on a more regular basis. The following graph shows the number of absences per freshman student for the four initial academy schools (source is Vanderbilt University study, 2009).



Fewer students are failing courses and the number of freshmen on the honor roll has increased. Data on retention show improvements since freshman academy adoption in 2007 (Muñoz & Shields, 2008). The following graph illustrates student retention data for the first group of freshman academy schools (source is Vanderbilt University study, 2009).

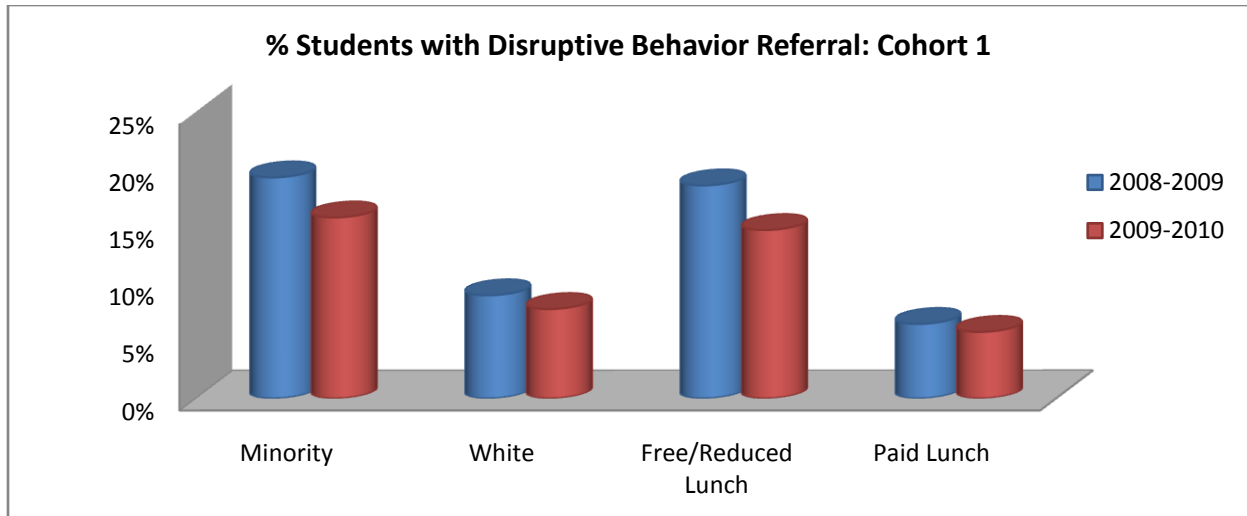


Cultural Competence. The Cultural Competence training initiative is aimed at helping the district “promote a district culture in which individual differences are respected and valued by offering professional development that supports and enhances the staff’s cultural competency and world view.” Since 2008, a total of 26 schools have participated in a cultural competence institute, lead by national expert and author Gary Howard. During 2009-2010 12 cohort schools (Cohort 1) participated in an intensive *train the trainer* professional development (PD) wherein each school’s cultural competence leadership team attended 3 successive institutes throughout the year. This model of cultural competence PD is designed to develop capacity for widespread implementation at the school level so that culturally responsive social, academic and disciplinary practices become institutionalized within each school systematically. During 2010-2011, a new set of schools (Cohort 2) began participation in the *train the trainer* institute. Additionally, all Elementary Principals and approximately half of all middle school teachers attended a Cultural Competence Institute in October 2010. Cohort 1 schools also participated in a follow up support session with Gary Howard to review implementation progress and planning for the school year. Cohort 1 schools will share their success and challenges of implementation with the Cohort 2 schools at the end of the 2010-2011 school year.

The evaluation results from each institute have consistently demonstrated statistically significant pre – post growth in participants’ awareness and understanding of various facets of culture and its influence on teaching and practices and policies that impact school level and student level outcomes, as well as a high level of commitment to enact the action plans developed during the institutes. Disaggregated data from the 2008 participating schools showed a decrease in gaps between white students and students of color on feelings of connectedness, perceived caring of teachers, and suspensions.

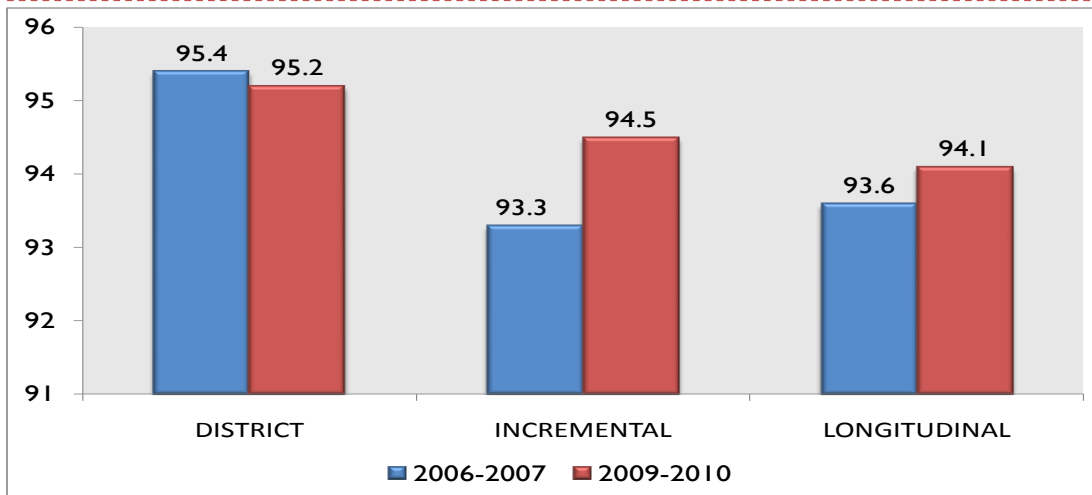
Analyses of the Cohort1 schools revealed steady increases in perceived level of cultural competence with respect to adult-student interactions throughout the 2009-2010 school year, and as shown on the Table below, gaps have decreased in the percent of students receiving disruptive behavior referrals between Minority and White students as well as between students based on lunch status between the baseline year and year 1. With respect to implementation thus far, Cohort 1 schools completed a self assessment of the progress of school wide implementation in October 2010. Each school as a Cultural Competence Leadership Team (CCLT), however s over 50% of the schools experienced changes in membership on their CCLT due to school restructuring and teacher transfers. The teams range from 3-15 members and they meet on average monthly. The CCLT have implemented on average 4 capacity building actions in their school during 2009-2010 including forums, Professional Development, and team meetings established to facilitate ongoing dialogue about cultural competence, build tone and trust, and implement activities from the institute.

