



THE WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Governance | Accountability | Achievement | Oversight | Career & College Readiness

Title:	<u>Review and Discussion of Required Action District Academic Performance Audit Findings</u>	
As Related To:	<input type="checkbox"/> Goal One: Effective and accountable P-13 governance. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal Two: Comprehensive statewide K-12 accountability. <input type="checkbox"/> Goal Three: Closing achievement gap.	<input type="checkbox"/> Goal Four: Strategic oversight of the K-12 system. <input type="checkbox"/> Goal Five: Career and college readiness for all students. <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Relevant To Board Roles:	<input type="checkbox"/> Policy Leadership <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> System Oversight <input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy	<input type="checkbox"/> Communication <input type="checkbox"/> Convening and Facilitating
Policy Considerations / Key Questions:	According to RCW 28A.657.060 and RCW 28A.657.050, the SBE shall approve required action plans only if they address the concerns identified in the audit findings. The audit is conducted to identify possible reasons for a required action school's low performance and lack of progress. The Board will need to review and understand the audit findings to prepare for consideration of approval of required action plans.	
Possible Board Action:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Review <input type="checkbox"/> Adopt <input type="checkbox"/> Approve <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
Materials Included in Packet:	<input type="checkbox"/> Memo <input type="checkbox"/> Graphs / Graphics <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Third-Party Materials <input type="checkbox"/> PowerPoint	
Synopsis:	Staff from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction's Office of Student and School Success will review and answer questions from Board members on the findings of the academic performance audits conducted for each of the four required action districts: Marysville, Tacoma, Yakima and Wellpinit.	



DRAFT
Required Action
District Academic
Performance
Audit:

Tulalip Elementary
School and
Marysville School
District

April 2014

Acknowledgements

This report was prepared for the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction under contract to Educational Service District 113 and other Educational Consultants.

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- **Dr. Ann Renker, Educational Consultant, Office of Student and School Success**
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I. Introduction

In spring 2010, Tulalip Elementary School in the Marysville School District (MSD) was awarded a [School Improvement Grant](#) (SIG) for three years (2010 through 2013) to fully and effectively implement a federally approved intervention model. The district selected the [Turnaround model](#). Among other things, this required the district and school to replace the principal and rehire no more than 50% of the school's staff, adopt a new governance structure, and implement a research-based instructional program aligned to state standards. Another School Improvement Grant was awarded to the district in spring 2011 to support Quil Ceda Elementary School to fully and effectively implement the [Transformation model](#), requiring the district and school to replace the principal and address areas critical to transforming persistently low-achieving schools such as developing teacher and principal leader effectiveness, implementing instructional reform strategies, extending learning time, creating community connections, and providing operating flexibility and sustained support.

To maximize district resources, MSD leadership moved Tulalip Elementary School staff and students to the Quil Ceda Elementary School site in fall 2011. The schools were expected to retain their identity and implement actions aligned with their federal intervention model (i.e., Turnaround for Tulalip and Transformation for Quil Ceda). However, while the two schools retained their separate building codes, for all intent and purposes they merged into one school and now serve a combined student population of about 550 students. Additionally, the two principals now serve as "co-principals" and share responsibilities for both Tulalip Elementary School and Quil Ceda Elementary School. During the on-site visit, district leaders indicated they plan to close Quil Ceda Elementary School at the end of this year; the two school will re-open as one (currently referred to as Tulalip-Quil Elementary School) in fall 2014. They have not determined if the co-principal leadership model of the school will continue into the 2014-15 school year.

Marysville School District was identified for required action status because of Tulalip Elementary School's inconsistent and persistent lack of progress for the "all students" group and subgroups on state assessments in Reading and Mathematics the last three years. The Academic Performance Audit Team recognizes the merging of the two schools and intends the recommendations in this report to apply to Tulalip-Quil Elementary School and the Marysville School District.

The purposes of this report are (a) to identify potential reasons for Tulalip Elementary School's low performance and lack of progress and (b) to recommend next steps for the Marysville School District and Tulalip-Quil Elementary School leaders and staff in building educator and system capacity to substantially improve student outcomes. Findings in this report are intended to assist district and school leaders in identifying an approved federal or state school improvement model appropriate for the school. Recommendations in the report will inform the district's Required Action District (RAD) application and the school and district Student and School Success Action Plan.

Sources of Data: This report is based on information gathered from the following sources:

- 1) Review of extant district- and school-level data (e.g., Student and School Success Action Plan; 2012-13 End-of-Year Report; staff surveys; Assessment of Progress Report)
- 2) Superintendent and district leader analysis of current practices and policies impacting the ability of district and school leadership and staff to effectively implement an intervention
- 3) Classroom visits focusing on instructional practices within the school

- 4) Qualitative interviews and focus groups focusing on the alignment of district and school structures and practices with Turnaround Principles described in federal guidance
- 5) Demographic and achievement data
- 6) Additional documents provided by the school and district during the on-site visit (e.g., daily schedule, student/teacher schedule, “MSD/Tulalip Tribes Support Summary – 2013-2014”)

Evaluators obtained information during an interview with the district leadership on March 4, 2014 and on-site visit on April 3, 2014. Approximately 26 people, including district and building administrators, staff members, and external service providers participated in interviews and focus groups. In addition, evaluators visited eight classrooms to determine the extent that classroom practices aligned with research-based instructional practices. Finally, evaluators reviewed data previously gathered about the school and district, including improvement plans, student achievement data, and additional school documents.

Organization of Report: Section II of this report describes requirements for Required Action Districts (RADs). The next section (Section III) summarizes findings and recommendations aligned with Turnaround Principles for both the district and school. Section IV provides an overview of the district and school. This is followed by detailed explanations of the three recommendations, including the evidence supporting the Academic Performance Audit Team’s conclusions; strengths and concerns; and requirements of the school and district and recommendations for the Office of Student and School Success (Section V). This report concludes with summary and next steps (Section VI) and questions for local improvement teams to consider during their planning processes (Section VII).

Appendices for this report include the following:

- Appendix A: Required Action District Frequently Asked Questions
- Appendix B: School Data Dashboard
- Appendix C: Assessment of Progress Report

II. Required Action Districts

Beginning December 1, 2013 and each December thereafter, the Superintendent of Public Instruction is required by state legislation ([E2SSB 5329](#)) to annually identify challenged schools in need of improvement and a subset of these schools that are the persistently lowest-achieving schools in the state. The criteria for determining persistently lowest achieving schools are determined by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and must include the school’s lack of progress over a number of years for both its “all students” group and subgroups. As required by state legislation (E2SSB 5329 and E2SSB 6696), the State Board of Education (SBE) can designate districts with at least one school determined to be persistently lowest achieving as Required Action Districts (RADs).

A summary of requirements for RADs follows. Specific requirements are described in OSPI’s *Required Action Districts: Level One Plan Guidance* available at:

<http://www.k12.wa.us/StudentAndSchoolSuccess/RequiredActionDistricts.aspx>

- **Academic Performance Audit:** Each RAD receives an academic performance audit by an external review team. The audit team consists of persons with expertise in comprehensive school and district reform; the team identifies the potential reasons for the school’s low performance and lack of progress. (RCW 28A.657.040)

- **Community Collaboration and Public Hearing:** In order to ensure successful collaboration, the required action plan must be developed with administrators, teachers and other staff, parents, unions representing any employees within the district, students, and other representatives of the local community. The school board must conduct a public hearing to allow for comment on the proposed required action plan. (RCW 28A.657.050)
- **Implementation of an Approved School Improvement Model:** The district must select and implement an approved school improvement model for the receipt of federal or state funds for school improvement. The model must address concerns raised in the academic performance audit and be intended to improve school performance to allow the district to exit Required Action District status within three years of implementation of the plan. Approved *federal* school improvement models include **Closure, Restart, Transformation, and Turnaround**. The approved *state* school improvement model is the **Synergy Model**.
- **Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) Assistance and Review:** The OSPI can provide assistance in developing a plan if requested. The district will submit the plan first to OSPI to review and approve that the plan is consistent with federal and state guidelines, as applicable. (RCW 28A.657.060)
- **State Board of Education (SBE) Approval:** Following OSPI's review of the plan, each district will submit its plan to the SBE for final approval. (RCW 28A.657.060)
- **Implementation of RAD Plan for 3 Years:** Once approved, the district is required to implement the RAD plan for three years. The school improvement model must be fully implemented, along with other requirements of the plan. OSPI will provide technical assistance and federal or state funds for implementation of the plan. The district will report regularly to OSPI on the progress it is making in meeting student achievement goals based on the state's assessments, identifying strategies and assets used to solve audit findings, and establishing evidence of meeting plan implementation benchmarks in the plan. (RCW 28A.657.090)
- **Semi-annual Reports to the State Board of Education:** For each year of the implementation of the plan, OSPI will report to the SBE semiannually on the progress made by all RADs. (RCW 28A.657.100)
- **Evaluation of Progress:** The OSPI will evaluate progress of each RAD and must recommend to the SBE that a school district be released from the designation after the district implements the plan for three years, has made progress using criteria under RCW 28A.657.020, including progress in closing the educational opportunity gap, and no longer has a school identified as persistently lowest achieving.

Intervention Models: Required Action Districts receive funds targeted to make lasting gains in student achievement and to implement required elements of the selected school improvement model. The model must address concerns raised in the academic performance audit and be intended to improve school performance to allow the district to exit Required Action District status within three years of implementation of the plan. Models are briefly described below.

- **Closure Model** (federal model): District closes school and enrolls students who attended the school in other higher achieving schools in the district.
- **Restart Model** (federal model): District converts the school or closes and reopens it under management of an educational management organization (EMO) or charter organization.
- **Transformation Model** (federal model): District replaces principal and addresses five areas critical to transforming persistently low-achieving schools: developing teacher and principal leader effectiveness, implementing instructional reform strategies, extending learning time, creating community connections, and providing operating flexibility and sustained support.

- **Turnaround Model** (federal model): District replaces principal and rehires no more than 50% of the school's staff, adopts a new governance structure, and implements a research-based instructional program aligned to state standards.
- **Synergy Model** (state model): District fully and effectively implements Turnaround Principles described in federal guidance (e.g., ensures principal has capacity to lead turnaround effort and teachers are effective and able to improve instruction; provides operational flexibility for principal to support school turnaround plans in key areas; ensures school significantly extends learning time for students and for teacher collaboration; ensures school improvement initiatives include rigorous, research-based instructional programs, practices, and models; and provides school with technology, training, and support for using data to inform instruction and continuous improvement).

Selection of any of these models may require modification or addition of Board policy and procedures and/or collective bargaining agreements.

III. Executive Summary and Recommendations

A thorough review of extant and collected data by the Academic Performance Audit Team led to the identification of a number of concerns; an analysis of these concerns resulted in the formulation of three recommendations. Legislation enacted in 2012 by the Washington State Legislature (E2SSB 5329) requires the district and school to explicitly address the concerns and recommendations when selecting the intervention model and crafting the Required Action Plan and Revised (Initial) Student and School Success Action Plan (submitted to the State Board of Education in June 2014) and Student and School Success Action Plan (submitted in October 2014). The action plans for Marysville School District and Tulalip-Quil Elementary School will need to address:

- **Recommendation 1: Ensure all students receive grade-level appropriate core instruction and curriculum by (a) aligning curriculum to Common Core and Washington State Standards; (b) using data to inform and differentiate instruction and interventions based on student needs; and (c) continuing to use culturally responsive practices and appropriate materials.**
- **Recommendation 2: Continue the shared leadership model through the transition and provide co-principals operational flexibility that (a) supports the school's turnaround plan; (b) builds staff capacity to deliver culturally relevant, standards-based instruction and curriculum and use data in making instructional decisions; and (c) aligns with districtwide expectations for increases in student achievement.**
- **Recommendation 3: Build upon the school's culturally responsive multi-tiered system of academic and social-emotional support, using a data-based inquiry system to track progress and make adjustments for individual students, classrooms, and the school.**

Turnaround Principles and Indicators identified across these three recommendations are tightly coupled, that is, they are intended to support district and school leadership teams to collaborate and build coherence at each stage of the action-planning process. This tight coupling also enables teams to scaffold their S.M.A.R.T. Goals and Tasks as they create the Required Action Plan and Student and School Success Action Plans.

The Academic Performance Audit Team is confident the school is well-positioned to address these recommendations for several reasons. First, interviewees indicated there is a strong building leadership structure that allows co-principals both to respond to problems and to maintain 50% of their time working with teachers. Building leaders and staff also shared their strong commitment to using student

data to inform and modify instruction, as well as to monitor progress. The principal at the nearby middle school affirmed the impact of these efforts when declaring that the incoming sixth graders are more prepared than in the past. The audit team also learned about several coordinated programs to manage and extinguish unsafe behaviors that disrupt the educational environment. Finally, interviewees described the strong community connection and commitment to healing the historical rift between American system of boarding schools for Native American children and the Tulalip Tribes.

Together, these strengths will serve the school and district well as they address the three recommendations described in this Academic Performance Audit Report.

IV. District and School Overview

The Marysville School District serves the city of Marysville and members of the nearby Tulalip Tribes. More than 11,000 students in kindergarten through grade 12 attend the district's 11 elementary schools, four middle schools, and eight high schools (Source: Marysville School District website). Tulalip Elementary School and Quil Ceda Elementary School share the same location and have a combined enrollment of approximately 540 students in grades Kindergarten through 5th Grade. About 77% of their students qualify for free or reduced price meals (Source: OSPI Report Card).

Students from the two schools attend the same classes, and most do not know if their school of record is Tulalip Elementary School or Quil Ceda Elementary School. The combined school provides a rich learning environment blending the Tulalip Culture with Common Core State Standards to improve student learning. Staff, students, and guests celebrate the each day with a 10-minute Morning Assembly in the gym. The assembly begins with students leading traditional drumming and singing; this is followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and inspirational daily messages from staff (Source: Quil Ceda and Tulalip Elementary website).

The schools are led by co-principals who work with all staff. Both leaders and staff describe the areas of focus of the two schools for this year as (a) leverage the strengths of the cultures represented in the school and communicate across differences; (b) accelerate student achievement and use student data to inform and modify instruction, as well as monitor progress; and (c) address social-emotional concerns and manage behaviors that disrupt the learning environment. The school adopted Tulalip Tribes' values as its own, and uses those to guide interactions with students, their families, and the community.

As indicated in the Introduction, district leaders said they plan to close Quil Ceda Elementary School this spring; the two schools will re-open as one (currently referred to as Tulalip-Quil Elementary School) in fall 2014. The Academic Performance Audit team notes that recommendations in this report are intended for the Marysville School District and newly organized Tulalip-Quil Elementary School.

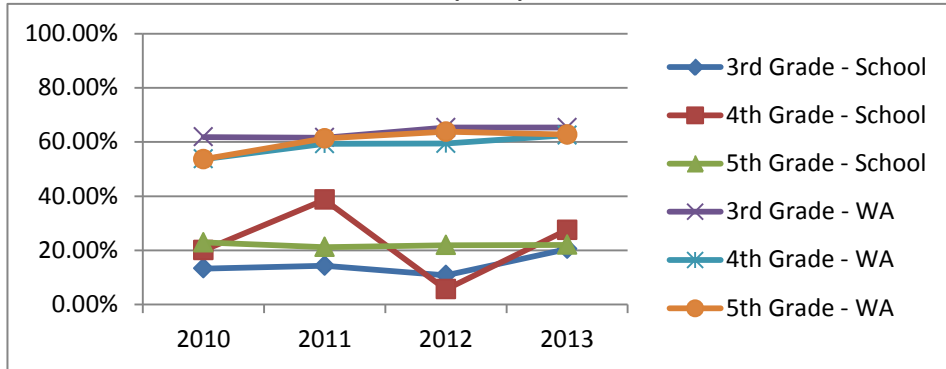
The Tulalip Tribes invests heavily in the school, providing financial supports for interventions and teaching and support staff time. Strong evidence exists that culturally linked experiences are provided through community partnerships. District and school leaders report active engagement in committees and local advisory boards. Additionally, tribal leaders are actively involved in school decision-making and improvement planning. A formal agreement is in place delineating the roles and expectations of the tribe and district to ensure continuity beyond transitions in local leadership.

Additional background information about Tulalip Elementary School is provided in charts and tables on the next several pages.

Tulalip Elementary School Summary – Marysville School District

<p>Student Demographics</p> <p>Source: OSPI State Report Card</p>	<p>Table 1. The table below provides a profile of students who attended the school in the 2012-13 school year.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr style="background-color: #4F7942; color: white;"> <th colspan="3">Enrollment</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>October 2012 Student Count</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">289</td> </tr> <tr> <td>May 2013 Student Count</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">300</td> </tr> <tr style="background-color: #4F7942; color: white;"> <th colspan="3">Gender (October 2012)</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Male</td> <td style="text-align: right;">128</td> <td style="text-align: right;">44.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Female</td> <td style="text-align: right;">161</td> <td style="text-align: right;">55.7%</td> </tr> <tr style="background-color: #4F7942; color: white;"> <th colspan="3">Race/Ethnicity (October 2012)</th> </tr> <tr> <td>American Indian/Alaskan Native</td> <td style="text-align: right;">157</td> <td style="text-align: right;">54.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hispanic / Latino of any race(s)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">45</td> <td style="text-align: right;">15.6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>White</td> <td style="text-align: right;">38</td> <td style="text-align: right;">13.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Two or More Races</td> <td style="text-align: right;">47</td> <td style="text-align: right;">16.3%</td> </tr> <tr style="background-color: #4F7942; color: white;"> <th colspan="3">Special Programs</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Free or Reduced-Price Meals (May 2013)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">230</td> <td style="text-align: right;">76.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Special Education (May 2013)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">53</td> <td style="text-align: right;">17.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Transitional Bilingual (May 2013)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">10</td> <td style="text-align: right;">3.3%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Enrollment			October 2012 Student Count		289	May 2013 Student Count		300	Gender (October 2012)			Male	128	44.3%	Female	161	55.7%	Race/Ethnicity (October 2012)			American Indian/Alaskan Native	157	54.3%	Hispanic / Latino of any race(s)	45	15.6%	White	38	13.1%	Two or More Races	47	16.3%	Special Programs			Free or Reduced-Price Meals (May 2013)	230	76.7%	Special Education (May 2013)	53	17.7%	Transitional Bilingual (May 2013)	10	3.3%																											
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<p>Student Achievement</p> <p>Source: OSPI State Report Card</p> <p>Note: Cells shaded in green represent increases over time; cells shaded in red represent decreases over time. Cells with no shading represent minimal change over time (less than 2%).</p>	<p>Table 2. Achievement Data on State Assessments from Baseline (2010) to 2013</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <thead> <tr style="background-color: #D9EAD3;"> <th>Tulalip Elementary</th> <th>2010</th> <th>2011</th> <th>2012</th> <th>2013</th> <th>Change Baseline to 2013</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr style="background-color: #D9EAD3;"> <td>Reading grade 3</td> <td>23.30%</td> <td>34.30%</td> <td>27.00%</td> <td>47.70%</td> <td>24.40%</td> </tr> <tr style="background-color: #D9EAD3;"> <td>Reading grade 4</td> <td>28.60%</td> <td>35.50%</td> <td>27.80%</td> <td>42.50%</td> <td>13.90%</td> </tr> <tr style="background-color: #D9EAD3;"> <td>Reading grade 5</td> <td>35.30%</td> <td>33.30%</td> <td>40.60%</td> <td>34.10%</td> <td>-1.20%</td> </tr> <tr style="background-color: #F4CCCC;"> <td>Math grade 3</td> <td>13.30%</td> <td>14.30%</td> <td>10.80%</td> <td>20.50%</td> <td>7.20%</td> </tr> <tr style="background-color: #F4CCCC;"> <td>Math grade 4</td> <td>20.00%</td> <td>38.70%</td> <td>5.60%</td> <td>27.50%</td> <td>7.50%</td> </tr> <tr style="background-color: #F4CCCC;"> <td>Math grade 5</td> <td>22.90%</td> <td>21.20%</td> <td>21.90%</td> <td>22.00%</td> <td>-0.90%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">Figure 1. Achievement Data on State Assessments in Reading from Baseline (2010) to 2013</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <caption>Data for Figure 1: Reading Achievement Percentages</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>3rd Grade - School</th> <th>4th Grade - School</th> <th>5th Grade - School</th> <th>3rd Grade - WA</th> <th>4th Grade - WA</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2010</td> <td>23.30%</td> <td>28.60%</td> <td>35.30%</td> <td>70.00%</td> <td>68.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2011</td> <td>34.30%</td> <td>35.50%</td> <td>33.30%</td> <td>72.00%</td> <td>70.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2012</td> <td>27.00%</td> <td>27.80%</td> <td>40.60%</td> <td>70.00%</td> <td>70.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2013</td> <td>47.70%</td> <td>42.50%</td> <td>34.10%</td> <td>72.00%</td> <td>72.00%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Tulalip Elementary	2010	2011	2012	2013	Change Baseline to 2013	Reading grade 3	23.30%	34.30%	27.00%	47.70%	24.40%	Reading grade 4	28.60%	35.50%	27.80%	42.50%	13.90%	Reading grade 5	35.30%	33.30%	40.60%	34.10%	-1.20%	Math grade 3	13.30%	14.30%	10.80%	20.50%	7.20%	Math grade 4	20.00%	38.70%	5.60%	27.50%	7.50%	Math grade 5	22.90%	21.20%	21.90%	22.00%	-0.90%	Year	3rd Grade - School	4th Grade - School	5th Grade - School	3rd Grade - WA	4th Grade - WA	2010	23.30%	28.60%	35.30%	70.00%	68.00%	2011	34.30%	35.50%	33.30%	72.00%	70.00%	2012	27.00%	27.80%	40.60%	70.00%	70.00%	2013	47.70%	42.50%	34.10%	72.00%	72.00%
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Figure 2. Achievement Data on State Assessments in Math from Baseline (2010) to 2013



Student Achievement

Whole School

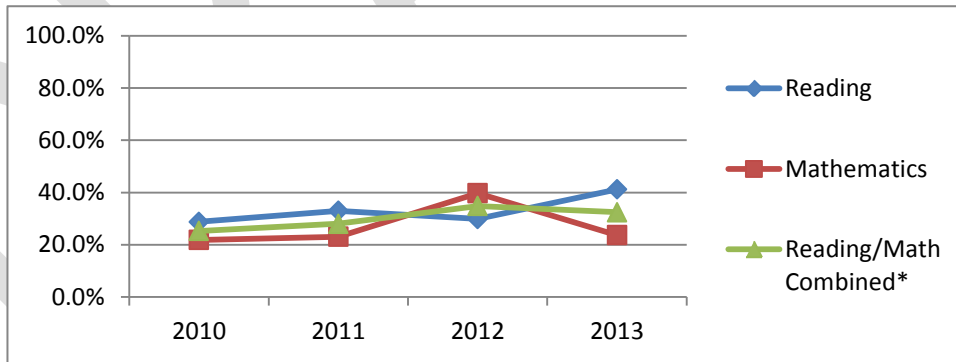
Source: OSPI State Report Card

Note: Cells shaded in green represent increases over time; cells shaded in red represent decreases over time. Percents are rounded to the nearest tenth.

Table 3. Whole School Achievement Data on State Assessments from Baseline (2010) to 2013

Tulalip	2010	2011	2012	2013	Change Baseline to 2013
Reading	28.7%	33.0%	29.9%	41.2%	12.5%
Mathematics	21.9%	23.1%	39.7%	23.7%	1.8%
Reading/Math Combined*	25.3%	28.0%	34.8%	32.5%	7.1%

Figure 3. Whole School Achievement Data on State Assessments from Baseline (2010) to 2013



*Reading/Math Combined: Weighted average of student performance on state assessments in Reading and Math; only continuously enrolled students are included in the weighted average.

Student Achievement-Subgroup Data

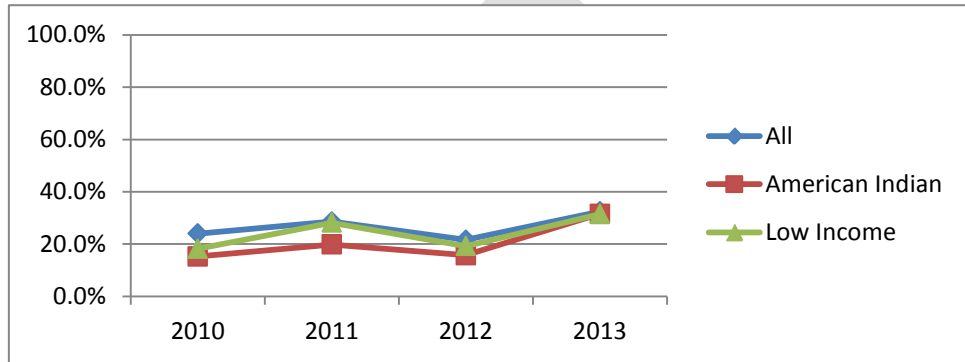
Source: OSPI State Report Card

Note: Cells shaded in green represent increases over time; cells shaded in red represent decreases over time. Percents are rounded to the nearest tenth.

Table 4. Subgroup Achievement Data on State Assessments from Baseline (2010) to 2013 – Reading/Math Combined

Tulalip	2010	2011	2012	2013	Change Baseline to 2013
All	24.0%	28.6%	21.6%	32.5%	8.5%
American Indian	15.3%	19.8%	15.7%	31.6%	16.3%
Low Income	18.2%	28.2%	19.2%	31.5%	13.3%

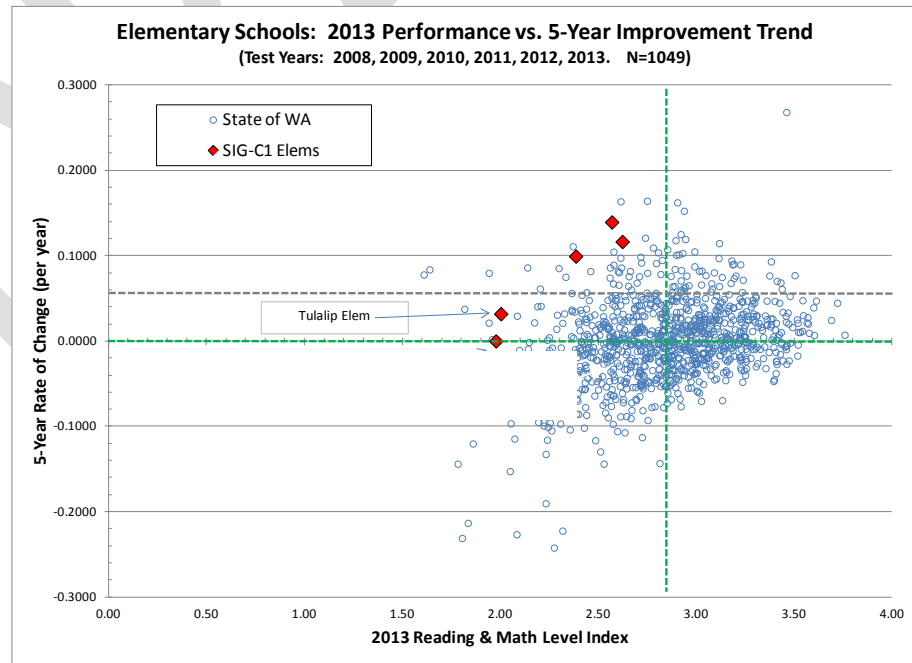
Figure 4. Subgroup Achievement Data on State Assessments from Baseline (2010) to 2013 – Reading/Math Combined



Student Achievement-Whole School

Source: Center for Educational Effectiveness and OSPI State Report Card

Figure 5. Five-Year Improvement Trend from 2009 to 2013



V. Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Ensure all students receive grade-level appropriate core instruction and curriculum by (a) aligning curriculum to Common Core and Washington State Standards; (b) using data to inform and differentiate instruction and interventions based on student needs; and (c) continuing to use culturally responsive practices and appropriate materials.

The findings informing this recommendation are segmented into the following areas, each of which aligns with Turnaround Principles:

- **1.A – Design and Implement Culturally Responsive, Standards-Based Units of Instruction** (Turnaround Principle 4: Strengthen the school’s instructional program based on student needs and ensure that the instructional program is research-based, rigorous, and aligned with State academic content standards)
- **1.B – Utilize Professional Learning Community Structure Supporting Use of Data to Inform Instruction** (Turnaround Principle 5: Use data to inform instruction and for continuous improvement, including by providing time for collaboration on the use of data)
- **1.C – Provide Professional Development, Technical Assistance, and Support** (Turnaround Principle 2: Ensure teachers are effective and able to improve instruction)

Each segment includes a brief description of current practice, concerns identified in data, and strengths upon which to build. A list of specific Turnaround Principles and Indicators that must be addressed by the school and district and recommendations for the Office of Student and School Success conclude the section.

The Academic Performance Audit Team begins this narrative with our finding that, based on a close review of extant data, focus group interviews, and school and classroom visits, Tulalip Elementary School, along with Quil Ceda Elementary School, is at the tipping point with respect to this recommendation. One of the team members observed, “There is better teaching than at other sites we visited; I would put my kids in these classes.” Another declared, “It’s a half day, and they’re still teaching.” While there is work to be done, the team believes leaders and staff are committed to and currently engage in building individual and collective capacity for using data and implementing culturally relevant practices to ensure all of their students receive standards-aligned instruction.

1.A – Design and Implement Culturally Responsive, Standards-Based Units of Instruction

Note. The Academic Performance Audit Team intends “rigorous” and “rigor” to signify high expectations for all students achieving or exceeding grade-level Common Core and Washington State Standards.

Tulalip Elementary School leadership and staff described their efforts to increase academic press and ensure students engage in rigorous, standards-based units of instruction. The principals described their vision of culturally responsive teaching they would like to use to ground their work. This vision is in the work of Ginsberg and Wlodkowski (2000). Leaders acknowledged their teachers are already implementing a number of culturally responsive practices that align with the framework; they intend to provide professional development to support all staff to effectively implement the framework.

Staff and leaders also talked about the school’s focus on acceleration, rather than remediation, to bring students to standard. The model began as a “flood-in” model in which all resources would “flood-in” to a specific grade level based on identified needs. Staff continues to use a similar model, with each grade

level determining where to allocate resources based on its students' data. For example, to close learning gaps that surfaced in the Math Benchmark Assessments, interviewees said they "flooded" second grade with intervention specialists and paraprofessionals to address specific gaps and accelerate learning.

Interviewees shared recent efforts around unpacking the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and rewriting their curriculum around those standards. They indicated that teacher-created curriculum materials for both first and second grade are now aligned to the CCSS. Teachers described questions they address when creating curriculum with a focus on acceleration, including "What does the standard look like at the next level," and "How do we 'up the rigor'?"

The leadership team described efforts to bring culture into classrooms and the school. These include theme-based units; focus on building relationships; and increased use of culturally responsive practices, including adapting curriculum materials and assessments to reflect the cultures of the students in the school.

Concerns: Evidence suggests the data-based inquiry process is resulting in higher achievement for students at Tulalip Elementary School at several grade levels (see Table 1 below). However, a close review of data in both Table 1 and Table 2 indicates the achievement of students in Tulalip Elementary School differs markedly from their peers in Quil Ceda Elementary School in grades 4 and 5. The audit team understands that students are not segregated by their school of record, so it will be important for school leadership and staff to dig deeply into these data to understand the disparity and address concerns that surface.

**Grade-Level Achievement Data on State Assessments* for
Tulalip Elementary School and Quil Ceda Elementary School from 2011** to 2013**

Table 1. Tulalip Elementary School Data from 2011 to 2013**

Tulalip Elementary	2011	2012	2013	Change 2011 to 2013
Reading grade 3	34.30%	27.00%	47.70%	13.4%
Reading grade 4	35.50%	27.80%	42.50%	7.0%
Reading grade 5	33.30%	40.60%	34.10%	.8%
Math grade 3	14.30%	10.80%	20.50%	6.20%
Math grade 4	38.70%	5.60%	27.50%	-11.2%
Math grade 5	21.20%	21.90%	22.00%	.80%

*Only continuously enrolled students are included in the weighted average.

**First year two schools were co-located at Quil Ceda Elementary School site.

Table 2. Tulalip Elementary School Data from 2011 to 2013**

Quil Ceda Elementary	2011	2012	2013	Change 2011 to 2013
Reading grade 3	52.8%	37.8%	63.4%	10.6%
Reading grade 4	31.8%	58.8%	50.0%	18.2%
Reading grade 5	22.0%	45.2%	44.2%	22.2%
Math grade 3	30.2%	32.4%	39.0%	8.8%
Math grade 4	11.4%	25.5%	39.0%	27.6%
Math grade 5	12.0%	33.3%	27.9%	15.9%

*Only continuously enrolled students are included in the weighted average.

** First year two schools were co-located at Quil Ceda Elementary School site.

During interviews, staff members stated that their alignment work began in first and second grade, so that might explain the similar proficiency levels at third grade. They also indicated their goal is for every student “to grow a year.” Because of the achievement gaps in Grades 4 and 5, staff may want to revisit that goal and focus on accelerating learning and closing achievement gaps so that all students (both Tulalip and Quil Ceda) are at grade-level in Reading and Mathematics when they transition to the middle school.

Concerns about lack of rigor in coursework and beliefs around students meeting state standards arose from multiple sources. These may contribute in some fashion to the disparity in learning outcomes between the two schools. Survey results from spring 2013 indicate 36% of staff agreed that students are provided higher level tasks that require critical thinking, and 50% agreed that staff believes that all students can meet state standards. Interviewees indicated some of their staff may have a “fixed mindset” and wonder if these peers believe students can achieve to high levels. Questions related to rigor arose when talking about alignment of curriculum to state standards, both vertically and horizontally. Interviewees added that they wished the district would support “cross-district grade-level coordination and vertical alignment.”

Common themes that arose from classroom visits included the following. Note that audit team members looked for shifts in practice described by leadership and staff (e.g., culture, behavior, teaching for expectations/teaching points/ teaching to objective, and acceleration in small group instruction with focus).

- There were times when formative assessment strategies could be used more frequently (students checking each other’s work, students showing their responses on whiteboards, etc.), and these opportunities were missed.
- Management appeared to be an issue in several classes, as some of the teaching staff tends to not have many years of experience. There was some evidence of learned techniques (take a breath, need you to focus) similar to what was observed during the Morning Assembly.
- Technology is used at a very low level; it was typically used to show things through a projector. There was very little student interaction or manipulation with the technology. Students were observed to be passive users of the technology; this contributed to low engagement in some classrooms.
- Questioning strategies tended to sit at the Depth of Knowledge Level 1 or Level 2. The team encourages teams of teachers to seek opportunities to raise the cognitive level of questioning strategies and to monitor changes in practice as they grow capacity to implement this approach.
- While there was evidence of teacher planning, the right strategy was not always used and/or a non-standards aligned strategy was used (e.g., lesson using coins [not aligned with CCSS in Mathematics]; use of whiteboards as formative way to check student understanding).
- There appears to be horizontal alignment for each grade level; however, staff needs to work on vertical alignment next. For example, teachers could use referential activities and prompt students with statements such as, “Remember how you _ in Kindergarten? We’re doing the same in first grade.”

The audit team found little evidence of the staff’s use of data to determine the strengths and weaknesses of adopted instructional materials and instructional and intervention strategies. This review should “bridge” the act of data analysis to the application of instruction and use of higher order thinking strategies in classrooms. Leader and staff acumen in collecting and analyzing data suggests they can

develop tools and identify evidence they can use to track implementation and impact of both instructional practices and curriculum materials.

Strengths upon which to build: A number of strengths emerged from the review of data, classroom visits, and interviews; these can serve as a platform for continuing the school's improvement efforts. The audit team begins this section with the commitment heard from leadership and staff: "We're all responsible for all of our students. The question becomes, 'How can I adjust around our kids, rather than making them conform to me?'" This commitment was pervasive, and supports the audit team's conviction that this school is poised to experience significant jumps in both the capacity to deliver effective instruction and the learning outcomes of students.

Interviewees indicated the need to make sure their curriculum materials both align with Common Core State Standards and represent the cultures of the students in the school. They recognized that an appropriate next step is to review their supplemental reading materials and possibly revise their mathematics core materials and supplemental materials; district support and engagement in the alignment and selection of culturally appropriate, standard-aligned curriculum materials are critical to the success of this effort.

Audit team members observed a number of research-based practices that align with the building-wide areas of focus (i.e., culture, behavior, and acceleration), including the following.

- Life skills were regularly taught along with the academics in the classroom and in small group settings. Team members also observed the Alternative Lunch setting where students were learning to interact with one another in a low pressure setting.
- Turn and talk with appropriate prompts were used in 4 of 8 classrooms.
- Teachers regularly had students accessing prior knowledge.
- Whiteboards were regularly used for students to record responses for formative assessment purposes (5 of 8 classrooms).
- Teachers in primary grades used small group instruction to teach reading and math.
- The strategy of using Popsicle sticks with names on it to vary who was called upon to respond was used in several rooms.
- Ninety percent of rooms posted the routine for the day.
- Intentional instructional strategies were evident, that is, teachers had a plan to deliver that lesson and the specific strategy matched the plan.
- Certain low-level inappropriate behaviors (e.g., student getting up and walking to another part of the room while the teacher was talking) appeared to be acceptable, allowing instruction to continue with minimal disruption.

The Academic Performance Audit Team reviewed the school's current Student and School Success Action Plan and identified multiple tasks supporting this effort, including the following:

- Select a walkthrough protocol based on Motivational Framework and consistent with CEL 5D Framework. (Principle 1 Indicator P1-IE06)
- Schedule lesson study cycles with all teachers to study culturally responsive practice(s). (Principle 1 Indicator P1-IE06)

These tasks illustrate leadership and staff commitment to ensure students are provided rigorous, standards-based instruction and curriculum. The audit team noted that Student and School Success Action Plans appear to differ for the two schools; revisions to the Tulalip Elementary School plan should reflect common efforts of the combined school.

These strengths can inform the work of leadership and staff as they develop S.M.A.R.T. Goals and tasks associated with this recommendation.

1.B –Utilize Professional Learning Community Structure Supporting Use of Data to Inform Instruction

The Academic Performance Audit Team found strong evidence of a culture of data use and application for making decisions around instruction and interventions. The data team model is based on Doug Reeves' data-based inquiry cycle. As indicated in *Strengths* below, audit team members have rarely seen a more robust data collection and analysis system. Details about this system and the professional learning communities (grade-level teams) engaged in this work follow.

Interviewees talked about the structures, protocols, and norms used by data teams that support their cycle of inquiry. School teams meet twice each week for 50 minutes; additionally teams are allowed an additional 150 minutes of collaboration time each week. The school day was extended by 15 minutes each day to accommodate "teacher collaboration that allows for real-time problem solving." Initially, teachers developed common screeners to place students; they now have access a variety of data to support "much more targeted interventions." Data for all students are displayed on a data wall, and all grades have data profiles for each of their students. They report, "We're used to being very public about our data and learning from one another. It [public display of and focus on data] is very safe for staff."

Interviewees describe the "data team personality [as] growing over time" as staff becomes more agile in disaggregating data and using findings to make instructional and intervention decisions. They indicated teams disaggregate data into proficiency levels (i.e., Not likely, Yet, Close, Far, and Proficient). Next, they analyze student work to determine strengths, obstacles, and errors for each proficiency level, and select instructional strategies appropriate to the needs of that small group of students. Leadership team members agreed, "What moves kids is small group instruction and having kids work on whatever skills will move them."

Staff used the word "acceleration" to describe the focus for their work around instruction and data. They found that students at proficiency weren't really growing: "Kids furthest from proficiency were making the most gains, and proficient students were not making the same gains. The gap was closing, but in the wrong way." In response, teachers now have a plan for every student for 40-50 minutes each day. Proficient students get enrichment at their level, and students performing below level receive more support with a focus on closing gaps. When probed about enrichment activities, staff described a recent assignment for second graders to write a five-paragraph essay on boarding schools. This was an ambitious project for these students, and "they stepped up to the challenge and created five-paragraph essays that exceeded expectations for a second grader."

Grade-level teams identify gaps they intend to close within six to eight weeks. Teachers assume responsibility for all 100 students in their grade level, so they collaborate together in developing interventions to address specific gaps. All students receive core instruction "plus an extra dip if needed, though not always with the same teacher." Though a few students may need special programs, teachers indicated they're "hesitant to send and prefer to serve them in our own classrooms and school." Staff reported this has resulted in an underrepresentation of students receiving special education services. The audit team noted that district leaders shared a concern about appropriate identification and placement of and services provided to students in need of specially designed instruction. Questions were raised with regard to the cultural relevance or appropriateness of identification criteria and strategies and the relevance of services provided to students.

Concerns: An analysis of Tables 1 and 2 in Section 1.A of this recommendation indicates significant disparity in state assessment results between Tulalip Elementary School and Quil Ceda Elementary School for their fourth and fifth graders. The audit team wonders about the types of data teachers in these grade levels can use as they make instructional decisions in order to accelerate their students beyond the stated goal of “one year of growth.”

Strengths upon which to build: Teacher teams have been allocated time to collaborate frequently around student data. The school has instituted a number of structures and protocols to support their grade-level teams in drilling down into the data in order to make instructional decisions. Academic Performance Audit Team members agreed, declaring: “We have rarely—if ever—seen a more detailed data wall or robust process used by a school.” The team also notes that results on the spring 2013 confirm this finding: 100% of staff agreed that data is used to inform student interventions and instructional strategies, staff monitor the effectiveness of instructional interventions, and struggling students receive early intervention and remediation to acquire skills. However, the audit team noted that only 55% agreed that students are encouraged to self-reflect and track progress toward goals. Since research suggests that goal-setting and tracking progress with students positively impacts their motivation and engagement in learning, staff may want to consider increasing the use of this strategy (Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2000).

1.C – Provide Professional Development, Technical Assistance, and Support

Leadership team members described intentional efforts to provide a coherent system of professional development; one used the phrase “pointing all the arrows in the same direction” to describe their collaborative work. Interviewees shared a number of strategies used to provide professional development, technical assistance, and support, including the following:

- **Studio:** This is particularly helpful for new teachers, since it gives them an opportunity to observe more experienced peers and learn what effective instruction and the “central message” at each grade. Following the observation, teachers and coaches debrief the lesson. Another described the benefit of studio for all teachers as giving them an opportunity to plan lessons together, teach the lessons, and then debrief the lesson to determine what worked well, what didn’t, and what they would do differently/the same next time.
- **On-site coaches:** Coaches work with teacher teams and individual teachers, facilitating data analysis and lesson development and maximizing opportunities for small group instruction. One of the co-principals served as a coach at Tulalip Elementary School, and staff reported that he continues to coach and support them to build their instructional capacity.

These interactions are described as both formal and informal. Teachers reported their “comfort with sharing what’s working and not...that helps us learn from each other.” They declared that the key to the success of their “job-embedded professional development” is sharing data and using those data to plan instruction. Staff also talked about the leadership opportunities for veteran teachers that arise when new teachers are paired with experienced teachers to learn about small group instruction and other strategies. Similar opportunities are provided for paraprofessionals to learn from teachers with whom they work; these classified staff members are described as “stepping up to the plate and becoming really skilled.”

Staff received specific professional development anchored in Doug Reeves’ work around data teams and implementing data-based cycles of inquiry. A team of staff attended training in North Carolina; team members then brought what they learned to the staff. This teacher-driven model has now evolved to become a district model for data-based inquiry.

Concerns: Results from spring 2013 surveys report somewhat mixed levels of support and engagement in professional development. Seventy-three percent of staff agreed that teachers engage in professional development activities to learn and apply new skills and strategies, 70% agreed that teachers engage in classroom-based professional development activities (e.g. peer coaching) that focus on improving instruction, and 60% agreed that appropriate data are used to guide building- directed professional development. Yet, 55% agreed that staff have opportunities to learn effective teaching strategies for the diversity represented in our school, 46% agreed that they are provided training to meet the needs of a diverse student population in our school, and only 33% agreed that professional development activities are sustained by ongoing follow up and support. These data suggest there is an opportunity for increasingly focused professional development and follow-up support, particularly around culturally responsive teaching strategies designed to meet the needs of their diverse learners.

Strengths upon which to build: The audit team noted that professional development at the school takes many forms (e.g., learning walks, studio, job-embedded coaching). The team suggests that school and district leaders can maximize the impact of their professional development by clarifying expected changes in educator practice and student outcomes and using a variety of measures to track progress toward these intended changes.

As stated in the introduction to the narrative for this recommendation, the team believes leaders and staff are committed to and currently engage in building individual and collective capacity for using data and implementing culturally relevant practices to ensure all of their students receive standards-aligned instruction.

Requirements for Recommendation #1

In light of concerns raised for this recommendation, Tulalip Elementary School and the Marysville School District must address the following Turnaround Principles and Indicators when selecting the school improvement model and crafting the Required Action Plan and Revised (Initial) Student and School Success Action Plan (submitted to the State Board of Education in June 2014) and Student and School Success Action Plan (submitted in October 2014):

Tulalip Elementary School

- Principle 2: Provide targeted professional development (PD) to build teacher capacity to implement culturally relevant and standards-based curriculum, instruction, and interventions. (Indicators P2-IF11 and/or P2-IF12)
- Principle 3: Continue to provide time for data teams to meet while specialists work with students in the areas of behavioral health and culture (P3IVD02, P4-IIIA07, P5-IIDO8, P5-IID12, and/or P6-IIIC16)
- Principle 4: Implement culturally relevant instructional strategies and materials aligned with state standards and student learning needs; regularly monitor and make adjustments to continuously improve the core instructional program based on identified student needs (Indicators P4-IIA03 and/or P4-IIIA07)
- Principle 4: Upgrade the mathematics program (core and supplemental) and the literacy program (supplemental) and ensure alignment with Common Core State Standards.
- Principle 5: Expand the capacity of teacher teams to monitor and assess mastery of standards-based objectives and to track schoolwide implementation and impact of culturally relevant practices and instructional materials. (P5-IID06)
- Principle 5: Use a variety of data to identify special needs students. (Indicator P5-IID12)

Marysville School District

- Principle 1: Provide operating flexibility to enable staff to continue to employ the replacement strategy with the literacy curriculum in order to foster links with the Tulalip Tribal heritage. (Indicator P1-C)
- Principle 2: Provide differentiated professional development and technical assistance to teachers to implement culturally responsive instruction that increases levels of both relevance and rigor for students. (Indicator P2-C)
- Principle 2: Ensure coherence across professional development and teaching/learning practices within the school. (Indicator P2-C)
- Principle 4: Provide training and support to ensure vertical and horizontal alignment of curriculum to Common Core and Washington State Standards. (Indicator P4-A)
- Principle 4: Provide training and support on culturally relevant practices and multi-tiered systems of support that result in accelerated student learning. (Indicator P4-B)

These Turnaround Principles and Indicators are tightly coupled. Therefore, leadership teams can scaffold the S.M.A.R.T. Goals and Tasks as they revise/create the Required Action Plan submitted to the State Board of Education and the Student and School Success Action Plan submitted to the Office of Student and School Success. The Wise Ways documents on Indistar® describe research-based practices leadership teams can implement as they craft action plans around school- and district-level Indicators.