Evaluation efforts continue to focus heavily on assessing levels of implementation through observations of capacity building activities, focus groups, school self assessments, as well as an ongoing analysis of student and teacher survey and student discipline data.



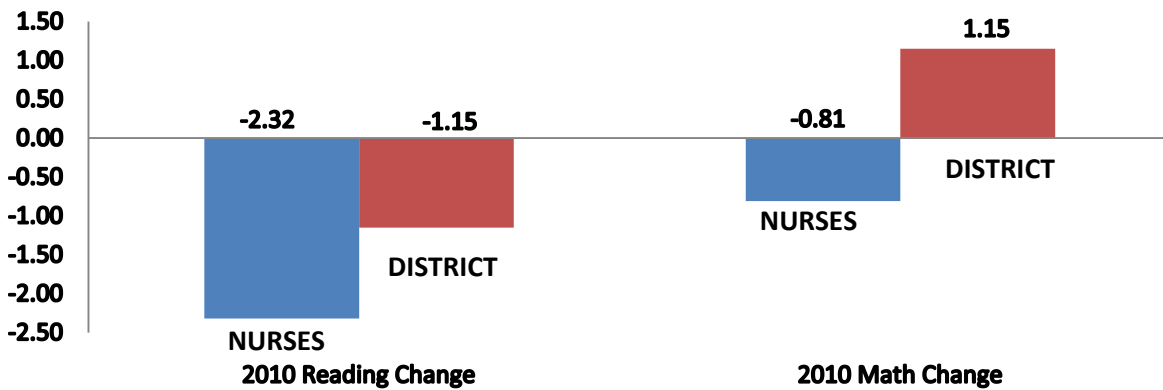
School Nurses. The purpose of the school nurse initiative is to implement and promote a comprehensive program of school health services and health education by expanding student access to nursing services within JCPS schools; thereby, reducing health barriers to school attendance and academic success. Supervised by district Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners, full-time Licensed Practical Nurses provided on-site health services to all students and staff in 16 elementary schools during the 2009-2010 school year. School nurses address attendance issues by contacting the parents/guardian of students who routinely miss school due to health issues and provide health education to students and adults on topics such as hygiene and nutrition. Providing school nurses to JCPS students allowed for the following: 25,744 well room visits; 89% of students returned to class; health classes taught to 7,090 students; 1425 height/weight screenings; 1040 vision screenings; 5239 head lice screenings; 5,093 phone consultations; assisted in 218 emergencies; Child Protective Services called 50 times; 5562 immunization forms reviewed; 7750 health history forms reviewed; 2612 physicals reviewed. In addition, when compared to a control group, attendance of diabetic students in schools with nurses was 2% higher and attendance of asthmatic students was 1% higher. The first chart below shows that attendance gains since the baseline year (2006-07) in schools with nurses have outpaced the district when compared against the actual set of schools each year and when compared to the original set of schools over time. The second chart shows the one-year improvement on novice reduction on the Kentucky Core Content Test in reading and math for schools with nurses. This chart also shows that schools with nurses outperformed elementary district schools in reducing novice students in reading and math.

JCPS Average Attendance for Baseline and Year 3 for Schools with Nurses



▶ Incremental = actual set of schools with nurses each year; Longitudinal = original cohort of schools

Jefferson County Public Schools School Nurse 2009 vs. 2010 KCCT %Novice Change Reading and Math



Student Engagement and Academic Achievement: Research Summary

Background

In order to advance student learning, students must be intellectually and emotionally engaged and instruction must be designed to meet student needs and interests. Student engagement refers to when students “devote substantial time and effort to a task, when they care about the quality of their work, and when they commit themselves because the work seems to have significance” (Newmann, 1986, p. 242). Education experts agree that student engagement is crucial to increasing academic achievement, yet school reforms often do not discuss how to improve student engagement in an intentional way (Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2007).

Key Literature on Student Engagement and Academic Achievement

Several major studies on student engagement have found significant long-term effects on academic achievement (Alexander et al., 1993; Fincham et al., 1989; Lee & Shute, 2009; Voelkl, 1997). One study utilizing data from the National Survey of Children found that engagement in first grade was found to significantly predict school achievement 3 years later in students’ fourth-grade reading and math scores even after controlling for previous achievement and demographic variables (Alexander et al., 1993). Another study found that student engagement in 3rd grade was predictive of achievement in 5th grade, again controlling for previous achievement (Fincham et al., 1989). Voelkl (1997) studied the relationship between academic achievement and student engagement and found that the two were significantly linked after a 4 year period.

There are also several studies showing that student engagement and academic achievement have bidirectional influences in that not only does student engagement predict academic achievement but being more successful academically leads to higher student engagement (Finn & Cox, 1992; Voelkl, 1997).