Office of Student and School Success: Additional next steps for the Office of Student and School Success to support both Tulalip Elementary School and the Marysville School District follow.

- Principle 2, 4, and 5: Provide and monitor professional development and technical assistance to school staff and district instructional coaches consistent with the Required Action Plan and Student and School Success Plan. Suggestions follow:
 - Aligning curriculum to Common Core and Washington State Standards (Principle 4)
 - Implementing a culturally responsive instructional program that ensures all students receive grade-level appropriate instruction and interventions based on student needs (Principles 4 and 5)
 - Gathering evidence to monitor progress of school-based initiatives (Principle 5)
- Principle 2: Convene ongoing meetings among external and internal professional development providers to improve coherence and alignment of supports provided to the school.
- Principle 4 and 6: Provide access to *Since Time Immemorial Curriculum*, culturally relevant supplementary materials, interim assessments and other types of data in addition to state assessments, and support offered through OSPI's Student Support division.

Recommendation 2: Continue the shared leadership model through the transition and provide co-principals operational flexibility that (a) supports the school's turnaround plan; (b) builds staff capacity to deliver culturally relevant, standards-based instruction and curriculum and use data in making instructional decisions; and (c) aligns with districtwide expectations for increases in student achievement.

The findings informing this recommendation are segmented into two areas, each of which aligns with the identified Turnaround Principles:

- **2.A – Principal Leadership** (Turnaround Principle 1: Provide strong leadership)
- **2.B – District Leadership** (Turnaround Principle 1: Provide strong leadership)

Each segment includes a brief description of current practice, concerns identified in data, and strengths upon which to build. A list of specific Turnaround Principles and Indicators that must be addressed by the school and district and recommendations for the Office of Student and School Success conclude the section.

2.A – Principal Leadership

As indicated in the Introduction to this report, the two principals assigned to Tulalip Elementary School and Quil Ceda Elementary School now serve as “co-principals” and share leadership responsibilities for both schools. Interviewees indicated that “Tulalip Elementary School was known for its attention to the culture, while Quil Ceda was known for its academics.” During the on-site visit, district leaders indicated they plan to close Quil Ceda Elementary School at the end of this school year; the two school will re-open as one (currently referred to as Tulalip-Quil Elementary School) in fall 2014. They have not determined if the current co-principal leadership model will continue into the 2014-15 school year.

The co-principals are described as having created a strong building leadership structure that allows them both to respond to problems and to maintain 50% of their time working with teachers. Another strength of these leaders is their acumen with data and “drilling down into the data” to make instructional decisions about individual students. They are also described as “clear about expected changes in teacher practice.” Another added, “They coach us to build our skills—both around data and around instruction.” They recognize the importance of continuing to build relationships with the Tulalip Tribes, so that the educational experiences of the parents and grandparents in boarding schools are not replicated in the current generation of students and those to come.

The co-principals are supported by a leadership team that enables them to distribute leadership across the school. The team includes the co-principals, teachers, counselors, coaches, intervention specialists, and a liaison with the Tulalip Tribes. The team is highly skilled in using data in making instructional and schoolwide decisions. The team is sensitive to the historic conflicts between the American system of boarding schools for Native American children and the Tulalip Tribes and expressed commitment to ensure the cultures representing students at Tulalip-Quil Elementary School are honored and respected. Team members encourage their peers to seek ways to bring these cultures into the classroom and support them with curriculum and instructional strategies that can be used.

Concern: Interviewees expressed concerns that the district has not yet determined the leadership model and staffing assignments for next year. For example, two principals and two counselors currently serve the two schools. Staff indicated that this assignment should continue into the 2014-15 school year, indicating that “continuity of building leadership is important, given the changes in the district [leadership].” Interviewees also declared, “We need to have balance between the change and the trauma that we experience,” and “It will take deep planning and time for further transitions.”

District leaders indicated the decision hasn’t been made. They added that they recently assigned one of the principals to another program in the district for one day each week for the remainder of the year, indicating she has the expertise needed to turn the program around. She will continue to serve as co-principal at Tulalip and Quil Ceda Elementary Schools.

Several wondered about the degree of autonomy that would be given the administrative team, indicating the co-principals “need operational flexibility to do things outside the box.” Others described this as finding the balance between “district-wide work for continuity and school-based decision making.

For example, leadership team members raised concerns regarding the flexibility given the school with respect to the building-level curriculum teams have created. One inquired, "What is the district going to do to us?" Others cited frustrations with operational areas of the district. When probed, they described the negative impact when substitute and/or new bus drivers refuse to drop students at homes of their relatives ("Aunties"). They continued, "They have to fight this same issue every year. District practices like these break relationships with students and families, and that's not okay." The audit team learned that one of the co-principals rides buses with new and substitute drivers to make sure students are allowed to get off the bus at the home of a relative.

Survey results from spring 2013 indicate that only 22% of staff agreed a clear and collaborative decision-making process is used to select individuals for leadership roles in the building, 50% agreed that the leadership team demonstrates the behavior and practice changes necessary to achieve the preferred future, and 38% agreed the leadership team clearly communicates how behavior and practice will be different in the preferred future. This suggests opportunities for the co-principals and current leadership team as they move forward with reorganizing the two schools into one school.

Strengths upon which to build: Interviewees described the co-principals as forming a "strong leadership team: One is all about instruction and the other looks at the whole lay of the land of the school." Some described their frequent and transparent communication with staff and parents." One opined, "It helps that one is male and the other female, they come from different backgrounds, and one is Native and the other is White." Others added, "They both put children first selflessly," They have set a path that is a good one and the teachers are getting stronger every year," and "The teachers are now choosing to be at these schools." One summarized the group's comments: "The district has the right people in the right place at the right time."

District leaders declared that under the leadership of the co-principals, teachers have gone "well beyond a cookie-cutter look at PLC work." They added, "Their staff's level of sophisticated data use is exemplary." District leaders also indicated, "They work well because they carved out their own territory in the spirit of wanting to complement each other's strengths."

The audit team supports the suggestion to continue with the current co-principal model during the transition. This will give the district opportunities to develop the capacity of both as transformational building leaders.

2.B – District Leadership

Both the superintendent and several members of the district's leadership cabinet are new to their roles this year. They all expressed the desire to maintain relationships with the school and community, recognizing that "continuity is essential to the progress the school is making." When asked how the district could support their work, the school's leadership team members responded with several requests. They request the district continue to provide operational flexibility, support the school in this time of transition, and recruit and hire more teachers. They hope the district will continue to differentiate resources based on the needs of their students, stating that "equitable doesn't always mean equal." They added that they would appreciate the district "having our backs" and "making it safe to share our story" when peers from across the district share concerns about the level of resources provided to Tulalip and Quil Ceda Elementary Schools.

Research cited in [Indistar's](#) Wise Ways suggests a variety of roles districts play in providing operational flexibility and building capacity of their principals to ensure they can turn around schools and substantially raise student achievement. Questions anchored in this research for district leaders to consider include:

- What supports is the district planning to provide to ensure the success of the school's leaders?
- How will the district assign and support central office leaders to engage with the co-principals, facilitate their growth as instructional leaders and building managers, provide them with operating flexibility, and hold them accountable for student learning?
- What process will the district use to ensure school leaders will have autonomy/flexibility within a districtwide context of accountability for improved educator practice and student learning?
- How will the district differentiate expectations, supports, and services for the school—within the context of district vision, priorities, and strategic plan?

Requirements for Recommendation #2

In light of concerns raised for this recommendation, Tulalip Elementary School and the Marysville School District must address the following Turnaround Principles and Indicators when selecting the school improvement model and crafting the Required Action Plan and Revised (Initial) Student and School Success Action Plan (submitted to the State Board of Education in June 2014) and Student and School Success Action Plan (submitted in October 2014):

Tulalip Elementary School

- Principle 1: Continue to develop distributed leader capacity to facilitate a continuous improvement process; guide and manage the review of data, selection of strategies, and implementation of improvement efforts; and monitor the effectiveness of these efforts. (Indicator P1-ID10)
- Principle 1: Sustain the practice of spending at least 50% of the time working directly with teachers to improve instruction, including classroom observations. (Indicator P1-IE06)
- Principle 2: Set goals for Professional Development and monitor the extent to which staff has changed practice and impacted student learning. (Indicators P2-IF14 and/or P5-IID06)
- Principle 5: Use a variety of data to assess strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum and instructional strategies and improvement initiatives. (Indicator P5-IID08)

Marysville School District

- Principle 1: Provide principal with operational flexibility in order to support school turnaround plans in key areas. (Indicator P1-C)
- Principle 1: Commit to continue to co-principalship model during the first year of transition to one school (2014-15) and build capacity of co-principals as building leaders. (Indicators P1-B and/or P1-C)
- Principle 3: Allocate resources (e.g., personnel, fiscal, and professional development and technical assistance) to support time for teacher collaboration and instructional planning. (Indicator P3-A)
- Principle 5: Provide technology, training, and support for school leadership to continue to collect and analyze a variety of data to track changes in educator practice and student learning. (Indicator P5-A)

Similar to the requirements for Recommendation 1, the Turnaround Principles and Indicators listed above are tightly coupled. Therefore, leadership teams can scaffold the S.M.A.R.T. Goals and Tasks as they revise/create the Required Action Plan submitted to the State Board of Education and the Student and School Success Action Plan submitted to the Office of Student and School Success. The Wise Ways

documents on Indistar® describe research-based practices leadership teams can implement as they craft action plans around school- and district-level Indicators.

Office of Student and School Success: Additional next steps for the Office of Student and School Success to support both Tulalip Elementary School and the Marysville School District follow.

- Principle 1: Develop and disseminate research-based guidance to support districts to provide operational flexibility to their principals in order to support school turnaround plans in key areas.
- Principle 1: Provide training and support to district leaders who are charged with supporting turnaround principals and developing principal capacity as transformational leaders.
- Principle 5: Provide training and support to build principal and school leadership team capacity to use data to create, implement, monitor, and if needed, revise school improvement plans written in S.M.A.R.T. Goal format; plans should explicitly identify expected changes in educator practice and student learning and evidence that will be used to track progress toward these changes.

Recommendation 3: Build upon the school’s culturally responsive multi-tiered system of academic and social-emotional support, using a data-based inquiry system to track progress and make adjustments for individual students, classrooms, and the school.

The findings informing this recommendation are segmented into the following areas, each of which aligns with Turnaround Principles:

- **3.A – School and Classroom Environment** (Turnaround Principle 6: Establish a school environment that improves school safety and discipline; address other non-academic factors that impact student achievement, such as students’ social, emotional, and health needs)
- **3.B – Parent/Family and Community Engagement** (Turnaround Principle 7: Provide ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement)

Each segment includes a brief description of current practice, concerns identified in data, and strengths upon which to build. A list of specific Turnaround Principles and Indicators that must be addressed by the school and district and recommendations for the Office of Student and School Success conclude the section.

3.A – School and Classroom Environment

A safe learning environment evidences itself in several ways, from physical safety to students feeling safe in taking risks as learners and staff taking risks in trying new classroom strategies to meet the needs of their students. Interviewees declared their commitment to ensuring a safe and supportive learning environment when stating, “Of our three goals [Culture, Acceleration/Data, and Behavior], behavior is where we’re seeing the greatest need because it’s impacting the other two.” Interviewees in each of the focus groups declared that “our students experience significant trauma in their lives.” When probed, one explained, “They have no filter about what is an emergency, so everything becomes an emergency.” Another continued, “Much of our work is about healing and trust; our students and their families need that [if our students are going to learn].”

Staff described a variety of strategies to create a safe learning environment for their students and staff, including a multi-tiered system of support for students (MTSS). They have all been trained in Compassionate Schools. Briefly, the tiers include the following:

- Tier 1: A group of staff volunteered to develop a common set schoolwide expectations (“GROWS”). These align with what staff was doing around culture. All students are taught these expectations, and interviewees indicated students have “done well with hallways, classroom expectations, and bathrooms.”
- Tier 2: Interventions occur in the classroom and may include assignment to alternative lunch and recess. Additional Tier 2 interventions include individual, group, and classroom interventions by counselors using the Social Thinking curriculum. Staff also developed the ACT where students for students who need strategic intervention outside of the classroom.
- Tier 3: Both ACT and TLC (district program) serve as intensive interventions for students. These interventions emphasize a therapeutic approach.

Both leaders and staff expressed their full commitment to ensuring every child starting and remaining a member of their general education classroom, so they are strategic about services offered to each tier. Supported by a Dean of Students and two intervention specialists, they describe the school as “emerging as a therapeutic setting.” They continued, “We’re like a ‘flipped pyramid,’ with about 7 percent of our students needing intensive interventions.” Another stated, “Life is a daily challenge for some of our kids. We don’t feel like what we’re doing really meets their needs; they need a whole set of mental health services.”

The audit team also heard many interviewees describe the way they intentionally develop a “growth mindset” with their students. For example, teachers will add “yet” to a student’s statements about what he or she hasn’t mastered (e.g., “I can’t do division” becomes “I can’t do division yet”) emphasizing that students can build their own capacity to tackle difficult tasks. Many nodded agreement with the staff comment: “Our students are very resilient, capable learners, though they may not know that yet.”

The co-principals described their vision of implementing a framework for culturally responsive teaching aligned with the work of Ginsberg and Wlodkowski (2000). School staff and leaders shared several essential components of the framework when talking about their intent to establish programs and practices that “leverage the many cultures in the school” and enable students, staff, and the families served to “communicate across differences.” One declared, “We want our kids to be okay in their own skin and to explicitly make it OK to be Indian.” Another said, “If this work is liberating the souls of our grandmothers, they we’re doing the right work.” The audit team was invited to join the Morning Assembly, giving team members an opportunity to understand one of the practices the school has adopted to build on the cultures of its students. Elders also participate in the Morning Assembly and share stories that help students understand the rich culture of the Tulalip Tribes. “This practice helps to heal the scars of the boarding school era for our entire Tribe,” commented one of the Tulalip staff members.

Concerns: Staff members described contrasting beliefs among their peers about students and learning. They indicated some staff members share a “growth mindset” and believe all students can learn and achieve to high levels; this is similar to the growth mindset they’re instilling in their students. They also reported that in contrast, some of their peers adhere to a “fixed mindset” philosophy. This is reflected in the results on spring 2013 surveys when 50% of staff indicated agreement with the statement, “Our staff believes that all students can meet state standards.” Though this is not a pervasive belief, it does directly impact the learning environment both in individual classrooms and across the school.

When asked about the impact of the behavior of students highly impacted by trauma, interviewees responded that it results in high staff turnover and makes it difficult for other students and their families. They also indicated that staff also experience trauma because attending to the needs of their

students can become overwhelming. While they recognize the need for self-care, they haven't established formal systems this year to attend to that important need. Another staff concern centered on the need for the district, rather than the Tribe, to invest in funding the counseling and behavior intervention staff.

Additional concerns surfaced with respect to identifying students in trauma as having disabilities. Said one, "We need to recognize there is a difference between having a disability and being in trauma. While this doesn't qualify a student for special education services, it still impacts the child's education and well-being." Staff expressed concern that students experiencing trauma will be "shoved toward special education, even though it's not what they need." Another declared, "They're not special education, but they will be if we don't intervene....We need help in building our therapeutic setting so we can keep and serve our students here in our school." Staff also expressed frustration regarding the district process once the decision is made to recommend a student for special education services. Teachers and leaders reported they implement a variety of interventions in the classroom and school before making that type of recommendation. Hence, a lengthy delay at the district level doesn't serve the student's needs, and it often adversely impacts the learning environment for other students and staff.

Together, these concerns impact the "culture of learning" to which interviewees aspire for Tulalip-Quil Elementary School.

Strengths upon which to build: BERC researches reported: "The building relationships, in support of the students, remain strong and constant. The classroom observation study indicates 88% of the classrooms observed demonstrate strong interpersonal interactions between the teacher and the students. This behavior reflects a commitment on the part of the staff to create a supportive learning environment for students. This is supported on staff surveys where 100% agree adults care, value and respect all students."

Additionally, the school is anchoring its efforts to create a safe learning environment in research-based practices (e.g., implementing Compassionate Schools and AVID, building on a framework for culturally responsive teaching). Other strengths include:

- Strong community connection which focuses on healing the historical rift between the American system of boarding schools to educate Native American children and the Tulalip Tribes.
- Coordinated MTSS in place (e.g., ACT, Social Thinking curriculum, TLC) to manage and extinguish unsafe behaviors that disrupt the educational environment and to address the needs of students in trauma.
- Desire to create a "behavior team" with structures and protocols for using data to inform decisions and interventions around behavior, similar to teams using data for making decisions related to academic instruction and interventions.

The Academic Performance Audit Team also notes the Student and School Success Plan includes the following tasks for Indicator P6-IIIC03 under Principal 6 (Safe and supportive learning environment):

- Teach Big 6 Expectations across all classrooms in the school using developed lesson plans from the Behavior Team plans
- Create a reinforcement schedule for addressing behavior across the grade levels.
- Counselors teach identified Second Step Lessons across the grade level to promote positive behavior.

- Bring in Carolyn Harkness as a consultant to work with helping us identify strategies for students who challenge our school system be successful in school. Use her to create a list of students who should have a full special education assessment to rule out a disability and to increase the understanding of building and district administrators about how adverse child effects can lead to health impairments that may need an IEP.

Finally, district leaders acknowledge the challenges their current system for qualifying students for special education poses for a school such as Tulalip Elementary School that has employed a number of classroom and school interventions before referring a student. Leaders also indicated the TLC program is not as effective as it has been in the past; they believe the part-time assignment of one of the co-principals to the program will significantly improve the program's effectiveness in serving students.

These strengths represent the work of staff and administration over the last several years and provide a solid foundation as they move forward with efforts to ensure a safe and supportive learning environment for their students.

3.B – Parent/Family and Community Engagement

Interviewees in each focus group reported a high level of tribal commitment to Tulalip and Quil Ceda Elementary Schools. They described this partnership as essential to bring about the healing and trust needed to ensure their students gain the “academic and cultural grounding to be successful in majority society.”

Many described the negative experiences of the American boarding school system for educating Native American children that the parents of grandparents of Tulalip and Quil Ceda Elementary School students endured. Because of these experiences, “their lack of trust in the school system is deeply ingrained and they are reluctant to engage with the school.” District, school, and tribal representatives acknowledged that changes will come in form of healing what happened and that re-introducing the Native culture in the school is “the tip of the iceberg.”

Among the changes are the Morning Assembly that includes traditional songs, stories, and strategies to restore the local culture's influence on the community. Team members said they implemented a number of other practices to “incorporate culture and make sure they [parents and students] can see themselves in the school.” Staff asked audit team members to “look at hallways and how we greet families,” since these are intentional strategies the school uses to build awareness of culture. Leadership team members also shared ways in which teachers intentionally bring literature about different cultures into their classrooms.

Team members described parent attendance at conferences as much higher than the 50 percent experienced at the former site; one declared, “I had 100 percent parent attendance.” They added, “Over 600 attended the winter concert, and the Fifth Grade Potlatch and beginning of the year barbecue and backpack giveaway are popular. Our goal is to create a ‘very welcoming feeling’ and we find we have a great turnout from parents when we celebrate their students.” Interviewees also indicated that Columbus Day is now referred to as Tulalip Day, and students are invited to wear traditional clothing. Interviewees said that parent and community participation “didn't start out this way.” Recognizing the need to re-engage parents and community, leadership team members declared, “We had to win them back one at a time; it will take winning back trust from our community one at a time.” These efforts are producing increased engagement, and the school and its community are portrayed as “moving forward towards healing.”

Concerns: As one interviewee declared, “Racism is part of the reality for our students and their families.” The negative impact of the experiences of multiple generations with American assimilation and boarding schools continues to influence how parents and families respond to overtures from Tulalip and Quil Ceda Elementary Schools to increase their engagement. As indicated earlier, the school and district will be well-served by building on the partnerships that exist with the Tulalip Tribes, expanding the opportunities for all students to learn about and identify with their cultures, and implementing strategies that intentionally involve families and the community in their improvement efforts.

Strengths upon which to build: Participants in all focus groups indicated their commitment to building bridges that heal the relationship between the Tulalip Tribes and school district. They recognize that their efforts will result in all of their students, regardless of culture, fulfilling the promise of the “growth mindset.” They desire to see the school become the hub of the community; they want to increase engagement, reconnect their students and families to their culture, and open the door to other communities. Discussion of local research into the categorization of the Tulalip culture as an “empathetic culture” makes this especially appropriate as a foundation for teaching respect for diversity.

The Academic Performance Audit Team reviewed the school’s Student and School Success Plan and found the following tasks associated with Indicator P7-IVA01 for Principle 7 (Family and Community Engagement) and found several tasks that align with the school’s stated commitment to build relationships across all cultures:

- Meet with ELL families at breakfast meeting in conjunction with District ELL Liaisons to engage Russian/Ukrainian and Spanish speaking families. Families will learn more about school initiatives, how to support students at home, and advise school team about needs to students.
- Create an invitation process for including family or community members on the school leadership team and the PBIS team. Use the following strategies: Contact education task force to get input about possible names. Post an invitation on Facebook page Include a blurb in monthly newsletter Reach out to recommended or interested parties.

Requirements for Recommendation #3

In light of concerns raised for this recommendation, Tulalip Elementary School and the Marysville School District must address the following Turnaround Principles and Indicators when selecting the school improvement model and crafting the Required Action Plan and Revised (Initial) Student and School Success Action Plan (submitted to the State Board of Education in June 2014) and Student and School Success Action Plan (submitted in October 2014):

Tulalip Elementary School

- Principle 2: Continue to provide professional development around culturally responsive leadership and instructional practices (e.g., culturally relevant practices, AVID) and monitor the extent to which these practices are implemented and impact student outcomes. (Indicators P2-IF12 and/or P1-IF07)
- Principle 6: Continue to ensure all staff members reinforce agreed-upon classroom rules and procedures with fidelity, positively teach them to their students, and implement the multi-tiered system of support for students struggling with trauma and unsafe behaviors. (Indicators P6-IIIC13, P6-IIIC16, and/or P6-IIIC04)
- Principle 7: Collaborate with parents and community members to build on the cultures of the students in the school and to identify and implement strategies to engage parents/families and community in the school’s improvement efforts. (Indicators P7-IVA05 and/or P7-IVA13)

Marysville School District

- Principle 2: Provide professional development around culturally responsive leadership and instructional practices and monitor the extent to which these practices are implemented and impact student outcomes. (Indicator P2-C)
- Principle 7: Engage parents and community, including the Tulalip Tribes, in the transformation process. (Indicator P7-B)

Similar to the requirements for Recommendations 1 and 2, the Turnaround Principles and Indicators listed above are tightly coupled. Therefore, leadership teams can scaffold the S.M.A.R.T. Goals and Tasks as they revise/create the Required Action Plan submitted to the State Board of Education and the Student and School Success Action Plan submitted to the Office of Student and School Success. The Wise Ways documents on Indistar® describe research-based practices leadership teams can implement as they craft action plans around school- and district-level Indicators.

Office of Student and School Success: Additional next steps for the Office of Student and School Success to support both Tulalip Elementary School and the Marysville School District follow.

- Principles 2 and 6: Disseminate research-based guidance around culturally responsive leadership and instructional practices and provide professional development and technical assistance to support district and school leaders and other staff to build their capacity to implement these practices.
- Principle 6: Collaborate with the OSPI's Student Support Division to disseminate research-based guidance around effective implementation of schoolwide discipline systems and provide professional development and technical assistance to leadership and staff to build their capacity to implement these practices.
- Principle 7: Disseminate research-based guidance to support schools and districts to engage their parents/families and communities in transformational efforts.

VI. Summary and Next Steps

As stated in the Executive Summary, a thorough review of extant and collected data by the Academic Performance Audit Team led to the identification of a number of concerns; an analysis of these concerns resulted in the formulation of three recommendations. Legislation enacted in 2012 by the Washington State Legislature (E2SSB 5329) requires the district and school to explicitly address the concerns and recommendations when selecting the intervention model and completing the Required Action Plan (submitted to the State Board of Education in June 2014) and Student and School Success Action Plan (submitted to the Office of Student and School Success in October 2014). Recommendations include:

- **Recommendation 1: Ensure all students receive grade-level appropriate core instruction and curriculum by (a) aligning curriculum to Common Core and Washington State Standards; (b) using data to inform and differentiate instruction and interventions based on student needs; and (c) continuing to use culturally responsive practices and appropriate materials.**
- **Recommendation 2: Continue the shared leadership model through the transition and provide co-principals operational flexibility that (a) supports the school's turnaround plan; (b) builds staff capacity to deliver culturally relevant, standards-based instruction and curriculum and use data in making instructional decisions; and (c) aligns with districtwide expectations for increases in student achievement.**

- **Recommendation 3: Build upon the school’s culturally responsive multi-tiered system of academic and social-emotional support, using a data-based inquiry system to track progress and make adjustments for individual students, classrooms, and the school.**

District and school leadership teams should review current Student and School Success Action Plans for both Tulalip Elementary School and Quil Ceda Elementary and make necessary revisions to ensure the recommendations contained within this report are adequately addressed in the combined plan for Tulalip-Quil Elementary School. As indicated in the Executive Summary, the Academic Performance Audit Team believes the *Strengths* articulated in the narrative will serve the school and district well as they address the three recommendations described in this Academic Performance Audit Report.

Further requirements and general timelines for completion of the Required Action Plan are provided below.

RCW 28A.657.050

Required action plans — Development — Publication of guidelines, research, and models — Submission — Contents — Effect on existing collective bargaining agreements. (Effective until June 30, 2019.)

- (1)(a) The local district superintendent and local school board of a school district designated as a required action district must submit a required action plan to the state board of education for approval. Unless otherwise required by subsection (3) of this section, the plan must be submitted under a schedule as required by the state board. A required action plan must be developed in collaboration with administrators, teachers, and other staff, parents, unions representing any employees within the district, students, and other representatives of the local community.
 - (b) The superintendent of public instruction shall provide a district with assistance in developing its plan if requested, and shall develop and publish guidelines for the development of required action plans. The superintendent of public instruction, in consultation with the state board of education, shall also publish a list of research and evidence-based school improvement models, consistent with turnaround principles, approved for use in required action plans.
 - (c) The local school board must conduct a public hearing to allow for comment on a proposed required action plan. The local school district shall submit the plan first to the office of the superintendent of public instruction to review and approve that the plan is consistent with federal and state guidelines, as applicable. After the office of the superintendent of public instruction has approved that the plan is consistent with federal and state guidelines, the local school district must submit its required action plan to the state board of education for approval.
- (2) A required action plan must include all of the following:
 - (a) Implementation of an approved school improvement model required for the receipt of federal or state funds for school improvement for those persistently lowest-achieving schools that the district will be focusing on for required action. The approved school improvement model selected must address the concerns raised in the academic performance audit and be intended to improve student performance to allow a school district to be removed from the list of districts designated as a required action district by the state board of education within three years of implementation of the plan. The required action plan for districts with multiple persistently lowest-achieving schools must include separate plans for each school as well as a plan for how the school district will support the schools collectively;
 - (b) Submission of an application for federal or state funds for school improvement to the superintendent of public instruction;

- (c) A budget that provides for adequate resources to implement the model selected and any other requirements of the plan;
 - (d) A description of the changes in the district's or school's existing policies, structures, agreements, processes, and practices that are intended to attain significant achievement gains for all students enrolled in the school and how the district intends to address the findings of the academic performance audit; and
 - (e) Identification of the measures that the school district will use in assessing student achievement at a school identified as a persistently lowest-achieving school, which include closing the educational opportunity gap, improving mathematics and reading or English language arts student achievement, and improving graduation rates as defined by the office of the superintendent of public instruction that enable the school to no longer be identified as a persistently lowest-achieving school.
- (3)(a) For any district designated for required action, the parties to any collective bargaining agreement negotiated, renewed, or extended under chapter 41.59 or 41.56 RCW after June 10, 2010, must reopen the agreement, or negotiate an addendum, if needed, to make changes to terms and conditions of employment that are necessary to implement a required action plan. For any district applying to participate in a collaborative schools for innovation and success pilot project under RCW 28A.630.104, the parties to any collective bargaining agreement negotiated, renewed, or extended under chapter 41.59 or 41.56 RCW after June 7, 2012, must reopen the agreement, or negotiate an addendum, if needed, to make changes to terms and conditions of employment that are necessary to implement an innovation and success plan.

Timeline

April - May 23, 2014	<p>District and school create Required Action Plan; plan must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of approved school improvement model • Application for state funds • Budget • Description of how the district intends to address the findings of the academy performance audit • Initial Revisions to Student and School Success Action Plan (i.e., Indicators identified in the Academic Performance Audit must be assessed on Indistar®. Additional S.M.A.R.T. Goals and tasks may be included; they are required to be included in the October 30, 2014 submission.) • Identification of measures that the school and district will use to assess student achievement • Collective bargaining agreements-reopen or negotiate an addendum to support plan • Parent/guardian notification of RAD status and process for creating plan <p>District and school share Required Action Plan with stakeholder groups, including local board of education, and incorporate feedback into final Required Action Plan submitted to the Office of Student and School Success.</p>
May 23, 2014	District submits revised Student and School Success Action Plan on Indistar®. Office of Student and School Success reviews Required Action Plan and initial revisions to Student and School Success Action Plan.
May 28, 2014	Office of Student and School Success submits Required Action Plan to State Board of Education.
June 6, 2014	District presents Required Action Plan to State Board of Education for approval.
October 30, 2013	District and school submit Student and School Success Action Plans on Indistar®.

VII. Questions for Leadership Teams to Consider

The questions below emerged during the data review on March 4, 2014 and the on-site visit on April 3, 2014. They are intended to support leadership teams as they engage in dialogues around these recommendations. Leadership teams are NOT required to address the questions in their Required Action Plan or Student and School Success Action Plans. Rather, these questions are only intended to inform their collaborative work.

Recommendation 1: Ensure all students receive grade-level appropriate core instruction and curriculum by (a) aligning curriculum to Common Core and Washington State Standards; (b) using data to inform and differentiate instruction and interventions based on student needs; and (c) continuing to use culturally responsive practices and appropriate materials.

Questions to Consider

The following questions can inform the work of the leadership team as it develops/revises the Student and School Success Plan:

- *How will positions of cultural specialists and behavior interventionists be maintained so that teachers can maintain common data analysis time?*
- *How will the district support ELL and language development training for staff, especially in the areas of Native American math development (e.g., application of Native American Math Avoidance research)?*
- *What structures have been established to plan, implement and monitor professional development provided to staff?*
- *What processes are in place to monitor shifts in educator practice?*
- *How do data teams track the outcomes of their efforts?*
- *How do you track achievement, behavior, and other data of students who have transitioned to the middle school?*

Recommendation 2: Continue the shared leadership model through the transition and provide co-principals operational flexibility that (a) supports the school's turnaround plan; (b) builds staff capacity to deliver culturally relevant, standards-based instruction and curriculum and use data in making instructional decisions; and (c) aligns with districtwide expectations for increases in student achievement.

Questions to Consider:

The following questions can inform the work of the leadership team as it develops/revises the Student and School Success Plan:

- *What supports is the district planning to provide to ensure the success of the school's leaders?*
- *How will the district assign and support central office leaders to engage with the co-principals, facilitate their growth as instructional leaders and building managers, provide them with operating flexibility, and hold them accountable for student learning?*
- *What process will the district use to ensure school leaders will have autonomy/flexibility within a districtwide context of accountability for improved educator practice and student learning?*
- *How will the district differentiate expectations, supports, and services for the school—within the context of district vision, priorities, and strategic plan?*
- *What is the structure of the decision-making system, and what is the role of staff in decision-making in that structure?*

- *How will leadership responsibilities be distributed among district and school leaders?*
- *How will the superintendent and district leaders demonstrate shared accountability for the school's success?*

Recommendation 3: Build upon the school's culturally responsive multi-tiered system of academic and social-emotional support, using a data-based inquiry system to track progress and make adjustments for individual students, classrooms, and the school.

Questions to Consider

The following questions can inform the work of the leadership team as it develops/revises the Student and School Success Plan:

- *What professional development can be provided to expand visions for engagement with families and community?*
- *How can staff develop transparency in their practices to develop and consistently implement school and classroom practices rules and procedures?*
- *What further refinement is needed in the implementation of the school's multi-tiered system of student support (e.g., development of behavior data team)?*
- *How do students move between tiers and how are interventions determined? How is effectiveness of interventions determined so that students exit the intervention and return to core?*
- *How are academic expectations communicated to parents and supported in the home environment?*

VIII. Appendix

Appendix A: Required Action District Frequently Asked Questions

Appendix B: School Data Dashboard

Appendix C: Assessment of Progress Report

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Required Action District (RAD), Level One Frequently Asked Questions

1. Which school districts can become a required action district?

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is required to annually recommend to the State Board of Education (SBE) school districts for designation as required action districts. A district with at least one school identified as persistently lowest achieving will be designated as required action district. The SBE may designate a district that received a school improvement grant in 2010 or 2011 as a required action district if after three years of voluntarily implementing a plan the district continues to have a school identified as persistently lowest achieving and meets the criteria for designation established by the superintendent of public instruction. See **RCW 28A.657.020** and **RCW 28A.657.030** for additional information.

2. How does a school district superintendent request reconsideration?

A school district superintendent may request reconsideration of the superintendent of public instruction's recommendation. The reconsideration shall be limited to a determination of whether the school district met the criteria for being recommended as a required action district. A request for reconsideration must be in writing and received by superintendent of public instruction within ten days of receipt of the letter notifying the school district of the superintendent's recommendation. See **RCW 28A.657.030** for additional information.

3. What are the requirements for required action districts?

a) **External Review (Academic Performance Audit):** OSPI will provide an external review team to conduct an academic performance audit of the district and each persistently lowest achieving school. The audit will identify potential reasons for the school's low performance and lack of progress. The review team will consist of persons who have expertise in comprehensive school and district reform. The team may not include staff from the agency, the school district that is the subject of the audit, or members or staff of the SBE. The audit is based on criteria developed by OSPI and **must include** but not be limited to an examination of the following:

- Student demographics
- Mobility patterns
- School feeder patterns
- The performance of different student groups on assessments
- Effective school leadership
- Strategic allocation of resources
- Clear and shared focus on student learning
- High standards and expectations for all students
- High level of collaboration and communication
- Aligned curriculum, instruction, and assessment to state standards
- Frequency of monitoring of learning and teaching
- Focused professional development
- Supportive learning environment
- High level of family and community involvement
- Alternative secondary schools best practices and
- Any unique circumstances or characteristics of the school or district.

Audit findings must be made available to the local school district, its staff, the community, and the SBE. See **RCW 28A.657.040** for additional information.

b) **School Improvement Model:** The district must select and implement a federal- or state-approved school improvement model. Federal models include Closure, Restart, Transformation, and Turnaround. The district may adopt Washington State's Synergy Model that was developed by the Office of Student and

School Success. The selected model must address the concerns raised in the academic performance audit and be designed to increase educator capacity and substantially improve student achievement.

- c) **Required Action Plan:** The local district superintendent and local school board of a school district designated as a required action district must submit a required action plan to the SBE for approval. The SBE will establish submission dates for required action plans. A required action plan must be developed in collaboration with administrators, teachers, and other staff; parents; unions representing any employees within the district; students; and other representatives of the local community. The school board must conduct a public hearing to allow for comment on a proposed required action plan. See **RCW 28A.657.040** and **RCW 28A.657.050** for additional information.
- d) **Online action-planning platform (Indistar[®]):** Districts and schools must use OSPI's approved online action-planning platform (Indistar[®]) to create, implement, monitor, and revise their required action plans. Staff in OSPI's Office of Student and School Success will provide support to district and school teams to use Indistar[®] as the platform for their action planning.
- e) **Parent notification:** A district designated as a required action district must notify all parents of students attending a school identified as a persistently lowest achieving school in the district of the SBE's designation of the district as a required action district and the process for complying with the required action district requirements. See **RCW 28A.657.040** through **28A.657.100**.
- f) **Collective Bargaining Agreement:** The parties to any collective bargaining agreement negotiated, renewed, or extended under chapter 41.59 or 41.56 RCW after June 10, 2010 by a required action district must reopen the agreement, or negotiate an addendum, if needed, to make changes to terms and conditions of employment that are necessary to implement a required action plan. If the school district and the employee organizations are unable to agree on the terms of an addendum or modification to an existing collective bargaining agreement, the parties, including all labor organizations affected under the required action plan, must request the public employment relations commission to, and the commission shall, appoint an employee of the commission to act as a mediator to assist in the resolution of a dispute between the school district and the employee organizations. See **RCW 28A.657.040** for specific guidance for mediation of an addendum or modification of an existing collective bargaining agreement and other information.
- g) **Professional development and technical assistance (PD/TA):** School and district teams will engage in required PD/TA to build leadership and instructional capacity to effectively implement their action plan.

4. What elements must be included in the Required Action Plan?

- a) **The plan must include the following.**
 - i. **Selection and implementation of an approved school improvement model.** The approved school improvement model selected must address the concerns raised in the academic performance audit and be intended to improve student performance to allow a school district to be removed from the list of districts designated as a required action district by the SBE within three years of implementation of the plan. The required action plan for districts with multiple persistently lowest achieving schools must include **separate plans** for each school as well as a plan for how the school district will support the schools collectively.
 - ii. **Funding:** The district must submit an application to OSPI for federal or state funds for school improvement.
 - iii. **Budget:** The plan must include a budget that provides for adequate resources to implement the selected model and any other requirements of the plan.

- iv. **Changes to existing policies, practices, etc.:** The plan must include descriptions of changes in the district's or school's existing policies, structures, agreements, processes, and practices that are intended to attain significant achievement gains for all students enrolled in the school.
- v. **Academic Performance Audit:** The district must also describe how it intends to address the findings of the academic performance audit.
- vi. **Data measures:** The plan must identify the measures that the school district will use in assessing the school's student achievement. Measures will include those related to closing the educational opportunity gap, improving mathematics and reading or English language arts student achievement, and improving graduation rates as defined by OSPI; these measures will also be used to determine the school's status as a persistently lowest achieving school.

- b) **Assistance with the required action plan:** OSPI will provide guidelines for the development of required action plans, as well as a list of research and evidence-based school improvement models to be implemented in the plan. If requested, OSPI will provide a school district with assistance in developing its plan. The local school board will first submit the plan to OSPI to review and approve that the plan is consistent with federal and state guidelines, as applicable. After OSPI approves the plan is consistent with federal and state guidelines, the local school district must submit its required action plan to the SBE for approval. See **RCW 28A.657.040** for additional information.
- c) **Review of the required action plan:** The required action plan developed by a district's school board and superintendent must be submitted to the SBE for approval. The SBE shall approve a plan proposed by a school district only if the plan meets the requirements in RCW 28A.657.050 and provides sufficient remedies to address the findings in the academic performance audit to improve student achievement. Any addendum or modification to an existing collective bargaining agreement, negotiated under RCW 28A.657.050 or by agreement of the district and the exclusive bargaining unit, related to student achievement or school improvement shall not go into effect until approval of a required action plan by the SBE. *Note.* The SBE must accept for inclusion in any required action plan the final decision by the superior court on any issue certified by the executive director of the public employment relations commission under the process in RCW 28A.657.050. See **RCW 28A.657.060** for additional information.
- d) **Timeline for implementing the action plan:** If federal or state funds for this purpose are available, a required action plan must be implemented in the immediate school year following the district's designation as a required action district. See **RCW 28A.657.060** for additional information.
- e) **Technical Assistance and Progress Monitoring:** OSPI must provide the required action district with technical assistance and federal or state funds for school improvement, if available, to implement an approved plan. The district must submit a report to OSPI that provides the progress the district is making in meeting the student achievement goals based on the state's assessments, identifying strategies and assets used to solve audit findings, and establishing evidence of meeting plan implementation benchmarks as set forth in the required action plan. OSPI will report to the SBE twice a year on the progress of a required action district in implementing the required action plan. See **RCW 28A.657.090** for additional information.

5. How can a required action district be released from the designation?

OSPI must recommend to the SBE that a school district be released from the designation as a required action district after the district implements a required action plan for a period of three years; has made progress as defined by the superintendent of public instruction using the criteria adopted under RCW 28A.657.020 including progress in closing the educational opportunity gap; and no longer has a school within the district identified as persistently lowest achieving. The SBE shall release a school district from the designation as a required action district upon confirmation that the district has met the requirements for a release.

If the SBE determines that the required action district has not met the requirements for release after at least three years of implementing a required action plan, the board may recommend that the district remain in required action and submit a new or revised plan under the process in RCW 28A.657.050, or the SBE may direct that the school district be assigned to level two of the required action process as provided in RCW 28A.657.105. If the required action district received a federal school improvement grant for the same persistently lowest achieving school in 2010 or 2011, the SBE may direct that the school district be assigned to level two of the required action process after one year of implementing a required action plan under this chapter if the district is not making progress. Before making a determination of whether to recommend that a school district that is not making progress remain in required action or be assigned to level two of the required action process, the SBE must submit its findings to the education accountability system oversight committee under RCW 28A.657.130 and provide an opportunity for the oversight committee to review and comment. See **RCW 28A.657.100** for additional information.

Additional information regarding the required action plan follows.

6. What if the SBE rejects the required action plan?

If the SBE does not approve a proposed plan, it must notify the local school board and local district's superintendent in writing with an explicit rationale for why the plan was not approved. With the assistance of OSPI, the superintendent and school board of the required action district shall either: (1) submit a new plan to the SBE for approval within forty days of notification that its plan was rejected, or (2) submit a request to the required action plan review panel established under RCW 28A.657.070 for reconsideration of the SBE's rejection within ten days of the notification that the plan was rejected. See **RCW 28A.657.040** for information.

7. What is the required action plan review panel?

A required action plan review panel is composed of five individuals with expertise in school improvement, school and school district restructuring, or parent and community involvement in schools. Two of the panel members shall be appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives; two shall be appointed by the president of the Senate; and one shall be appointed by the governor. The panel is to provide an objective, external review of a request from a school district for reconsideration of the SBE's rejection of the district's required action plan or reconsideration of a level two required action plan developed only by the superintendent of public instruction as provided under RCW 28A.657.105. The review and reconsideration by the panel shall be based on whether the SBE or the superintendent of public instruction gave appropriate consideration to the unique circumstances and characteristics identified in the academic performance audit or level two needs assessment and review of the local school district. See **RCW 28A.657.070** for additional information.

9. What happens if the school district does not submit the required action plan in time?

The SBE may direct the superintendent of public instruction to require a school district that has not submitted a final required action plan for approval, or has submitted but not received SBE approval of a required action plan by the beginning of the school year in which the plan is intended to be implemented, to redirect the district's Title I funds based on the academic performance audit findings. See **RCW 28A.657.080** for information.

2013 School Data Dashboard

Site:	Tulalip Elem
District:	Marysville

READING (MSP / HSPE)

STATUS (Percent Meeting Standard)						IMPROVEMENT per Year (change in percentage points per year over 5 years)		
	Reading 2013	Reading 2012	Change	Change in Percent	For 2013, Above or Below Your District?	School Trend vs. District	School	District
Grade 3	47.7%	27.0%	↑	20.7%	Below ●	Grade 3 ●	5.7%	-0.5%
Grade 4	42.5%	27.8%	↑	14.7%	Below ●	Grade 4 ●	-2.1%	0.1%
Grade 5	34.1%	40.6%	↓	-6.5%	Below ●	Grade 5 ●	0.3%	-0.3%

MATHEMATICS (MSP / EOC)

STATUS (Percent Meeting Standard)						IMPROVEMENT per Year (change in percentage points per year over 5 years)		
	Math 2013	Math 2012	Change	Change in Percent	For 2013, Above or Below Your District?	School Trend vs. District	School	District
Grade 3	20.5%	10.8%	↑	9.7%	Below ●	Grade 3 ●	-1.0%	-0.7%
Grade 4	27.5%	5.6%	↑	21.9%	Below ●	Grade 4 ●	-0.9%	1.1%
Grade 5	22.0%	21.9%	→	0.1%	Below ●	Grade 5 ●	2.5%	1.3%

WRITING

STATUS (Percent Meeting Standard)						IMPROVEMENT per Year (change in percentage points per year over 5 years)		
	Writing 2013	Writing 2012	Change	Change in Percent	For 2013, Above or Below Your District?	School Trend vs. District	School	District
Grade 4	27.5%	25.0%	↑	2.5%	Below ●	Grade 4 ●	-3.3%	-1.0%

SCIENCE (MSP / EOC)

STATUS (Percent Meeting Standard)						IMPROVEMENT per Year (change in percentage points per year over 5 years)		
	Science 2013	Science 2012	Change	Change in Percent	For 2013, Above or Below Your District?	School Trend vs. District	School	District
Grade 5	29.3%	18.8%	↑	10.5%	Below ●	Grade 5 ●	5.1%	9.6%

*Interpretation Tips: **STATUS** is a simple comparison between 2013 and 2012 results. **Above or Below the District** compares the school's 2013 results to the district's to determine whether they are above or below (equal means +/- 2%). **IMPROVEMENT** is a 5-year trend in percentage points per year. Larger positive values are better – implying greater improvement each year. Negative values indicate a declining trend in the percent of students meeting standard.*

2013 School Data Dashboard

Site:	Tulalip Elem
District:	Marysville

READING: Impact of Programs for Level-1 Students

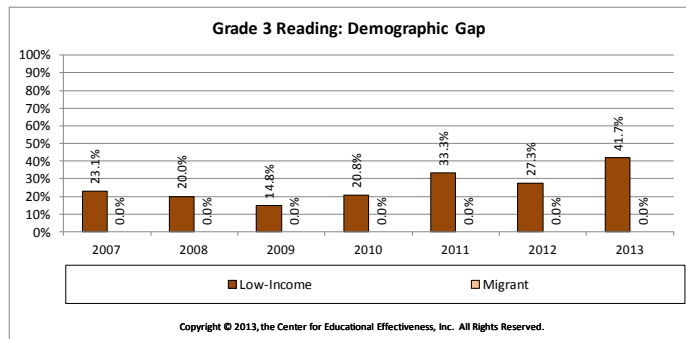
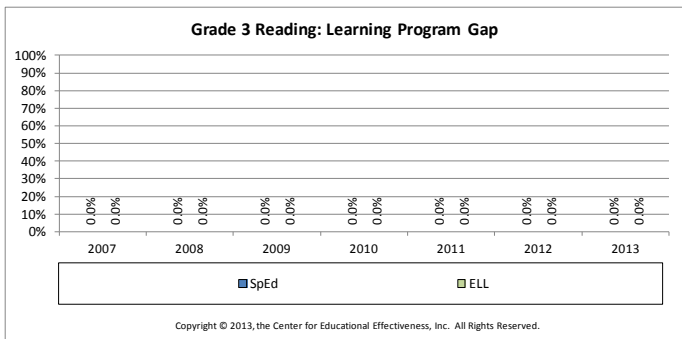
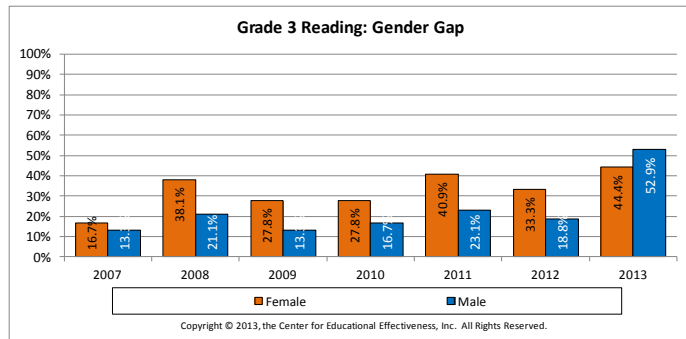
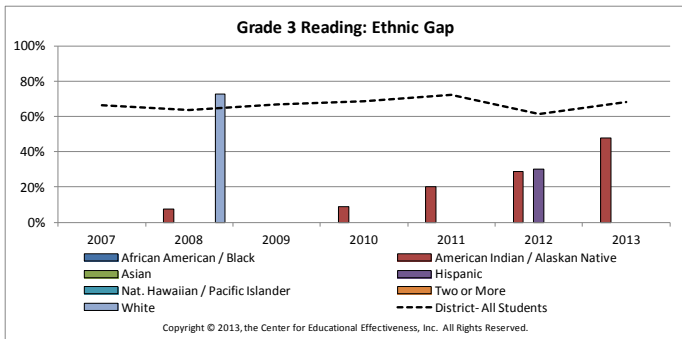
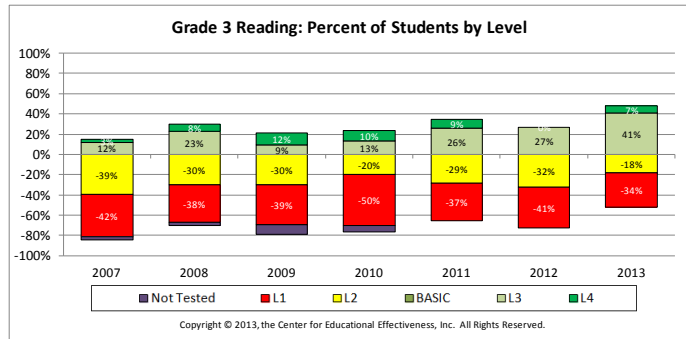
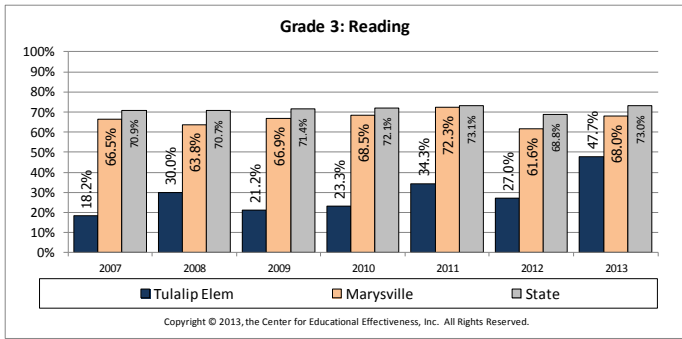
STATUS (Percent at Level-1)						5-Yr Trend: Is percent at Level-1 declining (percentage points / year)?		
	2013 % at Level-1	2012 % at Level-1	Change (we want values < 0%)		Is Level-1 larger than the District?	School Trend vs. District	School	District
Grade 3	34.1%	40.5%	●	-6.4%	Larger ●	Grade 3 ●	-2.0%	0.3%
Grade 4	15.0%	19.4%	●	-4.4%	Larger ●	Grade 4 ●	-2.4%	-0.5%
Grade 5	24.4%	28.1%	●	-3.7%	Larger ●	Grade 5 ●	-3.6%	-0.4%

MATH: Impact of Programs for Level-1 Students

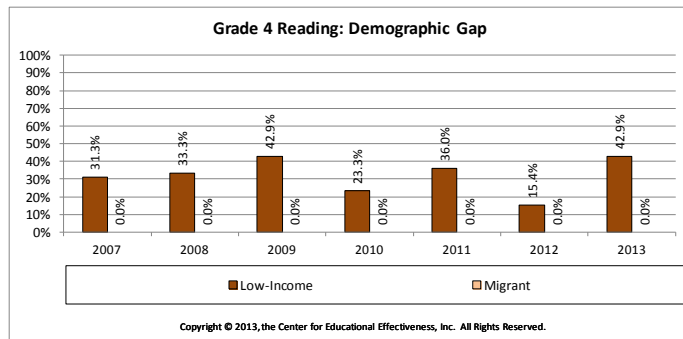
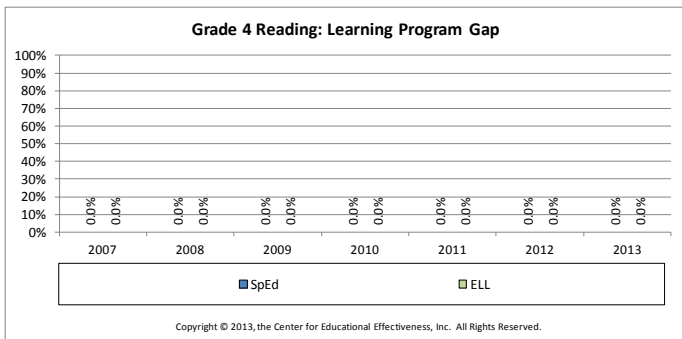
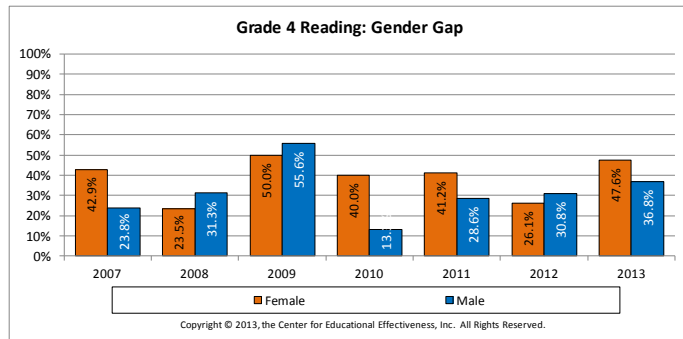
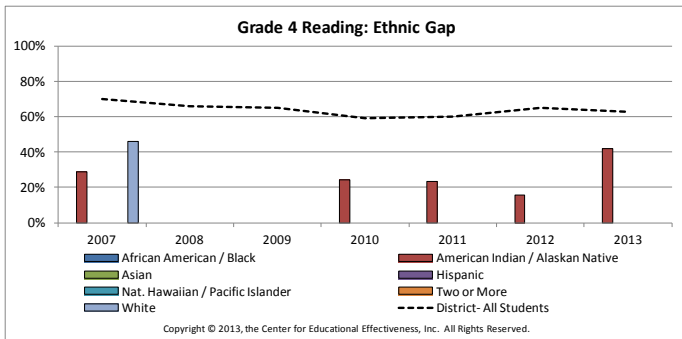
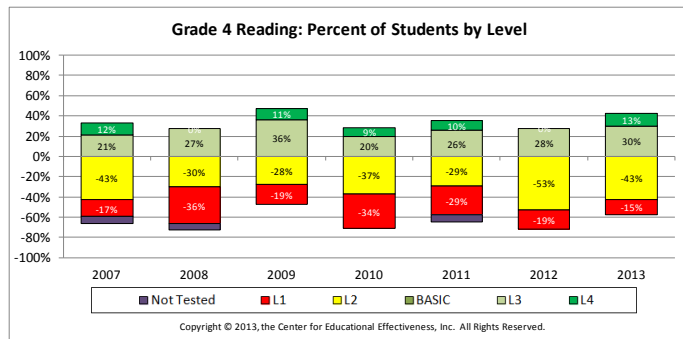
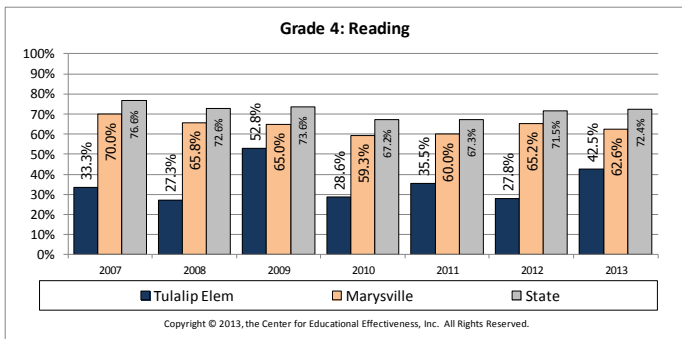
STATUS (Percent at Level-1)						5-Yr Trend: Is percent at Level-1 declining (percentage points / year)?		
	2013 % at Level-1	2012 % at Level-1	Change (we want values < 0%)		Is Level-1 larger than the District?	School Trend vs. District	School	District
Grade 3	52.3%	67.6%	●	-15.3%	Larger ●	Grade 3 ●	0.7%	-0.6%
Grade 4	60.0%	72.2%	●	-12.2%	Larger ●	Grade 4 ●	4.1%	0.5%
Grade 5	53.7%	53.1%	●	0.6%	Larger ●	Grade 5 ●	-2.4%	-1.5%

*Interpretation Tips: **STATUS** is a simple measure of the percentage of students at Level-1 (Level-1 is defined as "well below standard" for MSP, HSPE, and EOC). A smaller percentage at Level-1 is better. This is a direct measure of the impact of interventions for struggling students. For **Change**, we want the percentage of students at Level-1 to decline— so negative values are best. The **5-year Trend** looks at whether the school is shrinking the percentage of students at Level-1 over time. The values are percentage points per year. The larger negative values are better-- implying greater decline in the percentage of students at Level-1.*

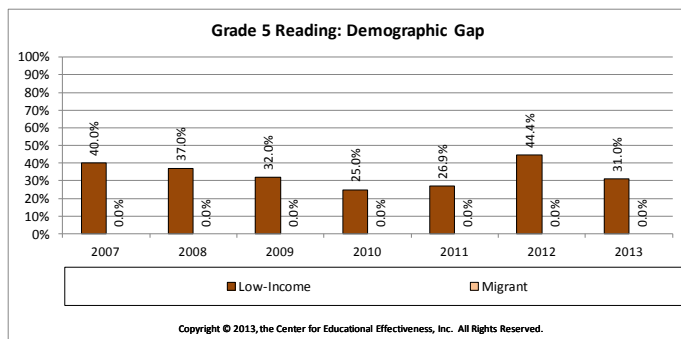
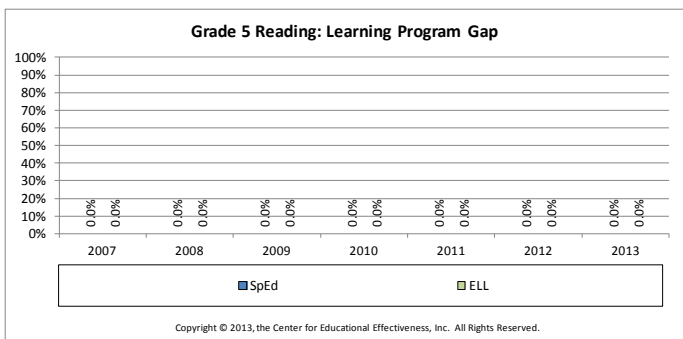
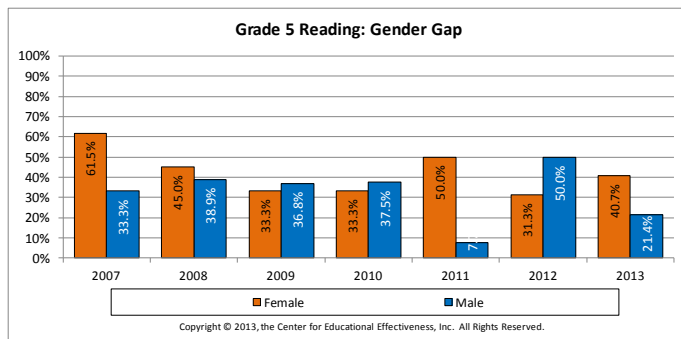
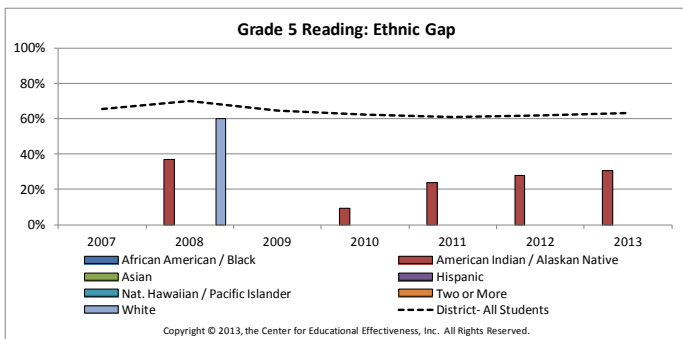
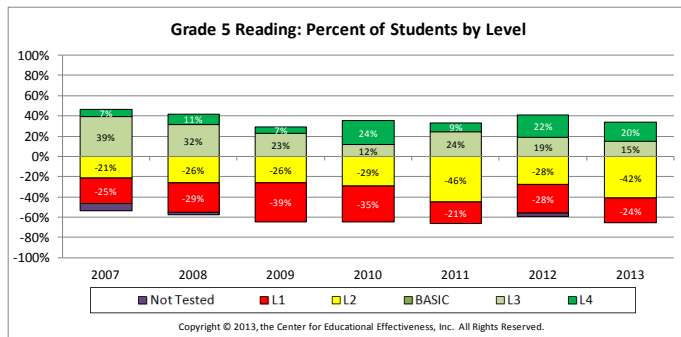
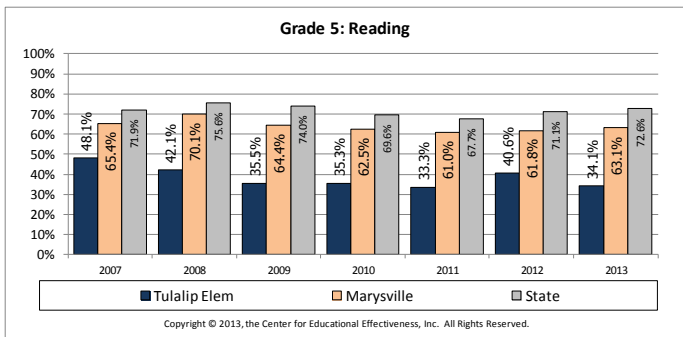
Reading Grade 3



Reading Grade 4

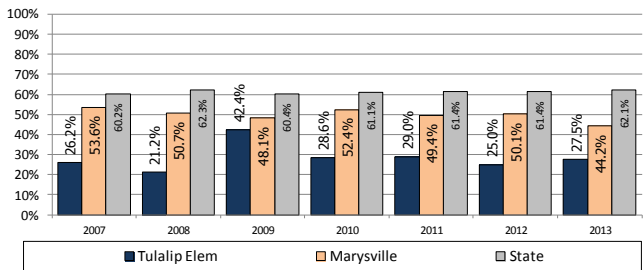


Reading Grade 5



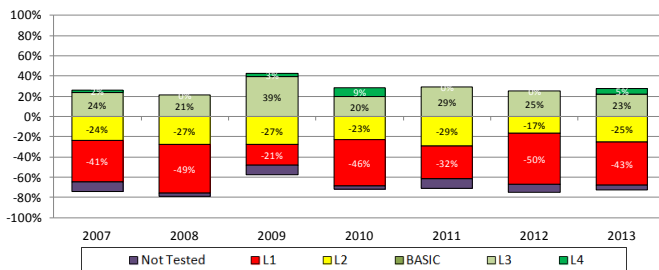
Writing Grade 4

Grade 4: Writing



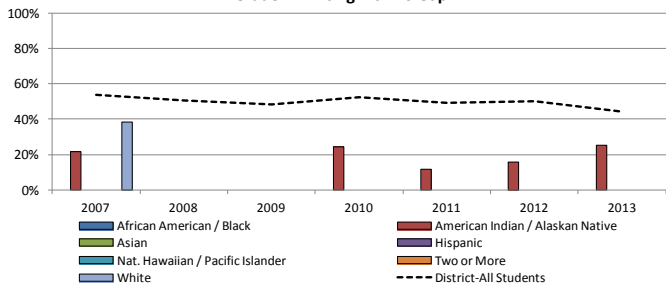
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Grade 4 Writing: Percent of Students by Level



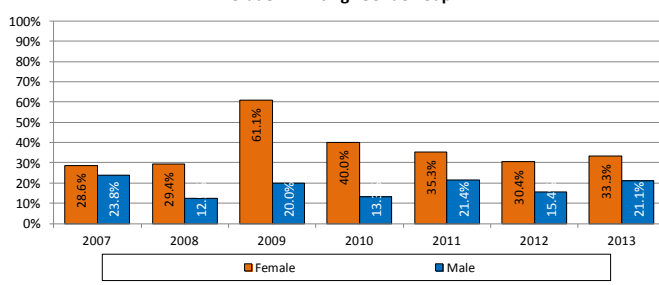
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Grade 4 Writing: Ethnic Gap



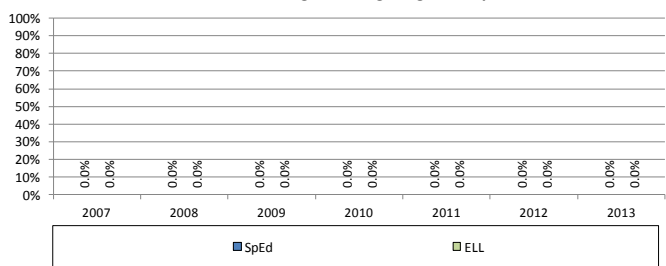
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Grade 4 Writing: Gender Gap



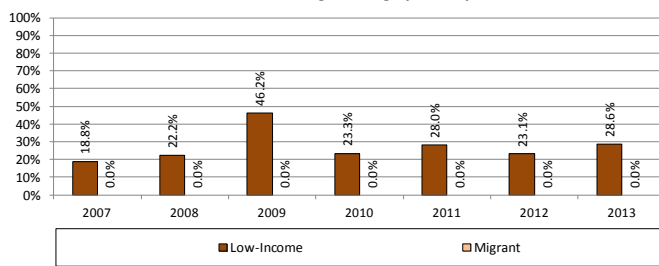
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Grade 4 Writing: Learning Program Gap



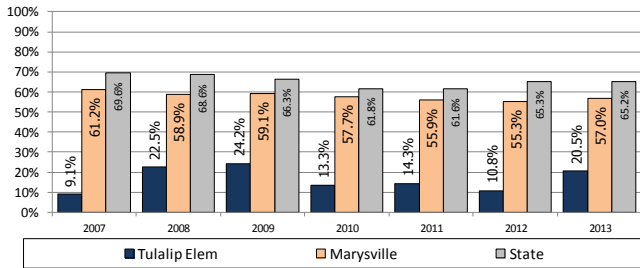
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Grade 4 Writing: Demographic Gap



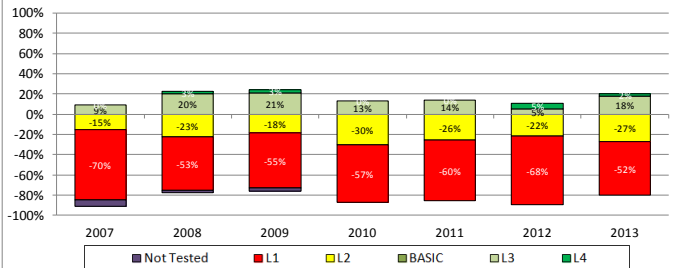
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Grade 3: Math



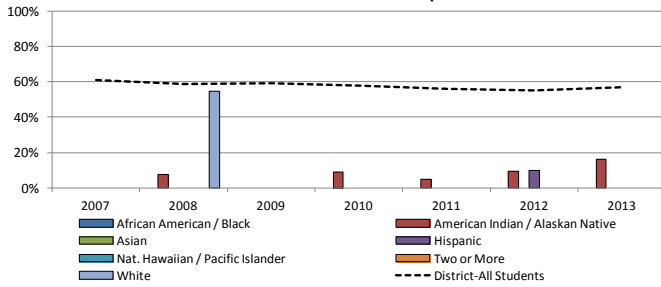
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Grade 3 Math: Percent of Students by Level



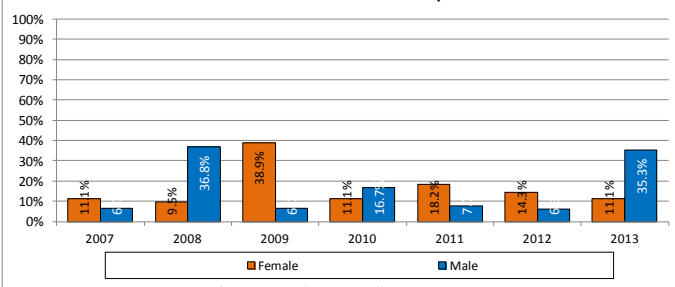
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Grade 3 Math: Ethnic Gap



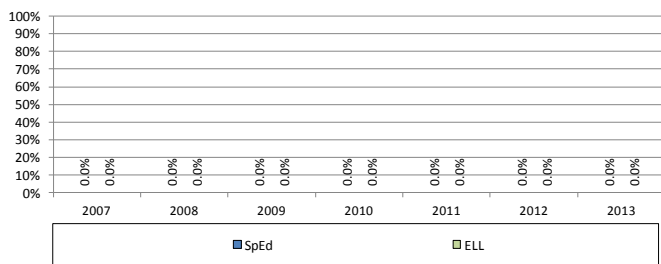
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Grade 3 Math: Gender Gap



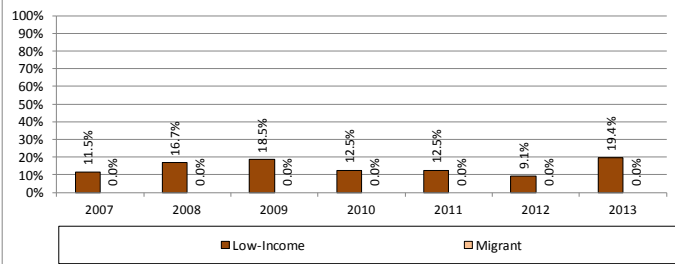
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Grade 3 Math: Learning Program Gap



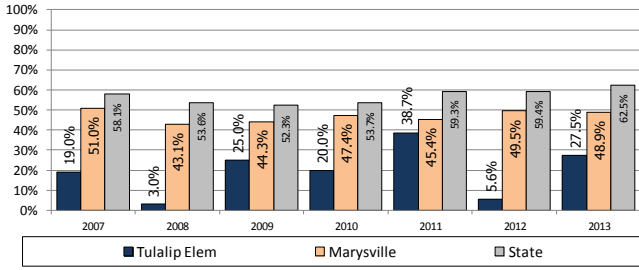
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Grade 3 Math: Demographic Gap



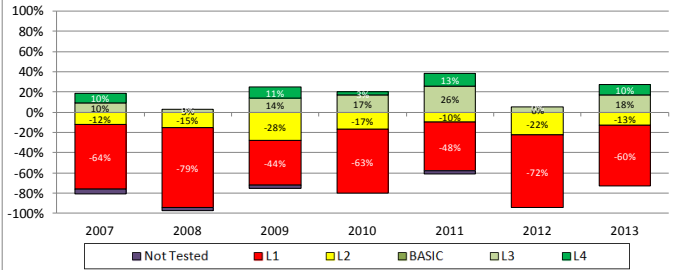
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Grade 4: Math



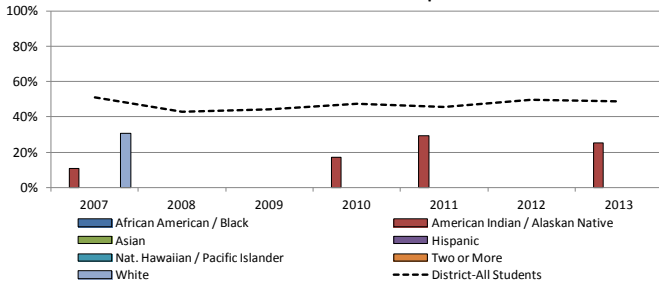
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Grade 4 Math: Percent of Students by Level



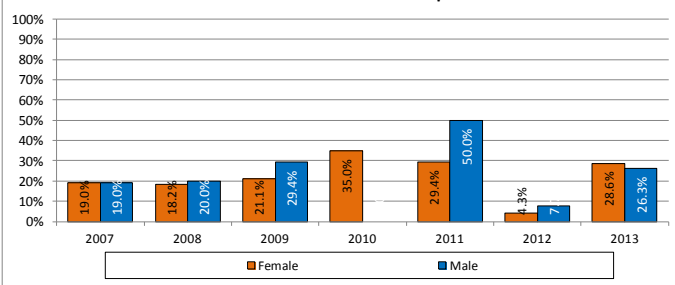
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Grade 4 Math: Ethnic Gap



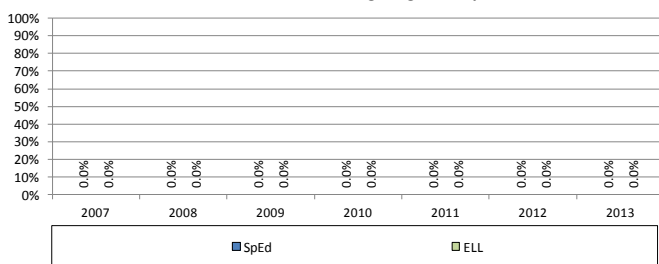
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Grade 4 Math: Gender Gap



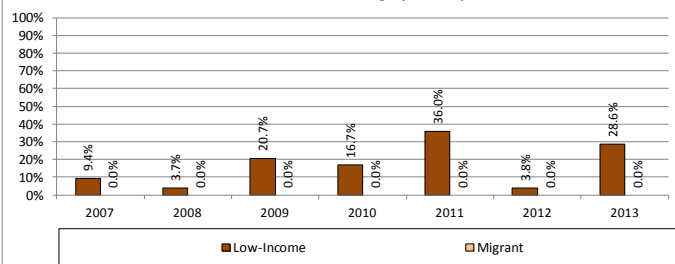
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Grade 4 Math: Learning Program Gap



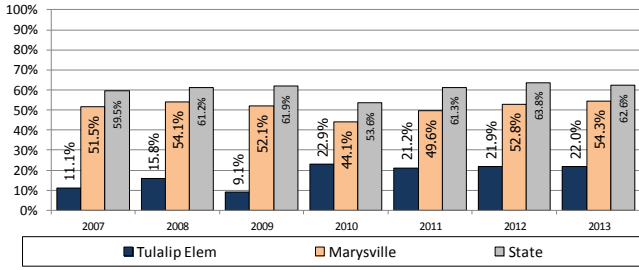
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Grade 4 Math: Demographic Gap



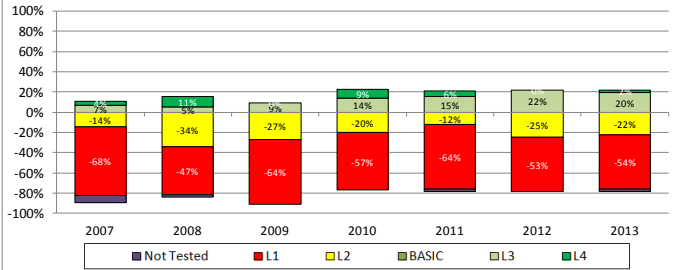
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Grade 5: Math



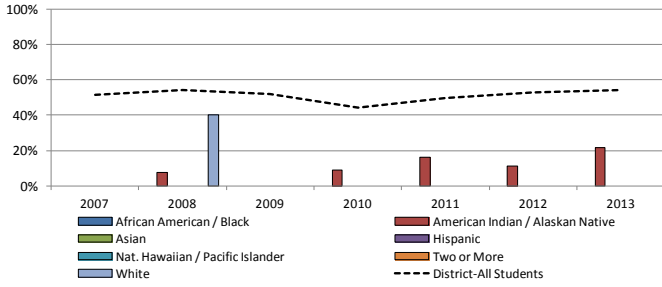
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Grade 5 Math: Percent of Students by Level



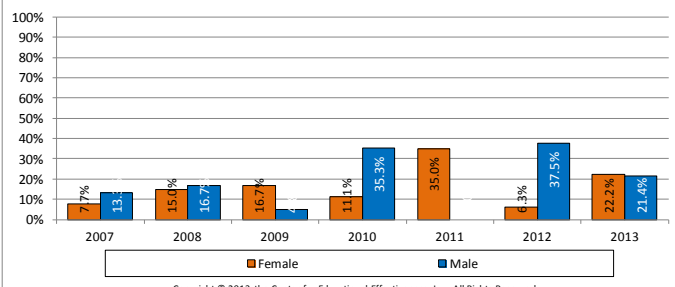
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Grade 5 Math: Ethnic Gap



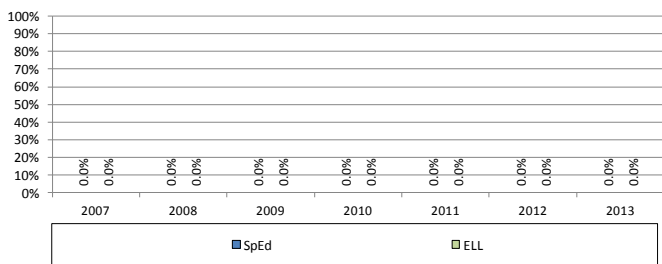
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Grade 5 Math: Gender Gap



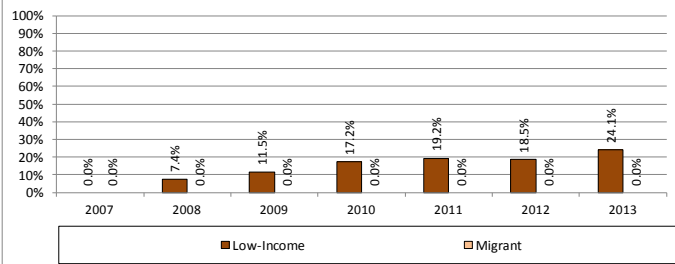
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Grade 5 Math: Learning Program Gap



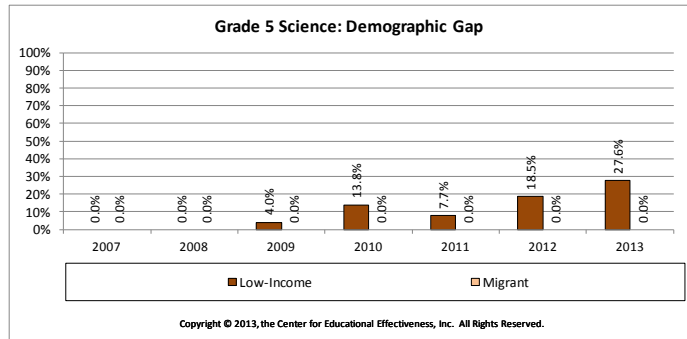
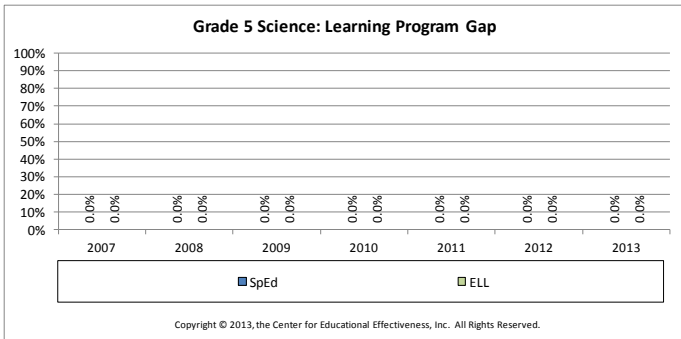
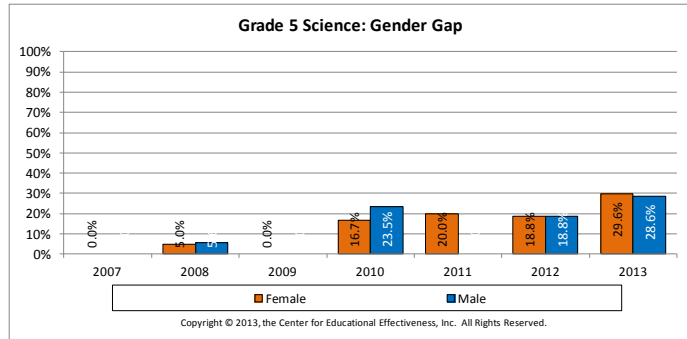
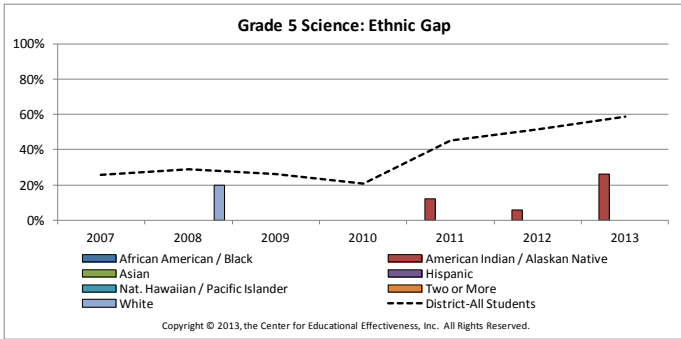
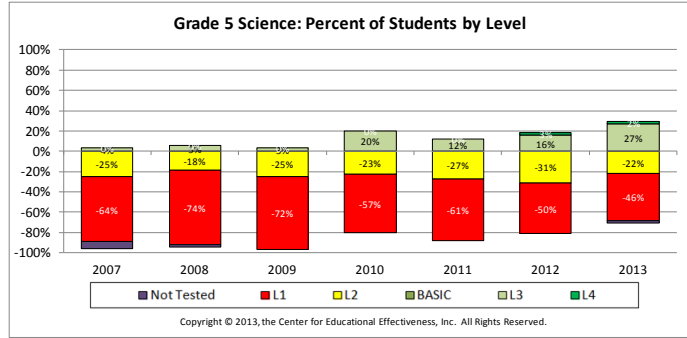
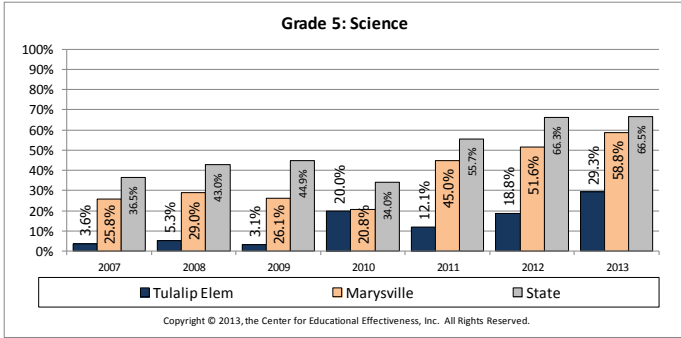
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Grade 5 Math: Demographic Gap



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Science Grade 5



MERIT - Assessment of Progress

**Tulalip Elementary School
Marysville School District
April 9, 2013**



School and Classroom Practices Study

Prepared by



BAKER ■ EVALUATION ■ RESEARCH ■ CONSULTING

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Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

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Tulalip Elementary School Assessment of Progress

Introduction

In 2010, the Marysville School District (MSD) applied for and received a federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) for one of its schools, Tulalip Elementary School (TES). As part of the application process, The BERC Group, Inc. conducted a School and Classroom Practices Study (SCPS) at Tulalip ES. The BERC Group a) reviewed district level practices and policies to identify potential supports and barriers that may impact the district's ability to implement an intervention; b) collected classroom observation data focusing on instructional practices within the school; and c) conducted qualitative interviews and focus groups focusing on the alignment of school structures and practices with OSPI's Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools. Findings noted in the initial report were used to complete the application for SIG support and were incorporated into the ongoing implementation of improvement goals and action plans at the school and district levels.

This report is a follow-up to the initial report, highlighting changes the school and district have made over the last year related to the School Improvement Grant (SIG). Evaluators repeated the data collection process used for the first report. The findings in this report are based on information gathered from the following sources:

- 1) a review of changes in district level practices and policies to support an intervention model;
- 2) a classroom observation study focusing on instructional practices within the school;
- 3) qualitative interviews and focus groups focusing on the alignment of school structures and practices with OSPI's *Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools*; and
- 4) surveys of school staff, students, and parents.

Evaluators obtained information during a site visit on April 9, 2013. Approximately 48 people, including district and building administrators, union leaders, certificated and non-certificated staff members, counselor, and parents participated in interviews and focus groups. In addition, evaluators conducted 17 classroom observations to determine the extent to which Powerful Teaching and Learning™ was present in the school. Finally, evaluators accessed additional information about the school and district; including the Comprehensive Plan Report, GROW plan, *Closing the Opportunity Gap for Native Student Achievement* and *History and Culture of The Tulalip Tribes* documents provided by district office, student achievement data, and additional school documents.

The following section describes the federal intervention model MSD and TES chose to adopt. This section also includes a comparative overview of the district findings from both SCPS studies, a description of the support provided to the school by the district, and a summary of the changes made at the school level. Subsequent sections of the report offer a detailed review of the school's alignment to the *Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools* based on classroom observations, interviews and focus groups, and survey data. Under each of the *Nine Characteristics* indicators, the report will highlight how the school has addressed issues brought to light in the initial study.

Implementation of the Intervention Model

In an effort to improve education and educational opportunities across the nation, the federal government provided funding for School Improvement Grants to support the lowest performing districts and schools. Schools and districts accepting SIG money chose from among four federally defined intervention models for their lowest performing schools: *Closure*, *Restart*, *Turnaround*, and *Transformation*. The school closure model refers to a district closing a school and enrolling the students who attended the school in other higher-achieving schools in the district. The restart model occurs when a district converts the school or closes and reopens it under management of an educational management organization (EMO). The turnaround model includes replacing the principal and rehiring no more than 50% of the school's staff, adopting a new governance structure, and implementing a research-based instructional program aligned to state standards. This model has produced significant gains in student achievement and has helped schools prepare for the longer process of transformation into a high performing organization.¹ The transformation model requires replacing the school principal, addresses four areas critical to transforming persistently low-achieving schools: developing teacher and principal leader effectiveness, implementing instructional reform strategies, extending learning time and creating community connections, and providing operating flexibility and sustained support.

MSD and TES chose to adopt and implement the *Turnaround* model. The table in Appendix A of this report describes the specific requirements for the transformation model in more detail and shows a comparison of rankings for each requirement from each of the Studies.

District and School Level Change

District Overview

The most current demographic data from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) shows MSD serving approximately 11,500 students. The district has 11 elementary schools, four middle schools, two high schools and one secondary campus serving several small learning communities, and an alternative school. MSD's ethnic makeup consists of 58.6% White, 18.5% Hispanic, 10.4% two or more races, 5.9% American Indian, 5.2% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1.4% Black. The district's free and reduced lunch percentage is 48.1%. The students with disabilities make up 15.1% of the student population, while the Transitional Bilingual is 6.3%. MSD employs 569 classroom teachers with an average of 12 years of experience and 62% hold at least a master's degree. Out of these teachers, 534 teach core classes and 99.6% meet the highly qualified definition.

For the 2013-2014 school year, MSD will see a change in leadership at the district level. Several retirements have been announced including the superintendent, assistant-superintendent, executive director of human resources, and director of school improvement. In early January, the Board of Directors selected a consultant company to begin their search and recruitment for the superintendent position. They held over 30 meetings with a variety of stakeholder groups, and offered opportunities for electronic and paper surveys. The purpose was to gather input to

¹ Mass Insight (June 2010). *School Turnaround Models*. Boston, MA.: Mass Insight Education and Research Institute.

develop selection criteria. Through this feedback, it was determined that the candidate chosen would need to demonstrate success in the following areas: Student Achievement, Leadership, Community Partnerships/Relationships, Budget, Diversity/Multicultural, Roots and Wings, and Commitment to Marysville. The MSD Board of Directors took formal action on March 28, 2013 at a special session board meeting to hire Dr. Becky Berg effective July 1, 2013. She is currently the superintendent of Deer Park School District in Washington State.

Even with the change in leadership, there is a sense of commitment from the central office to ensure a continued focus on student achievement centered on math and literacy. District leaders continue working to accomplish the district mission of "Every student 100% Proficient in literacy and math; Graduating on time; Prepared for success in college, career, and responsible citizenship." The district's focus on student achievement has led to curriculum and system changes over the last several years. These changes have generated a student-focused and results-driven approach to guide the district. The district continues to be committed to the implementation of Response to Intervention (RtI) and its full implementation next year.

District leaders are providing school personnel with professional development directly aligned with the goal of closing achievement gaps and the planning of training includes input from both district and school personnel. District leaders believe teacher practice can be improved with a model of support that includes job embedded training and intense coaching cycles. Principals are directly involved with teacher professional development and look for implementation when conducting informal walkthroughs and formal classroom observations; verifying that the professional development is being applied in the classroom. District personnel provided support for this by ensuring principals are trained in conducting informal walkthroughs, formal classroom observations, and assessing the essential components of lesson plans.

In 2011, the union leadership expressed a strong willingness to explore a new evaluation and professional growth model that included some aspect of student growth. The Union President said, "We are in the process of developing a competency-based evaluation system. We hope to roll it out in April and pilot it next year. Using assessment data to inform instruction is what we are trying to get better at. I think the use of student performance data should be a part of the system." In 2012, OSPI made a decision to eliminate some of the pilot teacher evaluation models and the model Marysville was working with was one of the ones eliminated. A significant amount of work went into the pilot and the district had to begin fresh with a new TPEP (Teacher/Principal Evaluation Project) model for the 2012-2013 school year. Working closely together, union and district leaders found common ground with the University of Washington's Center for Educational Leadership (UWCEL) 5D teacher evaluation rubric. One district office representative said, "We have been working with CEL here in the district, so their system was familiar to us. This made it easier for us to adopt." District-wide training on the 5D instructional framework happened in the fall and each building provided follow-up professional development as well.

Presently, the Marysville School District has three schools receiving support through School Improvement Grants (SIG). Totem Middle School and Tulalip Elementary School received SIG grants in 2010 and Quil Ceda Elementary School received one in 2011. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOA) exists between the district and these three buildings. According to bargaining team members, the MOA has specific language on seniority, transfers, and extended day. Both the district and union agree it is essential for the three schools to have the right people in place to serve the students. One district representative talked about the agreement, sharing, "I think we have the right people in the right spot. These three schools are not for

everyone. We do not judge when it is not the right fit.” District personnel discussed the importance of school leadership and having strong principals in each building. District leaders discussed how important it is for the schools to have principals with strong instructional and management skills, in addition to needing the stamina and fortitude to make tough decisions, stay the course, and make mid-course key decisions. One district office said, “Our leaders are leading the transformation of our buildings. We have made great strides, but there is still much to do.”

According to district administration, relations with the Tulalip Tribes are the strongest they have ever been. The superintendent and assistant superintendent have committed time and attention to working with Tulalip Tribes, and they believe they are providing many opportunities for the Tribes to influence the direction of the schools. Currently, the two parties are developing a shared leadership compact that will formalize their strong working relationship. To add support within the buildings, the district provides support for a Tribal Liaison in each of the three SIG schools and the Tribes provide Tribal Advocates and a Family Support Liaison as well. The Tulalip Tribes also generously put in an additional one million dollars of funding to support the schools in their improvement efforts. Sadly, several members of the Tulalip Tribes have died recently due to drugs, murders, and natural causes. This has caused a tremendous amount of trauma in the Tulalip community and it has significantly impacting tribal students. In an effort to support these students and their families, the district and the schools have stepped up their efforts to increase counseling support, and teacher awareness.

School and Classroom Level Findings

Survey Results

A survey was administered to TES staff members to measure whether these groups see evidence of the *Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools* in the school. The staff survey includes factors around each of the *Nine Characteristics*, and the family surveys include factors around each of the characteristics, except *Focused Professional Development*. Individual survey items were scored on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral/undecided, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree). Researchers consider a “4” or “5” response on an individual survey item a positive response. Likewise, an overall factor score of 4.0 and above is a positive response. These surveys were not administered in the initial assessment.

A summary of the staff survey findings appears in Figure 1. Several scores are above a 4.0, indicating the factor does exist to a high degree. TES staff members scored the *Monitoring Teaching and Learning* (4.42) factor the highest along with *Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment* (4.40). The lowest factor was *Focused Professional Development* with a score of 3.38, which is in the moderate range. All scores increased from the previous assessment. However, it is noteworthy only 11 staff members responded to all survey items, so these results should be interpreted cautiously.