What Impacts Student Engagement? Implications for Policy

Research shows one of the most important contributors to the level of student engagement is the extent to which teacher-student relationships are positive and personalized (McClure, Yonezawa, & Jones, 2010). Student perceptions of whether they have adults they can trust and talk to in school is not surprisingly related to how engaged they feel in their learning. When students feel more connected to the adults in their school, they in turn, are more motivated to listen and learn in the classroom. The connectedness to adults in the school may also reduce the amount of stress a student feels and therefore, result in more focused attention in the classroom.

Related to the findings on personalization and teacher-student relationships are research studies showing that group work and project-based learning are also beneficial to student engagement (Fillipatou & Kaldi, 2010). When students have a voice and choice in the activities in the classroom, communication, creativity, and exploration increase and thus lead to higher student engagement. As Westwood (2006) points out, projects or small group/partner activities can promote more meaningful learning as well as more student responsibility and participation than traditional whole-group settings.

Finally, much attention has been given to the idea of differentiating instruction for students. This again relates back to the importance of engaging students in the learning process. The critical impact of differentiating instruction is that it makes the learning meaningful and engaging to students (Tomlinson, 2005). Differentiated instruction encourages teachers to see the diversity of learners in their classroom and to help develop activities that will enrich and challenge areas where students are strong, as well as formulate learning activities that will fill in the missing gaps. The movement towards more differentiated instruction is aligned with the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework, which sets forth principles to move away from a “one-size-fits-all” approach to instruction (NEA, 2008). UDL promotes creating policies, curriculum, and practices that are engaging to as many students as possible with the overall goal of making learning more meaningful.

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Change Framework and Performance Metrics

Student Engagement

| CDIP Strategies |
|---|
| 4.2 Drive curricular reform 4.3 Reduce class size 4.4 Redesign the high school structure 4.6 Enhance the capacity for innovation and instructional improvement |
| Initiatives |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Elementary Redesign• High School Redesign/Trimester Schedule• Ramp-Up• Connected Math Program 2 |
| Performance Metrics |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Matrix of programs implemented by school• Teacher/principal professional development participation by district initiative• Student attendance• Student absences• Student suspensions• Student retentions• Graduation rate |

Student Engagement and Academic Achievement: Strategies and Outcomes

Elementary Redesign. Beginning in 2008-2009, 3 elementary schools (Engelhard, Coral Ridge, and Wheatley) participated in a comprehensive redesign pilot program. The redesign of the 3 schools consisted of the following changes: lowered student-teacher ratio (average of 20-1), full-time nurse, full-time instructional coach, and a Professional Development School partnership with the University of Louisville. The purpose of the redesign is to create an environment in which 1) each student receives the individual attention necessary to improve academic performance in more personalized, caring learning environments that enhance the sense of connection to their learning, their school community, and the world around them, 2) each staff member is supported within a culture of professional growth that nurtures collegial reflection, dialogue, collaboration, and team building to enhance practice for student success, and 3) each family member serves as a welcome partner in supporting student learning.

Observations, surveys, student focus groups, and secondary data have been collected for the evaluation of the Redesign initiative. When asked what Redesign components have positively impacted their school, the highest rated components by school-faculty were reduced class size (96%), in-house school-nurse (94%), and CARE for Kids (91%). Based on the 2009 and the 2010 Comprehensive Surveys, students at the Redesign schools showed more growth in the areas of Overall Satisfaction, School Engagement, School Belonging, School Support, Personal Safety, Political Discussion, Conflict Resolution, Positive Character, Teaching, and Curriculum than matched comparison schools (a total of 9 out of the 11 major areas). In 2009-10, observations showed that teachers in the Redesign schools scored significantly higher in the quality of their instructional practices than teachers in the Comparison schools. Students have significantly grown in their rating of "I get individual attention from my teachers to help me learn better." In 2009, 75% of students agreed that they received individual attention from their teachers to help them learn. In 2010, this percentage grew to 86% of students who agreed with that statement, whereas the comparison schools were at 74%. In terms of student outcomes, since the baseline 07-08 school year, the Redesign schools have raised their student attendance by 0.7%, whereas the Comparison schools have gained 0.1%. In addition, Redesign schools have had a 10% drop in suspensions, whereas, at the elementary level there has been a 12% increase during the same period of time. In terms of achievement, Redesign schools outperformed their matched comparison group in achievement growth across all 5 content areas as well as the district elementary schools overall. The chart below depicts the change in Academic Index from Spring 2009 to Spring 2010 for the Comparison and Redesign schools. Change was calculated by subtracting the 2009 Academic Index from the 2010 Academic Index so that positive numbers reflected growth.

| Group | Reading Index Change | Math Index Change | Science Index Change | Social Studies Index Change | Writing Index Change |
|------------|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Comparison | +1.46 | -3.91 | +.87 | -.81 | +2.65 |
| Redesign | +4.55 | +5.44 | +4.42 | +10.86 | +6.70 |

High School Redesign/Trimester Schedule. JCPS developed a plan to personalize the high school experience through nurturing relationships among students and between students and adults, to enhance student engagement through more rigorous and student-centered curricula, to ensure depth of understanding through a restructured schedule, and to boost student motivation by assisting them in developing a vision of their future career and how they can best prepare for it. Across successful schools, research reveals three major priorities for allocating existing instructional time and resources: (1) core academics and literacy; (2) individual attention and personalized learning environments; and, (3) professional development and collaboration (Darling-Hammond, 2001; Miles & Frank, 2008).