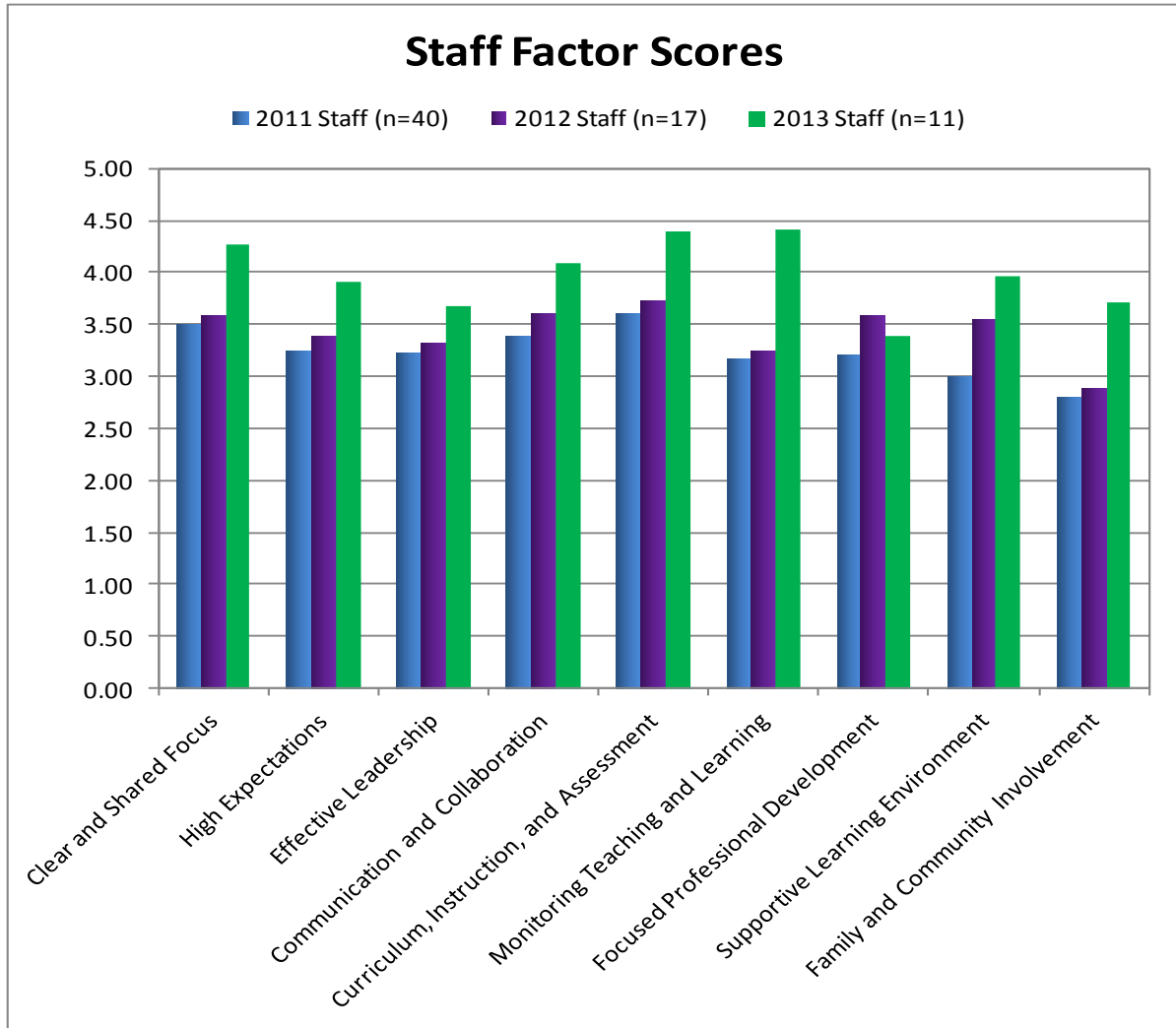


Figure 1. Survey Factor Scores- Staff

School and Classroom Practices Study Findings

Using data collected through the School and Classroom Practices Study and survey results from staff, students, and parents, research team members reached consensus on scores for 19 Indicators organized around the *Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools*. Each Indicator was scored using a rubric with a continuum of four levels that describe the degree to which a school is effectively implementing the Indicator. The four levels are:

- 4 – Leads to continuous improvement and institutionalization (meets criteria in column 3 on this indicator plus additional elements)
- 3 – Leads to effective implementation
- 2 – Initial, beginning, developing
- 1 – Minimal, absent, or ineffective

Indicators with a score of a 3 or above represent strengths in the school, and Indicators with a score of 2 or below warrant attention. Table 1 includes rubric scores for all the Indicators, including the results from the School and Classroom Practices Study conducted in 2010, 2011, 2012, and the current Assessment of Progress.

Table 1.
Indicator Scores for the Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools

Indicators	Rubric Score 2010	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
Clear and Shared Focus				
Core Purpose – Student Learning	2	2	2	3
High Standards and Expectations for All Students				
Academic Focus	2	3	3	3
Rigorous Teaching and Learning	3	3	2	2
Effective School Leadership				
Attributes of Effective School Leaders	3	3	3	3
Capacity Building	2	2	3	3
Distributed Leadership	1	1	2	2
High Levels of Collaboration and Communication				
Collaboration	1	2	3	4
Communication	2	2	3	3
Curriculum, Assessments, and Instruction Aligned with State Standards				
Curriculum	2	3	3	3
Instruction	3	3	2	3
Assessment	3	3	3	4
Frequent Monitoring of Teaching and Learning				
Supporting Students in Need	3	3	3	4
Focused Professional Development				
Planning and Implementation	3	3	3	3
Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	2	2	2	2
Supportive Learning Environment				
Safe and Orderly Environment	1	2	3	2
Building Relationships	1	2	2	3
Personalized Learning for All Students	2	2	3	3
High Levels of Family and Community Involvement				
Family Communication	1	1	3	3
Family and Community Partnerships	1	1	2	2

Clear and Shared Focus

Everyone knows where they are going and why. The focus is on achieving a shared vision, and all understand their role in achieving the vision. The focus and vision are developed from common beliefs and values, creating a consistent direction for all involved.

Indicators	Rubric Score 2010	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
Clear and Shared Focus				
Core Purpose – Student Learning	2	2	2	3

Core Purpose – Student Learning. In the spring of 2010, students and staff at Tulalip Elementary School (TES) pointed to the Orca Motto as their guide. In the spring of 2011, however, a new focus had emerged: P.O.W.E.R. Principles (Proud, Ownership, Welcoming, Encouraging, and Respectful) and C.H.A.M.P.S. Plans (Conversation, Help, Activity, Movement, Participating, and Success) for student behavior management. The core purpose at TES appeared unknown. According to focus groups and interviews, staff and most other adults in the community did not agree on what the school must accomplish. “It’s just too much change in one year for us to really know what the priority is,” explained one staff member.

In 2011-2012, researchers found the vision and mission statements had been changed for the school year when Quil Ceda and TES merged. The Marysville School District moved the Co-Op program from Quil Ceda to another location, and moved TES to the Quil Ceda building. This allowed the district to save operating costs and enabled the Tulalip Tribe to start a pre-school program in the former Tulalip building. Staff interviews revealed the merger seemed rushed and as a result the staff identified goals for the year, but did not have sufficient time to develop a school specific vision and belief statement. They adopted the district's mission and vision statement with the intent of revisiting at a later time. Researchers recommended developing the vision and mission for the merger school must be accomplished before the start of the 2012-2013 school year, because these two statements should be ever present in the minds of staff to drive every decision regarding the school's operation.

During the summer of 2012, some staff members came together and started the development of a new vision and mission statement. They continued this work in August with the entire staff right before school started. According to the building principal, “We got down our values, beliefs, and goals. It was our intention to wrap up this work by the winter break in December. Truly it has been a lack of time. We will have this done by June when the staff leaves for summer so we can start our school year with this firmly in place.”

Even though the mission and vision statements are not in place, the building has developed a set of guidelines for success called GROW and they are displayed in the gym, classrooms, and on posters throughout the school. One staff member said, “These guidelines for success mean more to the students, parents, and staff, than any two lines on a mission statement. GROW is what we stand for.” In addition to GROW, the building has established monthly Tulalip Tribal Values, which are introduced on the first of every month at the daily morning assembly, supported by a guest community member that comes in and speaks on behalf of the value, shares a song, and tells a story that correlates with the value. These monthly values are posted at the entry of the school, in classrooms, and around the school. The Tulalip Tribal Values are

reviewed daily, supported by classroom activities, and connected to the GROW Leaf - Growth Mindset Values and the student of the week awards.

GROW

- G – Grow your brain at least six hours a day!
- R – Respect yourself, all people, and things.
- O – Own your actions and attitudes.
- W – Welcome all who come to our community.

Tulalip Tribal Values

- We respect the community of our elders past and present, and pay attention to their good words. (September)
- We show respect to every individual. (October)
- We strengthen our people so that they may walk a good walk. (November)
- We work hard and always try to do our best. (January)
- It is valued work to uphold and serve our people. (February)
- We uphold and follow the teachings that come from our ancestors. (March)
- We do not gossip, we speak the truth. (April)

Growth Mindset Values and Student of the Week Criteria

- September – Individual endures hardships and overcome obstacles. (Resilient/Persistent)
- October – Maintains control over self in all situations. (Self-control)
- November – Careful and thoughtful about interactions with and actions towards others. (Consciousness)
- December – Individual focuses on things she/he can control. (Focused)
- January – The goal is to learn, learn, learn. (Learner)
- February – Individual works hard and is effortful in all endeavors. (Hard worker)
- March – The realization that everyone has unlimited potential in terms of intellect, athletic ability, and personal character. (Recognizes potential)
- April – Belief that you have within yourself the power to be successful. (Confident)

Staff surveys show 100% agree the school's mission and goals focus on raising the bar for all students and closing the achievement gap, a 19 percentage point increase from 2012; 67% agree the school's mission and goals are developed collaboratively, a 29 percentage point increase; and 89% agree TES allocates resources in alignment with school improvement goals, a 16 percentage point increase from 2012. Further survey results show 82% of the staff members agree important decisions are based on the goals of TES, and 89% believe the building has a data-driven improvement plan with measurable goals.

High Standards and Expectations for All Students

Teachers and staff believe that all students can learn and meet high standards. While recognizing that some students must overcome significant barriers, these obstacles are not seen as insurmountable. All students are offered an ambitious and rigorous course of study.

Indicators	Rubric Score 2010	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
High Standards and Expectations for All Students				
Academic Focus	2	3	3	3
Rigorous Teaching and Learning	3	3	2	2

Academic focus. At the time of the initial assessment in the spring of 2010, expectations and beliefs about students' abilities varied across the school. While staff members agreed there was a range in beliefs and expectations, staff members reported they used the state standards to guide lesson development more in the 2010-11 school year. When asked how they set high expectations for student learning, one staff member responded, "I believe it comes first from the state. We have state standards, and I believe everyone is aware of them. I'm pretty sure we ask teachers about that when they are interviewed to work here."

In the 2011-2012 school year, the merger brought together a total of 2.5 Math coaches, 1.5 Literacy coaches, and a .5 Response to Intervention (RtI) coordinator. This represented a higher than average number of staff members designated to assist teachers in improving their instructional practice. Because the district is leading an initiative to reduce the number of students being placed in special education, staff members have been working to identify the specific needs of the students who have performance levels below proficiency, and creating accelerations that address these deficiencies without labeling these students as special education. This action was supported by the work of the administration and the building coaches.

During 2012-2013, there has been a continued academic focus on using data aligned to Common Core State Standards to identify the specific needs of students and to drive instructional acceleration for students through the work of data teams. The grade level teachers have two planning sessions per week where they track the learning of every child. They use pre- and post-tests to show what students know and where the gaps are. They find strategies for closing gaps, implement those strategies, and report back three weeks later on how many students are meeting the standard. In recognition of their data team work, Quil Ceda and Tulalip elementary schools were named second in the nation for the prestigious Shirley Hord Award. This award was presented at the Learning Forward's National Conference in July 2012. The school submitted their entry, and a video of their work can be found on YouTube. The data team model is based on Doug Reeves', *5 Steps for Data Teams*. At the grade level planning sessions, the teams follow the five step process:

1. Collect and chart data
2. Analyze strengths and obstacles
3. Establish goals: set, review, revise
4. Select instruction strategies

5. Determine results indicators

According to staff members, through the work of these teams, academic rigor has increased and student gaps are decreasing. One staff member said, "Through this process we are learning we can't do it (close academic gaps) alone. It takes all of us to collaborate, data to drive us forward, and be there for each other when times get tough."

Staff survey results show 91% believe they hold each other accountable for student learning, while only 50% believe their students can meet standards. Eighty percent of staff members also expect all staff to perform responsibilities with a high level of excellence. Further, 46% of staff members agree students are promoted to the next instructional level only when they have achieved competency, a 27 percentage point increase from 2012.

Rigorous teaching and learning. Results from the classroom observations show that the focus on teaching and learning continues to be an area of needed improvement. The 2013 classroom observations using the STAR Classroom Observation Protocol™ yielded the following scores on the five essential components (3s and 4s combined): *Skills* (47%), a three percentage point decrease from 2012, *Knowledge* (41%), a one percentage point increase from 2012, *Thinking* (18%), a 17% point decrease from 2012, *Application* (12%), three percentage point decrease from 2012, and *Relationships* (88%), three percentage point increase from 2012. Overall alignment with Powerful Teaching and Learning is 35%, no change from 2012, and 10% points below the STAR average. The *Relationships* Component remains the highest scoring component showing classrooms were supportive and positive overall.

Effective School Leadership

Effective instructional and administrative leadership is required to implement change processes. Effective leaders are proactive and seek help that is needed. They also nurture an instructional program and school culture conducive to learning and professional growth. Effective leaders have different styles and roles. Teachers and other staff, including those in the district office, often have a leadership role.

Indicators	Rubric Score 2010	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
Effective School Leadership				
Attributes of Effective School Leaders	3	3	3	3
Capacity Building	2	2	3	3
Distributed Leadership	1	1	2	2

Attributes of effective school leaders. Attributes of effective school leaders. TES and Quil Ceda ES have a very unique setup. Each school operates as an independent school, but under one roof. Dr. Anthony Craig is the principal of TES and Ms. Kristin DeWitte leads Quil Ceda. Each school has a designated staff that is separate from each other for all administrative matters (payroll, evaluation), but the grade level teams are composed of both Quil Ceda and Tulalip teachers together. Both Dr. Craig and Ms. DeWitte express what a great team they make. Ms. DeWitte said, "Anthony brings history and culture to the building. He is valuable and brings so much to the table. This is a big job and the support that we give each other is essential to bring the two schools together. We may be two schools on paper, but we are moving as one big unit. Couldn't do it without him."

The TES principal is in his second year leading the building, and he has spent his entire career at TES. His career started with his student teaching, then hired as a teacher, moved into a Literacy Coach position, and finally selected to lead the TES staff last year. While he has assumed all of the responsibilities of the principal, his title as "Director of Turnaround Education" was a necessity due to contractual issues. One staff member said, "Anthony is the face of our school. He knows the culture and he knows our families and kids. That type of resource is so valuable for our building." Another staff member echoed this by saying, "We need to be responsive to our community. We need to learn and grow from each other. He (Dr. Craig) is leading the way."

According to staff members, the principal is strong and focused on improving the school. One teacher said, "I think our principal is an excellent leader, he is very knowledgeable about literacy instruction, and he is very focused on improving instruction across the board." Another teacher added, "I really think he is making a big difference in our ability to analyze assessment data. All of our grade level team meetings are very focused, he does not waste a single minute." Staff survey results show 82% believe they are held accountable for the new behaviors and practices needed to achieve the preferred future, while only 50% believe the leadership team demonstrates the behavior and practice changes necessary to achieve the preferred future.

Capacity building. The building's principals are responsible for the direct supervision and evaluation of all staff members. With the state moving to the new certificated evaluation process known as Teacher/Principal Evaluation Project (TPEP), the two principals have divided the responsibility as follows: Ms. DeWitte evaluates 3rd– 5th grade level staff, special education, and acceleration specialists; Dr. Craig evaluates K – 2nd grade level staff, all support staff, and counselors. This division of labor is based on Ms. DeWitte's expertise in special education and Dr. Craig's expertise in literacy. All certificated staff members at Quil Ceda ES are currently being evaluated based on the MSD adopted CEL's, *5 Dimensions of Teaching and Learning*, (5D). Staff members reported they have received district level professional development the first of the year on the 5D evaluation process. Certificated staff members also report they have sat down with the principal and set their professional goals for the year. These goals are directly tied to student improvement and data. Survey results show 80% of staff members actively participate in the process of their performance evaluation, while 64% report they talk with the principal about their progress on performance goals.

To further support the new TPEP high standards, the principal conducts not only the formal observation model, but several walkthroughs yearly. One staff member said, "The principals like coming into our classrooms and seeing what we are doing, but I also love it because it gives my kids a chance to show-off what they are learning." Some staff members would like even more walkthroughs. One staff member said, "I wish the principals would come around more often. It would help the kids get used to them being around."

Staff members noted how visible the principal is throughout the building and at data team meetings. Each principal continues to meet with their respective grade level data teams on a weekly basis and works closely with the coaches for embedded professional development. They closely monitor and modify the instructional programs and organizational practices to align with continuous school improvement goals. The school staff members engage in formal, ongoing, and regularly scheduled collective professional learning opportunities with an additional hundred minutes of structured data team collaboration time during the school day. Teachers receive frequent support from the instructional coaches and Response to Intervention (RtI) coordinator in the areas of literacy and math. Most focus group respondents reported their professional development needs were being met. However, the para-professional focus group participants reported they could always use more.

Distributed leadership. In the 2010-2011 school year, a School Leadership Team (SLT) existed at TES and convened regularly over matters such as PLC dates, the new behavior plan (CHAMPS), calendar decisions, community outreach, and some professional development planning. TES also had other decision-making groups such as the Transitions Team (to prepare for the upcoming merge with Quil Ceda Elementary School), the Foundations Team (to implement systems to support behavior management and a positive climate), and the Student Intervention Team (to address students of concern). While staff members reported there were more committees and teams in 2010-2011, many were still unclear about how all the teams worked together to support a school goal or who makes the decisions in each one. "The problem is we didn't have a clear way of making decisions," explained one staff member.

In 2011-2012, the school used the grade level teams to process most information and the decision making process, and while it continued to be collaborative it was more decentralized than in 2010-2011. Some staff members complained they did not have enough PLC time to discuss the issues that they are facing as a staff. Other staff members indicated the process

needed to be more representative in nature. In the visit in 2012, several teachers voiced concerns about the number of staff members who were not attending staff meetings, and some staff members did not believe their voices were being heard.

During the 2013 visit, staff members reported there continues to be no formal process with the building to select members to leadership teams. Survey results are consistent with this, showing that 22% of staff members believe there is a clear and collaborative decision-making process used to select individuals for leadership, a decrease of 3 percentage points from 2012. They did identify the building as having a Building Leadership Team (BLT) consisting of grade level, specialist, and classified staff members, and anybody that wants to be on the team. Each group selects a team member to attend BLT meetings. These representatives have a responsibility to represent their team, communicate back to the team, and take ideas/concerns to the BLT for discussion. On the staff survey, 44% believe the BLT listens to their ideas and concerns. BLT team members reported they have only met a handful of times so far this year. Staff members reported at the end of the year, 2012, they were assigned to a committee that would meet over the summer and continue to meet during the 2012-2013 school year. Researchers could only find evidence of one committee meeting over the summer, with the Social Committee and the BLT currently active in the building. Staff members did report that within their grade level teams there are assigned leadership responsibilities that consist of literacy, math, communications, and behavior.

High Levels of Collaboration and Communication

There is strong teamwork across all grades and with other staff. Everybody is involved and connected to each other, including parents and members of the community to identify problems and work on solutions.

Indicators	Rubric Score 2010	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
High Levels of Collaboration and Communication				
Collaboration	1	2	2	4
Communication	2	2	3	3

Collaboration. In 2010-2011, some TES staff members characterized their collaboration with peers as “a collective sense of community,” and “a family.” Most, however, believed there was much room for improvement. “I think we have a real problem with communication still,” one staff member explained, “and we’re (staff) not really a valid part of making decisions.”

In 2011-2012, staff members indicated most efforts to promote collaboration were limited to the grade level teams. Building coaches planned and led collaboration. However, several staff members raised concerns about the lack of PLC time to discuss school wide issues, and some of the staff indicated there were some difficulties with collaboration efforts between Quil Ceda and Tulalip staff in some of the grade level teams. These issues seemed to be related to establishing mutual respect between members of the different schools. The staff recognized the dynamics precipitated the move, but many staff members felt the district could have done a better job of helping each staff to cope with the transition.

During the visit in 2013, researchers found evidence of collaboration time being established several different ways for grade level teams during the school day. The building grade level teams have common planning time three times a week for 150 minutes total. These planning times are covered by building specialist (music, art, library, science, and PE). TES also has a MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) with the union for their grade level teams to have an additional 100 minutes a week of time to collaborate in structured data teams. In addition to this sustained collaboration time, the Marysville School District has early release time on Wednesdays for staff development and team collaboration. On the staff survey, 100% agree that TES staff members collaborate to improve student learning, and 91% believe they collaborate to lesson plan.

Specialists and the ACT team do not get the additional MOU time. When meeting with those focus groups, they expressed a desire to meet on a regular monthly basis with their grade level teams. They believe they could be supporting the classroom instruction with aligned activities and collaborate with grade level staff concerning strategies for behaviors and academic growth.

Communication. During the visit in 2012-2013, the staff members at TES report they do not have a formal communications plan. While they use “face-to-face”, emails, phone, and planning times to communicate with each other, they are experiencing some snags. One person said, “Communication is an issue. It is driving us crazy. We are still figuring out how to communicate in a timely manner so that we all stay informed.” Another staff member said, “There is so much going on that it really becomes a need to know basis.”

Staff members work hard to create opportunities to connect with families by sending home newsletters in the Wednesday Envelopes, daily behavior/progress sheets, emails, hosting a Back to School Night, and by having parent nights and conferences. Staff surveys show 100% believe TES communicates effectively with their families, an increase of 44 percentage points from 2012. In addition to school newsletters, the school uses the Connect-Ed system to make phone calls. Interpretation services are available and attempts are made to provide information in Russian, Spanish, and Cambodian as well as English. The tribal liaisons and the tribal advocates continue to be proactive in helping the staff communicate with tribal parents. The biggest addition this school year has been the Quil Ceda/Tulalip Facebook account. This is updated daily and has become a great source for parents and staff alike.

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessments Aligned with State Standards

The planned and actual curriculums are aligned with the Essential Academic Learning Requirements and Grade level Expectations. Research-based teaching strategies and materials are used. Staff understands the role of classroom and state assessments, what the assessments measure, and how student work is evaluated.

Indicators	Rubric Score 2010	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
Curriculum, Assessments, and Instruction Aligned with State Standards				
Curriculum	2	3	3	3
Instruction	3	3	2	3
Assessment	3	3	3	4

Curriculum. In 2010-2011, TES staff members used state standards to plan instruction. The district-written, research-based Units of Study provided teachers with explicit guidance each month on literacy skills required by state standards. Since most teachers utilized the Units of Study to plan lessons, TES curriculum appeared aligned with state standards. There was some debate among staff members about whether the Units of Study was a curriculum or a suggested practice, as one staff member explains, "The district says it's not curriculum, but a practice, but if you don't follow it, it's called curriculum."

In 2012, the curriculum appeared to be in place and the building coaches had shifted their focus on dissecting the curriculum to determine which areas were conceptual and which were skill based. The staff members made a commitment to throw out everything else and focus on using Balanced Literacy in reading, which does not have a basal reader. The teachers used Everyday Math and a lot of work had gone into working through the curriculum and determining what should go into a lesson.

During the current visit in 2013, researchers found no changes in the curriculum. TES continues to use the MSD's reading and writing units of study (Balanced Literacy), Everyday Math 3 curriculum, and the Motivational Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching. Every effort is being made by the data teams to align their work to ensure their lessons are aligned to the Common Core State Standards. Staff surveys show 100% agree they teach programs that are aligned with state learning standards and 90% demonstrates a thorough understanding of the the state learning standards. One staff member said, "We are aligned in kindergarten and first grade. We close in second and working on third through fifth. It is a work in progress." There is a continued concern by staff members that Everyday Math 3 is not deep enough to close the achievement gaps. These concerns are reflected by the staff survey where 75% agree the school provides curriculum that is relevant and meaningful.

Additionally, the fifth grade team is leading the building by working with Sarah Collinge, a consultant and author of the book, *Raising the Standards Through Chapter Books: The C.I.A. Approach*, which outlines effective ways to improve students' reading skills and growth. Collinge coined the C.I.A Model or Approach, to help students collect, interpret, and apply reading skills. The read aloud model, which is intended to build learning along Bloom's Taxonomy ladder,

helps students approach their reading as if it's a puzzle in order to overcome the overwhelm of reading texts above their reading level and transfer their confidence to independent reading. Collinge's model goes beyond simple character, setting, and plot analyses to critical thinking, problem solving, and synthesis of new knowledge.

Instruction. In 2011-2012, there had been considerable growth in how teachers approach instruction. The administration and the coaches stressed the use of data analysis to inform instruction, and the teachers were looking at the data and developing lessons collaboratively under the watchful eye of the coaches. In literacy, the staff members used Jan Richardson's work to help teachers in guided reading. Richardson identified the essential components of an effective guided reading lesson: targeted assessments, data analysis that pinpoint specific strategies students need, and the use of guided writing to support the reading process. Math instruction was built around a pre-test - teach - post-test model. The pre-test information informed the instruction. After pre-testing and teaching, the staff used other math materials to re-teach, and used a multi-station approach with an emphasis upon conceptual knowledge the students should know and be able to do.

During the visit in 2013, instruction continues to be intentional and there is a sense of urgency throughout the building. The support by the literacy and math coaches, plus an RtI coordinator, play a key role in helping build a deeper conceptual understanding of core curriculum based on the specific needs in reading and math and students making accelerations (not remediation) by targeting instruction that closes gaps. Pre- and post- assessments are essential to target the learning needs for students, to identify job embedded professional development needs for staff, and to identify strategies and materials to enhance lesson effectiveness. The in-house expertise, combined with research-based support from the University of Washington (CEL) and Native American Center in Wyoming have helped assist the efforts.

Teachers have two planning sessions per week where they are in data teams determining what the students know and where the gaps are. They determine how many students are at proficiency, near proficiency, far from proficiency, or in need of acceleration. Teachers work together to design assessments, to plan for a given unit, to select common instructional strategies, and to set a timeline for implementation. Teachers assess the effectiveness of instruction mid-way through a unit and discuss progress of student learning and instructional implementation. At that time, necessary adjustments are made to strategies being used. As a result of this horizontal planning, teachers and coaches collaborate to identify and teach to "power standards" that are aligned to Common Core State Standards. Teachers implement lessons in common, administrators and coaches monitor and support implementation, and students receive adequate and appropriate support.

Survey results report 91% of staff agrees they provide students with tasks that require higher-level thinking skills and teachers are providing regular feedback to students about their learning. Eighty-two percent of staff members agree instruction is personalized to meet the needs of each student. These results are more positive than classroom observation results. However, there appears to be a common focus around instruction, as well as substantial support.

Assessment. In 2010-2011, staff members indicated the focus to use assessment data to inform instruction has helped staff to increase rigor and student engagement. In 2011-2012, the use of assessment data had become the driving force behind instructional changes.

Teachers were working closely with the coaches to identify what the data said and designed lesson plans that used data to organize differentiated methods within the classroom.

During the visit for 2012-2013, researchers found ample assessments happening throughout the MSD and TES. TES staff members assess their students according to the statewide assessment system. Staff members use a number of assessments to inform instruction, including the Measurements of Student Progress (MSP), DIBELS (**D**ynamic **I**ndicator of **B**asic **E**arly **L**iteracy **S**kills), the Fountas & Pinnell, MAP (Measurement of Academic Progress), MBA (Math Benchmark Assessment), and the Universal Screening assessment. Staff members recognize the value of all of the assessments mentioned above, but they believe their most informative assessment that drives their instruction forward is the pre- and post- test for each unit of study. One staff member said, "The pre and posttests drive our data teams, which drive our instruction and acceleration groups. These assessments help us close the achievement gaps for it directly aligns with our curriculum and instructional strategies."

The results of the staff survey show 100% of staff members agree they use assessments aligned to standards and instruction and that regular unit assessments are used to monitor student progress. Results also show 89% of staff members agree common benchmark assessments are used to inform instruction.

Frequent Monitoring of Learning and Teaching

A steady cycle of different assessments identify students who need help. More support and instructional time are provided, either during the school day or outside normal school hours, to students who need more help. Teaching is adjusted based on frequent monitoring of student progress and needs. Assessment results are used to focus and improve instructional programs.

Indicators	Rubric Score 2010	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
Frequent Monitoring of Teaching and Learning				
Supporting Students in Need	3	3	3	4

Supporting students in need. In 2010-11, TES established a well-defined system for monitoring progress and providing interventions for students. In 2011-2012, staff members used the system to support differentiation and intervention. The grade level team's work on data analysis increased to the point teachers were looking at pre-test data to design lessons, teaching, and then post-testing data to determine which students need re-teaching and what strategy to use. The school staff made extensive efforts to meet the needs of all students.

In 2012-2013, the use of data to support the needs of students is more evident than in prior years. Staff members make instructional and placement decisions in response to intervention by using formative and summative student data. For each unit of study in reading and math, teachers create, administer, and analyze a pre- and post- test. These are based on "power standards" aligned to the Common Core State Standards. Along with screening assessments, such as DIBELS, MAP, and the Universal Screener, the unit tests determine placement of each student in the school, at their point of need, to accelerate their learning. Between classroom teachers, acceleration teachers, and Para-professionals, about 10 staff members are dedicated to each grade level to support literacy and math accelerations. One coach said, "It was so great to see a teacher so excited about her end of the unit poetry results. It was so nice to have the conversation of how and why those results were achieved." Survey data indicates 100% of staff members agree data is used to identify student needs and appropriate instructional interventions. Staff members also agree they monitor the effectiveness of instructional interventions and struggling students receive early intervention and remediation to acquire skills.

The ELL program supports over nine students at TES who are served by a .5 Para-professional. Students qualify for services based on the *Washington English Language Proficiency Assessment (WELPA)*. The *WELPA* annually assesses growth in English language development by the state's English language learners. This assessment tests reading, writing, listening and speaking knowledge and skills. The Placement Test is used to determine initial student eligibility for English language development services. The Placement Test is given to all students whose families answer "yes" to question #2 on the Home Language Survey: "Is your child's first language a language other than English?" The annual test is given to all students who qualified for ELD services with a Placement Test. It measures students' growth in English language knowledge and skills. Results from this test determine which students are eligible to continue to receive ELD services. Upon completion of the test, students will get a score of Level 1 – 4 (beginning, intermediate, advanced, and transitional). The state made a change to this

requirement this spring. According to TES staff members, all of the Native America students were tested this spring. District leadership recognizes the numbers at TES could increase, which would increase the need for support.

The students with disabilities are being served by one full-time and one .5 certificated teacher. This program supports over 45 identified students in a pull-out model. Most grade level staff members report special education services are aligned with the acceleration services and the students are in class for core content instruction. One staff member said, "This does not happen all the time, but we try and make sure our special education students get double dipped, if not triple. We really want to bring as many strategies as possible their way." There are times when services that are being provided are given by a para-professional, while under the direct supervision of the special education case manager.

Three other unique programs that support students in need are the All Day Kindergarten, Acceleration through Computers (ACT), and FLEX programs. Four full-time staff members serve the tuition free all-day kindergarten programs. It is a firm belief that students in this program will get a firm foundation for learning and "jump start" their success as they enter into first grade. Because of the instructional rigor, Quil Ceda and Tulalup Elementary School kindergarten students scored the highest in the district on the Dynamic Indicators of Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessment in 2011 – 2012, according to staff members.

The ACT program is a targeted program serving students who have been identified as needing extra support in the area of social/emotional/behavioral. This program provides academic support to students while working on specific behaviors. The students are provided with support from three certificated staff and three para-professionals in very small classes for half-day (few identified as full-day). These programs maintain a stable learning environment in the regular classes and gives behaviorally challenged students the support they need to accelerate their learning and learn behavior skills.

The FLEX program is a "reset" placement for students who need extra support on an intermittent basis. The classroom teacher can refer a student to FLEX, with the student returning as soon as their behavior is stabilized. Two staff members support this program.

Staff members continue to address the social-emotional needs of students. One staff member explained, "This year, there were 54 members of the tribes who died due to drugs, murders, and natural causes. This has caused a tremendous amount of trauma in the Tulalip community, and it has significantly impacted tribal students. The trauma that hit the tribes this year created even more challenging issues for both the school and the tribes." With the support of the two full-time school counselors, two Native liaisons, and one Family liaison, the staff members help support families in regards to doctor's appointments, community resources, and finding help in working with families through the grief cycles of denial-anger-bargaining-depression-acceptance-and beginning to resolve underlying medication, social, and emotional issues. School counselors provide one-on-one, small group, and whole class instruction surrounding the needs of each of the groups.

Everyone continues to make supporting the children in need their number one priority. One staff member said, "By helping our parents and students, we are making a world of difference for some of our families. We just keep working one student at a time." The TES principal explained, "We had several students who were suspended from the bus who lived on the reservation, and we wanted them to be in school. As a school, Kristen and I worked together

with the transportation department to get a van to pick these students up." When TES was at its original location, the Boys and Girls Club was across the street. When the school moved to the Quil Ceda campus, it forced more students to ride the bus. School staff worked with families to make the transition as smooth as possible. Because the tribal students often stay overnight with different relatives, it required a modification of the bus schedules. A school leader said, "We probably get 100 calls a day telling us that a student will be going to a relative that night. We had to find a way to get the kids to the appropriate part of the reservation in an effort to honor tribal ways, without placing anyone in danger because they were dropped too far from the relative. Our secretary does an outstanding job of managing this process. She adjusts the bus routes based on where the relative lives and is very good at checking the relatives listed on the emergency contact card."

Focused Professional Development

A strong emphasis is placed on training staff in areas of most need. Feedback from learning and teaching focused extensive and ongoing professional development. The support is also aligned with the school or district vision and objectives.

Indicators	Rubric Score 2010	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
Focused Professional Development				
Planning and Implementation	3	3	3	3
Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	2	2	2	2

Planning and implementation. Continued extensive professional development support has been embedded through school-based coaches. Teachers receive extensive training in research-based instruction, Common Core State Standards, and interpreting assessment data. The building coaches work directly with the teachers individually and through grade level teams. Teachers work together to implement new strategies in reading, receiving support for balanced literacy, in addition to using a pre-teach, assess, re-teach model to implement the mathematics curriculum.

In 2011-2012, the staff members had been receiving professional development from Stephanie Fryberg, a psychologist from the Tulalip tribes on Native American culture. Developing cultural awareness of the Native American population was, and is, extremely important at TES because 54% of the students are Native American. Stephanie Fryberg spent large amounts of time at TES helping the staff to understand what instructional strategies work best with Native learners and how to establish better connections with the Native parents. Even though, during the 2012-2013 school year she has not been to the building as often, most staff members believe her professional development was valuable and still is in use currently in the building. However, survey results show staff members would like more training, and only 46% of staff members agree they are being provided with training to meet the needs of diverse student population at TES.

In 2013, participants in the para-professional focus group stated that because TES has early release Wednesdays and the district has early release Fridays, they are not able to attend any of the district professional development opportunities. Because of this, para-professional focus group participants believe they are missing opportunities to further their knowledge in working with students. They do feel supported by the building coaches when providing instruction on how to work with students in their acceleration groups. This focus group is in consensus that if they wanted to attend staff meetings and trainings they definitely could do that, they just do not always know when those trainings will be happening.

Curriculum, instruction, and assessment. In 2011-2012, the building coaches had been working with teachers to align instruction to the standards. Units were broken down and lessons were created. The teachers worked with the coaches to identify the standards, to develop a pre-test to determine where the students were, to deliver the lesson using research-based strategies, then to administer a post-test. The coaches had also been training the teachers to shift the emphasis from concrete to conceptual.

For the 2012 – 2013 school year, staff members continue to receive regular professional development in the use of instructional materials, Common Core State Standards, and classroom-based assessments in reading and mathematics. According to the building's Comprehensive Plan Report, the staff participated in several professional development sessions surrounding Growth Mindset and Motivational Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching (GM/MF). Teachers adapt educational experiences to meet the cultural needs of students where barriers exist. As part of the core curriculum and instruction, teachers incorporate both GM and MF culturally responsive practices into regular practice. Even though researchers did not hear specifically about this professional development during focus groups, staff members used the terms "culturally responsive" and "growth mindset" to describe their practices. Additionally, the building's plan referenced Compassionate Schools. The Comprehensive Plan Report describes a whole group presentation, a book study, and setting up "reset places" for students to go. In addition, staff members talked about the building's continual focus on helping their students and the emotional trauma many of the students carry to school. Many staff focus groups talked about setting up the "reset place" and the creation of the FLEX room.

Staff survey results show 70% agree that professional development activities help the school staff acquire greater knowledge of effective, research-based, content pedagogy, a decrease of five percentage points from 2012. Thirty-three percent of staff members also report their professional development activities are sustained by on-going follow-up and support (decrease of 23 percentage points), and 60% agree appropriate data is used to guide building-directed professional development.

Supportive Learning Environment

The school has a safe, civil, healthy, and intellectually stimulating learning environment. Students feel respected and connected with the staff and are engaged in learning. Instruction is personalized and small learning environments increase student contact with teachers.

Indicators	Rubric Score 2010	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
Supportive Learning Environment				
Safe and Orderly Environment	1	2	3	2
Building Relationships	1	2	2	3
Personalized Learning for All Students	2	2	3	3

Safe and orderly environment. During the initial assessment in the spring of 2010, staff reported frustrations with student behavior. While the school had developed POWER principals and CHAMPS plans to reinforce positive behavior, these concerns still existed in 2010-2011. TES had a behavior intervention teacher and a solution room for students who get in trouble. "But," as one staff member said, "being pedagogically smart about how staff can avoid those situations would have been helpful." Other strategies to support a safe learning environment included peer mediation, yoga curriculum, anger management groups, Second Step, and counseling services for students.

In 2011-2012, staff members indicated student behavior had improved across all grade levels. The behavior interventionist worked with individual students and with small groups for about 90 minutes. These efforts helped the general education students function better during small group instruction. Some of the teachers had been trained in Safe and Civil Schools, but since the two staffs came together they have not received training as a total group. Some teachers indicated the school leaders have never told the staff that they must follow Safe and Civil procedures with fidelity. The school organized ACT classes where approximately six students in the morning and six in the afternoon who have serious behavior issues go to a more appropriate setting to work on academic and behavior intervention.

During the visit in 2012-2013, staff members indicate behavior is one of the biggest concerns in the building. Survey results show 73% of staff members feel the students believe the school is a safe place, while 64% of staff members feel the school is orderly and supports learning. One staff member said, "Behavior is getting better all the time, but it could be a lot better if it became a building focus. Now that we have our data teams, I think it is time to have a behavior team." Another staff member echoes, "I would like to see a building system for our everyday behavior needs like hallways, lunchroom, and playground where everyone is moving the same way." Researchers saw expectations posted in the halls, classrooms, and lunchroom, but they were not consistent rules throughout the building and observed evidence of some teachers using CHAMPS and Safe and Civil Schools. Researchers witnessed redirects given to students to correct hallway behaviors, but only to be ignored by students. Even within a grade level team, the expectations from one room to another were different. Strength of the school's discipline is that each child is looked at "as an individual" and that there is not a one size fits all type of discipline policy.

The overall rubric score is a two, but will increase to a three when TES has a framework or process for assisting school personnel in adopting and organizing evidence-based behavioral interventions into an integrated continuum that promotes academic and social behavior outcomes for all students. This established set of organized supports will give school personnel capacity to use effective interventions accurately and successfully at the school. The voice of family and community members should be involved directly through active participation of, for example, leadership teams, practice implementations, and outcome evaluation at the school. This framework or process should mirror the same approach as the data teams process already set in the building.

Many of the teachers indicated the rules for student behavior are consistently enforced for all students, but some staff members stated they have colleagues who ignore the discipline policies all together. On the staff survey, only 64% of respondents agree staff members enforce consistent behavior expectations and consequences in their classrooms, 60% agree staff members enforce the bullying/harassment policy, and 70% agree TES addresses issues of diversity in a timely and effective manner.

Building relationships. The building relationships, in support of the students, remain strong and constant. The classroom observation study indicates 88% of the classrooms observed demonstrate strong interpersonal interactions between the teacher and the students. This behavior reflects a commitment on the part of the staff to create a supportive learning environment for students. This is supported on staff surveys where 100% agree adults care, value and respect all students.

In the 2012 visit, staff relationships remained a work in progress. The merger of the two schools had thrown all of the staff into one building. With new personalities, it changed the interpersonal dynamics, but staff members understood it would take time and hard work to strengthen the relationships as a whole staff. In the recent 2013 visit, one staff member said, "Wow, what a difference a year and a half makes. When we merged last year we had to hit the ground running, but now we have gotten to know each other, build off of each other's strengths, and truly are becoming one staff." Several grade level focus group participants stated they believe they really know each other or people they directly work with, but they did not know everyone in the building. There is a Social Committee in the building that does organize staff building activities, both on and off site. Staff survey results show 91% agree they honor agreements made with each other.

Personalized learning for all students. According to most staff members interviewed, TES continues to provide opportunities to personalize the learning experience for students by offering a number of acceleration and support programs. Student progress is individually tracked in math and literacy and intentional efforts are made to encourage students to work hard. The efforts of the building coaches to help teachers use and interpret assessment data are instrumental in designing lessons that include a variety of differentiations and strategies. The use of acceleration specialists to assist individual students in meeting standard is contributing to more personalized learning. Additionally, staff members regularly recognize and celebrate, formally and informally, student academic accomplishments. Students are taught goal setting, study skills, and time management strategies for success in school.

In addition, TES also has the AVID program and the Tulalip Storytelling Unit. AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) is an internationally recognized program designed

to prepare students for success in college. AVID students focus on developing the study and academic skills necessary for success in high school and beyond. TES has been working with the Lushootseed Language Department to bring a newly enriched Tulalip Storytelling Unit and Tribal language. Both these programs are at the fifth grade level.

High Level of Family and Community Involvement

There is a sense that all have a responsibility to educate students, not just the teachers and staff in schools. Families, as well as businesses, social service agencies, and community colleges/universities all play a vital role in this effort.

Indicators	Rubric Score 2010	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
High Levels of Family and Community Involvement				
Family Communication	1	1	3	3
Family and Community Partnerships	1	1	2	2

Family communication. TES staff believes families of all cultures, languages, and incomes care deeply about their children's success. They stress the importance of family-school-community collaboration and partnerships that benefit all children. One of the main goals is to make students and parents feel that TES is their school. As visitors enter the school, they see pictures of Tribal leaders, values, vision, language, and stories. Student work is visibly displayed along with data showing student progress. Each day begins with Native drumming and a seven minute Welcome Assembly. Parents and tribal leaders are frequent guests. Once a month parents are invited to Wednesday morning coffee. Student demonstrations also bring parents into the school. Communication on student academic progress is conducted at family-student-teacher conferences. These happen twice a year, once in the fall and again in the spring. The staff is continuing to communicate with parents via Wednesday Envelopes, email, newsletters, conferences, personal phone calls, automated phone messages and "good old face-to-face conversations." Students' grades and homework assignments continue to be available online through Skyward, and this is very helpful for families with access to technology. Interpreters are available during conferences and upon request. The school has both a tribal liaison and a representative from the tribes who work closely with tribal families. The school also communicates through the tribal newspaper, TV station, and new this year, Facebook. School staff members also attend tribal meetings and participate in tribal celebrations. TES held a back-to-school night where over 500 people attended for food, making of drums, and other fun activities.

Family and community partnerships. In 2010-2011, one of the annual goals, according to TES's School Improvement Plan, was "to understand the importance of how Tulalip culture (traditional and contemporary) played a role in their instructional practice and overall performance as a school." The goal continues: "Teachers will be able to identify one or two strategies that will enable them to be more effective teachers of Tulalip tribal students. These can be small ideas that positively impact student performance." TES has systems in place for developing a stronger bridge between families and school (e.g., strong tribal support for education, Lushootseed language classes, access to a Boys and Girls Club). Families and staff members also have access to a full-time tribal liaison and a tribal youth advocate. And yet, staff members and parents reported few families come to volunteer in classrooms. One parent said, "I know there's a parent and family component in the grant (referring to SIG), but I haven't been asked about anything."

In 2011-2012, the merger of the two schools created a new dynamic. The parents whose students attended TES had always prided themselves in their efforts to instill tribal customs and values into the school. In order to ensure that this continued, the merger staff members have made a significant effort to work with Stephanie Fryberg to enhance cultural awareness, and the staff has increased its efforts to attend tribal functions. The majority of staff members stated that tribal relations have improved and the staff has reached out to the children and the families that experienced a death in the family. The tribes continue to be very generous in their financial support of school functions and the establishment of an early childhood center will better prepare pre-school children for kindergarten. An administrator said, "My conversations with the tribes suggest that for the first time in 100 years, the tribes believe that the district is wrapping its services around the needs of the tribal students. I feel that the superintendent is very sensitive to the effect the tribes have on tribal students in terms of culture. He is the first to say that we have to treat the tribal students differently culturally, rather than just a part of the Marysville district population.

During the visit in 2012-2013, researchers had a chance to speak with three tribal members regarding how they were feeling about the merger and the early childhood center. All three members stated they are "very happy with how things are going and that the culture of the building is inviting and welcoming to all families and all students." One tribal member said, "I would not go back to two buildings. This feels like our school. This is our school." TES also has partnered with the National Education Association (NEA) and the Washington Education Association (WEA) as they have been adopted as a NEA SIG school. The school, along with Quil Ceda ES and Totem MS, were featured in two on-line articles by the National Education Association Priority School Campaign and Learning First Alliance. This article congratulated these three Marysville schools on their work to close the achievement gap and improve student learning. Out of this recognition, came a cross-country relationship with a North Carolina school. On the day of the researchers visit, this North Carolina school sent representatives to see the TES's cultural successes first hand. One staff member said. "We have visitors all the time. We are doing good work."

Over the last several years, the Marysville Schools and the Tulalip Tribes have developed many positive and productive ways to work together. Today, both parties say, "Our relationship has never been stronger." In an effort to confront history and build a new future, MSD is working closely with with Tulalip Tribes to develop a true partnership—one that extends from the board level, to parents, to students, to community – committed to turning things around for "our" Native students. The objective is to create safe schools where Native students feel they belong and can be successful. All parties want to provide a positive learning environment for ALL students and to prepare students for success both academically and in their home culture.