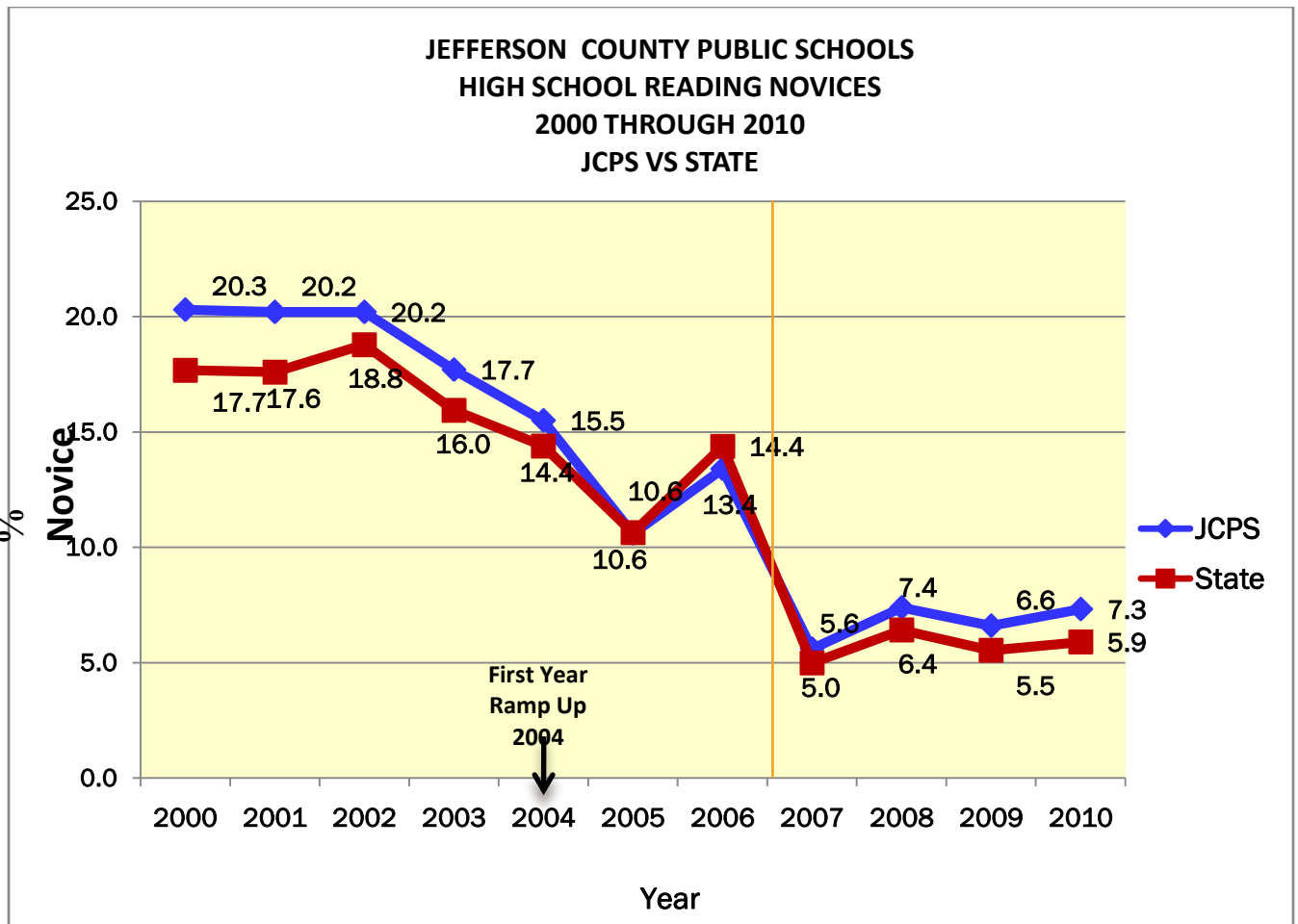
In light of recent increase in graduation requirements for high school seniors, JCPS have reconfigured their daily schedules to try to maximize student learning. JCPS is attempting to find a schedule that allows students to meet graduation requirements; recover failed credits; increase elective courses; and, reorganize the number of courses students take and teachers instruct. Such strategic schedule changes also target other meaningful outcomes such as increased faculty collaboration through the implementation of learning communities of practice. JCPS has deployed a Trimester Schedule (TS) pilot in 12 high schools. The 3x5 trimester schedule consists of five courses per day for each of the three 12-week trimesters. Students may earn up to 7.5 credits per year and 30 credits in four years. Since the state requires 22 credits to graduate, JCPS TS allow students increased access to the growing number of state requirements (e.g., remediation) and electives (e.g., acceleration). In addition, the TS allows for in-depth learning and personalization while staff and students benefit from a more manageable load. With students managing only five classes and teachers only four, the TS allows built-in time for an advisory period to personalize the support to students. A comparison of multiple elements impacted by the high school schedule is presented in the table below.

| SCHEDULE | Student Classes Per Day | Length of a class period | Length of Course | Teacher Course Load | Possible Teacher Load | Credits per year | Credits earned in 4 years |
|-----------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|---|---------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| 7 PERIOD DAY | 7 | 48 min | 36 weeks | 6 per semester | Up to 180 students per semester | 7 | 28 |
| AB BLOCK | 4 | 90 min | 18 weeks | 6 per semester | Up to 180 students per semester | 8 | 32 |
| 3 x 5 TRIMESTER | 5 | 70 min | 24 weeks (AP/Competitive Music classes = 36 weeks) | 4 per trimester | Up to 120 students per trimester | 7.5 | 30 |

The preliminary process evaluation reflected high levels of satisfaction of a sample of schools with TS using survey research methodology that captured the perception of multiple stakeholders, including (a) teachers (n = 121), (b) students (n = 756), and (c) parents (n = 401). The preliminary outcome evaluation indicated that schools with TS, when compared to semester schedule approaches, show promising results including having (a) higher percentage increase in attendance (0.6% vs. 0.3%); (b) smaller percent of increase in suspensions (17% vs. 30%); (c) higher percentage of decrease in mobility to alternative schools (46% vs. 11%); and, (d) higher percentage increase of students ending the school year at the same school (6% vs. 1%). More conclusive research will be available at the end of the current school year, thanks to a collaborative study with Vanderbilt University.