The school has a brand new position at the school to build relations between the school and community. This position is a .5 Community Outreach liaison. This position is responsible for putting on events at the school and communicating those activities throughout the community. Some of the activities so far have been organizing the first Wednesday of the month morning coffee and the development of the GROW, Tulalip Tribal Values, and GROW Leaf - Growth Mindset Values and the student of the week awards. This position is also responsible for bringing in speakers, singers, and other cultural pieces to the daily Welcoming Assembly. An area of need is the development of the school's Parent/Teacher/Student Organization (PTSO). This position is partnering with the Tulalip Tribes Foundation to create bylaws and standing rules for a PTSO to start as early as next school year. With the absence of the PTSO, the

Community Outreach liaison has picked up some of the activities that the PTSO would do, such as, the yearbook, pictures, book fair, back to school events, and Tulalip Day celebration.

The area of Family and Community partnerships is a progressing area of growth for TES. As progress is made in this area, the rubric score of a two will increase to a three. Staff surveys support this with only 27% agreeing that community organizations and families volunteer to work with the school (7% in 2012), but 82% of staff agree they encourage the involvement.

Summary and Recommendations

The MSD and TES chose to implement the *Turnaround* model. Over the course of the year several large changes occurred, such as additional staff training, more targeted academic interventions, a longer school day, and a longer school year. TES staff members demonstrate a passion for and commitment to their students' academic success. There is evidence of attention to each of the Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools. The sub-scores for the nine characteristics spread between three stages on the rubric: "*Initial, Beginning, and Developing*" (five total), "*Leads to Effective Implementation*" (11 total), and Leads to Continuous Improvement (three total). These scores represent an improvement from 2011 and 2012.

Over the three years, as the district and school continues to implement the *Turnaround* model, school and district staff members have taken measures to address the recommendations made in our initial assessment. Progress toward these critical areas is noted below, as well as further recommendations that align with the *Student and School Success Principle Indicators*, which is part of Indistar.

Update on Previous Recommendation

- **Develop and implement an integrated communication strategy with tribal leadership that supports both cultural and academic learning.** In 2011, TES had developed an integrated, multi-stakeholder communications plan for supporting its School Improvement Goals. However, crucial school information (e.g., start date, details about the upcoming merge with Quil Ceda) was not reaching families. In 2012, the merger schools and the tribes reached out to each other to create a more effective partnership. The merger staffs have worked to expand their cultural understanding and knowledge of the tribal children they serve. The school and the tribes are continuing to work together to improve communication between the school and tribal parents. Staff should continue to address this goal in 2013-2014.
- **Conduct an action planning process to identify a mission and vision statement, specific goals, and strategies for school improvement.** In 2011, school leadership prioritized improving student behavior and school climate. While staff members had developed frameworks, expectations, and consequences around these issues (P.O.W.E.R. and C.H.A.M.P.S.), there was still uncertainty about the priorities. According to the 2011 focus groups and interviews, the intense pressure to hold students accountable and provide targeted interventions for skill development compete with many stakeholders' vision of what the school stands for. We recommended staff, students, and families work collaboratively to define a mission and vision for the school. Although some of this work began for Quil Ceda and Tulalip during planning sessions for the grant, the merger process of Quil Ceda and Tulalip did not allow sufficient time to refine this work and the two schools chose to use the Marysville School District mission and vision statements. In 2013, the mission and vision statements are to be completed by June, but the building is supported by the GROW, Tulalip Tribal Values, and Growth Mindset Values.
- **Conduct a reading and mathematics program gap analysis.** Last year, staff members raised questions about the intellectual demand of the curriculum for their

weaker students. Because of this issue, we recommended a deep gap analysis to identify specific areas of strength and weakness for their student population. This year, staff members are identifying gaps in the curriculum with respect to state standards, and applying scaffolding when needed. With the support of the data teams, collaboration time, and administrative support, staff members should continue this work in 2013. Please refer to *Student and School Success Principle 4: Rigorous, aligned instruction - Engaging teachers in aligning instruction with standards and benchmarks (IIA01)*.

- **Develop a long-term vision for curriculum implementation by identifying essential standards, curriculum alignment, and pacing.** The initial assessment reported gaps in curricular vertical alignment. Since that time, TES staff has committed to the district's Units of Study that are research-based and aligned to most state standards. This year staff reported supplementing the curriculum with teaching materials to address state standards not included in the Units of Study, as well as extra practice activities for skill reinforcement. Because of the merger process and the work that has been accomplished this year, this goal has been met.
- **Establish a school-wide Response to Intervention and Positive Behavior Intervention system.** At the time of the initial assessment, staff members used data to make curricular or placement decisions, but fewer used data to identify interventions for students. However, with the implementation of data teams, this has been an area of growth, particularly around RtI. This work should continue within the 2013-2014 school year. Please refer to *Student and School Success Principle 4: Rigorous, aligned instruction - Engaging teachers in assessing and monitoring student mastery (IB04, IB05)*.
- **Adopt and implement a Defined Instructional Framework.** TES staff have been participating in professional development activities and have been working closely with building coaches and the administration in an effort to improve instructional. However, at the beginning of this process, there was not an instructional framework in place. Since then staff members have adopted the Center for Education 5 D Framework. There should be continued support around this framework. Please refer to *Student and School Success Principle 2: Staff evaluation and professional development - Professional development (IF07, IF08, IF10, IF11)*.
- **Continue to develop meaningful collaboration.** The TES staff has a variety of teaming structures in place. We recommended the implementation of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) within the workday for these PLCs to meet. In addition, we recommended staff should have greater opportunity to visit other classrooms as a means of sharing best practice using a reflective protocol. In 2012, there was strong effort to increase collaboration among the staff. With the merger of Tulalip ES with Quil Ceda ES, new personalities and old practices created some difficulties in collaborating. With the support of the data teams, collaboration time, and administrative support, staff members should continue this work in 2013. Please refer to *Student and School Success Principle 3: Expanded time for student learning and teacher collaboration - Expanded time for student learning and teacher collaboration (IVD02)*.

- **Set high academic expectations.** Staff members acknowledge TES students have many barriers to learning. We recommend staff members work together to identify the highest level of expectations possible for students and develop common language around those expectations. These expectations should relate to or exceed state standards and performance expectations, and there should be opportunities for above-standard students to work at a higher challenge level and to take advanced classes. We recommend staff members identify high-achieving elementary schools with similar demographics and resources and ascertain how expectations are implemented. This can be followed by an investigation of how those expectations are supported. The efforts in 2012 suggest that merger staff have been working to raise expectations of performance in academics and behavior. With the assistance the coaches, staff members re developing a better understanding of how to support these expectations through improved instructional practice and they should continue to address this goal. In 2013, continued support and rigor should be emphasized for continual academic student growth. Please refer to *Principle 4: Rigorous, aligned instruction*.

Recommendation for 2013 - 2014:

- **Supportive Learning Environment – Safe and orderly environment.** The overall rubric score is a two, but will increase to a three when TES has a framework or approach for assisting school personnel in adopting and organizing evidence-based behavioral interventions into an integrated continuum that promotes academic and social behavior outcomes for all students. This established set of organized supports will give school personnel capacity to use effective interventions accurately and successfully at the school. The voice of family and community members should be involved directly through active participation of, for example, leadership teams, practice implementations, and outcome evaluation at the school. This framework or approach should mirror the same approach as the data teams process already set in the building. We recommend referencing *Principle 6: Safety, discipline, and social, emotional, and physical health – School and classroom culture, particularly, III C13*.

Appendix A: District Rubric

Scoring of the conditions under each model as **"In Place"** or **"Able to Put in Place"** is based on:

- (1) The condition for the model does not currently exist and essential pieces for implementing the condition do not exist (e.g., policies, procedures, collective bargaining language, and programs or processes are not in place). This scoring level does not mean that the condition cannot be implemented; but rather that implementation will be more demanding, require more extensive engagement of all parties, and require greater external support and assistance.
- (2) Essential pieces to implement the condition exist (e.g., no significant barriers are contained in the current collective bargaining agreement, existing programs lend themselves to adaptation). The condition can be implemented at an acceptable level with some support and assistance.
- (3) The condition is currently in place at an acceptable level.
- (4) The condition is currently in place at a high level and could be considered as an exemplar.

The ratings in the table below comes from an analyses of district personnel ratings combined with data collected by The BERC Group.

Actions	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013	Comment
Replace the principal.	3	3	4	Met requirement of grant at all 3 schools.
Use locally adopted competencies to measure effectiveness of staff who can work in a turnaround environment; use to screen existing and select new staff.	2	2	4	At all 3 schools we continue to replace staff who do not exhibit the competencies and hire/transfer staff who have a proven track record of being able to promote student achievement among all students, especially Native students.
Screen all existing staff, rehiring no more than 50% of the school staff.	N/A	3	4	
Implement such strategies as financial incentives and career ladders for recruiting, placing, and retaining effective teachers.	2	3	3	As agreed to in MOA with teacher union
Implement rigorous, transparent, and equitable evaluation systems for teachers and principals which are developed with staff and use student growth as a significant factor.	3	4	4	Using CEL 5D+ and multiple measures of student growth for both teachers and principals. Multiple measures include pre and post unit tests, and standardized measures as well as state achievement tests.

Actions	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013	Comment
Identify and reward school leaders who have increased student achievement and graduation rates Identify and reward school leaders who have increased student achievement and graduation rates; Identify and remove school leaders and teachers who, after ample opportunities to improve professional practice have not done so.	3	3	2	
Provide additional incentives to attract and retain staff with skills necessary to meet the needs of the students (e.g., bonus to a cohort of high-performing teachers placed in a low-achieving school.	3	3	3	Professional development opportunities, extra collaboration time, pay for extended day have all proven to be incentives to attract professional, highly skilled teachers. Opportunity to have support in NBCT process has also proven an incentive.
Ensure school is not required to accept a teacher without mutual consent of the teacher and principal regardless of teacher's seniority.	3	3	4	Have agreement with teachers' union to transfer in and out of SIG schools first – without reference to seniority – has resulted in highly skilled and committed staff over the last 3 years at all 3 schools.
Use data to select and implement an instructional program that is research-based and vertically aligned to each grade and state standards.	3	3	3	We are using data to develop and revise our current Units of Study and Math curriculum to fill the curriculum gaps that are a root cause of the achievement gap.
Provide staff ongoing, high quality, job-embedded professional development aligned with the school's comprehensive instructional program and designed with school staff.	3	4	4	Our instructional coaches and CEL consultants are exceptionally knowledgeable and effective in their work with teachers.
Ensure continuous use of data (e.g., formative, interim, and summative assignments) to inform and differentiate instruction to meet the academic needs of individual students.	3	3	4	All 3 schools have received national recognition for their data team work and lead this work in our district.
Institute a system for measuring changes in instructional practices resulting from professional development.	2	2	4	AS part of an overall Response to Intervention, data is used systematically to monitor progress and growth toward standards, and changes are made when that is not happening.
Conduct periodic reviews to ensure the curriculum is implemented with fidelity, having intended impact on student achievement, and modified if ineffective.	2	3	4	Reviews are continuous – principals and district admin do frequent walkthroughs – coaches in classrooms along with other support personnel – peer visits to other classrooms, common planning on lessons.
Implement a school-wide response to intervention model.	2	2	4	Data team cycles and adjustments in interventions happen monthly

Actions	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013	Comment
Provide additional supports and professional development to teachers to support students with disabilities and limited English proficient students.	2	2	3	AVID in 4 th and 5 th grade, mindset curriculum work in 4 th grade, and acceleration bands with flexible small group instruction.
Use and integrate technology-based supports and interventions as part of the instructional program.	2	2	2	We have the components but this area is not yet well – implemented. We do MAP testing at all 3 schools – better connected to Compass software at Totem than the 2 elementary schools.
Secondary Schools: Increase graduation rates through strategies such as credit recovery programs, smaller learning communities, etc.	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Secondary Schools: Increase rigor in coursework, offer opportunities for advanced courses, and provide supports designed to ensure low-achieving students can take advantage of these programs and coursework.	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Secondary Schools: Improve student transition from middle to high school.	N/A	N/A	N/A	District team working on this area to be implemented next
Secondary Schools: Establish early warning systems.	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Establish schedules and strategies that provide increased learning time. Increased learning time includes longer school day, week, or year to increase total number of school hours.	4	3	4	Acceleration bands at elementary and PRIDE intervention and enrichment time at middle level – each school has a 30 minute extended day.
Provide appropriate social-emotional and community-oriented services and support for students.	2	3	3	We have established 3 classes at QC-TU to serve the neediest students with social and emotional support – family support specialist works with these students as well as tribal advocates and counselors.
Provide ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement.	2	2	3	With a grant from NEA, we have started a home visit program at Totem this year to build strong school-home relationships with Native families.
Extend or restructure the school day to add time for such strategies as advisories to build relationships.	3	3	4	QC-TU and Totem have extended day every day for every student. This time is used for intervention and enrichment.
Implement approaches to improve school climate and discipline.	3	3	3	The ACT classes are serving the needs of the most challenging students at QC-TU.

Actions	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013	Comment
Elementary Schools: Expand program to offer pre-kindergarten or full day kindergarten.		4	4	We have full-day kindergarten for all students at QC-TU supported by BEA and Tribal dollars.
Adopt a new governance structure to address turnaround schools; district may hire a chief turnaround officer to report directly to the superintendent.	3	4	3	Sig Principal on Special Assignment
Grant sufficient operational flexibility (e.g., staffing, calendar, budget) to implement fully a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student achievement and increase high school graduation rates.	2	3	4	School leadership has had total flexibility with staffing, calendar (e.g., QC-TU has a different calendar that better serves their needs than the rest of the district), and budget
Ensure school receives intensive ongoing support from district, state, or external partners.	3	3	4	OSSS coach model has been a huge support this year – like the changes. District Asst Supt visits twice a month and serves as a liaison between the schools and district when challenges arise.
Allow the school to be run under a new governance agreement, such as a turnaround division within the district or state.	2		2	Not sure – we have implemented the transformation and turnaround federal requirements
Implement a per-pupil school based budget formula that is weighted based on student needs.	3	2	4	We have an equitable distribution of funding model thanks to our involvement in SIG that drives more dollars and staffing to our neediest schools.

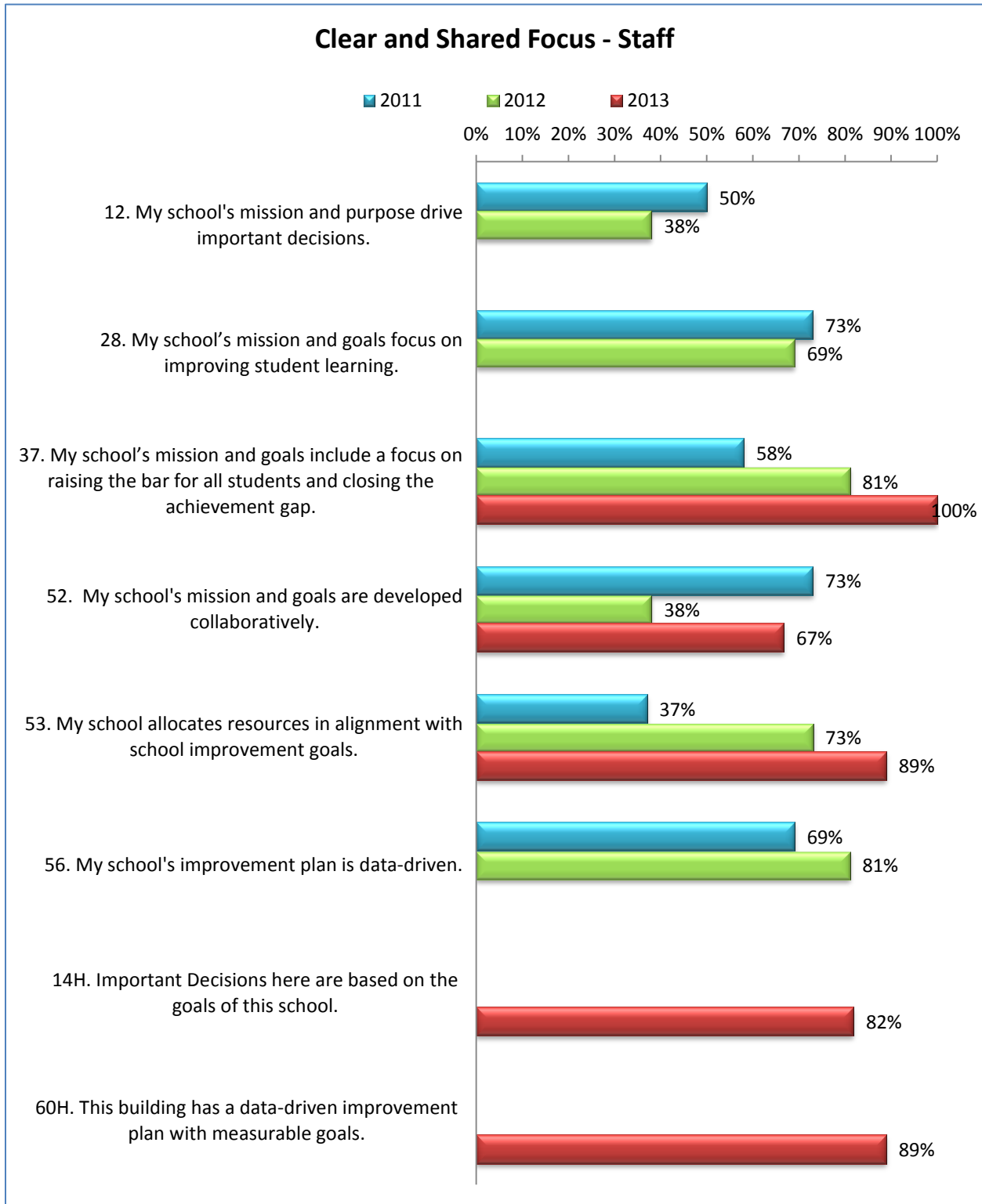
**Appendix B: Staff Survey
Staff Survey Demographics**

	2011	2012
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	13.2%(n=5)	5.9%(n=1)
Female	86.8%(n=33)	94.1%(n=16)
<i>Race</i>		
American Indian/Alaskan Native	7.5%(n=3)	5.9%(n=1)
Asian	5.0%(n=2)	
Black African American	5.0%(n=2)	
White	67.5%(n=27)	88.2%(n=15)
Hispanic/Latino/a	10.0%(n=4)	
Pacific Islander	2.5%(n=1)	
Declined to identify	2.5%(n=1)	5.9%(n=1)
<i>Staff Role</i>		
Certificated Staff	67.5%(n=27)	94.1%(n=16)
Classified Staff	30.0%(n=12)	5.9%(n=1)
Administrator	2.5%(n=1)	
<i>Years Teaching at this School</i>		
1st year	36.1%(n=13)	41.2%(n=7)
2nd or 3rd year	13.9%(n=5)	17.6%(n=3)
4th or 5th year	16.7%(n=6)	5.9%(n=1)
6th-9th year	16.7%(n=6)	23.5%(n=4)
10th year or more	16.7%(n=6)	11.8%(n=2)
<i>Total years Teaching</i>		
1st year	5.6%(n=2)	
2nd or 3rd year	5.6%(n=2)	
4th or 5th year	11.1%(n=4)	17.6%(n=3)
6th-9th year	27.8%(n=10)	35.3%(n=6)
10th year or more	50.0%(n=18)	47.1%(n=8)
<i>National Board Certified</i>		
Yes	3.1%(n=1)	17.6%(n=3)
No	96.9%(n=31)	82.4%(n=14)

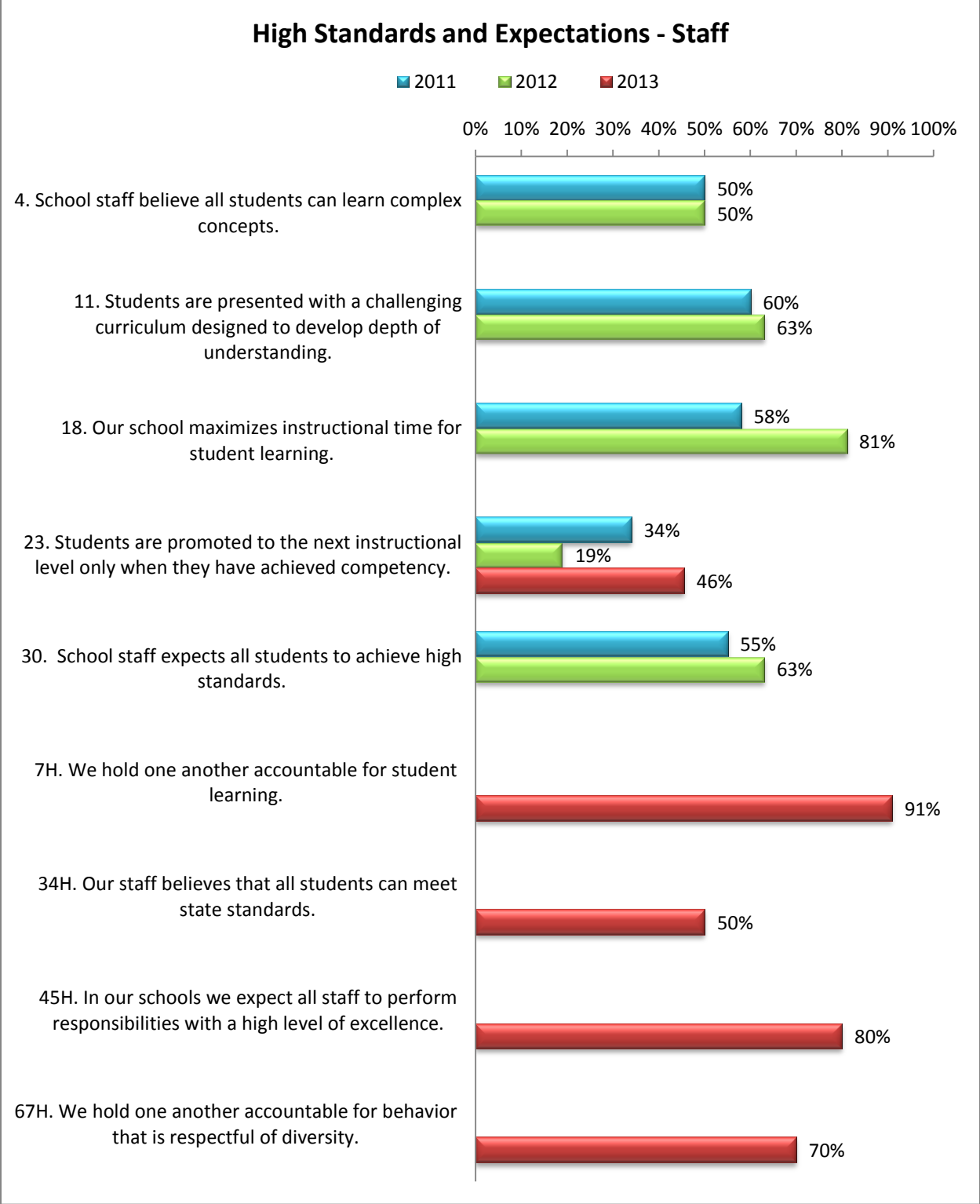
2013

<i>Gender</i>	
Male	9.1% (n=1)
Female	90.9% (n=10)
Missing	
<i>Subject Area</i>	
Missing	
Generalist	81.8% (n=9)
Other	18.2% (n=2)
Electives	
LA/Social Studies	
Math/Science	
<i>Total number of years teaching</i>	
Missing	
More than 11	27.3% (n=3)
8-11 years	36.4% (n=4)
4-7 years	36.4% (n=4)
1-3 years	
Less than a year	
<i>Years Teaching at this School</i>	
Missing	
More than 11	
8-11 years	18.2% (n=2)
4-7 years	18.2% (n=2)
1-3 years	27.3% (n=3)
Less than a year	36.4% (n=4)
<i>Position</i>	
Administrator	
Paraprofessional or Instructional Aid	
Classified Support Staff	9.1% (n=1)
Certificated Support Staff	
Certificated Staff	90.9% (n=10)
Missing	

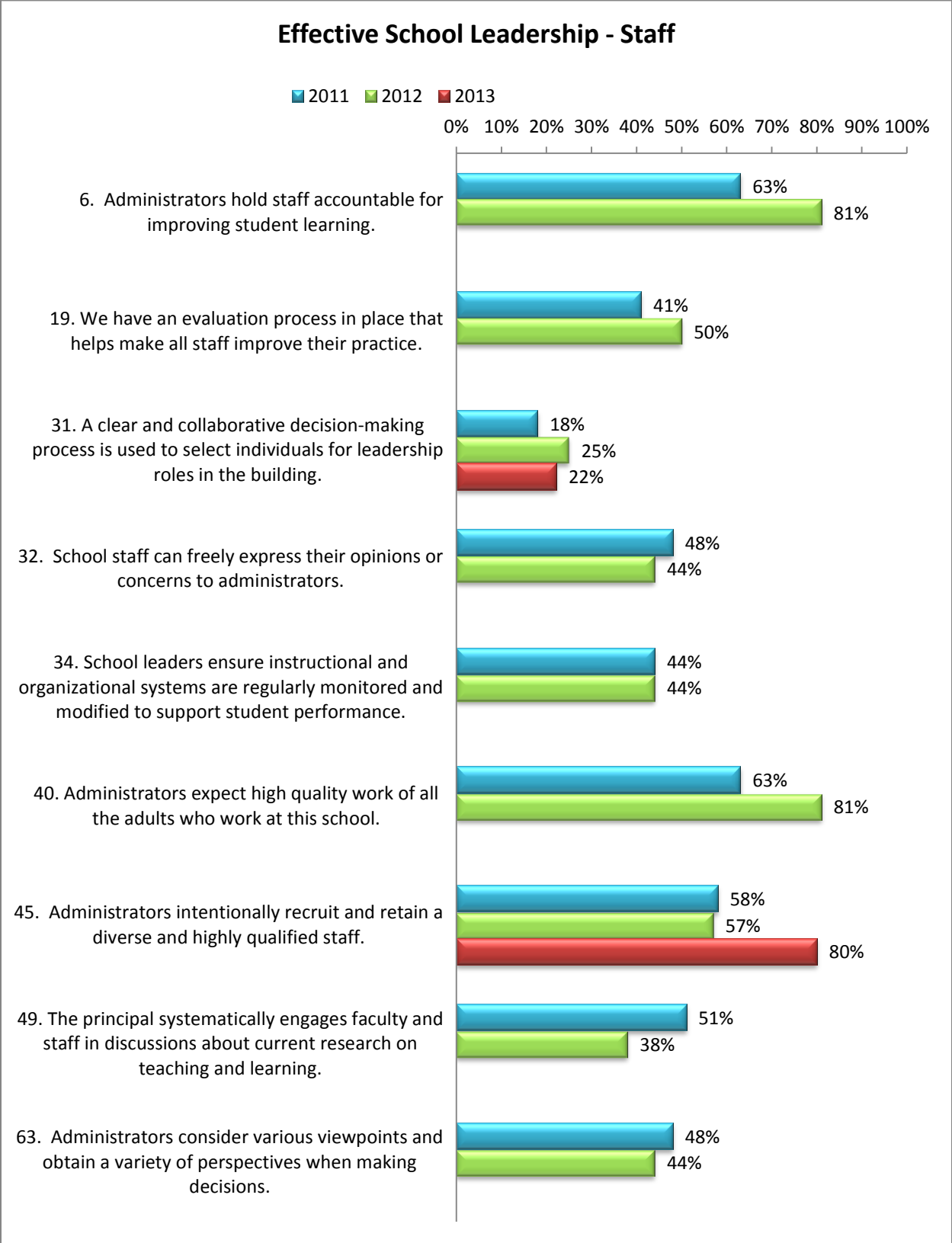
Clear and Shared Focus



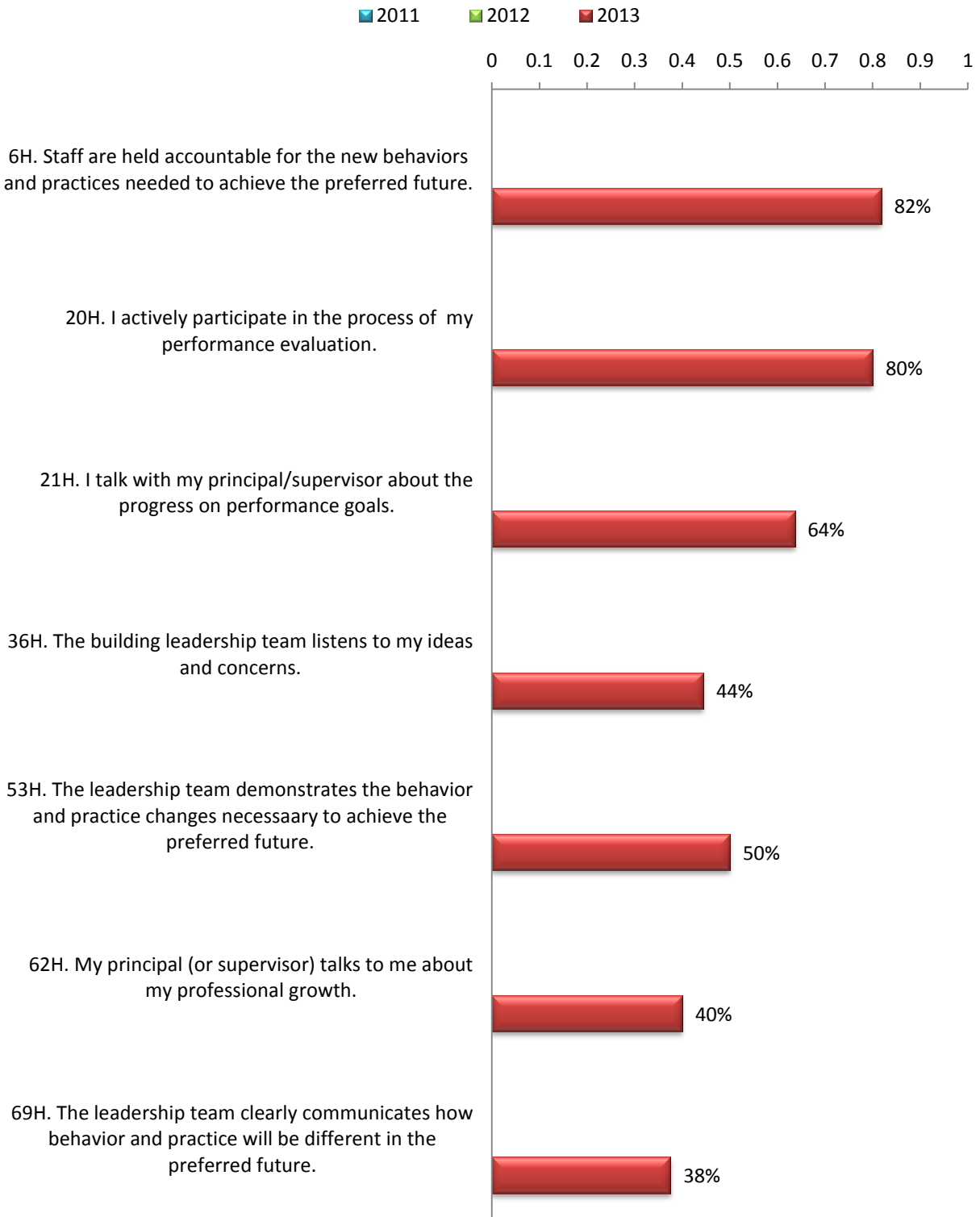
High Standards and Expectations



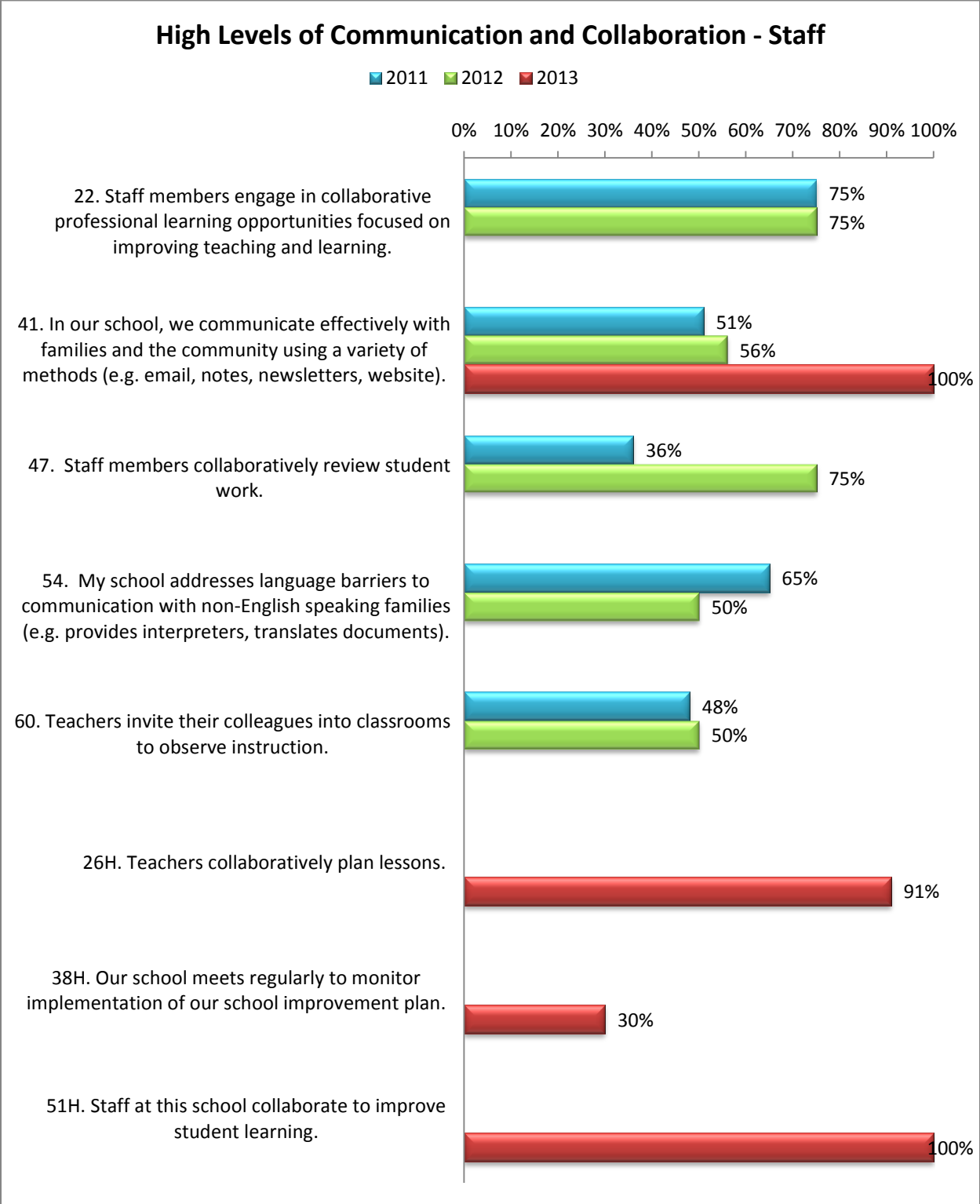
Effective School Leadership



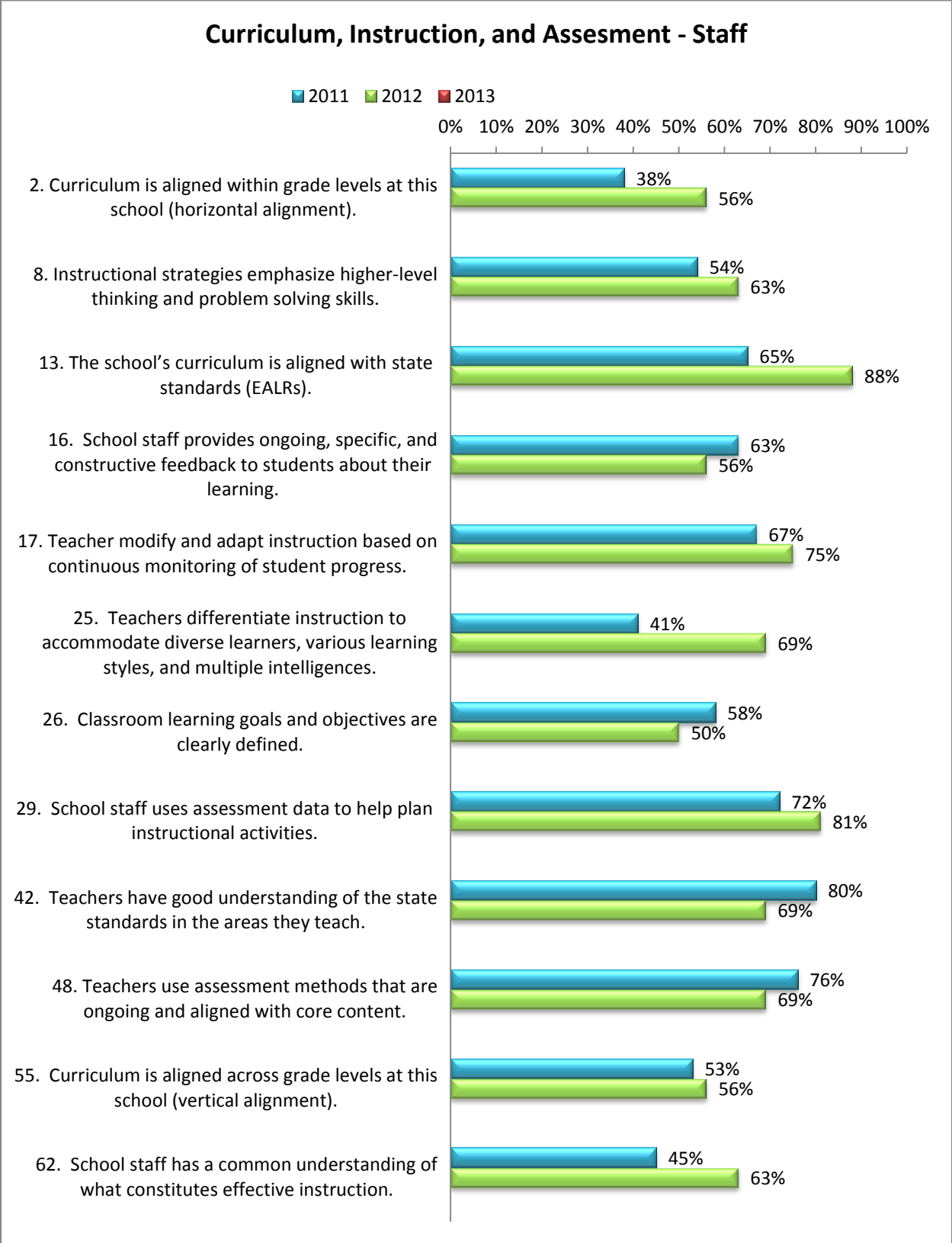
Effective School Leadership - Staff



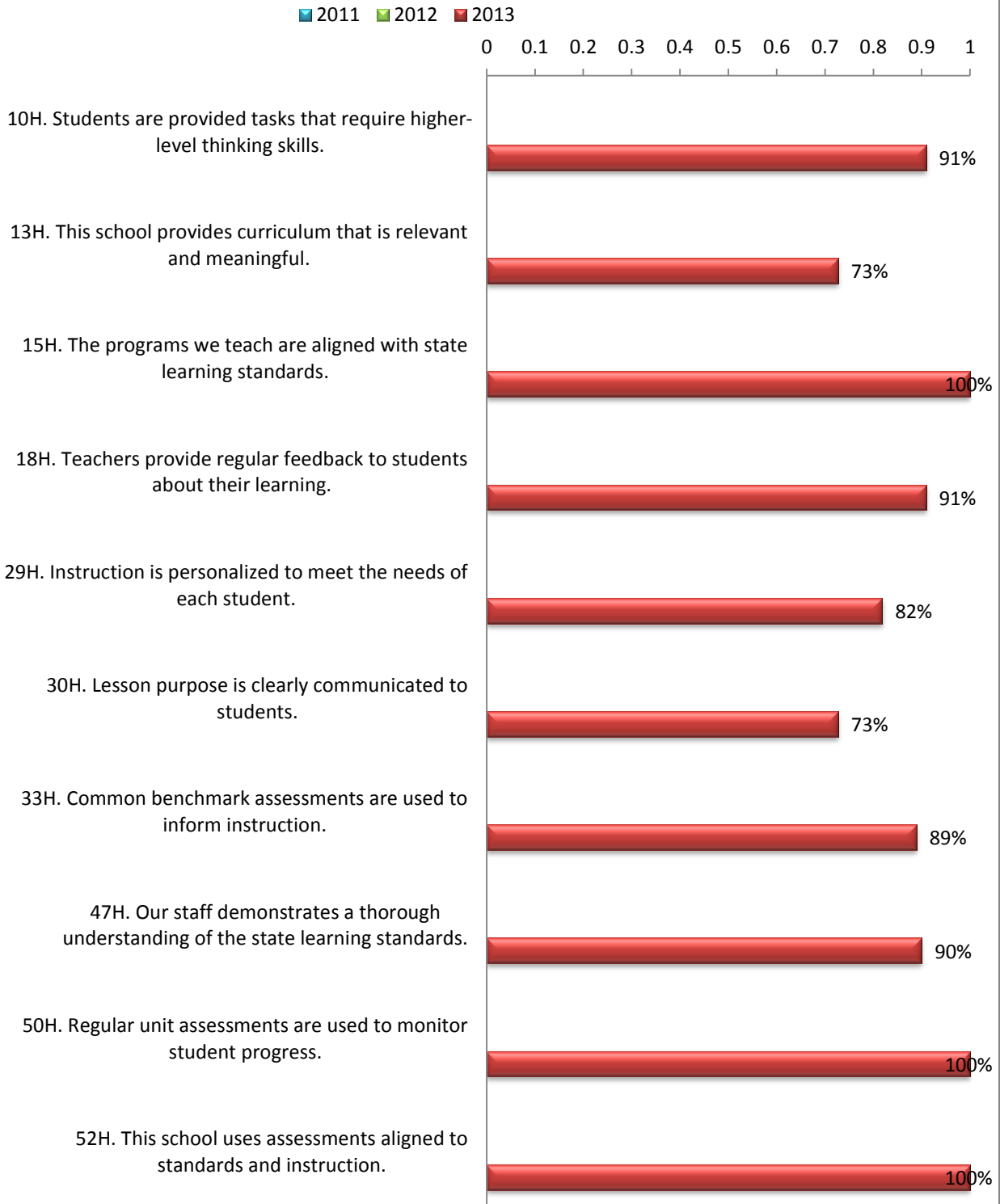
High Levels of Communication and Collaboration



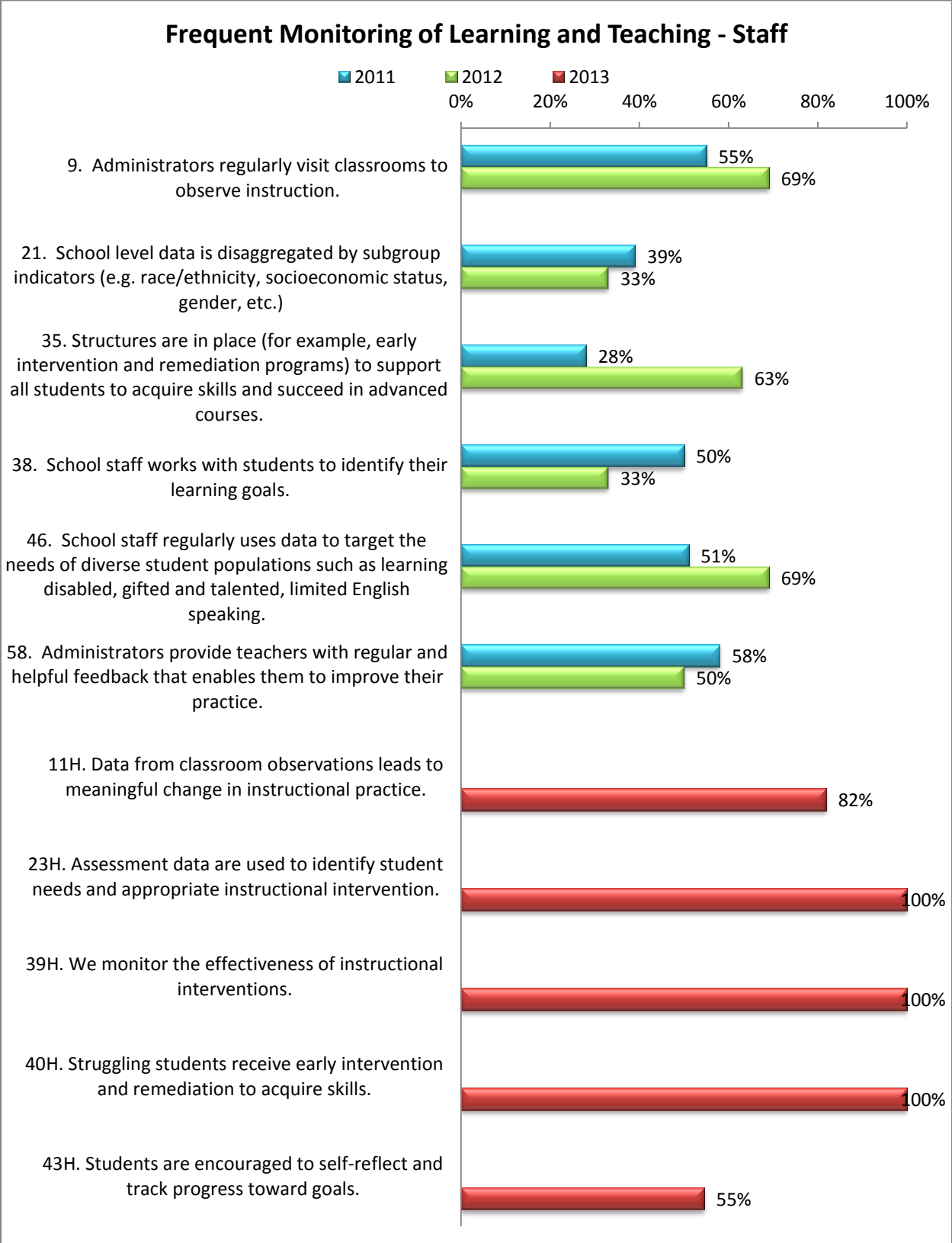
Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment



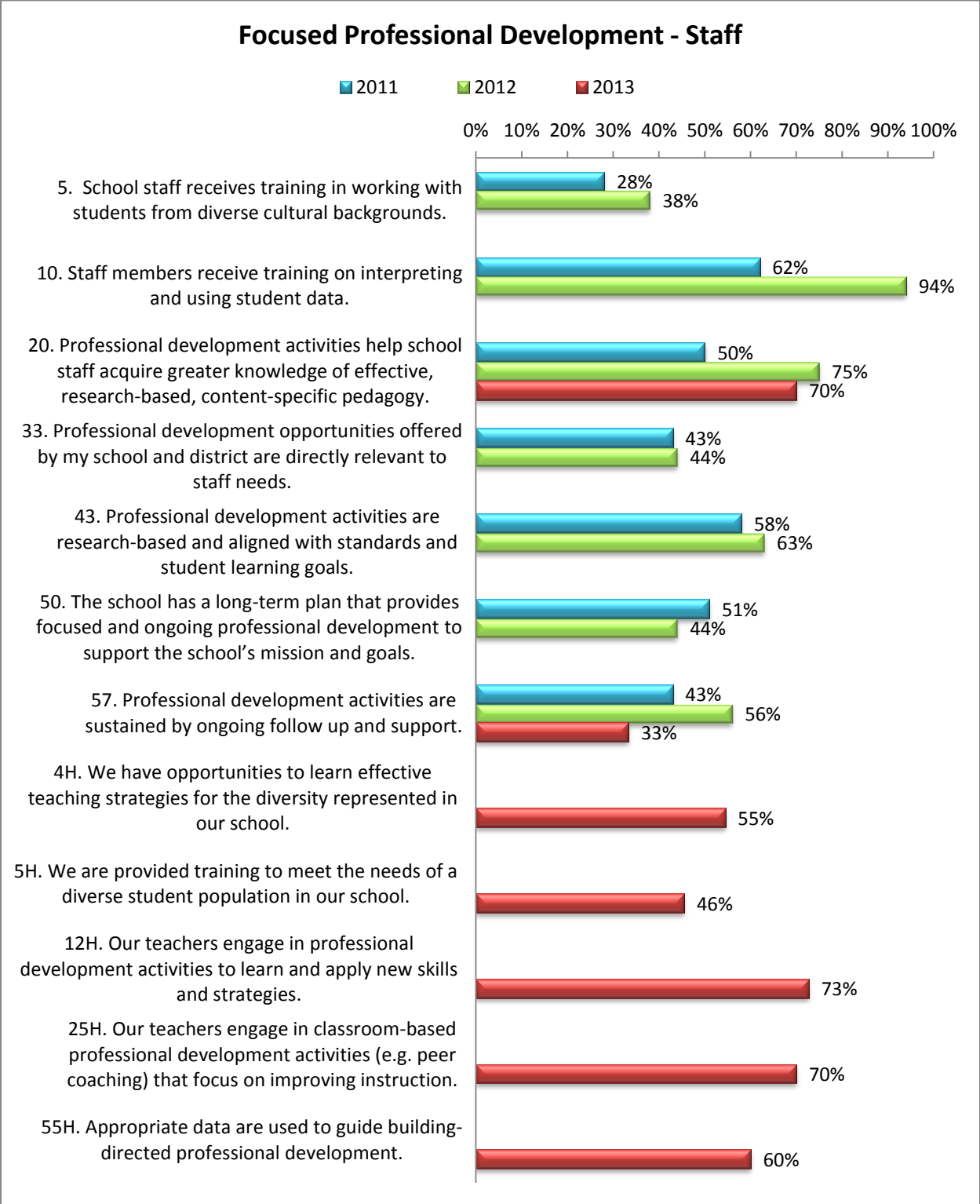
Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment - Staff



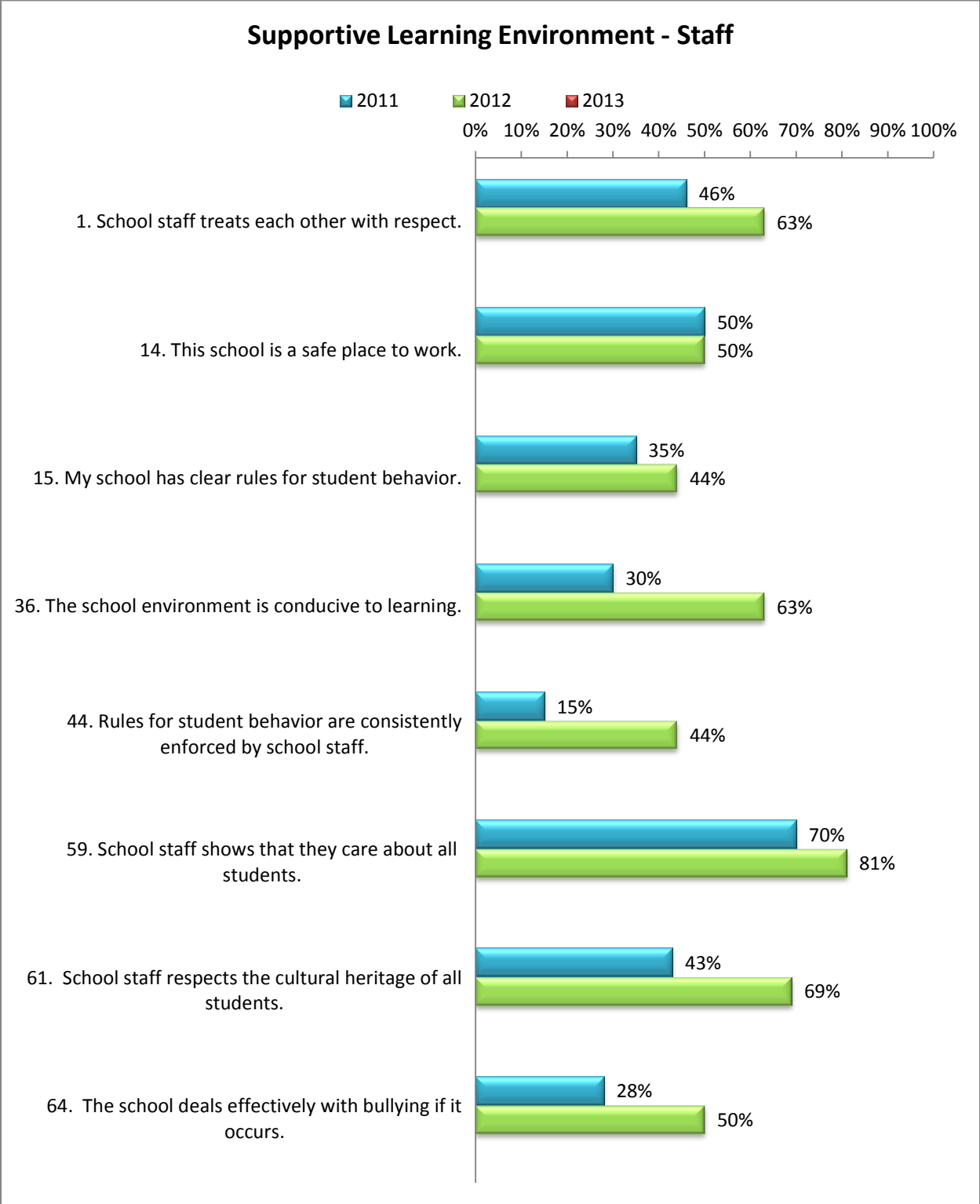
Frequent Monitoring of Teaching and Learning



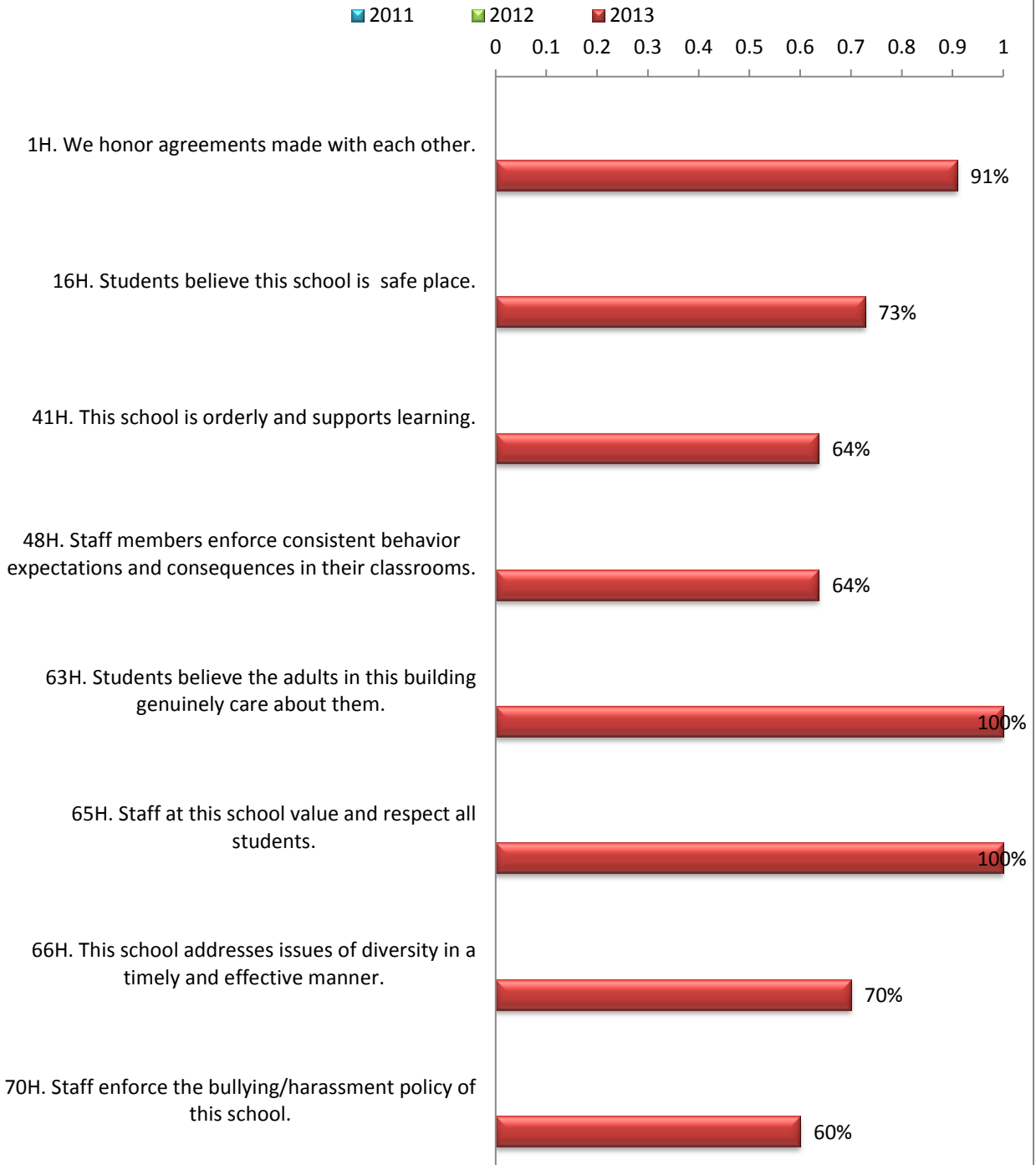
Focus Professional Development



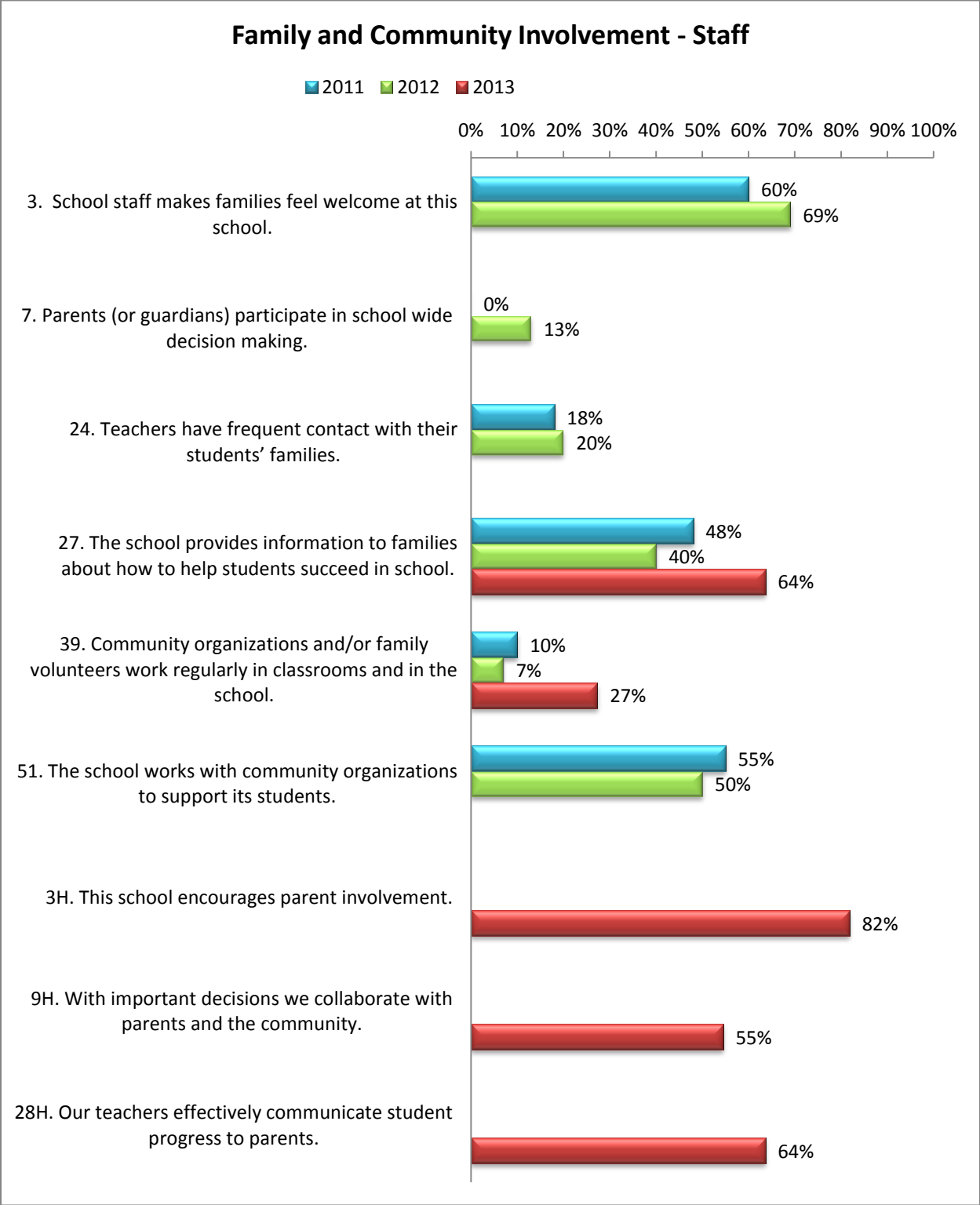
Supportive Learning Environment



Supportive Learning Environment - Staff



Family and Community Involvement





DRAFT
Required Action
District Academic
Performance
Audit:

Stewart Middle
School and
Tacoma School
District

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- **Dr. Dana Anderson, Superintendent, Educational Service District 113**
- **Dr. Andrew Eyres, Assistant Superintendent, Educational Service District 113**
- **Jim Ridgeway, Educational Consultant, Office of Student and School Success**
- **Dr. Sue Cohn, Educational Consultant, Office of Student and School Success**



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I. Introduction

In spring 2010, Stewart Middle School in the Tacoma School District was awarded a [School Improvement Grant](#) (SIG) for three years (2010 through 2013) to fully and effectively implement a federally approved intervention model. The district selected the [Turnaround model](#). Among other things, this required the district and school to replace the principal and rehire no more than 50% of the school's staff, adopt a new governance structure, and implement a research-based instructional program aligned to state standards. While the school has shown progress in some areas, this progress is not consistent. For instance, data on state assessments in Reading and Mathematics show improvement in proficiency for seventh graders from 2011 to 2013. However, these same data demonstrate proficiency for the school (grades 6, 7, and 8) is in the lowest 5 percent in the state for both content areas. This inconsistent and persistent lack of progress for the "all students" group and subgroups on state assessments in Reading and Mathematics the last three years led to the identification of the district as a Required Action District.

The purposes of this report are (a) to identify potential reasons for Stewart Middle School's low performance and lack of progress and (b) to recommend next steps for the Tacoma School District and Stewart Middle School leaders and staff in building educator and system capacity to substantially improve student outcomes. Findings in this report are intended to assist district and school leaders in identifying an approved federal or state school improvement model appropriate for the school. Recommendations in the report will inform the district's Required Action District (RAD) application and the school and district Student and School Success Action Plan.

Sources of Data: This report is based on information gathered from the following sources:

- 1) Review of extant district- and school-level data (e.g., Student and School Success Action Plan; 2012-13 End-of-Year Report; staff, student, parent surveys; Assessment of Progress Report)
- 2) Superintendent and district leader analysis of current practices and policies impacting the ability of district and school leadership and staff to effectively implement an intervention
- 3) Classroom visits focusing on instructional practices within the school
- 4) Qualitative interviews and focus groups focusing on the alignment of district and school structures and practices with Turnaround Principles described in federal guidance
- 5) Demographic and achievement data
- 6) Additional documents provided by the school and district during the on-site visit (e.g., daily schedule, student/teacher schedule)

Evaluators obtained information during an interview with the district leadership on March 4, 2014 and on-site visit on March 25, 2014. Approximately 26 people, including district and building administrators, staff members, students, and external service providers, participated in interviews and focus groups. In addition, evaluators visited 12 classrooms to determine the extent to which classroom practices aligned with research-based instructional practices. Finally, evaluators reviewed data previously gathered about the school and district, including improvement plans, student achievement data, and additional school documents.

Organization of Report: Section II of this report describes requirements for Required Action Districts (RADs). The next section (Section III) summarizes findings and recommendations aligned with Turnaround Principles for both the district and school. Section IV provides an overview of the district

and school. This is followed by detailed explanations of the three recommendations, including the evidence supporting the Academic Performance Audit Team’s conclusions; strengths and concerns; and requirements of the school and district and recommendations for the Office of Student and School Success (Section V). This report concludes with summary and next steps (Section VI) and questions for local improvement teams to consider during their planning processes (Section VII).

Appendices for this report include the following:

- Appendix A: Required Action District Frequently Asked Questions
- Appendix B: School Data Dashboard
- Appendix C: Assessment of Progress Report

II. Required Action Districts

Beginning December 1, 2013 and each December thereafter, the Superintendent of Public Instruction is required by state legislation ([E2SSB 5329](#)) to annually identify challenged schools in need of improvement and a subset of these schools that are the persistently lowest-achieving schools in the state. The criteria for determining persistently lowest achieving schools are determined by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and must include the school’s lack of progress over a number of years for both its “all students” group and subgroups. As required by state legislation (E2SSB 5329 and E2SSB 6696), the State Board of Education (SBE) can designate districts with at least one school determined to be persistently lowest achieving as Required Action Districts (RADs).

A summary of requirements for RADs follows. Specific requirements are described in OSPI’s *Required Action Districts: Level One Plan Guidance* available at:

<http://www.k12.wa.us/StudentAndSchoolSuccess/RequiredActionDistricts.aspx>

- **Academic Performance Audit:** Each RAD receives an academic performance audit by an external review team. The audit team consists of persons with expertise in comprehensive school and district reform; the team identifies the potential reasons for the school’s low performance and lack of progress. (RCW 28A.657.040)
- **Community Collaboration and Public Hearing:** In order to ensure successful collaboration, the required action plan must be developed with administrators, teachers and other staff, parents, unions representing any employees within the district, students, and other representatives of the local community. The school board must conduct a public hearing to allow for comment on the proposed required action plan. (RCW 28A.657.050)
- **Implementation of an Approved School Improvement Model:** The district must select and implement an approved school improvement model for the receipt of federal or state funds for school improvement. The model must address concerns raised in the academic performance audit and be intended to improve school performance to allow the district to exit Required Action District status within three years of implementation of the plan. Approved *federal* school improvement models include **Closure, Restart, Transformation, and Turnaround**. The approved *state* school improvement model is the **Synergy Model**.
- **Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) Assistance and Review:** The OSPI can provide assistance in developing a plan if requested. The district will submit the plan first to OSPI to review and approve that the plan is consistent with federal and state guidelines, as applicable. (RCW 28A.657.060)

- **State Board of Education (SBE) Approval:** Following OSPI's review of the plan, each district will submit its plan to the SBE for final approval. (RCW 28A.657.060)
- **Implementation of RAD Plan for 3 Years:** Once approved, the district is required to implement the RAD plan for three years. The school improvement model must be fully implemented, along with other requirements of the plan. OSPI will provide technical assistance and federal or state funds for implementation of the plan. The district will report regularly to OSPI on the progress it is making in meeting student achievement goals based on the state's assessments, identifying strategies and assets used to solve audit findings and establishing evidence of meeting plan implementation benchmarks in the plan. (RCW 28A.657.090)
- **Semi-Annual Reports to the State Board of Education:** For each year of the implementation of the plan, OSPI will report to the SBE semi-annually on the progress made by all RADs. (RCW 28A.657.100)
- **Evaluation of Progress:** The OSPI will evaluate progress of each RAD and must recommend to the SBE that a school district be released from the designation after the district implements the plan for three years, has made progress using criteria under RCW 28A.657.020 including progress in closing the educational opportunity gap and no longer has a school identified as persistently lowest achieving.

Intervention Models: Required Action Districts receive funds targeted to make lasting gains in student achievement and to implement required elements of the selected school improvement model. The model must address concerns raised in the academic performance audit and be intended to improve school performance to allow the district to exit Required Action District status within three years of implementation of the plan. Models are briefly described below.

- **Closure Model** (federal model): District closes school and enrolls students who attended the school in other higher achieving schools in the district.
- **Restart Model** (federal model): District converts the school or closes and reopens it under management of an educational management organization (EMO) or charter organization.
- **Transformation Model** (federal model): District replaces principal and addresses five areas critical to transforming persistently low-achieving schools: developing teacher and principal leader effectiveness, implementing instructional reform strategies, extending learning time, creating community connections, and providing operating flexibility and sustained support
- **Turnaround Model** (federal model): District replaces principal and rehires no more than 50% of the school's staff, adopts a new governance structure, and implements a research-based instructional program aligned to state standards.
- **Synergy Model** (state model): District fully and effectively implements Turnaround Principles described in federal guidance (e.g., ensures principal has capacity to lead turnaround effort and teachers are effective and able to improve instruction; provides operational flexibility for principal to support school turnaround plans in key areas; ensures school significantly extends learning time for students and for teacher collaboration; ensures school improvement initiatives include rigorous, research-based instructional programs, practices, and models; and provides school with technology, training, and support for using data to inform instruction and continuous improvement).

Selection of any of these models may require modification or addition of Board policy and procedures and/or collective bargaining agreements.

III. Executive Summary and Recommendations

A thorough review of extant and collected data by the Academic Performance Audit Team led to the identification of a number of concerns; an analysis of these concerns resulted in the formulation of three recommendations. Legislation enacted in 2012 by the Washington State Legislature (E2SSB 5329) requires the district and school to explicitly address these concerns and recommendations when selecting the intervention model and crafting the Required Action Plan and Revised (Initial) Student and School Success Action Plan (submitted to the State Board of Education in June 2014) and Student and School Success Action Plan (submitted in October 2014). The school and district's action plan will need to address:

- **Recommendation 1: Design and implement protocols, structures, and professional development for Stewart's Student Success Cycle (data-informed inquiry cycle) to ensure all students receive rigorous, standards-aligned, and differentiated instruction and curriculum.**
- **Recommendation 2: Provide the principal operational flexibility that (a) supports the school's turnaround plan; (b) builds staff capacity to deliver rigorous, standards-based instruction and curriculum and use data in making instructional decisions; and (c) aligns with districtwide expectations for increases in student achievement.**
- **Recommendation 3: Ensure the learning environment is safe, supportive, mutually respectful, and honors the cultures and families represented in the school.**

Turnaround Principles and Indicators identified across these three recommendations are tightly coupled, that is, they are intended to support district and school leadership teams to collaborate and build coherence at each stage of the action-planning process. This tight coupling also enables teams to scaffold their S.M.A.R.T. Goals and Tasks as they create the Required Action Plan and Student and School Success Action Plans.

The Academic Performance Audit Team is confident the school is well-positioned to address these recommendations for several reasons. First, interviewees described a number of research-based practices critical to boosting educator practice and increasing student outcomes (e.g., on-site instructional, behavior, and data coaching support; collaboration time for Professional Learning Communities to analyze data). Additionally, the audit team heard multiple comments emphasizing the recent progress of the school's relatively young teacher team. Interviewees reported, "They've come far in a short amount of time," and "This staff has done a lot this year to change and grow, and the school reflects this growth." These comments are particularly noteworthy given the high turnover of staff, placement of significant number of teachers new to the profession (referred to as "Premies") at Stewart Middle School, and multiple changes in both school leadership and district leaders assigned as liaisons or supervisors to the building over the last four years. Finally, staff and the newly appointed principal expressed their high levels of commitment to engage in the challenging work of continuing to move the school forward. This commitment was echoed by district leadership.

Together, these strengths will serve the school and district well as they address the three recommendations described in this Academic Performance Audit Report.

IV. District and School Overview

Tacoma Public Schools (TPS) is the third largest district in Washington State and serves a diverse population of more than 28,000 students in kindergarten through grade 12. The district has 35

elementary schools, nine middle schools, five comprehensive high schools, and 14 alternative learning sites. TPS has more than 3,500 employees and is one of the largest employers in Tacoma (Source: Tacoma Public Schools website). Forty-two certificated staff members are assigned to Stewart Middle School (SMS). Approximately 55 percent of SMS teachers possess masters' degrees. The average teaching experience is 5.6 years; this compares to an average of 12.9% years of experience of teachers across the district. Stewart Middle School serves approximately 596 students, 77% of whom qualify for free or reduced price meals (Source: OSPI Report Card).

The Tacoma School District appointed three principals over the course of the three-year School Improvement Grant (SIG) to lead Stewart Middle School's turnaround effort (2010-11 through 2012-13). A principal from another school in the district was recently appointed to lead the school's future improvement efforts; he is the fourth to serve in the principal chair at Stewart Middle School since the first year of SIG (2010-11). A number of assistant principals have also been assigned to the building over the same period of time, and the district will appoint two new assistant principals to support the newly appointed principal.

Stewart Middle School is scheduled to be remodeled in the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years. During the two-year project, the school will be housed in a closed school in another part of the district. Interviewees at both the district and school levels expressed multiple challenges related to this two-year move, including transporting students "45 minutes" to the temporary location, keeping students engaged in their school, and maintaining connections with their parents, families, and the community.

A review of the school's Student and School Success Action Plan indicates the school has successfully assessed all 17 School-Level Expected Indicators and has active Expected Indicators for six of the seven Turnaround Principles. Descriptions in the Current Level of Development and assigned tasks are consistent with an analysis of extant data and additional data collected during the on-site visit by the Academic Performance Audit Team on March 25, 2014.

Additional background information about Stewart Middle School is provided in charts and tables on the next several pages.

Stewart Middle School Summary – Tacoma School District

Student Demographics

Source: OSPI State Report Card

Table 1. The table provides a profile of students in the 2012-13 school year.

Enrollment		
October 2012 Student Count		596
May 2013 Student Count		599
Gender (October 2012)		
Male	314	52.7%
Female	282	47.3%
Race/Ethnicity (October 2012)		
Asian/Pacific Islander	65	10.9%
Black / African American	172	28.9%
Hispanic / Latino of any race(s)	94	15.8%
White	252	42.3%
Special Programs		
Free or Reduced-Price Meals (May 2013)	461	77.0%
Special Education (May 2013)	74	12.4%

Student Achievement

Source: OSPI State Report Card

Note: Cells shaded in green represent increases over time; cells shaded in red represent decreases over time.

Table 2. Achievement Data on State Assessments from Baseline (2010) to 2013

Stewart Middle School	2010	2011	2012	2013	Change Baseline to 2013
Reading grade 6	37.30%	49.00%	48.30%	47.30%	10.00%
Reading grade 7	33.90%	36.70%	53.80%	51.80%	17.90%
Reading grade 8	52.90%	47.10%	40.00%	34.50%	-18.40%
Math grade 6	19.60%	30.60%	34.20%	35.80%	16.20%
Math grade 7	24.30%	25.90%	18.70%	37.90%	13.60%
Math grade 8	27.60%	25.20%	11.70%	17.30%	-10.30%

Figure 1. Achievement Data on State Assessments in Reading from Baseline (2010) to 2013

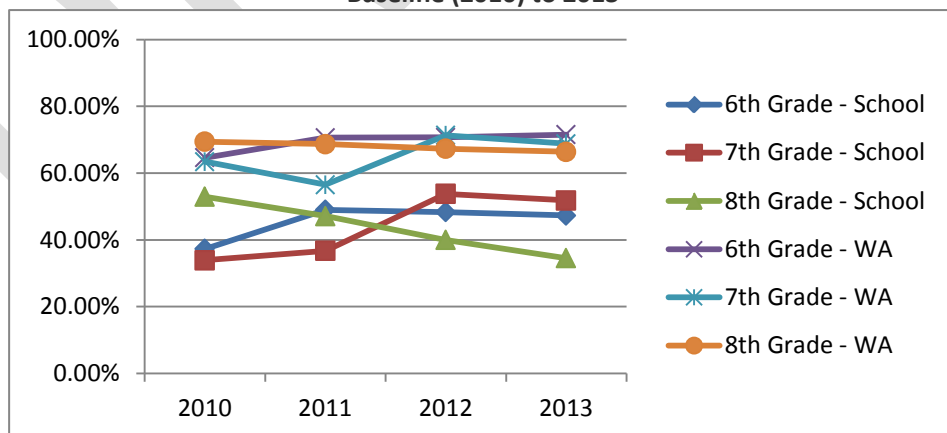
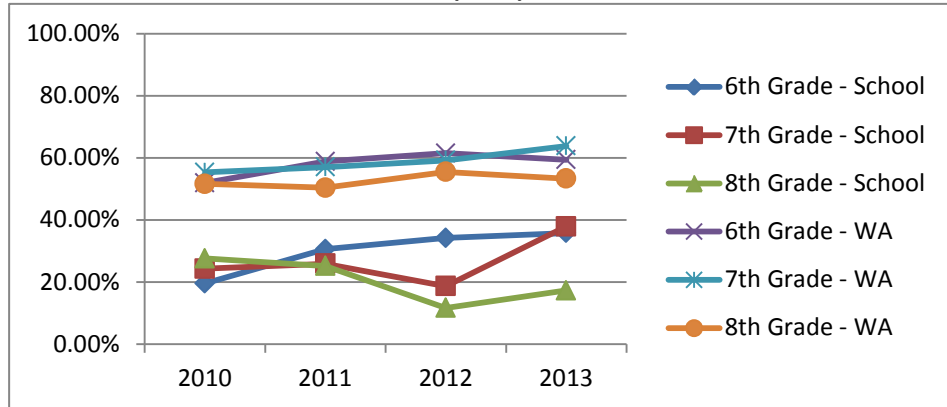


Figure 2. Achievement Data on State Assessments in Math from Baseline (2010) to 2013



Student Achievement- Whole School

Source: OSPI State Report Card

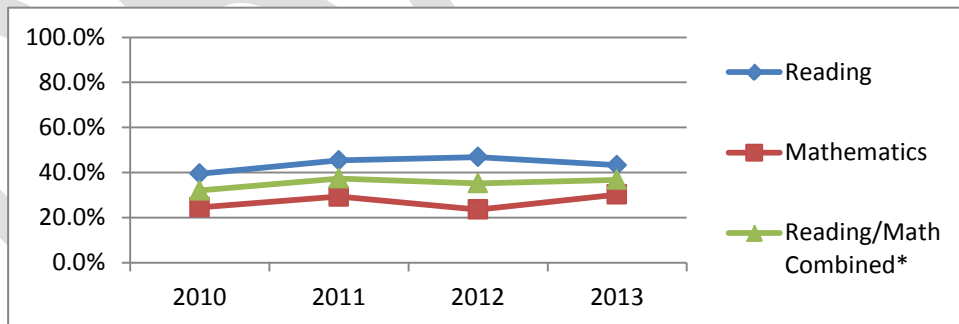
Note: Cells shaded in green represent increases over time; cells shaded in red represent decreases over time.

Percents are rounded to the nearest tenth.

Table 3. Whole School Achievement Data on State Assessments from Baseline (2010) to 2013

Stewart	2010	2011	2012	2013	Change Baseline to 2013
Reading	39.5%	45.4%	46.9%	43.3%	3.8%
Mathematics	24.6%	29.4%	23.6%	30.3%	5.7%
Reading/Math Combined*	32.1%	37.4%	35.3%	36.8%	4.7%

Figure 3. Whole School Achievement Data on State Assessments from Baseline (2010) to 2013



*Reading/Math Combined: Weighted average of student performance on state assessments in Reading and Math; only continuously enrolled students are included in the weighted average.

Student Achievement-Subgroup Data

Source: OSPI State Report Card

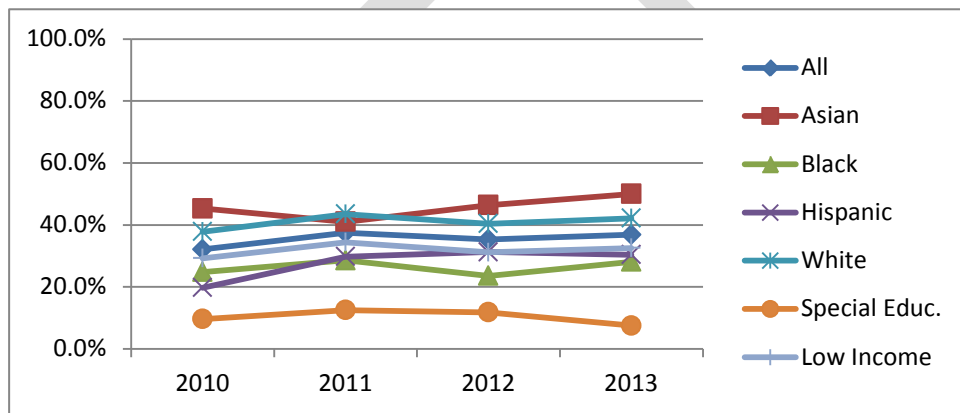
Note: Cells shaded in green represent increases over time; cells shaded in red represent decreases over time.

Percents are rounded to the nearest tenth.

Table 4. Subgroup Achievement Data on State Assessments from Baseline (2010) to 2013 in Reading/Math Combined

Stewart	2010	2011	2012	2013	Change Baseline to 2013
All	32.1%	37.4%	35.3%	36.8%	4.7%
Asian	45.3%	41.0%	46.4%	50.0%	4.7%
Black	24.8%	28.6%	23.5%	28.1%	3.3%
Hispanic	19.8%	29.7%	31.3%	30.4%	10.6%
White	37.8%	43.5%	40.4%	42.2%	4.3%
Special Educ.	9.6%	12.5%	11.8%	7.5%	-2.1%
Low Income	29.2%	34.4%	31.2%	32.6%	3.3%

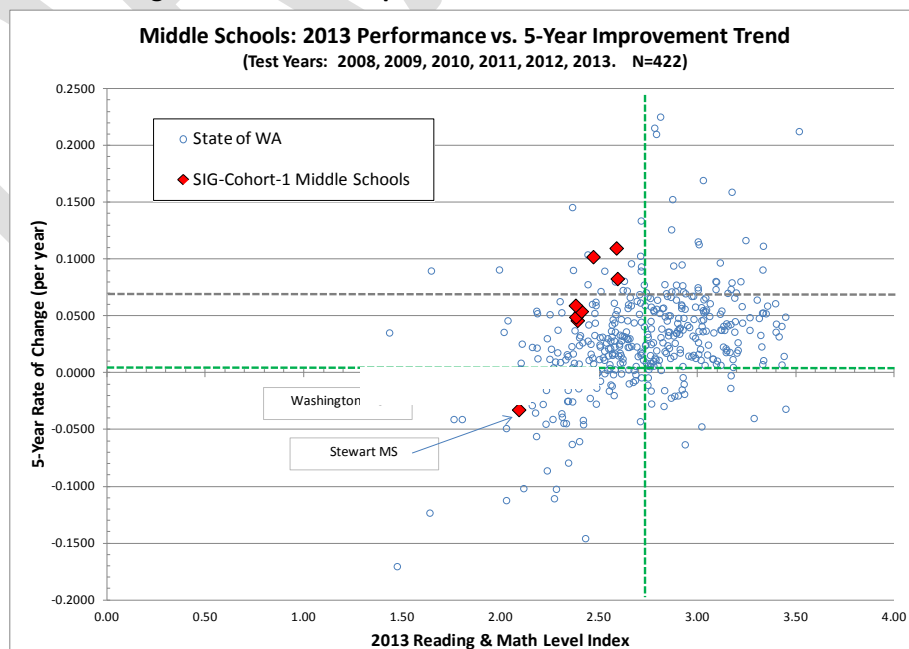
Figure 4. Subgroup Achievement Data on State Assessments from Baseline (2010) to 2013 in Reading/Math Combined



Student Achievement-Whole School

Source: Center for Educational Effectiveness and OSPI State Report Card

Figure 5. Five-Year Improvement Trend from 2009 to 2013



V. Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Design and implement protocols, structures, and professional development for Stewart’s Student Success Cycle (data-informed inquiry cycle) to ensure all students receive rigorous, standards-aligned, and differentiated instruction and curriculum.

The findings informing this recommendation are segmented into the following areas, each of which aligns with Turnaround Principles:

- **1.A – Design and Implement Rigorous, Standards-Based Units of Instruction** (Turnaround Principle 4: Strengthen the school’s instructional program based on student needs and ensure that the instructional program is research-based, rigorous, and aligned with State academic content standards)
- **1.B – Provide Professional Development, Technical Assistance, and Support** (Turnaround Principle 2: Ensure teachers are effective and able to improve instruction)
- **1.C – Build and Consistently Use Protocols and Structures Supporting Use of Data to Inform Instruction** (Turnaround Principle 5: Use data to inform instruction and for continuous improvement, including by providing time for collaboration on the use of data)

Each segment includes a brief description of current practice, concerns identified in data, and strengths upon which to build. A list of specific Turnaround Principles and Indicators that must be addressed by the school and district and recommendations for the Office of Student and School Success conclude the section.

1.A - Design and Implement Rigorous, Standards-Based Units of Instruction

Note. The Academic Performance Audit Team intends “rigorous” and “rigor” to signify high expectations for all students achieving or exceeding grade-level Common Core and Washington State Standards.

Stewart Middle School (SMS) leadership and staff described their efforts to increase academic press and ensure students engage in rigorous, standards-based units of instruction. They shared common areas of focus supporting their work: (a) implementation of culturally and linguistically relevant teaching practices, referred to as CLR; (b) articulation of purpose/learning target (students write the target and target is referenced at beginning, throughout, and end of lessons); (c) making connections to real-life application; (d) integrating across content areas (i.e., STREAM [Science, Technology, Reading, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics]); (e) using subject-specific language across content areas; (f) assessing student engagement and equity (e.g., equitable opportunity for students to respond, student placement in groups); (g) increasing student-to-student discourse and using more student-centered questioning strategies; (h) improving classroom management and discipline; and (i) engaging peers in “crucial conversations around beliefs about what students can do.”

When asked to describe shifts in practice resulting from these efforts, staff and leaders indicated the following:

- Aligning instructional practice with the district’s selected framework (CEL 5D) and standards; monitoring progress through pre- and post-tests
- Focusing on students understanding learning targets and the purpose of lessons
- Looking at student discourse to assess equitable opportunities provided to students
- Implementing culturally and linguistically relevant practices
- Collaborating with peers, particularly around student work

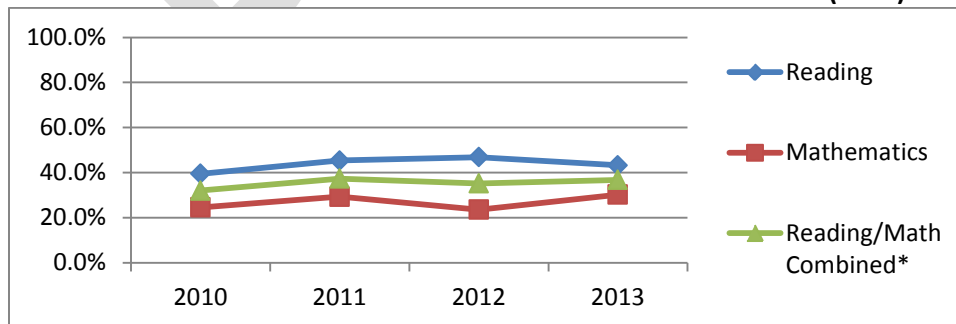
Leadership indicated shifts in instructional practice are observed in daily walkthroughs, posting of learning targets, and the levels of student discourse. School leaders also reported the school has increased rigor in coursework from the onset of the turnaround effort. For instance, the number of high school equivalent courses has increased from three to eight. Additionally, students may now enroll in Springboard, a pre-Advanced Placement (pre-AP) curriculum in English Language Arts developed by the College Board.

Staff and leadership reported they are focusing their efforts on selecting the highest leverage instructional practices and collecting data to determine their effectiveness and impact. Staff referred to this process as Stewart’s Student Success Cycle or cycle of inquiry. Leadership team members indicated that they have invested particular energy in building the capacity of their new staff. Departments are aligning curriculum across and within grade levels and developing common assessments. Teachers reported developing Student Success Cycle protocols for looking at data; each content area then added to the four consistent questions (e.g., Are these data meaningful?)

Staff described differentiating lessons within the classroom for students as needed. Interviewees also explained the interventions offered to students in English Language Arts and Mathematics. These include (a) READ 180 and Reading Support for students in English Language Arts and (b) Winter Session (between 1st and 2nd semester) to build confidence and “double-dosing” with AIMSweb in Mathematics. They described “double-dosing” all students in 2012-13; however, they did not continue that practice into the 2013-14 school year. Teachers described their efforts to continue to look at student growth and focus on observation and conferencing. They also noted that READ 180 is used as a supplement to the core, rather than a replacement for core instructional materials. When describing their model to serve students with disabilities, school leaders indicated the school moved from the full inclusion model instituted in the 2010-11 school year (first year of SIG) to a traditional pull-out model.

Concerns: There is a lack of evidence indicating the current instructional improvement cycle serves Stewart Middle School students well. As illustrated in the figure below, data on state assessments in Reading and Mathematics over the last several years indicate a lack of consistent progress. Proficiency in both Reading and Math increased an average of 5.5% during the first year of participation in SIG (from 2010 to 2011). However, the school experienced little change for the remaining years of the grant (-2.1% in Reading and +.9% in Mathematics from 2011 to 2013). Additionally, the number of students below benchmark (Level 1 and Level 2) has grown over the same time period. Finally, both proficiency and the median growth percentile for the all-students group on state assessments over three years (2011, 2012, and 2013) are in the lowest 5 percent of the state.

Whole School Achievement Data on State Assessments from Baseline (2010) to 2013



*Reading/Math Combined: Weighted average of student performance on state assessments in Reading and Math; only continuously enrolled students are included in the weighted average.

Teachers reported, "It's not clear what the intervention model will look like for students not at benchmark in mathematics." Another added, "Our SRI scores are going up, so an argument could be made for READ 180. However, math interventions have changed, so we're not sure what's effective." Staff also indicated the double-dosing in both Mathematics and English Language Arts has led to an unintentional tracking of students.

Audit team members heard comments regarding the number of preparations teachers are assigned, indicating this is particularly challenging for the many new and inexperienced teachers at Stewart Middle School. Some indicated they haven't taught in other schools, so they're not sure that what they're doing "is the right thing" and focuses on "key skills expected of all teachers." Others shared a desire "to identify the things they are doing and be informed of areas in which they could grow."

Concerns regarding lack of rigor in coursework and beliefs around students meeting state standards arose from multiple sources. Survey results from spring 2013 indicated 36% of staff agreed that students are provided higher level tasks that require critical thinking, and 45% agreed that staff believes that all students can meet state standards. Interviewees indicated some of their staff may have a "fixed mindset" and wonder if these peers believe students can achieve to high levels. Interestingly, student perceptions on the spring 2013 surveys were more positive: 60% of students agreed their teachers believe that all students can do well, 55% agreed that they understand how to apply what they learn at school to real-life situations, and 54% agreed that their classes challenge them to think and solve problems. Interviewees (both staff and students) also expressed concerns around rigor. Said one student, "I want to be prepared for high school, and I'm not sure I'll be ready." Another stated, "We aren't offered the same content in the same class"; several students agreed, citing their mathematics class as an example.

Several staff also expressed concerns with respect to the effectiveness of the current model serving special education students. One interviewee declared, "If the district curriculum is core for special education, then the current model probably won't make it. She [the special education teacher] is on her own for grades 6 through 8." Others expressed concerns about the connections of the special education teacher to the core curriculum and as "isolated," and some suggested a co-teaching model should be considered to ensure special education students access core instruction and curriculum.

Strengths upon which to build: A number of strengths emerged from the review of data, classroom visits, and interviews; these can serve as a platform for continuing the school's improvement efforts. For example, students reported learning protocols that support them across their subjects (e.g., circling actions they need to complete and underlining concepts they need to know). Others described some of their classes as providing "relevant content," citing recent assignments in their Social Studies classes around constitutional issues.

Additionally, teachers shared the district's efforts to align curriculum with Common Core and Washington State Standards and the district's commitment to work with Stewart Middle School teachers to ensure curriculum, instruction, and assessments align with standards. There is the expectation that standards-aligned curriculum and instruction will lead to increased rigor across courses. Interviewees also described both Springboard and the increase in credit-bearing classes as evidence of increased rigor in coursework.

Staff shared several strategies used to identify and support students with academic needs, including development of common benchmark assessments and conferencing with students at Level II on last

spring's state assessments during the year. Several also declared, "READ 180 is good because of the goal-setting and celebration. I see kids taking charge of their own learning." Said one, "It would be great if we had a 'MATH 180' as well, since READ 180 seems to be working with our students."