Ramp-Up. The Ramp-Up (RU) Program is a district-wide effort designed to help high school teachers improve the reading skills of their freshman and sophomore students. RU is a two-year course that seeks to accelerate the learning progress of entering high school students who are two or more years behind grade level in English/Language Arts. Activities focus on helping students make rapid progress toward becoming fluent readers, develop wider vocabularies, and comprehend grade level texts through a variety of instructional approaches: (a) independent reading; (b) read-aloud/think-aloud/talk aloud; (c) whole-group and small-group reading and writing instruction; and, (d) collaborative learning situations including cross-age tutoring and service learning. The concept of RU is to reform high school literacy instruction to ensure that every student learns to read.

Based on the gathering of data using Thomas Guskey's five levels of professional development evaluation, the consistent direction of the effects showed benefits for RU teachers when compared to control teachers. The first level assessed participants' reactions, while the second level assessed participants' learning through pre- and post-measures of knowledge and skills specific to the program. The third level assessed participants' perceptions of organizational support to enable change, and the fourth level focused on participants' use of new knowledge and skills at the classroom level. The fifth and final level assessed the impact of the professional development activities on student learning outcomes using results from statewide accountability assessments in reading. Results revealed that participating teachers liked the program and experienced significant gains in their knowledge of procedures for teaching reading skills. In particular, the results of the study showed favorable achievement outcomes for the students enrolled with teachers with high participation on the professional development activities associated with the RU program. The results were supportive of the professional development effects on academic achievement as measured by the state-mandated test scores in reading. On the KCCT Reading subtest in the tenth grade, RU participants were significantly higher than the matched control students. At the school level, it was noted an increase in reading achievement with a remarkable decrease in Novices. Please see graphic below showing longitudinal data related to decreasing Novices in reading.



Connected Math Program 2. The Connected Math Program 2 (CMP2) is a complete mathematics curriculum for grades 6–8 helps students utilize engaging interactive problems and motivating everyday situations to learn math concepts. Each grade level curriculum is a full-year program, and in each of the three grade levels, topics of number, algebra, geometry/measurement, probability and statistics are covered in an increasingly sophisticated manner. The program seeks to make connections within mathematics, between mathematics and other subject areas, and to the real world. The curriculum is divided into units, each of which contains investigations with major problems that the teacher and students explore in class. Extensive problem sets are included for each investigation to help students practice, apply, connect, and extend these understandings. CMP2 addresses both the content and the process standards of the National Council for Teachers in Mathematics (NCTM). The work completed over the past three years in rolling out CMP2 provides an opportunity for the district to push beyond a mechanical implementation of the materials by supporting all middle school mathematics teachers and principals in developing deeper understandings of the core principles of the curriculum.

With the assistance of Vanderbilt University, we have focused our research on assessing CMP2 implementation and professional development support. We have identified two key elements that will help with implementation: professional development and tools designed for teachers to use. We believe that these supports *combined* with working closely with district resource teachers are needed if teachers are to develop ambitious forms of math instruction and provide better learning opportunities for students. The district continues to provide professional development for teachers to support better understanding of aspects of high quality mathematics instruction that aligns both with CMP2 and the district's *Vision for Mathematics Teaching*. The district PD is focusing on identifying the cognitively demanding aspects of tasks in CMP2 and on how to maintain the rigor of tasks through the launch, explore and summarize phases of lessons. In terms of providing on-going, school-based professional development to teachers, we have found that resource teachers' time in schools will be used most productively if they are leading professional learning communities. In order for these learning communities to thrive, the district should ensure that principals schedule common planning time and should provide clear expectations for the types of activities that district resource teachers might engage with teachers. Principals will play a key role on this aspect of the program. Principals need to (a) provide common time for teacher collaboration led by the resource teacher, and (b) encourage teachers to use that time to focus solely on matters of instruction. Because administrators found their discussions with the resource teachers valuable, we also suggest that the principal and the district resource teacher occasionally conduct classroom observations together to develop a greater understanding of the characteristics of high-quality CMP2 lessons.

Diagnostic Approach to Teaching and Achievement: Research Summary

Background

Critical to student learning is the ability for teachers to diagnose what each student knows, identify gaps in their learning, track how students are progressing in relation to learning targets, and then to adapt that information to move the student learning forward. This type of approach has been referred to as “formative assessment” or “assessment for learning.” In the last decade, increased attention to formative assessment for increasing student learning has emerged. Instead of viewing formative assessment as a series of tests throughout the school year, formative assessment is now defined as a planned process by which “assessment-elicited evidence of students’ status is used by teachers to adjust their ongoing instructional procedures or by students to adjust their current learning tactics” (Popham, 2008, p.6).

Key Literature on Diagnostic Approach to Teaching and Academic Achievement

The distinction between assessments *of* learning and *for* learning is key to having a diagnostic approach to teaching (Stiggins et al., 2006). Assessment for learning involves teachers being descriptive in feedback, not evaluative, and requires students to be actively involved in their own learning progress. The effect of formative assessment, or assessment for learning, has impacted student achievement four to five times the effect of small class size (Ehrenberg et al., 2001). Moreover, the impact has been shown to be greatest for the students who struggle academically (Marzano, 2006).

In 1992, Hattie reviewed over 8,000 studies and found that “the most powerful single modification that enhances achievement is feedback” (p.9). Marzano’s review of the literature finds that it cannot be any kind of feedback that enhances student achievement (2006). When feedback is purely correctional (i.e., telling students whether answers are correct or incorrect), learning can be negatively impacted (Bangert-Drowns et al., 1991). Black and William (1998a, 1998b) reviewed hundreds of studies related to interventions and found that formative assessments, when conducted as an interactive process, was a powerful predictor of student learning. Characteristics of the most impactful feedback on student learning include that it is provided frequently, gives students an understanding of the criteria being used to define the learning targets, provides students specific strategies for improving, and is encouraging (Bangert-Drowns, Kulik, & Kulik, 1991; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1986; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996, Marzano, 2006).