Academic Performance Audit Team members observed the following evidence supporting shifts in practice described by leadership and staff:

- Learning targets were present in every lesson observed. Students in all but one classroom noted the learning target in their planners. Several teachers reviewed the Learning Target during the lesson. In half of the classrooms, the learning target was written as a classroom activity. Team members suggest teachers continue to (a) work on consistently posting and intentionally communicating clear learning targets and involving students in understanding the learning intention of the lessons; (b) clarify the difference between a learning target and an activity; and (c) ensure classroom activity/activities are in direct service to the learning target.
- The effective use of formative assessment was present in half of the classrooms. Team members suggest teachers increase their use and variety of formative assessments and adjust instruction accordingly.
- Cooperative groups were observed in all but two classrooms. Teachers employed cooperative pairs, triads, and small groups in order to complete classroom activities. In fact, students spent a considerable amount of time working both formally and informally in pairs and small groups. Team members noted student-to-student discourse was often sharing of answers or side conversation; therefore, students would probably benefit from additional training and support around clarity of group norms, roles, and purpose for their small group work.

These strengths can inform the work of leadership and staff as they develop S.M.A.R.T. Goals and tasks associated with this recommendation.

1.B – Provide Professional Development, Technical Assistance, and Support

Both district and school personnel described a variety of supports available for teachers to improve their craft. These include external content facilitators and embedded coaching (academic, behavior, and data), professional development aligned with school and district initiatives, and professional learning communities and collaboration time to analyze student work. Descriptions of these supports follow.

External Content Facilitators and Embedded Coaching: Interviewees explained that the district assigns content and instructional facilitators in Language Arts/Social Studies, Mathematics, and Science to support teachers at both Stewart Middle School and other schools in the district. Additional support is provided by full-time Instructional and Data Coaches assigned to the school. Facilitators and coaches engage with teachers as they look at their instructional practice through a studio model; they also participate in team meetings focused on student data and aligning curriculum vertically and with Common Core and Washington State Standards. Additional learning opportunities supported by facilitators and coaches include the following:

- Mathematics teachers participate in the Teacher Development Group Math Studio work. Between cycles, the teachers have "mini studios" where they collaboratively plan a lesson, observe their grade level peers teach the lesson, re-design the lesson, and have the lesson taught by the partner teacher.
- Language Arts teachers participate in the Springboard Studios and have conducted mini-studios within the building, similar to the Math and Science departments.

- Science teachers participate in Science Studios focused around research-based teaching strategies.

Professional Development: The leadership team described multiple areas of focus for professional development supported by coaches and facilitators. These include 5 Dimensions of Teaching and Learning (district’s selected Instructional Model), schoolwide discipline, AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination), Compassionate Schools model, Cultural and Linguistic Diversity training that emphasizes culturally responsive strategies in focused instruction, Safe and Civil Schools components (e.g., Voice Level, SLANT, and CHAMPS), Teacher Development Group (TDG) in Mathematics, Springboard and READ 180 in English Language Arts, Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), and selected teacher-to-teacher cafeteria-style training sessions on “just-in-time” topics of interest to staff. The Data Coach also supports teachers to build their capacity around using data and facilitates their use of data to inform instructional practice at the student and classroom levels.

Professional Learning Communities and Collaboration Time: Teachers collaborate within and across their grade-level and content-area teams. The school’s innovative calendar includes a common planning period at the start of the school day and a two-hour late start each Friday. Together, these allow for targeted professional development and opportunities for professional learning communities to collaborate around student work. Interviewees also described the opportunities provided during the Friday late starts: engage in professional development led by the administrative team; collaborate in grade-level or department teams (professional learning communities); participate in cafeteria-style training sessions led by building, district, or community facilitators; and take part in focused interdisciplinary STEM planning and training.

Concerns: While teachers have access to a variety of professional development opportunities and ongoing technical assistance, evidence suggests teachers are not yet consistently implementing research-based instructional practices with fidelity. Interviewees described several challenges to taking their instructional skills “to the next level,” including: insufficient time for collaboration and team planning, amount of required “external content” based on district priorities, lack of coherence across the multiple instructional supports and across content areas, frequent staff turnover resulting in a number of new and/or inexperienced teachers arriving at Stewart Middle School each year, and multiple changes in leadership over the last four years.

The question posed by one teacher was echoed by several: “How do you know what you don’t know?” Others added, “We need support when we try new things, like effective mentorship” and “We need help when things aren’t working.” Still others asked, “How do we know if the studio model is working or not, since it only happens three times each year,” and “How do we help teachers grow so that it’s not punitive?” Said another, “It all comes back to fidelity and who is holding us accountable to make sure [the new practice] happens?” And finally, “How do we bring coherence and focus to the collaboration time, professional development, walkthrough feedback, and studio?” These questions express the depth of concern among interviewees. Their commitment to increasing their instructional capacity is laudable; their lack of confidence that they’re implementing those highest leverage practices that will lead to significant increases in student growth was palpable.

Additionally, interviewee comments suggest the district has a number of inconsistently supported and frequently changing initiatives that have led to “initiative fatigue.” One staff member opined, “It feels like there are too many changes and initiatives going on to do well. It would be helpful for the district to pick out the few things that will demonstrate a positive impact [and focus on those].” Said another, “It

feels like there are too many initiatives moving forward, and there is inadequate ongoing support to implement them well.” Another added, “The district has not done a good job of creating the shared messaging around the coherence of the work within the system.”

Strengths upon which to build: Both district and school leaders communicated a strong commitment to providing the professional development and technical assistance essential to build educator capacity to increase learning outcomes for Stewart Middle School students. Teachers report a similar commitment to improving their craft. Additionally, the district has developed a number of initiatives to support educators to increase their leadership and instructional capacity. While strengths, these multiple learning opportunities also bring challenges (see *Concerns* above). It is essential that district and school leadership identify and focus on those initiatives that will have the highest impact on educator skills, so they can reduce the “initiative fatigue” described by building staff.

District leaders also recognized the impact on Stewart Middle School of the performance of students coming to SMS from “feeder pattern” schools. They described “the need for regional dialogue with feeder partners and for developing regional approaches to support building capacity among the elementary and middle school staff.”

Multiple interviewees demonstrated their commitment to building their instructional capacity when citing professional development and technical assistance needs around areas such as the following: (a) instructional design and delivery, (b) effective strategies and practices for inclusion, (c) implementing skills demonstrated in studios, (d) culturally and linguistically relevant teaching practices, and (e) interpreting and using data.

Interviewees also described the recent formation of the School Centered Decision Making (SCDM) Team. One of the team’s responsibilities is to help identify and support professional development needs based on a variety of surveys, departmental input, and administrative and coaching staff assessment. This may support staff in addressing “initiative fatigue” described by both district and school leaders and staff.

Finally, results from spring 2013 surveys indicate high levels of support and engagement in professional development: 84% of staff agreed teachers engage in professional development activities to learn and apply new skills and strategies, 71% agreed they have opportunities to learn effective teaching strategies for the diversity represented in the school, and 65% agreed they are provided training to meet the needs of a diverse student population in the school.

1. C – Build and Consistently Use Protocols and Structures Supporting Use of Data to Inform Instruction

Teachers described Stewart’s Student Success Cycle used to analyze data and for making instructional decisions at the classroom and individual student levels. They indicated this is a switch in focus from previous years, and teams now use common questions/protocols (e.g., “Are these data meaningful?”) for examining student work and analyzing data. Teachers reported that each content area added to the four protocol questions.

Additionally, both school and district interviewees reported teachers use a variety of data in their planning processes. Examples of data cited include: Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI), READ 180, and AIMSweb for interventions; common assessments in departments and benchmark assessments to measure progress; and summative Classroom Based Assessments (CBAs). School leaders indicated data are reviewed and analyzed monthly and as needed, and have been used to follow up with

classroom/student observations, co-inquiry conversations with teacher(s), and recommendations for interventions and supports. They cited examples of staff use of data in decision-making, including intervention classes, student and/or parent conferences, creation of additional classes, and/or referrals of students for additional extended learning opportunities (e.g., tutoring, Panther Center, winter session, spring session). A newly developed START team (Student Teacher Advisory Resource Team) supports teachers and administrators to focus on a wrap-around approach for youth who are a shared focus of concern. Students and parents are aware of and involved in goal setting to further ensure progress. Additionally, grade level and departmental teams have established benchmark goals after review of results on state assessments, the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI), Math Benchmark Assessments, AIMSweb, BERC surveys, and district climate surveys.

The current principal developed a data tool that includes all students at Stewart Middle School and provides one means to track academic progress, involvement in school activities, and disciplinary issues for individual students. Administrators report they use these data when meeting with students and parents; they added, "We now know more students because of the data base. We have more information about each student, such as their MSP data and their after-school sports activities." Additionally, data for use by school staff are collected on multiple district initiatives (e.g., AVID, Navigation 101 and the Springboard (Language Arts) and Science studios. The school also collects intervention data for both Reading and Mathematics and is beginning to collect discipline data to determine the impact of the Save and Civil Schools initiative. As indicated above, the Data Coach is available to support staff in learning how to use these data.

Concerns: Results on state assessments and the lack of a coherent system that ensures all students receive grade-level, standards-based instruction and curriculum and differentiated instruction as needed suggest staff teams are not consistently using common protocols and structures to analyze student work and determine and implement instructional changes needed to boost student achievement. Staff comments support this concern: "We use the Student Success Cycle to look at data; however, we're not sure how well it's working," and "We need to learn how to collaborate effectively."

Interviewees surfaced several other challenges:

- "How can we embed collaboration during the day, so it's not at end of the day?"
- "Does it make a difference that not all departments use the same protocols?"
- "Right now teachers are detached from data; we need to create an emotional response so they connect with the data."
- "We need to make sure there is safety and respect within staff; it needs to be a safe place for staff to learn and grow."
- "We need to be student-centered and focused on student engagement."

Results from spring 2013 surveys indicated 41% of staff members agree data from classroom observations leads to meaningful change in instructional practice, 43% agree assessment data are used to identify student needs and appropriate instructional intervention, 35% agree they monitor the effectiveness of instructional interventions, 24% agree struggling students receive early intervention and remediation to acquire skills, and 47% agree students are encouraged to self-reflect and track progress towards goals. As mentioned in the previous section, only 13% of staff members agreed instruction is personalized to meet the needs of each student.

The Academic Performance Audit Team suggests the dichotomy between the high levels of data use reported by staff and the results on the spring 2013 survey are worthy of further examination.

Implementation of common protocols and structures, as well as additional professional development to collaborate in professional learning communities (PLCs) and use data in the Student Success Cycle, may serve as significant steps to increase the effectiveness of this research-based process.

Strengths upon which to build: School leaders described use of the Student Success Cycle and collaboration of content and grade-level teams in PLCs as strengths for Stewart Middle School. They added that teachers are committed to collecting and using data to determine what is and isn't working. The Data Coach is supporting them in increasing their facility with using data in instructional decision making at the classroom and student levels. Though opportunities for collaboration have been reduced since the sunset of School Improvement Grant funding in June 2013, staff continues to meet regularly in PLCs. Because of this, the organization of all staff members into professional learning communities provides the structure and strong foundation for staff to engage in this work. This will support staff and leadership as they continue to build a student-centered culture and use data to identify the instruction and interventions required to meet student needs.

Staff members recognized the need for commonly used protocols, structures, and professional development to maximize the impact of the Student Success Cycle. They added they would like to use the inquiry cycle to examine student work and other data and to guide instruction and student groupings, but they're not quite sure about their protocols: "How do we know what questions to ask in data analysis? How should we use data in our content area?" The desire to grow their instructional capacity through collaboration with peers and educators from other schools was reiterated by a number of interviewees.

The Academic Performance Audit Team reviewed the school's current Student and School Success Action Plan and identified the following tasks supporting this effort:

- Departments will develop common benchmark assessments and use that data to identify individual student academic needs as aligned with CCSS. (Indicator P4-III A07)
- Utilize the data tool to plan and implement ELO and in school instructional strategies for student achievement. (Indicator P5-IID07)
- Grade level and content teams will analyze student work during their weekly meetings and also when in cross content team meetings. Students that are a focus of concern will have shared teams review student strengths and utilize this to develop an individual student learning plan. Progress monitoring will be based on objective data. (Indicator P1-ID10)

While these tasks are not recorded as completed, they illustrate leadership and staff commitment to ensure students are provided rigorous, standards-based instruction and curriculum.

Requirements for Recommendation #1

In light of concerns raised for this recommendation, Stewart Middle School and the Tacoma School District must address the following Turnaround Principles and Indicators when selecting the school improvement model and crafting the Required Action Plan and Revised (Initial) Student and School Success Action Plan (submitted to the State Board of Education in June 2014) and Student and School Success Action Plan (submitted in October 2014):

Stewart Middle School

- Principle 2: Provide targeted professional development (PD) to build teacher capacity to implement standards-based curriculum, instruction, and interventions. (Indicators P2-IF11 and/or P2-IF12)

- Principle 4: Align instructional strategies with student learning needs; regularly monitor and make adjustments to continuously improve the core instructional program based on identified student needs. (Indicators P4-IIA03 and/or P4-IIIA07)
- Principle 5: Implement protocols, structures, and professional development that expand the capacity of teacher teams to monitor and assess mastery of standards-based objectives and to make instructional adjustments to the core instructional program based on student needs. (Indicator P5-IID12)

Tacoma School District

- Principle 2: Provide differentiated professional development and technical assistance to teachers to move instruction to increased levels of rigor and relevance for students. (Indicator P2-C)
- Principle 2: Build capacity within the coaching cadre to (a) support expanded teacher core instructional practices and differentiated instruction and (b) train on the adopted instructional framework. (Indicator P2-C)
- Principle 2: Ensure coherence across professional development and teaching/learning practices within the school. (Indicator P2-C)
- Principle 3: Allocate resources (e.g., personnel, fiscal, and professional development and technical assistance) to support additional learning time for staff. (Indicator P3-A)
- Principle 4: Provide training and support on systems of intervention that result in accelerated student learning. (Indicator P4-B)
- Principle 5: Provide appropriate assessment tools, data management systems and training on the interpretation of data. (Indicator P5-A)

These Turnaround Principles and Indicators are tightly coupled. Therefore, leadership teams can scaffold the S.M.A.R.T. Goals and Tasks as they revise/create the Required Action Plan submitted to the State Board of Education and the Student and School Success Action Plan submitted to the Office of Student and School Success. The Wise Ways documents on Indistar® describe research-based practices leadership teams can implement as they craft action plans around school- and district-level Indicators.

Office of Student and School Success: Additional next steps for the Office of Student and School Success to support both Stewart Middle School and the Tacoma School District follow.

- Principle 2, 4, and 5: Provide and monitor professional development and technical assistance to school staff and district instructional coaches consistent with the Required Action Plan and Student and School Success Plan. Suggestions follow:
 - Implementing an instructional program that ensures all students receive grade-level appropriate instruction and interventions based on student needs (Principles 4 and 5)
 - Using data to inform instruction (Principles 4 and 5)
 - Monitoring progress of school-based initiatives (Principle 5)
- Principle 2: Convene ongoing meetings among external and internal professional development providers to improve coherence and alignment of supports provided to the school.

Recommendation 2: Provide the principal operational flexibility that (a) supports the school’s turnaround plan; (b) builds staff capacity to deliver rigorous, standards-based instruction and curriculum and use data in making instructional decisions; and (c) aligns with districtwide expectations for increases in student achievement.

The findings informing this recommendation are segmented into two areas, each of which aligns with the identified Turnaround Principles:

- **2.A – Principal Leadership** (Turnaround Principle 1: Provide strong leadership)
- **2.B – District Leadership** (Turnaround Principle 1: Provide strong leadership)

Each segment includes a brief description of current practice, concerns identified in data, and strengths upon which to build. A list of specific Turnaround Principles and Indicators that must be addressed by the school and district and recommendations for the Office of Student and School Success conclude the section.

As indicated in the Introduction to this report, Stewart Middle School was awarded a School Improvement Grant (SIG) for three years (2010-11 through 2012-13) to fully and effectively implement the federal Turnaround model. Among other things, this required the school and district to replace the principal and rehire no more than 50% of the school’s staff, adopt a new governance structure, and implement a research-based instructional program aligned to state standards. To comply with the requirement to replace the principal, the district appointed a new principal in spring 2010 to lead the turnaround effort at Stewart Middle School. That individual was replaced during Year 1 of SIG (2010-11) and another principal was appointed. In Year 2, the district appointed a co-principal to share leadership; this individual was asked to serve as the sole principal for the last quarter of Year 2 and continued in that role for the 2012-13 and 2013-14 school years. Recently, the district appointed a principal from another school in the district to lead Stewart Middle School’s future improvement efforts, making him the fourth to serve in the principal chair at Stewart Middle School since the 2010-11 school year. The district indicated it will appoint two new assistant principals to support the newly appointed principal.

The sections below focus on leadership as the school moves forward. That said, the Academic Performance Audit Team notes the significant number of comments regarding the impact of the current principal in leading the school through several difficult years. Interviewees attributed recent positive changes in the school to her leadership: “The building has truly calmed down under the current leadership; a nurturing soul has helped build a community in the school.” Others declared, “She has ‘really pushed’ the adoption and application and use of the district adopted curriculum.” Still others opined, “She is attentive; takes notes; participates in studios; wants to learn what she can about the curriculum; knows what effective instructional practice should look like; and stays with studio from beginning to end.” Said another, “She is very involved, present and involved. She has grown in her role; there just wasn’t enough time to fix all that was going on.” The common themes emerging from interviewees include the following: she has taken role seriously, created ownership of what needs to change, values quality instruction, participates in professional development, looks for ways to support staff, has a strong work ethic, and created a sense of direction for building. These comments are noteworthy, because they clarify the role of the current principal in laying the groundwork for the newly appointed principal and staff as they move forward in their turnaround efforts.

2.A – Principal Leadership

Though the school engaged in an intensive turnaround effort over the last four years, a variety of data reviewed by the Academic Performance Audit Team indicates that changes in instructional, leadership, and schoolwide practices were not sufficient to turn around the school’s persistent low performance. When considering in-school influences, research indicates that the impact of principal leadership is

second only to that of teacher practices in improving student outcomes (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom, 2004). Hence, the appointment of an individual described by district leadership as “demonstrating the capacity to lead, facilitate, and manage the change effort at Stewart Middle School” should bode well for the coming years.

The newly appointed principal is not new to Tacoma School District. Rather, he served as the principal of another SIG school in the district for the last four years. Under his leadership, the school experienced gains in Reading and Mathematics for each grade level from baseline (2010) to 2013; these gains ranged from an increase of 3.1% in eighth-grade Reading to an increase of 24.8% in seventh-grade Math.

Interviewees described the new principal (and he describes himself) as “very data driven, very engaged in his own learning.” Others shared, “He has a firm grasp of instructional practices and the expectations of what good instruction should look like.” One district leader declared, “We aren’t doing another experiment. He is a known leader with turnaround capacity. He will be clear and transparent about the plan, saying ‘Here’s what you’re in for,’ so there are no surprises.” Another agreed, “He’ll set the vision and hold staff accountable. He’ll tell them, ‘I’ll explain to you why we’re doing it; if you’re at Stewart Middle School, it won’t be an option to buy-out.’” He is also described as a person committed to “building distributive leadership.” Still another opined, “He will create a culture of looking at data, always asking the question, ‘What do the data say we need to do for kids?’”

A number of interviewees questioned how much autonomy and operating flexibility will be accorded to the new principal by the district. Comments included: “The district needs to listen to him and not delay in filling his requests,” and “For him to be successful early on, the district needs to provide flexibility, authority and resources to put in place the program he feels is needed.” One example of operating flexibility described by interviewees is allowing the principal to require SMS teachers to attend school-level training aligned to their needs, rather than attending district-level offerings. This will enable him to monitor what they receive, which is important because of the high number of inexperienced teachers at Stewart Middle School. Another example of operating flexibility is allowing the new principal to significantly change the daily schedule to a “5 x 5 with 70 minute periods” to align with his vision for the school and how staff can most effectively boost student learning. Also described was the importance of “giving the new principal latitude to manage the development of his team.”

The principal is supported by a distributed leadership model that includes the school’s School Centered Decision-Making Team (SCDM) and subject-area departments. Interviewees indicated the SCDM team is relatively new and includes the principal, team leaders, guidance counselors, and coaches. The team is described as “meeting every other week to gather updates from departments and manage schoolwide decisions.” The team approves all initiatives related to learning; if a decision impacts the school day, then the whole staff will vote. Otherwise, the SCDM gets feedback and makes decisions about the issue. Department teams (English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies) meet each Friday as appropriate with an administrator. Interviewees indicated teachers from elective subjects are assigned to core academic teams.

Concerns: Several interviewees wondered about the district’s process of choosing the new principal. While they didn’t question his capacity to lead Stewart Middle School, they were concerned that “a new leader is coming with limited school input or consideration of the impact on the school’s progress of yet another change.” Others reported that the whole staff is typically involved in decisions relating to the schedule. They continued, “The new principal is bringing the model [5 x 5] in. The master schedule has changed dramatically each year, so teachers will need support—and likely students too—for facilitating

instruction in this new model.” Others expressed concern that “the extended learning time [currently] provided to students who are academically at risk will not be present in the new schedule.”

Interviewees also expressed uncertainty regarding the expectations of the new principal. Specificity around how he will support them to build capacity to deliver rigorous, standards-based instruction and interventions and to use data in making instructional decisions will be important. As he and the leadership team craft S.M.A.R.T. Goals around professional development (Principle 2), the instructional program (Principle 4), and use of data (Principle 5), they will have an opportunity to explicitly describe the expected changes in educator practice and student outcomes and to cite the evidence that will be used to track progress. Clarity around both expectations and ways that changes in practice will be measured will help alleviate uncertainty and assist staff in developing and sharing a common vision of effective instruction with the principal.

Audit team members also learned that Stewart Middle School does not have an organizational or decision-making chart at this time; this concern also brings an opportunity for the new principal to collaborate with the staff and leadership teams.

Strengths upon which to build: The newly appointed principal has demonstrated experience in turning around low-performing schools and is familiar with the district’s vision, benchmarks for success, and initiatives. The audit team heard a number of comments about the strengths he brings to Stewart Middle School, including the following:

- He’s both an analytical thinker who looks deeply at data and a facilitator of the learning of others.
- He understands effective instruction and how a variety of data can be used to inform decision-making at the individual student, classroom, and school levels.
- He also knows how to coach his staff to build their capacity and recognizes that veteran staff can serve as mentors to teachers new to the building and the profession.
- He builds teacher leaders and will continue to distribute leadership across the school, including in school improvement planning and monitoring progress on Indistar.

The new principal shared his intention to be in the building as often as possible during the rest of this school year. He also hopes to bring staff in over the summer and to host a workshop for staff prior to school starting in the fall. He described these as “opportunities to build those relationships with staff that are so critical to moving the school forward.”

District leaders indicated they will provide a high level of support for the principal. He has their confidence, and they’ll allow him latitude to support his staff to “take risks and to learn and grow.” They are also giving him autonomy to select his administrative team and to allow staff to “buy-in or opt out [and be transferred to another school in the district].”

These are all strengths that will serve the principal, staff, students, families, and community as the school enters the 2014-15 school year.

2.B – District Leadership

The narrative for this recommendation began with a description of the multiple changes in leadership at Stewart Middle School over the last four years. District leaders were confident that each of the first three appointments was the right choice for the school; yet, as interviewees indicated, the school finds itself with another principal for the 2014-15 school year.

Research cited in [Indistar's](#) Wise Ways suggests a variety of roles districts play in ensuring their schools are led by empowered change agents with the capacity to turn around schools and substantially raise student achievement. Questions anchored in this research for district leaders to consider include:

- What supports is the district planning to provide to ensure the success of this new principal?
- How will the district assign and support central office leaders to engage with the principal, facilitate his growth as an instructional leader, provide him operating flexibility, and hold him accountable for student learning?
- What process does the district use to ensure the principal will have autonomy/flexibility within a districtwide context of accountability for improved educator practice and student learning?
- How will the district differentiate expectations, supports, and services for the school—within the context of district vision, priorities, and strategic plan?

Support from district leadership will be critical during the reconstruction project and while the school is temporarily housed at another location in the district. The principal will need latitude to maintain his focus on the staff, students, and families served, and to minimize the time spent on the design and construction phases of the project. He may also need district support in transporting students for after-school interventions and activities during the transition years.

Requirements for Recommendation #2

In light of concerns raised for this recommendation, Stewart Middle School and the Tacoma School District must address the following Turnaround Principles and Indicators when selecting the school improvement model and crafting the Required Action Plan and Revised (Initial) Student and School Success Action Plan (submitted to the State Board of Education in June 2014) and Student and School Success Action Plan (submitted in October 2014):

Stewart Middle School

- Principle 1: Develop shared/distributed leader capacity to facilitate a continuous improvement process; guide and manage the review of data, selection of strategies, and implementation of improvement efforts; and monitor the effectiveness of these efforts. (Indicator P1-ID10)
- Principle 2: Set goals for Professional Development and monitor the extent to which staff has changed practice and impacted student learning. (Indicators P2-IF14 and/or P5-IID06)
- Principle 5: Use a variety of data to assess strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum and instructional strategies. (Indicator P5-IID08)

Tacoma School District

- Principle 1: Provide principal with operational flexibility in order to support school turnaround plans in key areas. (Indicator P1-C)
- Principle 3: Allocate resources (e.g., personnel, fiscal, professional development and technical assistance) to support time for teacher collaboration and instructional planning. (Indicator P3-A)
- Principle 5: Provide technology, training, and support for school leadership to collect and analyze a variety of data to track changes in educator practice and student learning. (Indicator P5-A)

Similar to the requirements for Recommendation 1, the Turnaround Principles and Indicators listed above are tightly coupled. Therefore, leadership teams can scaffold the S.M.A.R.T. Goals and Tasks as they revise/create the Required Action Plan submitted to the State Board of Education and the Student and School Success Action Plan submitted to the Office of Student and School Success. The Wise Ways documents on Indistar® describe research-based practices leadership teams can implement as they craft action plans around school- and district-level Indicators.

Office of Student and School Success: Additional next steps for the Office of Student and School Success to support both Stewart Middle School and the Tacoma School District follow.

- Principle 1: Develop and disseminate research-based guidance to support districts to provide operational flexibility to their principals in order to support school turnaround plans in key areas.
- Principle 1: Provide training and support to district leaders who are charged with supporting turnaround principals and developing principal capacity as transformational leaders.
- Principle 5: Provide training and support to build principal and school leadership team capacity to use data to create, implement, monitor, and if needed, revise school improvement plans written in S.M.A.R.T. Goal format; plans should explicitly identify expected changes in educator practice and student learning and evidence that will be used to track progress toward these changes.

Recommendation 3: The school and district action plans will need to identify how they will ensure the learning environment is safe, supportive, mutually respectful, and honors the cultures and families represented in the school.

The findings informing this recommendation are segmented into the following areas, each of which aligns with Turnaround Principles:

- **3.A – School and Classroom Environment** (Turnaround Principle 6: Establish a school environment that improves school safety and discipline; address other non-academic factors that impact student achievement, such as students’ social, emotional, and health needs)
- **3.B – Parent/Family and Community Engagement** (Turnaround Principle 7: Provide ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement)

Each segment includes a brief description of current practice, concerns identified in data, and strengths upon which to build. A list of specific Turnaround Principles and Indicators that must be addressed by the school and district and recommendations for the Office of Student and School Success conclude the section.

In addition to the concerns described below, interviewees also shared their apprehension around the move to a temporary site—described as “45 minutes away”—for the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years. They voiced particular concern around their ability to continue to engage students in their school and to maintain connections with families and the community during the period of transition. Hence, attention to this recommendation and concerns in the 2014-15 school year can significantly lessen the negative impact of the temporary move to another location in the district in the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years and alleviate the “loss of community connections” feared by multiple interviewees.

The team also noted that staff members reported of a “lack of celebration and recognition” from district administration about the positive changes that have occurred at Stewart Middle School over the last several years. Interviewees shared that the school has moved forward this year. They also indicated a desire for the superintendent to visit and communicate directly with staff about the designation as a Required Action District. While the message should reflect that this is where the school is now, it would also be good to hear a hopeful message, one that thanks leadership and staff for their commitment. Recognition of achievements and successes will encourage staff members to incorporate new philosophies as well as try ideas outside of their comfort zone, foster students’ pride in their school, increase parent and community awareness of improvement efforts, and build commitment across the

school community and district to engage with the school as it continues on its journey of transformation.

3.A – School and Classroom Environment

A safe learning environment evidences itself in several ways, from physical safety to students feeling safe in taking risks as learners and staff taking risks in trying new classroom strategies to meet the needs of their students. Interviewees shared a variety of strategies and programs designed to foster these complementary aspects of a safe learning environment. Leadership team members cited their work and common agreements around Compassionate Schools, Safe and Civil Schools (CHAMPS), AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination), and Navigation 101 programs. They described greeting students as they enter their classrooms and increased visibility before and after school in common areas of the school. Other practices supporting a safe and supportive environment include requiring a dress code for students, building relationships with students during the weekly Advisory period, training staff in CHAMPS strategies, and collaborating with the behavior coach to build a discipline system across the school. Team members also shared efforts of the honors level committee and “Positive Paws” as ways to recognize students for progress in behavior and academics. Each provides evidence of Stewart Middle School staff’s efforts to establish a safe and supportive learning environment.

Concerns: Interviewees shared frustrations that some staff members don’t adhere to and aren’t held accountable for following common agreements. When probed, several indicated fluctuation in classroom management could be attributed to staff turnover. Others explained, “Our current culture is more staff-centered,” and “The culture needs to shift to move forward for the purpose of students.” When asked to describe a student-centered environment, interviewees responded that they’re not sure how to apply what they’ve learned “to our kids and their cultures.” They continued, “School culture is challenging; we need to challenge students to change their belief system. We also need accountability and high expectations.” Lack of fidelity to commonly held agreements was also observed by Academic Performance Audit team members. They noted that student behavior was not generally seen as an impediment to learning; however, high expectations for all students’ behavior were not uniformly observed (e.g., students were sleeping in several classrooms, and some defiance towards teachers when asked to follow a reasonable request was observed).

Staff members described a contrast among peers with respect to beliefs about students and learning. They indicated some staff members share a growth mindset and believe all students can learn and achieve to high levels. They also reported that in contrast, some of their peers adhere to a fixed mindset philosophy. Though this is not a pervasive belief, it does directly impact the learning environment both in individual classrooms and across the school. As one staff member observed, “Students pick up on this.” When asked if school is a safe place for students to learn, staff responses ranged from “Yes, for my classroom—but I can’t speak for other classes,” to “No, not in terms of what I’ve seen.” Student responses to this same question also varied: “Some teachers do follow through [on discipline],” “If you don’t show a teacher respect and the teacher is respecting you, then you need to deal with the consequences,” and “In some classes it’s hard to learn, since students don’t respect the teacher.”

Survey results around staff and student perceptions related to the learning environment surfaced issues around safety, trust, and respect. These results provide additional data for consideration. Results from spring 2013 surveys indicated that only 30% of staff agreed the school is orderly and supports learning, 35% agreed discipline is handled fairly in the school, and 31% agreed staff members enforce consistent behavior expectations and consequences in their classrooms. Less than 50% of students and staff believe the learning environment is safe, and less than 50% trust their teachers. Survey results also

indicated 59% of staff members agree students believe adults in the building genuinely care about them, while 66% agree the staff value and respect all students. Of the students surveyed, 51% agreed adults who work at the school care about all students, not just a few; only 49% agreed they trust their teachers; and 55% agreed adults in the school show respect to them. These results are all generally lower than previous results on similar items.

Together, these concerns impact the “culture of learning” to which interviewees aspire for Stewart Middle School. The Academic Performance Audit Team noted there were no active tasks for Principle 6 (Establish a school environment that improves school safety and discipline and addresses other non-academic factors that impact student achievement) in Stewart’s Student and School Success Action Plan.

Strengths upon which to build: The BERC Group Assessment of Progress Report from 2012-13 indicated the school is in the initial stages of creating a schoolwide discipline system. Each schoolwide program described at the beginning of this section provides evidence of this work moving forward into the 2013-14 school year. Additionally, multiple interviewees described the school’s efforts around the following strategies:

- Created a Panther Center: This is used for students with behavior and/or academic issues; students can also go to the Panther Center if they want a quiet space to work. The team is using data to track students who are sent to the center and to determine how it is working for them.
- Implemented SCDM for clubs: Students talk about how to better the school; all clubs are represented. Ideas are brought forward to the school’s SCDM team.
- Implementing culturally and linguistically appropriate teaching strategies. Survey results from 2012-13 indicated that 71% of staff members agree they have opportunities to learn effective teaching strategies for the diversity represented in the school, and 65% agree they are provided training to meet the needs of a diverse student population in the school.
- Partnering with Ocean Crest (private, non-profit agency focused on families in crisis). The agency is housed within the school building and provides service to students and the local community.
- Developed the START team (Student Teacher Advisory Resource Team) to support teachers and administrators; team focuses on a wrap-around approach for youth who are a shared focus of concern.
- Collecting multiple forms of data (e.g., AVID, Navigation 101, CHAMPS, and discipline/suspension/expulsion) at school and district levels to inform efforts in this area.

The Student and School Success Action Plan includes the following Indicator supporting this recommendation:

- Schoolwide schedule will be implemented, and rotated on a regular basis, which assigns staff to "Super duty" schedules. This schedule has staff in the hallways and in designated areas outside the building for visibility, support and management of students. This schedule changes every two weeks and will be reviewed by the School Center Decision Making team for rotation schedule. It supports the school's mission of a safe and positive learner-centered environment. (Indicator P4-III A32)

In addition to interviewee comments, the School Improvement Grant End-of-Year Report for 2012-13 cites the following as strategies implemented at Stewart Middle School to ensure a safe and supportive learning environment: “PAWs [mentoring program] is offered before school Fridays and every day after school. SPARX is offered after school as well as Urban League mentoring and tutoring. This year, we also partnered with Communities That Care and Safe Streets which has a four-year grant that involves the

community to support student achievement of Stewart students. This coalition focuses on research based prevention models that support this goal.” The report also indicated that “Stewart administration worked closely with staff, students, and parents to provide training about the district's Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) policies and procedures. We were one of two schools selected to be interviewed by the Department of Education about our implementation practices. We had an all student and parent assembly about anti HIB issues and student leadership.”

Several interviewees shared evidence of the impact of these programs. Discipline referrals have been on a downward trend, and suspensions/expulsions have dramatically decreased from the 2012-13 school year to the first semester of the 2013-14 school year. Additionally, interviewees describe increased use of AVID strategies and shifts in instructional practice that impact the learning environment (e.g., students learning to ask questions of their peers; teachers using alternatives to small group strategies, since small group configurations don't work for all students).

Students described their teachers as “nice” and “mostly on-subject.” They also noted, “Most kids are nice and accepting of diversity.” They added that there is bullying among some students—particularly for new students.

Audit team members observed students transitioning between classes and lunch in a generally orderly manner and following classroom rules. They also observed many teachers standing by their doors during passing. Team members found ample evidence of common language around classroom expectations; every classroom observed featured a poster of classroom behavioral expectations.

These strengths represent the work of staff and administration over the last several years and provide a solid foundation as they move forward with efforts to ensure a safe and supportive learning environment for their students.

3.B – Parent/Family and Community Engagement

The BERG Group's Assessment of Progress Report for 2012-13 indicated that Stewart Middle School (SMS) “continues to have strong relationships with several community organizations. Communities That Care (CTC), a group sponsored by the organization Safe Streets, began meeting at SMS in 2011-12, and is involved in determining evidence-based strategies to make a difference for youth in the community. “[The principal]” comes to every single Community That Cares meeting, and has been very supportive in showing that the school wants CTC in her building,” said one CTC member. The Girl Scouts of America offers a program called Girl Talk during both lunches to give girls a safe space to explore their problems and look for solutions to them. The Male Improvement Program (MIP) offers mentoring to at-risk male students. Although MIP is primarily aimed at young men of color, it is open to all boys in the school. MIP mentors students afterschool and on weekends as well as during school hours. AmeriCorps hosts an afterschool mentoring program called PAWS, which seeks to tie youth-selected activities and interests into academics.”

BERG researchers reported that “staff members and parents participating in focus groups indicated the school communicates with families via report cards, telephone calls, e-mails, newsletters, teacher websites, and an automated phone system. A majority (72%) of the family members surveyed agreed the school staff keeps them informed about school activities and events (up five percentage-points from 2012). One parent said, ‘I see the school seems to be more welcoming to the community. Before, there were no people out there trying to pull you in. I feel in the last three years you see that. Whether you want to be or not, you feel like you're pulled into the [school] community.’”

Concerns: Interviewees reported minimal parent involvement in school and community activities hosted at Stewart Middle School. They described parents and community as “invited, but [they] don’t show.” Similar perceptions were reported in the Assessment of Progress Report for 2012-13; BERC researchers reported that the lowest staff and student perceptions around the nine characteristics of high-performing schools related to Family and Community Involvement, rating this attribute at 3.18. Researchers noted that all of the family scores were consistent with 2012 survey results. However, student scores were markedly lower than the staff and family scores. Only 44% of students agreed their parents or guardians have a good idea what goes on at school (compared to 63% in 2012), and 53% agreed their teachers talk to them about how they are doing in class (compared to 73% in 2012). Survey data indicated that 50% of staff members agree the school encourages parent involvement, while 41% of students surveyed agree there are ways for their families to participate at school.

The Assessment of Progress Report indicates BERC researchers found “limited student and family input into schoolwide decisions.” They continued: “A student and a parent participate on the SCDM, and one staff member said, ‘They’ve been very active partners.’ However, survey data reveal only 53% of students agree they can make decisions that affect them at their school (compared to 72% in 2012), and only 41% of family members agreed school staff asks for their ideas and suggestions on important decisions (consistent with 40% in 2012). This suggests that, while a few selected students or parents may have input into the decision-making process, the majority of parents and students do not.” Student perceptions provide another view of parent and family involvement: Only 44% of students agreed their parents or guardians have a good idea what goes on at school (compared to 63% in 2012).

Interviewees also described the significant opportunity for the district to engage parents and the community: “There is a role for the district to message the successes at Stewart, especially if quick wins are identified,” and “The community has a good perception of the school and parent support is strong.” For example, replanting of the field connected to the school was supported by families, which forced the school district to improve the grounds.”

Strengths upon which to build: Interviewees at both the school and district levels agreed that they “need help with this [increasing parent/family and community engagement].” The commitment and leadership at both of these levels will be significant as the school crafts and implements plans to engage parents, families, and the community in supporting student learning and schoolwide improvement efforts. This engagement will be particularly important when the school moves to another site in the district for the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years.

The school’s Student and School Success Action Plan included a specific task of recreating Stewart Middle School’s web page to match the district’s new design; the task indicates the new web page will be “personalized for Stewart’s family needs.” Though not reported as completed, this task provides a specific example of ways the school intends to communicate with families and involve them in the school’s improvement efforts. The Academic Performance Audit Teams notes that providing a welcoming environment and communicating with parents and families may serve as current strengths upon which Stewart Middle School can build. While family response rate on the spring 2013 survey was low (only 40 parents and family members responded), BERC researchers reported that the vast majority (95%) agreed they feel welcome at the school (up 13 percentage-points from 2012). Additionally, 76% agreed the school’s staff communicates with them in a way that is convenient, 75% agreed their child’s teachers respond promptly when they have a question or concern, and 64% agreed the school provides opportunities to learn more about the school. In contrast, BERC researchers noted that only 46% of the

401 students completing surveys agreed their families feel welcome at school. Only 30% of staff members agreed teachers effectively communicate student progress to parents; similarly, only 36% of students agreed their teachers talk to their families about how they are doing in school.

As evidenced by the data shared in *Concerns* and *Strengths*, the Academic Performance Audit Team found the high levels of positive responses by family members on surveys administered in spring 2013 contrasted sharply with low levels by staff and students around critical components of family engagement (e.g., providing a welcoming environment, involving parents and families in decision-making, and communicating effectively). This dichotomy will be important to “unpack” as school and district leaders address this recommendation.

Requirements for Recommendation #3

In light of concerns raised for this recommendation, Stewart Middle School and the Tacoma School District must address the following Turnaround Principles and Indicators when selecting the school improvement model and crafting the Required Action Plan and Revised (Initial) Student and School Success Action Plan (submitted to the State Board of Education in June 2014) and Student and School Success Action Plan (submitted in October 2014):

Stewart Middle School

- Principle 2: Continue to provide professional development around culturally responsive leadership and instructional practices (e.g., Safe and Civil Schools [CHAMPS], AVID) and monitor the extent to which these practices are implemented and impact student outcomes. (Indicators P2-IF12 and/or P1-IF07)
- Principle 6: Ensure all staff members reinforce agreed-upon classroom rules and procedures with fidelity and positively teach them to their students. (Indicator P6-IIIC13) The Academic Performance Audit Team noted that the school’s assessment of this Indicator does not match teacher and student perceptual surveys and findings.
- Principle 7: Collaborate with parents and community members to identify and implement strategies to engage parent and the community in the school’s improvement efforts at the current site and the temporary site. (Indicators P7-IVA05 and/or P7-IVA13)

Tacoma School District

- Principle 2: Provide professional development around culturally responsive leadership and instructional practices and monitor the extent to which these practices are implemented and impact student outcomes. (Indicators P2-C)
- Principle 7: Engage parents and community in the transformation process. (Indicator P7-B)

Similar to the requirements for Recommendations 1 and 2, the Turnaround Principles and Indicators listed above are tightly coupled. Therefore, leadership teams can scaffold the S.M.A.R.T. Goals and Tasks as they revise/create the Required Action Plan submitted to the State Board of Education and the Student and School Success Action Plan submitted to the Office of Student and School Success. The Wise Ways documents on Indistar® describe research-based practices leadership teams can implement as they craft action plans around school- and district-level Indicators.

Office of Student and School Success: Additional next steps for the Office of Student and School Success to support both Stewart Middle School and the Tacoma School District follow.

- Principles 2 and 6: Disseminate research-based guidance around culturally responsive leadership instructional practices and provide professional development and technical assistance to

support district and school leaders and other staff to build their capacity to implement these practices.

- Principle 6: Collaborate with the OSPI's Student Support Division to disseminate research-based guidance around effective implementation of schoolwide discipline systems and provide professional development and technical assistance to leadership and staff to build their capacity to implement these practices.
- Principle 7: Disseminate research-based guidance to support schools and districts to engage their parents/families and communities in transformational efforts.

VI. Summary and Next Steps

As stated in the Executive Summary, a thorough review of extant and collected data by the Academic Performance Audit Team led to the identification of a number of concerns; an analysis of these concerns resulted in the formulation of three recommendations. Legislation enacted in 2012 by the Washington State Legislature (E2SSB 5329) requires the district and school to explicitly address the concerns and recommendations when selecting the intervention model and crafting the Required Action Plan and Revised (Initial) Student and School Success Action Plan (submitted to the State Board of Education in June 2014) and Student and School Success Action Plan (submitted in October 2014). Recommendations include:

- **Recommendation 1: Design and implement protocols, structures, and professional development for Stewart's Student Success Cycle (data-informed inquiry cycle) to ensure all students receive rigorous, standards-aligned, and differentiated instruction and curriculum.**
- **Recommendation 2: Provide the principal operational flexibility that (a) supports the school's turnaround plan; (b) builds staff capacity to deliver rigorous, standards-based instruction and curriculum and use data in making instructional decisions; and (c) aligns with districtwide expectations for increases in student achievement.**
- **Recommendation 3: Ensure the learning environment is safe, supportive, mutually respectful, and honors the cultures and families represented in the school.**

District and school leadership teams should review their current Student and School Success Action Plans and make necessary revisions to ensure the recommendations contained within this report are adequately addressed. As indicated in the Executive Summary, the Academic Performance Audit Team believes the *Strengths* articulated in the narrative will serve the school and district well as they address the three recommendations described in this Academic Performance Audit Report.

Further requirements and general timelines for completion of the Required Action Plan are provided below.

RCW 28A.657.050

Required action plans — Development — Publication of guidelines, research, and models — Submission — Contents — Effect on existing collective bargaining agreements. (Effective until June 30, 2019.)

(1)(a) The local district superintendent and local school board of a school district designated as a required action district must submit a required action plan to the state board of education for approval. Unless otherwise required by subsection (3) of this section, the plan must be submitted under a schedule as required by the state board. A required action plan must be developed in

collaboration with administrators, teachers, and other staff, parents, unions representing any employees within the district, students, and other representatives of the local community.

- (b) The superintendent of public instruction shall provide a district with assistance in developing its plan if requested, and shall develop and publish guidelines for the development of required action plans. The superintendent of public instruction, in consultation with the state board of education, shall also publish a list of research and evidence-based school improvement models, consistent with turnaround principles, approved for use in required action plans.
 - (c) The local school board must conduct a public hearing to allow for comment on a proposed required action plan. The local school district shall submit the plan first to the office of the superintendent of public instruction to review and approve that the plan is consistent with federal and state guidelines, as applicable. After the office of the superintendent of public instruction has approved that the plan is consistent with federal and state guidelines, the local school district must submit its required action plan to the state board of education for approval.
- (2) A required action plan must include all of the following:
- (a) Implementation of an approved school improvement model required for the receipt of federal or state funds for school improvement for those persistently lowest-achieving schools that the district will be focusing on for required action. The approved school improvement model selected must address the concerns raised in the academic performance audit and be intended to improve student performance to allow a school district to be removed from the list of districts designated as a required action district by the state board of education within three years of implementation of the plan. The required action plan for districts with multiple persistently lowest-achieving schools must include separate plans for each school as well as a plan for how the school district will support the schools collectively;
 - (b) Submission of an application for federal or state funds for school improvement to the superintendent of public instruction;
 - (c) A budget that provides for adequate resources to implement the model selected and any other requirements of the plan;
 - (d) A description of the changes in the district's or school's existing policies, structures, agreements, processes, and practices that are intended to attain significant achievement gains for all students enrolled in the school and how the district intends to address the findings of the academic performance audit; and
 - (e) Identification of the measures that the school district will use in assessing student achievement at a school identified as a persistently lowest-achieving school, which include closing the educational opportunity gap, improving mathematics and reading or English language arts student achievement, and improving graduation rates as defined by the office of the superintendent of public instruction that enable the school to no longer be identified as a persistently lowest-achieving school.
- (3)(a) For any district designated for required action, the parties to any collective bargaining agreement negotiated, renewed, or extended under chapter 41.59 or 41.56 RCW after June 10, 2010, must reopen the agreement, or negotiate an addendum, if needed, to make changes to terms and conditions of employment that are necessary to implement a required action plan. For any district applying to participate in a collaborative schools for innovation and success pilot project under RCW 28A.630.104, the parties to any collective bargaining agreement negotiated, renewed, or extended under chapter 41.59 or 41.56 RCW after June 7, 2012, must reopen the agreement, or negotiate an addendum, if needed, to make changes to terms and conditions of employment that are necessary to implement an innovation and success plan.