This type of approach towards teaching also serves to motivate students to learn. When students are actively involved in the learning process and teachers are communicating with students on how to improve, it gives students an intrinsic sense of control and choice, allows students to take on risks and more challenging tasks, and helps students learn to self-assess and regulate their own learning (Stiggins et al., 2006).

Challenges and Implications for Public Policy

High quality assessment for learning is largely a reflective process for both teachers and students and therefore takes time to plan and implement. One of the challenges for formative assessment has been the rapid expansion of state standards in that now there is 1) too much content and 2) a lack of unidimensionality (Marzano, 2006). When Kendall and Marzano (2000) reviewed the standards and

benchmarks across various national and state standard documents, they found over 200 standards and 3,000 benchmarks. When teachers were asked to estimate the amount of time it would take to teach all the content covered in the standards, the estimates would require 71 percent more instructional time than currently available (Marzano, Kendall, & Gaddy, 1999). Second, the lack of unidimensionality refers to benchmarks that measure more than one dimension. For example, at the end of 5th grade, the National Council of Teacher and Mathematics (NCTM) describe that students should have developed fluency in adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing (NCTM, 2000, p. 392).

Another challenge to formative assessments is that it moves educators away from traditional grading systems. Point systems fail to assess how learning changes over time because various tests are not comparing the same skills at every time point (Marzano, 2006). Instead, student progress should be assessed in records that identify what skills have been mastered and what areas need improvement (Chappuis, 2009). The current state of educational policy continues to evaluate schools on instructionally insensitive standardized achievement tests and the challenge for policy makers will be to move towards policy that encourages teachers to plan and utilize assessments for learning (Popham, 2008).

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Change Framework and Performance Metrics

Diagnostic Approach to Teaching

| CDIP Strategies |
|---|
| 1.3 Apply a diagnostic approach to teaching and learning 2.1 Nurture a professional culture |
| Initiatives |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessment for Learning |
| Performance Metrics |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• School Improvement Plans• Growth plans• Professional development• Student reading performance (KCCT)• Student math performance (KCCT)• Student science performance (KCCT)• Student social studies performance (KCCT)• Student writing performance (KCCT) |

Diagnostic Approach to Teaching and Achievement: Strategies and Outcomes

Assessment for Learning. In the spring of 2009, in an effort to promote data driven instructional practices in Jefferson County Public Schools, the district launched an initiative focused on the understanding and use of formative assessment. For this initiative, district leaders selected a program developed by Rick Stiggins and the Educational Testing Service called *Assessment for Learning*® (*AfL*). The *AfL* program trains teachers to use assessment data to inform instruction, provide students with clear learning targets and specific feedback, and encourages students to take ownership of their learning, with the belief that increased student motivation leads to increased student learning (Stiggins, Arter, Chappuis, & Chappuis, 2007). The pilot phase of the *AfL* initiative began with nine self-selected schools – five elementary schools, one middle school, two high schools, and the district’s virtual school. In conjunction with the pilot phase of this initiative, JCPS has partnered with Vanderbilt University to study aspects of the pilot schools’ experiences with the *AfL* program. Furthermore, the purpose of this joint research project is to provide specific recommendations as the district expands the pilot phase of the initiative to include other schools in JCPS. Currently, we have 37 schools that implemented the initiative in the school year 2009-10. The goal is to have more schools implementing the initiative in 2010-11.

Overall, there appears to be strong agreement among survey respondents that collaboration around the use of data to inform decision making is occurring in the schools. Respondents indicate considerable use of *AfL* program components in their classroom. Overall, in the early stages of program adoption, teachers report the highest level of use for the following key components of *AfL*: clear learning targets, using assessment results to inform instructional decisions, and providing frequent, descriptive feedback to students. One challenge to full program implementation that principals mentioned frequently was what they felt to be a lack of discretionary funds needed to compensate the core group of trained teachers for their work outside of regular school hours on the *AfL* initiative. Particularly, principals cited the extensive time required both to meet as a learning team to initially reflect on program implementation in their own classrooms, and then also to meet in order to plan and execute training sessions for the rest of the faculty. *AfL* is designed for implementation in all subject areas and grade levels, but as the extant literature makes clear, it would be highly beneficial for teachers to have some practical training specific to their own content area during the early stages of program adoption. If past participants were to assist with future training sessions organized by grade level and/or subject area, the district could draw upon their subject-specific examples and experience to provide training participants with concrete examples of *AfL*-inspired instruction and assessment.

Community Engagement and Academic Achievement: Research Summary

Background

It is crucial that schools and districts have the community support and community involvement to support student learning. Schools do not operate in isolation, and community support for the district mission is essential to launch district-wide initiatives such as career themed high schools, magnet programs, and the promotion of diversity in schools. National Center for School Engagement states that community members should “understand the primary goals of the school/district and work with schools to plan and implement effective strategies to attain goals” (Martinez & Porter, 2008).

In addition, another reason why community support and engagement are crucial for schools is the number of out-of-school time (OST) programs that have emerged in the past two decades. Research shows that wrap-around care activities (services before or after school) for children ages 5 to 14 years of age has increased from 5.6 percent in 1995 to 20 percent in 2005 (Beckett et al., 2009). Thus, the type of activities that are available and provided for students outside of schools has become a significant proportion of student learning time.

Just as schools do not operate in isolation, student learning can no longer be thought of as only within the context of the classroom. Epstein and Sheldon (2006)'s seminal work of over 1000 schools, 125 school districts through the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) at Johns Hopkins University has emphasized moving towards an ecological approach towards student learning where students, families, schools, and communities must work together to support student progress. Moreover, they emphasize the importance of community involvement for promoting and ensuring equity so that school-community partnerships help *all* children and families.

Key Literature on Community Engagement and Academic Achievement

Community engagement can take on many different forms in terms of formal and informal supports, including decision-making, volunteerism, service-learning partnerships, and financial contributions. Research on the impact of community involvement on academic achievement has shown that students who report more community involvement (e.g., through church or another group) have higher academic self-concept and fewer behavior problems (Sanders, 1998). The key predictor of whether community involvement will be linked to student achievement is whether the partnership between the community and the school district clearly delineates how the partnership will impact student learning and describes measurable goals (Epstein, 2001, Sheldon, 2003). For communities with the most at-risk youth, Rodriguez (2011) argues that community participation in the education system, both financially and in terms of technical assistance, can help increase the graduation rate and access to higher education.

In terms of community programs that support student learning, Beckett et al. (2009) found that the most important quality of successful programs is their ability to adapt instruction to individual and small group needs. A sample protocol would be to conduct baseline assessments, adapt instruction based on the assessments, and to the extent possible implement activities with low student-instructor ratios (Black et al., 2008; Borman & Dowling, 2006; Johnson & Johnson, 1999; Morris, Shaw, & Perney, 1990). The meta-analysis by Beckett et al. found that this ability to differentiate was more important to student achievement than other components of community programs such as aligning the program with the school day or maximizing attendance.

Challenges and Implications for Public Policy

Evaluating the impact of community engagement on student learning can be challenging because of the difficulty of isolating “value-added” effects of community partnerships. Research shows that successful partnerships between communities and schools have the following commonalities (Sanders, 1997): 1) shared responsibility, 2) took time to establish, 3) reach out to all family members, 4) improve in incremental steps and with planning, 5) work throughout different levels and grades, 6) focus on students, 7) help schools reach the “hard-to-reach”, 8) link curriculum to student learning, and 9) work with different levels of involvement (e.g., volunteering, contributing resources, decision-making).

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Change Framework and Performance Metrics

Community Engagement

| CDIP Strategies |
|--|
| 3.3 Strengthen family participation and involvement 3.4 Offer highly attractive schools that engage the community 4.1 Promote student diversity across the district |
| Initiatives |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• GE Math and Science Initiative• One Community, One Nation• Facing History and Ourselves• U of L/JCPS Doctoral Program |
| Performance Metrics |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student Attendance• Student involvement in after-school activities• Comprehensive survey (staff satisfaction with communications and school climate)• Comprehensive survey (parents)• Number of volunteers and business/organizations involved with schools• Variety of ways community members are involved |

Community Engagement and Academic Achievement: Strategies and Outcomes

Math Investigations 2. As part of the GE Math and Science Initiative, elementary and middle schools have adopted a new math curriculum that encourages student-centered inquiry through problem solving and reasoning. The *Math Investigations 2* curriculum is currently being implemented in 80 elementary schools. During the 2009-10 school year, an outside organization conducted an K-5 Math Implementation Audit in order to identify successes, examine the challenges of implementation and describe instructional practices in JCPS elementary math classes following one full year of implementation. The audit team conducted a series of 86 interviews with classroom teachers, principals, resource teachers and system leaders and conducted 122 classroom observations of full-lesson math instruction across grades K-5. Their findings indicate wide-spread agreement that the district has supported the initiative with extensive resources and strong professional development. Teachers are frequently using the extensive set of resources and many are attempting an inquiry-based approach to math instruction by following the program strategies and questioning. Teachers reported that students are enjoying math much more than before and they are more motivated to participate in math activities.

However, the audit team also identified a number of challenges with the implementation of *Math Investigations 2*. Some teachers spent too much time on classroom management and there was not always a connection between the purpose of the lesson and learning activities. Teachers were also concerned about the pacing of the program, possible gaps, and its effectiveness with struggling students. While most teachers that were observed were using all or most of the program components, they were at various stages of development in their inquiry-based methods. In sum, the audit team found that “this is a strong start to implementing a very complex change initiative that is already having a positive impact on instructional practices and student engagement.”

One Community, One Nation. One Community, One Nation is a unique K-5 social studies curriculum developed to support district-wide implementation of an approach to teaching and learning designed to engage students, promote critical thinking, and formatively assess student progress. This school year, 2010-11, will serve as a pilot year with implementation of the 3rd and 4th grade curriculum in 5 elementary schools. OCON has been designed to infuse principals of CARE for Kids by addressing students’ social, emotional, ethical and intellectual development through classroom activities and the practice of seven civic dispositions diffused throughout the curriculum: Commitment to social justice, Critical-mindedness, Compassion, Individual responsibility, Open-mindedness, Negotiation/Compromise, and Promotion of the common good. Similar to the Facing History high school curriculum, service learning is embedded to help imbue students with a sense of purpose, foster a connection to the community, and promote self-confidence.

The evaluation plan is designed to (1) understand implementation dynamics to aid in the identification of successes and barriers and effective strategies for replication in other settings; (2) assess the impact of the training and implementation on teacher outcomes, perceptions and experiences, and (3) ascertain the impact of on participating student outcomes, perceptions

and experiences through the use of surveys, focus groups, classroom observations, and student assessment data. A two week institute was held during summer 2010. The initial findings show that there is a high degree of positive “buy-in” from the pilot teachers. In addition, teachers demonstrated growth in their knowledge how civic dispositions can be infused into teaching and OCON classroom practices; they perceive themselves as having the capacity to employ key OCON components necessary for successful implementation; and feel confident that their school will be supportive and accommodating as they implement the service-learning component.

In order to provide intensive support and continued guidance to pilot teachers during year 1 of implementation, the OCON team is conducting 6 after school support sessions and 4 all day professional development sessions through the 2010-2011 school year. Qualitative data collected thus far during these support sessions have revealed the teachers perceive that the lessons are sparking great conversations in class and students are very engaged in lesson activities. They also report that they are seeing evidence that lessons are helping student make connections with multiple areas, raising student’s awareness and impacting positive behaviors of students both inside and outside of the classroom. The primary challenge that teachers are reporting is keeping up with the pacing of the curriculum. Focus groups are being conducted with students to assess their perception of the curriculum thus far.

Facing History and Ourselves. Facing History and Ourselves (FHO) is curriculum based initiative directed towards ninth graders attending Jefferson County Public Schools. The program is overseen by a national organization (www.facinghistory.org) and the curriculum is used for JCPS 9th grade Social Studies Course entitled Exploring Civics. The goal of FAO is to “help classrooms and communities worldwide link the past to moral choices today.” Additionally, it is hoped education can be a means not only to teach students history, but to also aide them in becoming “active, thoughtful, socially responsible citizens.” The curriculum designed by FHO for JCPS’ Exploring Civics course is to serve as an instrument against bigotry, inequity, and aggressive behavior. The curriculum utilized for Jefferson County is broken into three parts: (a) Holocaust and Human Behavior, (b) Choices in Little Rock, and (c) Learn and Serve. Currently, FHO is taught at almost all of our regular schools (exceptions are Brown and Male) as well as many alternative schools.

Based on the gathering of data using Thomas Guskey’s five levels of professional development evaluation, the consistent direction of the effects showed benefits for FHO teachers. Evaluation of the initiative has included participants’ reactions, participants’ learning, organizational support and change, participants’ use of new knowledge and skills, and student learning outcomes. Schools and teachers report high levels of satisfaction with the professional development support from JCPS and national representatives. Following training and professional development, participants reported a stronger sense of knowledge and expertise in key concept areas set forth by the FHO program. During classroom observations, Facing History classrooms averaged a score of 3.09 for creating a classroom engaged in inquiry and questioning and a score of 3.18 on classroom promoting a climate of respect (on a scale of 1 - 4). JCPS offered school administrators and teachers the FHO curriculum on a volunteer basis;

only those interested would be asked to teach or support the curriculum. Positive feedback can be seen on the growing number of schools and teachers offering FHO curriculum. Based on the Comprehensive School Survey and when compared to ninth graders prior to FHO in JCPS, ninth grade students enrolled at schools using FHO Curriculum have reported an increase in performing services for people or doing work to make their community a better place.

U of L/JCPS Doctoral Program. During the 2008-09 school year, we developed the doctorate in educational leadership and organizational development with the University of Louisville (UofL). In collaboration with U of L and other colleagues, we have been able to develop a three-year program that will focus on the particular context and needs of our JCPS schools. The program is designed for nine semesters (3 years) of part-time work (6-9 hours each semester), with classes being held in the Stewart Auditorium on Thursdays and Fridays. The program has a nice balance between rigor and relevance in such a way that it will prepare a new generation of collaborative leaders.

We focus on developing leaders that will be able to contribute to our JCPS Vision, Theory of Action, Beliefs, and Goals and Strategies. Besides the service to our school system, there are numerous professional and personal reasons to pursue doctoral work. We advocate doctoral work for those practitioners who want to (1) inform practice through inquiry and reflection, (2) improve practice through information, knowledge and understanding, and (3) affirm principles of social justice and equity and a commitment to making a positive difference.

“Cohort-based problem-driven learning” is the program’s signature pedagogy. This model acknowledges that problems in educational organizations are usually multi-faceted and complex, and candidates are provided opportunities to define and contextualize problems, determine how to evaluate the solution, then design approaches to solve the problem. In some cases, solutions will be implemented and adjusted, with results reported. The source and setting of the problems (“laboratories of practice”) are neither artificial nor removed, but come from the students, the constituent groups, and over-arching communities (Jefferson County and the state of Kentucky), and meet the standards of the academy. The environment is interactive, collaborative/negotiated, situated in the field and based in service.

Program candidates applied to the program and 21 JCPS employees were selected from a large pool of candidates in the summer of 2009. The program started the fall of 2009 and it had a successful first year of implementation during the school year 2009-10. The first year of the program focused on research, evaluation, measurement, and leadership topics. This coming school year 2010-11 (Year 2 of the doctoral program), the main focus will be in preparing our JCPS employees in methodological issues associated with quantitative and qualitative data analyses. Our main target will be to provide valuable process and outcomes research that will inform District and School decision-making and strong cadre of leaders that will push our educational reform forward.

Change Framework, Strategies, and Performance Metrics: Summary

| School Climate | Student Engagement |
|---|--|
| <p>Performance Metrics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student and Teacher Attendance • Suspensions • KCCT Performance • Student Retention • Comprehensive School Survey • Student and Teacher School Climate <p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CARE for Kids • Freshman Academies • Cultural Competence • School Nurses | <p>Performance Metrics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matrix of programs implemented by school • Teacher/principal professional development participation by district initiative • Student attendance • Student absences • Student suspensions • Student retentions • Graduation rate <p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elementary Redesign • High School Redesign/Trimester Schedule • Ramp-Up • Connected Math Program 2 |
| Diagnostic Approach to Teaching | Community Engagement |
| <p>Performance Metrics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Improvement Plans • Growth plans • Professional development • Student reading performance (KCCT) • Student math performance (KCCT) • Student science performance (KCCT) • Student social studies performance (KCCT) • Student writing performance (KCCT) <p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment for Learning | <p>Performance Metrics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student attendance • Student involvement in after-school activities • Comprehensive survey (staff satisfaction with communications and school climate) • Comprehensive survey (parents) • Number of volunteers and business/organizations involved with schools • Variety of ways community members are involved <p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GE Math and Science Initiative • One Community, One Nation • Facing History and Ourselves • U of L/JCPS Doctoral Program |