Timeline

April - May 23, 2014	<p>District and school create Required Action Plan; plan must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of approved school improvement model • Application for state funds • Budget • Description of how the district intends to address the findings of the academy performance audit • Initial Revisions to Student and School Success Action Plan (i.e., Indicators identified in the Academic Performance Audit must be assessed on Indistar®. Additional S.M.A.R.T. Goals and tasks may be included; they are required to be included in the October 30, 2014 submission.) • Identification of measures that the school and district will use to assess student achievement • Collective bargaining agreements (reopen or negotiate an addendum to support plan) • Parent/guardian notification of RAD status and process for creating plan <p>District and school share Required Action Plan with stakeholder groups, including local board of education, and incorporate feedback into final Required Action Plan submitted to the Office of Student and School Success.</p>
May 23, 2014	District submits revised Student and School Success Action Plan on Indistar®. Office of Student and School Success reviews Required Action Plan and initial revisions to Student and School Success Action Plan.
May 28, 2014	Office of Student and School Success submits Required Action Plan to State Board of Education.
June 6, 2014	District presents Required Action Plan to State Board of Education for approval.
October 30, 2014	District and school submit Student and School Success Action Plans on Indistar®.

VII. Questions for Leadership Teams to Consider

The questions below emerged during the data review on March 4, 2014 and the on-site visit on March 25, 2014. They are intended to support leadership teams as they engage in dialogues around these recommendations. Leadership teams are NOT required to address these questions in their Required Action Plan or Student and School Success Action Plans. Rather, these questions are only intended to inform their collaborative work.

Recommendation 1: Design and implement protocols, structures, and professional development for Stewart’s Student Success Cycle (data-informed inquiry cycle) to ensure all students receive rigorous, standards-aligned, and differentiated instruction and curriculum.

Questions to Consider

The following questions can inform the work of leadership teams:

- *Rigorous, Research-based, Standards-aligned, Grade-Appropriate Instruction*
 - Is there a coherent, instructional framework used within the school? Currently, the school is using a number of frameworks (e.g., CEL 5D, AVID). Is there a clear understanding of the relationship between these frameworks?
 - How can staff most effectively (a) differentiate within the core curriculum and (b) provide additional interventions as needed that enable students to continue to receive rigorous grade-level standards-based instruction and curriculum?
 - What data and process can staff use to assess their current level of development around this recommendation?

- *Professional Development, Technical Assistance, and Support*
 - How can the coaches and facilitators support staff and leaders to implement an effective instructional program that ensures all students receive grade-level, standards-based instruction and curriculum?
 - How is PD differentiated to support teachers new to the profession and/or to the school?
 - What measures are used to determine the impact of strategies on educator practice and student learning?
 - How can district and school leaders collaborate to address “initiative fatigue” and provide coherence for Stewart Middle School staff across the multiple initiatives?
- *Protocols and Structures Supporting Use of Data*
 - What is the impact of the PLC process on teacher practice? How do you know?
 - How do staff and leadership determine fidelity of implementation and impact of extended learning time opportunities (PD for staff and interventions for students)? For example, staff surveys from spring 2013 revealed that 62% agree the staff collaborates to improve student learning, and only 32% agree teachers collaboratively plan lessons.
 - What data protocols are used in collaborative team meetings? How do teams determine the effectiveness of their efforts in improving student outcomes?
 - How do different data sources come together to form a coherent assessment system? How do you know?

Recommendation 2: Provide the principal operational flexibility that (a) supports the school’s turnaround plan; (b) builds staff capacity to deliver rigorous, standards-based instruction and curriculum and use data in making instructional decisions; and (c) aligns with districtwide expectations for increases in student achievement.

Questions to Consider:

The following questions can inform the work of leadership teams:

- *Principal Leadership*
 - Given the myriad of administrative responsibilities, particularly during the upcoming move to another site for two years, how will the principal maintain his focus on instructional improvement and student learning outcomes?
 - How can he effectively distribute leadership and engage others in the continuous improvement process?
 - What data will he collect to measure if instructional and behavior initiatives are implemented with fidelity? How are these data used to inform decision-making and action-planning processes?
- *District Leadership*
 - What supports is the district planning to provide to ensure the success of the new principal?
 - How will the district assign and support central office leaders to engage with the principal, facilitate his growth as an instructional leader, provide him operating flexibility, and hold him accountable for student learning?
 - What process does the district use to ensure the principal will have autonomy/flexibility within a districtwide context of accountability for improved educator practice and student learning?
 - How will the district differentiate expectations, supports, and services for the school – within the context of district vision, priorities, and strategic plan?

- What additional supports will the district provide the principal during the design and construction phases of the project?

Recommendation 3: Ensure the learning environment is safe, supportive, mutually respectful, and honors the cultures and families represented in the school.

Questions to Consider

The following questions can inform the work of leadership teams:

- *School and Classroom Environment*
 - What evidence is gathered to determine the levels of direct instruction of classroom and school expectations in each classroom? How can these data be used to inform leadership and staff efforts?
 - How is the effectiveness of Compassionate Schools, Safe and Civil Schools (CHAMPS), AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination), Navigation 101, and other similar initiatives monitored? What difference are these making for students? How do data across subgroups compare?
 - How does the school integrate various initiatives and wrap-around services for students with non-academic factors into a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS)? How is the impact of these services monitored?
 - How are barriers to achievement for students from low-income and mobile families been identified? How are they addressed through MTSS or another source?
- *Parent/Family and Community Engagement*
 - How does the school reach out to parents/families and the community to seek their input?
 - What are the meaningful ways that parents and families are engaged?
 - How are parents and families involved in teaching and reinforcing classroom and schoolwide expectations?
 - How are parents involved in decision making, creating the vision, and supporting the mission?
 - How will the school engage families and the community while located at another site in the district?

VIII. Appendix

Appendix A: Required Action District Frequently Asked Questions

Appendix B: School Data Dashboard

Appendix C: Assessment of Progress Report

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Required Action District (RAD), Level One Frequently Asked Questions

1. Which school districts can become a required action district?

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is required to annually recommend to the State Board of Education (SBE) school districts for designation as required action districts. A district with at least one school identified as persistently lowest achieving will be designated as required action district. The SBE may designate a district that received a school improvement grant in 2010 or 2011 as a required action district if after three years of voluntarily implementing a plan the district continues to have a school identified as persistently lowest achieving and meets the criteria for designation established by the superintendent of public instruction. See **RCW 28A.657.020** and **RCW 28A.657.030** for additional information.

2. How does a school district superintendent request reconsideration?

A school district superintendent may request reconsideration of the superintendent of public instruction's recommendation. The reconsideration shall be limited to a determination of whether the school district met the criteria for being recommended as a required action district. A request for reconsideration must be in writing and received by superintendent of public instruction within ten days of receipt of the letter notifying the school district of the superintendent's recommendation. See **RCW 28A.657.030** for additional information.

3. What are the requirements for required action districts?

a) **External Review (Academic Performance Audit):** OSPI will provide an external review team to conduct an academic performance audit of the district and each persistently lowest achieving school. The audit will identify potential reasons for the school's low performance and lack of progress. The review team will consist of persons who have expertise in comprehensive school and district reform. The team may not include staff from the agency, the school district that is the subject of the audit, or members or staff of the SBE. The audit is based on criteria developed by OSPI and **must include** but not be limited to an examination of the following:

- Student demographics
- Mobility patterns
- School feeder patterns
- The performance of different student groups on assessments
- Effective school leadership
- Strategic allocation of resources
- Clear and shared focus on student learning
- High standards and expectations for all students
- High level of collaboration and communication
- Aligned curriculum, instruction, and assessment to state standards
- Frequency of monitoring of learning and teaching
- Focused professional development
- Supportive learning environment
- High level of family and community involvement
- Alternative secondary schools best practices and
- Any unique circumstances or characteristics of the school or district.

Audit findings must be made available to the local school district, its staff, the community, and the SBE. See **RCW 28A.657.040** for additional information.

b) **School Improvement Model:** The district must select and implement a federal- or state-approved school improvement model. Federal models include Closure, Restart, Transformation, and Turnaround. The district may adopt Washington State's Synergy Model that was developed by the Office of Student and

School Success. The selected model must address the concerns raised in the academic performance audit and be designed to increase educator capacity and substantially improve student achievement.

- c) **Required Action Plan:** The local district superintendent and local school board of a school district designated as a required action district must submit a required action plan to the SBE for approval. The SBE will establish submission dates for required action plans. A required action plan must be developed in collaboration with administrators, teachers, and other staff; parents; unions representing any employees within the district; students; and other representatives of the local community. The school board must conduct a public hearing to allow for comment on a proposed required action plan. See **RCW 28A.657.040** and **RCW 28A.657.050** for additional information.
- d) **Online action-planning platform (Indistar[®]):** Districts and schools must use OSPI's approved online action-planning platform (Indistar[®]) to create, implement, monitor, and revise their required action plans. Staff in OSPI's Office of Student and School Success will provide support to district and school teams to use Indistar[®] as the platform for their action planning.
- e) **Parent notification:** A district designated as a required action district must notify all parents of students attending a school identified as a persistently lowest achieving school in the district of the SBE's designation of the district as a required action district and the process for complying with the required action district requirements. See **RCW 28A.657.040** through **28A.657.100**.
- f) **Collective Bargaining Agreement:** The parties to any collective bargaining agreement negotiated, renewed, or extended under chapter 41.59 or 41.56 RCW after June 10, 2010 by a required action district must reopen the agreement, or negotiate an addendum, if needed, to make changes to terms and conditions of employment that are necessary to implement a required action plan. If the school district and the employee organizations are unable to agree on the terms of an addendum or modification to an existing collective bargaining agreement, the parties, including all labor organizations affected under the required action plan, must request the public employment relations commission to, and the commission shall, appoint an employee of the commission to act as a mediator to assist in the resolution of a dispute between the school district and the employee organizations. See **RCW 28A.657.040** for specific guidance for mediation of an addendum or modification of an existing collective bargaining agreement and other information.
- g) **Professional development and technical assistance (PD/TA):** School and district teams will engage in required PD/TA to build leadership and instructional capacity to effectively implement their action plan.

4. What elements must be included in the Required Action Plan?

- a) **The plan must include the following.**
 - i. **Selection and implementation of an approved school improvement model.** The approved school improvement model selected must address the concerns raised in the academic performance audit and be intended to improve student performance to allow a school district to be removed from the list of districts designated as a required action district by the SBE within three years of implementation of the plan. The required action plan for districts with multiple persistently lowest achieving schools must include **separate plans** for each school as well as a plan for how the school district will support the schools collectively.
 - ii. **Funding:** The district must submit an application to OSPI for federal or state funds for school improvement.
 - iii. **Budget:** The plan must include a budget that provides for adequate resources to implement the selected model and any other requirements of the plan.

- iv. **Changes to existing policies, practices, etc.:** The plan must include descriptions of changes in the district's or school's existing policies, structures, agreements, processes, and practices that are intended to attain significant achievement gains for all students enrolled in the school.
- v. **Academic Performance Audit:** The district must also describe how it intends to address the findings of the academic performance audit.
- vi. **Data measures:** The plan must identify the measures that the school district will use in assessing the school's student achievement. Measures will include those related to closing the educational opportunity gap, improving mathematics and reading or English language arts student achievement, and improving graduation rates as defined by OSPI; these measures will also be used to determine the school's status as a persistently lowest achieving school.

- b) **Assistance with the required action plan:** OSPI will provide guidelines for the development of required action plans, as well as a list of research and evidence-based school improvement models to be implemented in the plan. If requested, OSPI will provide a school district with assistance in developing its plan. The local school board will first submit the plan to OSPI to review and approve that the plan is consistent with federal and state guidelines, as applicable. After OSPI approves the plan is consistent with federal and state guidelines, the local school district must submit its required action plan to the SBE for approval. See **RCW 28A.657.040** for additional information.
- c) **Review of the required action plan:** The required action plan developed by a district's school board and superintendent must be submitted to the SBE for approval. The SBE shall approve a plan proposed by a school district only if the plan meets the requirements in RCW 28A.657.050 and provides sufficient remedies to address the findings in the academic performance audit to improve student achievement. Any addendum or modification to an existing collective bargaining agreement, negotiated under RCW 28A.657.050 or by agreement of the district and the exclusive bargaining unit, related to student achievement or school improvement shall not go into effect until approval of a required action plan by the SBE. *Note.* The SBE must accept for inclusion in any required action plan the final decision by the superior court on any issue certified by the executive director of the public employment relations commission under the process in RCW 28A.657.050. See **RCW 28A.657.060** for additional information.
- d) **Timeline for implementing the action plan:** If federal or state funds for this purpose are available, a required action plan must be implemented in the immediate school year following the district's designation as a required action district. See **RCW 28A.657.060** for additional information.
- e) **Technical Assistance and Progress Monitoring:** OSPI must provide the required action district with technical assistance and federal or state funds for school improvement, if available, to implement an approved plan. The district must submit a report to OSPI that provides the progress the district is making in meeting the student achievement goals based on the state's assessments, identifying strategies and assets used to solve audit findings, and establishing evidence of meeting plan implementation benchmarks as set forth in the required action plan. OSPI will report to the SBE twice a year on the progress of a required action district in implementing the required action plan. See **RCW 28A.657.090** for additional information.

5. How can a required action district be released from the designation?

OSPI must recommend to the SBE that a school district be released from the designation as a required action district after the district implements a required action plan for a period of three years; has made progress as defined by the superintendent of public instruction using the criteria adopted under RCW 28A.657.020 including progress in closing the educational opportunity gap; and no longer has a school within the district identified as persistently lowest achieving. The SBE shall release a school district from the designation as a required action district upon confirmation that the district has met the requirements for a release.

If the SBE determines that the required action district has not met the requirements for release after at least three years of implementing a required action plan, the board may recommend that the district remain in required action and submit a new or revised plan under the process in RCW 28A.657.050, or the SBE may direct that the school district be assigned to level two of the required action process as provided in RCW 28A.657.105. If the required action district received a federal school improvement grant for the same persistently lowest achieving school in 2010 or 2011, the SBE may direct that the school district be assigned to level two of the required action process after one year of implementing a required action plan under this chapter if the district is not making progress. Before making a determination of whether to recommend that a school district that is not making progress remain in required action or be assigned to level two of the required action process, the SBE must submit its findings to the education accountability system oversight committee under RCW 28A.657.130 and provide an opportunity for the oversight committee to review and comment. See **RCW 28A.657.100** for additional information.

Additional information regarding the required action plan follows.

6. What if the SBE rejects the required action plan?

If the SBE does not approve a proposed plan, it must notify the local school board and local district's superintendent in writing with an explicit rationale for why the plan was not approved. With the assistance of OSPI, the superintendent and school board of the required action district shall either: (1) submit a new plan to the SBE for approval within forty days of notification that its plan was rejected, or (2) submit a request to the required action plan review panel established under RCW 28A.657.070 for reconsideration of the SBE's rejection within ten days of the notification that the plan was rejected. See **RCW 28A.657.040** for information.

7. What is the required action plan review panel?

A required action plan review panel is composed of five individuals with expertise in school improvement, school and school district restructuring, or parent and community involvement in schools. Two of the panel members shall be appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives; two shall be appointed by the president of the Senate; and one shall be appointed by the governor. The panel is to provide an objective, external review of a request from a school district for reconsideration of the SBE's rejection of the district's required action plan or reconsideration of a level two required action plan developed only by the superintendent of public instruction as provided under RCW 28A.657.105. The review and reconsideration by the panel shall be based on whether the SBE or the superintendent of public instruction gave appropriate consideration to the unique circumstances and characteristics identified in the academic performance audit or level two needs assessment and review of the local school district. See **RCW 28A.657.070** for additional information.

9. What happens if the school district does not submit the required action plan in time?

The SBE may direct the superintendent of public instruction to require a school district that has not submitted a final required action plan for approval, or has submitted but not received SBE approval of a required action plan by the beginning of the school year in which the plan is intended to be implemented, to redirect the district's Title I funds based on the academic performance audit findings. See **RCW 28A.657.080** for information.

2013 School Data Dashboard

Site:	Stewart MS
District:	Tacoma

READING (MSP / HSPE)

STATUS (Percent Meeting Standard)						IMPROVEMENT per Year (change in percentage points per year over 5 years)		
	Reading 2013	Reading 2012	Change	Change in Percent	For 2013, Above or Below Your District?	School Trend vs. District	School	District
Grade 6	47.3%	48.3%	→	-1.0%	Below ●	Grade 6 ●	-0.8%	0.5%
Grade 7	51.8%	53.8%	→	-2.0%	Below ●	Grade 7 ●	4.4%	3.3%
Grade 8	34.5%	40.0%	↓	-5.5%	Below ●	Grade 8 ●	-5.3%	-2.5%

MATHEMATICS (MSP / EOC)

STATUS (Percent Meeting Standard)						IMPROVEMENT per Year (change in percentage points per year over 5 years)		
	Math 2013	Math 2012	Change	Change in Percent	For 2013, Above or Below Your District?	School Trend vs. District	School	District
Grade 6	35.8%	34.2%	→	1.6%	Below ●	Grade 6 ●	2.0%	3.1%
Grade 7	37.9%	18.7%	↑	19.2%	Below ●	Grade 7 ●	0.3%	3.7%
Gr. 8 (MSP)	17.3%	11.7%	↑	5.6%	Below ●	Gr. 8 (MSP) ●	-4.1%	0.3%

WRITING

STATUS (Percent Meeting Standard)						IMPROVEMENT per Year (change in percentage points per year over 5 years)		
	Writing 2013	Writing 2012	Change	Change in Percent	For 2013, Above or Below Your District?	School Trend vs. District	School	District
Grade 7	41.2%	32.4%	↑	8.8%	Below ●	Grade 7 ●	-5.2%	-0.8%

SCIENCE (MSP / EOC)










STATUS (Percent Meeting Standard)						IMPROVEMENT per Year (change in percentage points per year over 5 years)		
	Science 2013	Science 2012	Change	Change in Percent	For 2013, Above or Below Your District?	School Trend vs. District	School	District
Gr 8. (MSP)	32.4%	39.1%	↓	-6.7%	Below ●	Gr 8. (MSP) ●	3.2%	3.5%

Interpretation Tips: STATUS is a simple comparison between 2013 and 2012 results. Above or Below the District compares the School's 2013 results to the District's to determine whether the school is above or below the district (equal means +/- 2%). IMPROVEMENT is a 5-year trend in percentage points per year. Larger positive values are better – implying greater improvement each year. Negative values indicate a declining trend in the percent of students meeting standard.










2013 School Data Dashboard

Site:	Stewart MS
District:	Tacoma

READING: Impact of Programs for Level-1 Students

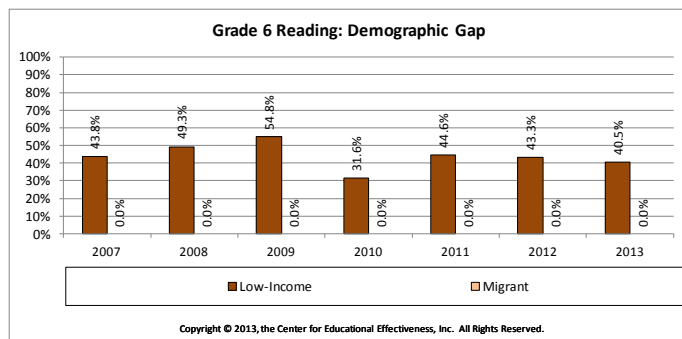
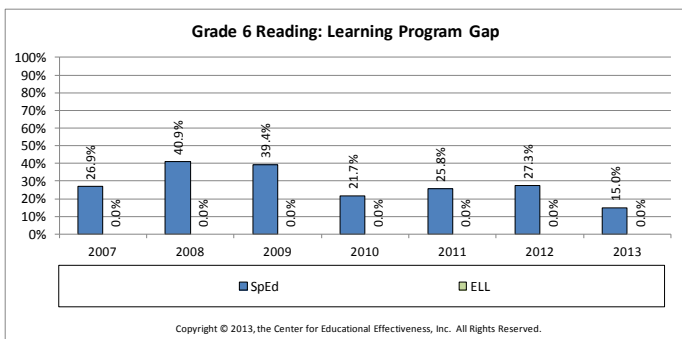
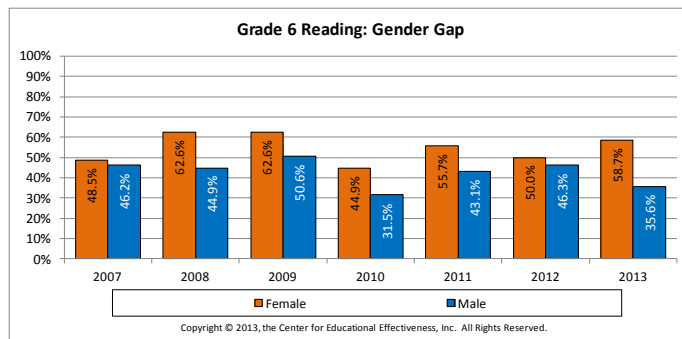
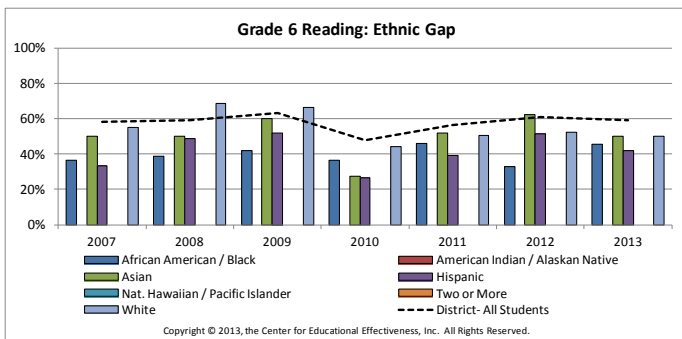
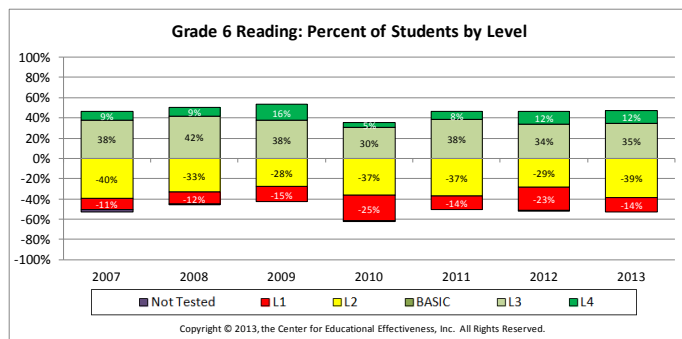
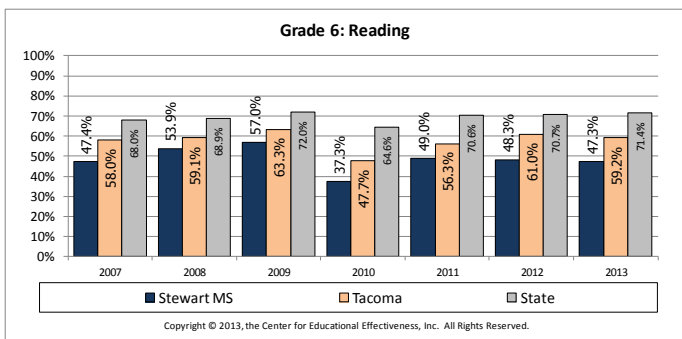
STATUS (Percent at Level-1)							5-Yr Trend: Is percent at Level-1 declining (percentage points / year)?		
	2013 % at Level-1	2012 % at Level-1	Change (we want values < 0%)		Is Level-1 larger than the District?		School Trend vs. District	School	District
Grade 6	14.2%	22.6%	 -8.4%		Equal 		Grade 6 	-0.5%	0.2%
Grade 7	16.1%	17.3%	 -1.2%		Larger 		Grade 7 	-1.0%	-1.3%
Grade 8	39.6%	30.6%	 9.0%		Larger 		Grade 8 	6.8%	2.9%

MATH: Impact of Programs for Level-1 Students

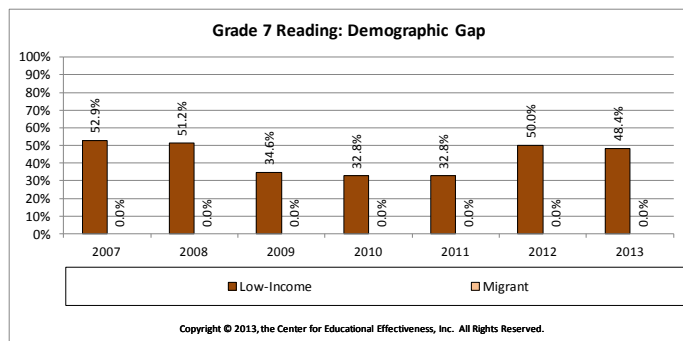
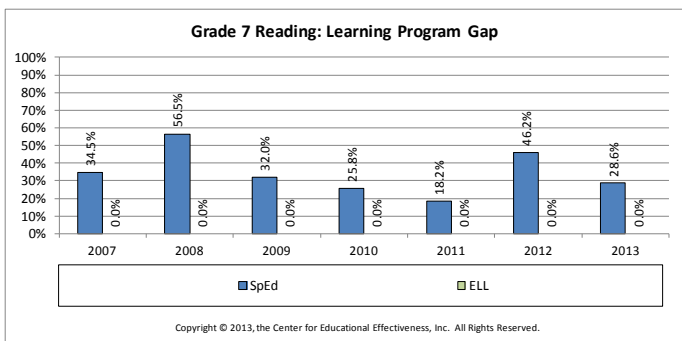
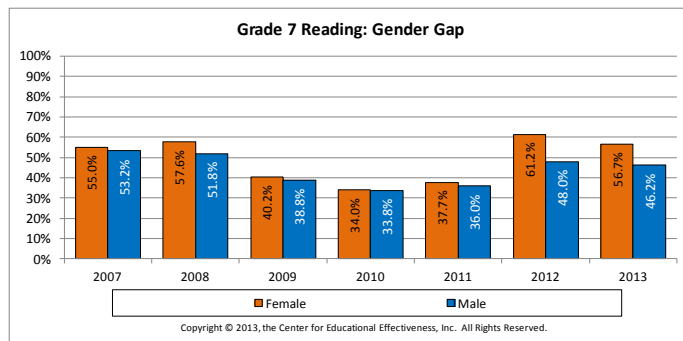
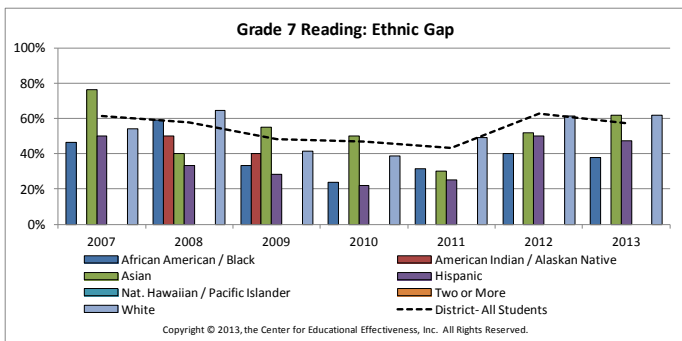
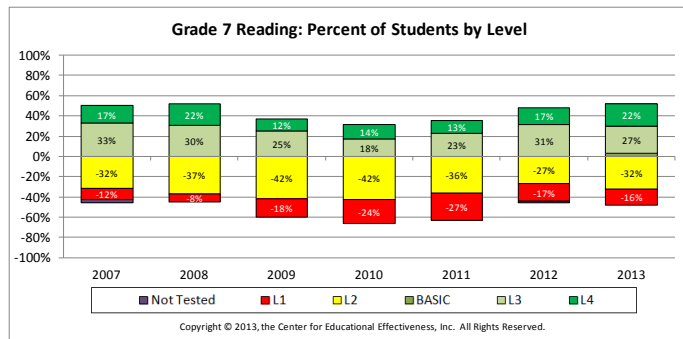
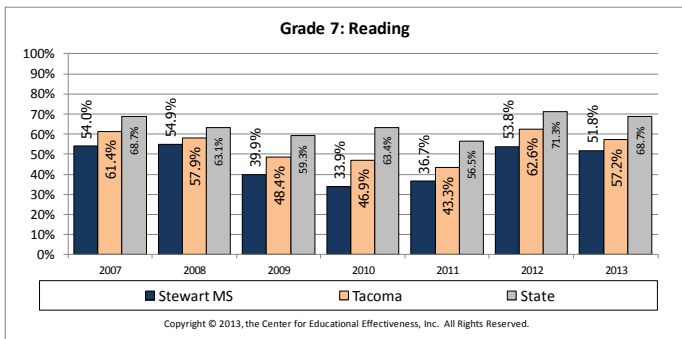
STATUS (Percent at Level-1)							5-Yr Trend: Is percent at Level-1 declining (percentage points / year)?		
	2013 % at Level-1	2012 % at Level-1	Change (we want values < 0%)		Is Level-1 larger than the District?		School Trend vs. District	School	District
Grade 6	39.2%	39.7%	 -0.5%		Larger 		Grade 6 	-2.3%	-2.3%
Grade 7	36.6%	55.1%	 -18.5%		Larger 		Grade 7 	-2.0%	-4.1%
Grade 8	60.9%	61.7%	 -0.8%		Larger 		Grade 8 	5.6%	1.1%

Interpretation Tips: STATUS is a simple measure of the percentage of students at Level-1 (Level-1 is defined as "well below standard" for MSP, HSPE, and EOC). A smaller percentage at Level-1 is better. This is a direct measure of the impact of programs for struggling students. For Change, we want the percentage of students at Level-1 to decline— i.e., negative values are best. The 5-year Trend looks at whether the school is shrinking its percentage of students at Level-1 over time. The values are percentage points per year. The larger negative values are better-- implying greater decline in the percentage of students performing at Level-1.

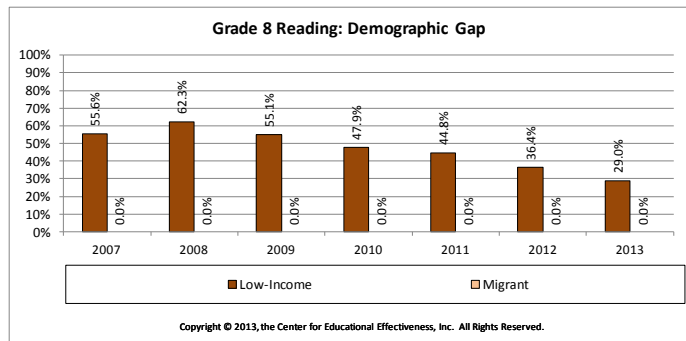
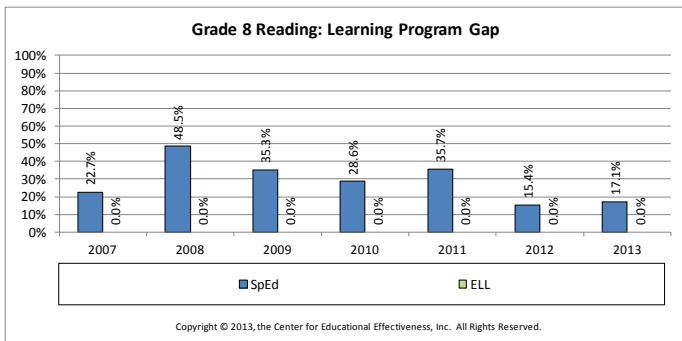
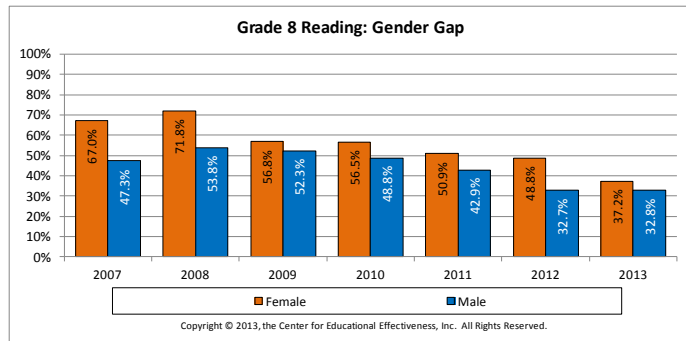
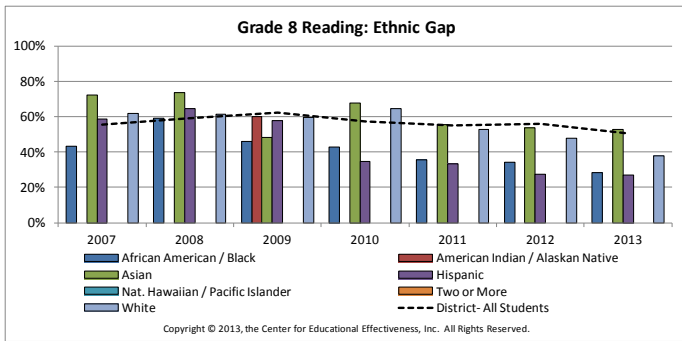
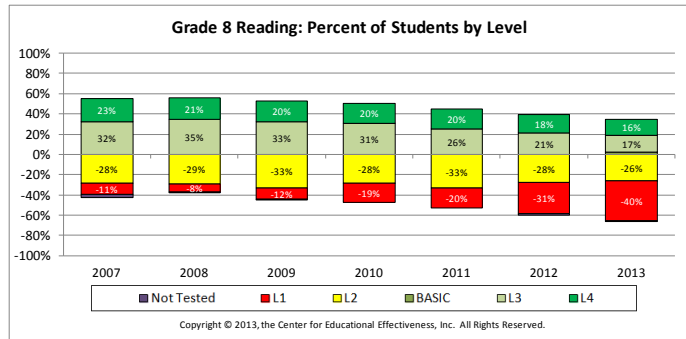
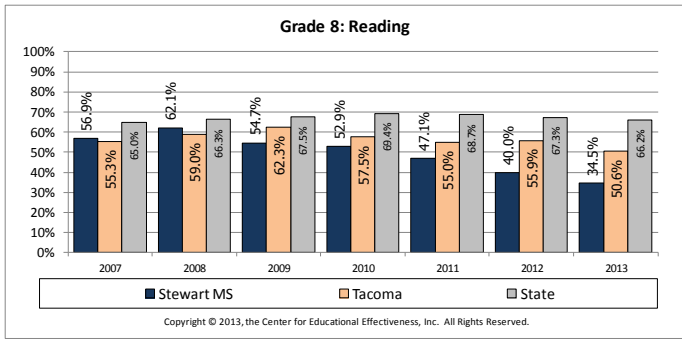
Reading Grade 6



Reading Grade 7

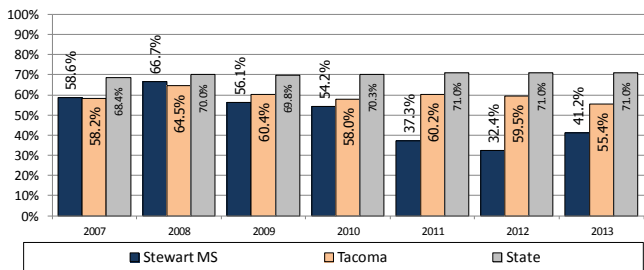


Reading Grade 8



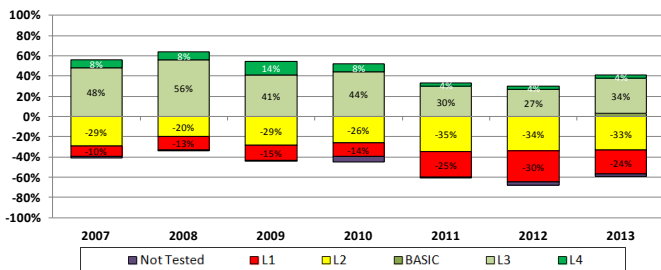
Writing Grade 7

Grade 7: Writing



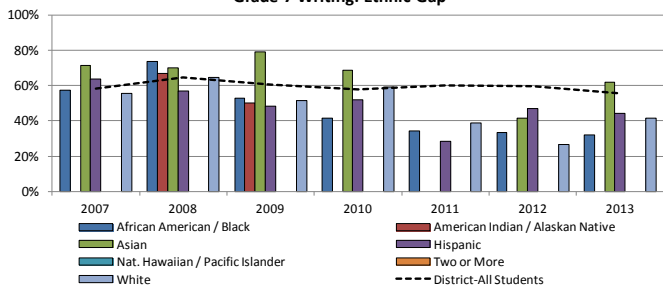
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Grade 7 Writing: Percent of Students by Level



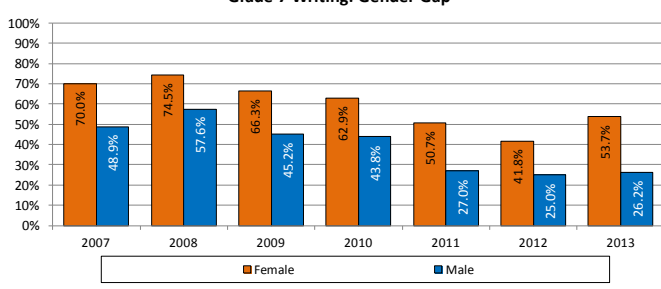
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Grade 7 Writing: Ethnic Gap



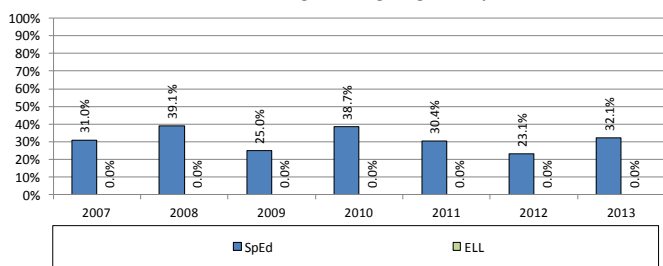
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Grade 7 Writing: Gender Gap



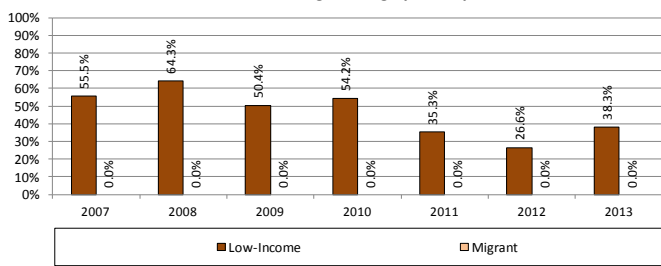
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Grade 7 Writing: Learning Program Gap



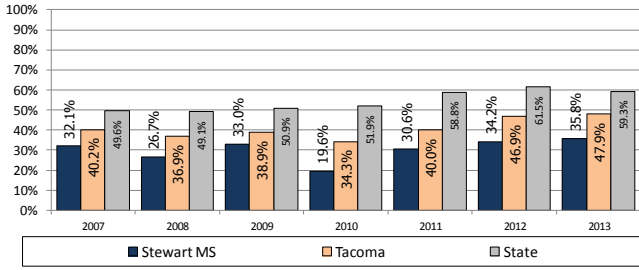
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Grade 7 Writing: Demographic Gap



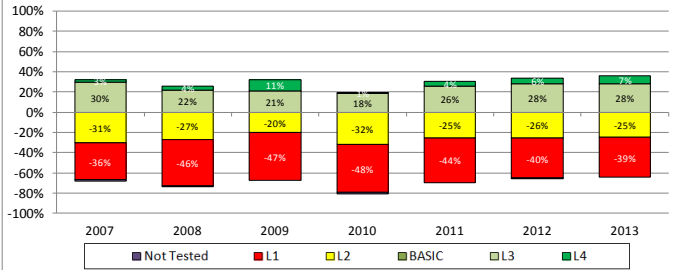
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Grade 6: Math



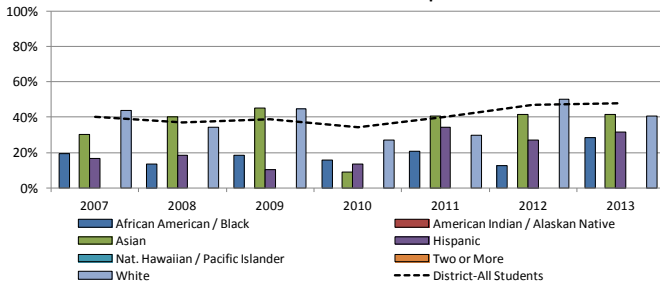
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Grade 6 Math: Percent of Students by Level



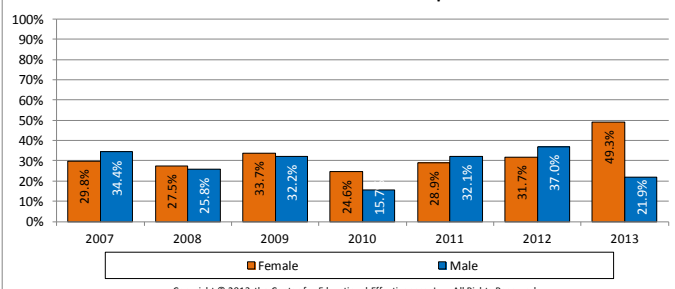
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Grade 6 Math: Ethnic Gap



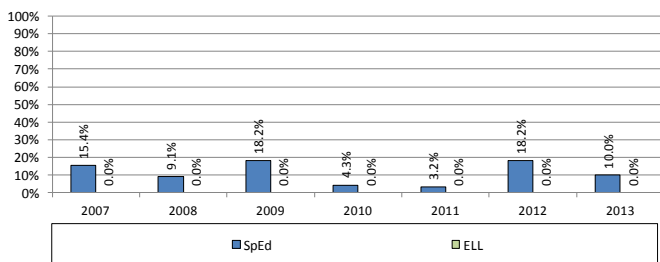
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Grade 6 Math: Gender Gap



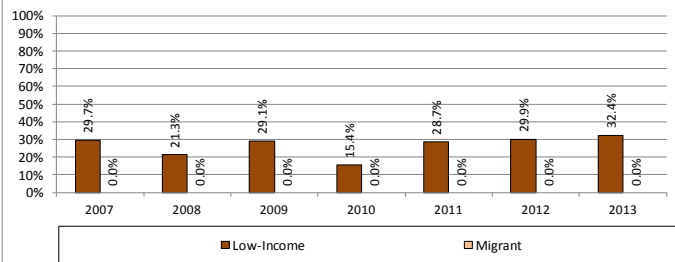
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Grade 6 Math: Learning Program Gap



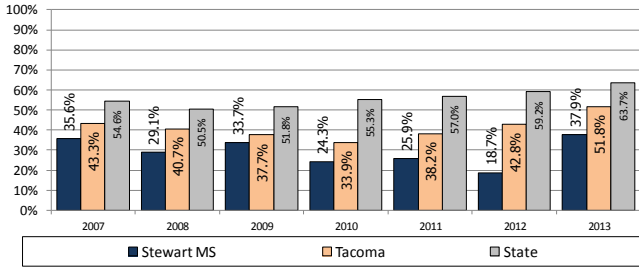
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Grade 6 Math: Demographic Gap



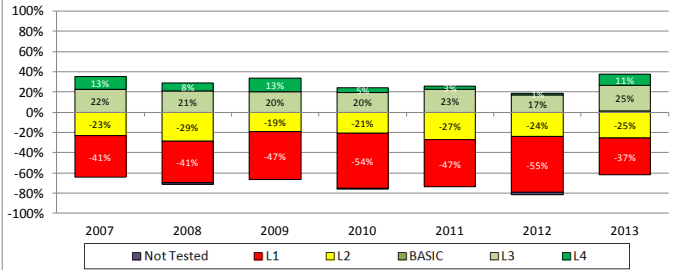
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Grade 7: Math



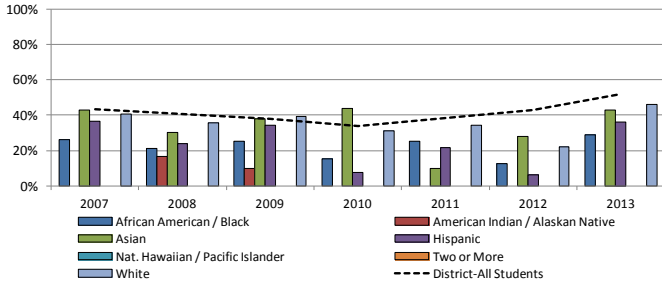
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Grade 7 Math: Percent of Students by Level



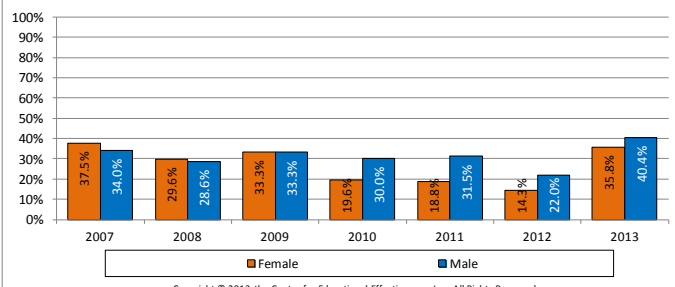
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Grade 7 Math: Ethnic Gap



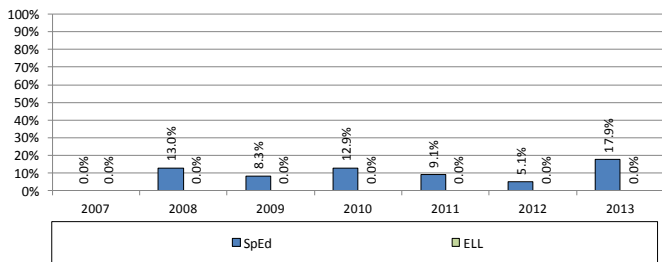
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Grade 7 Math: Gender Gap



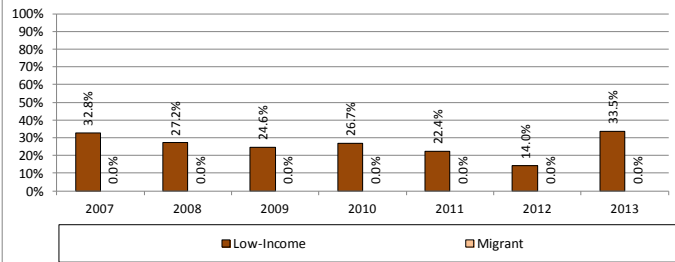
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Grade 7 Math: Learning Program Gap



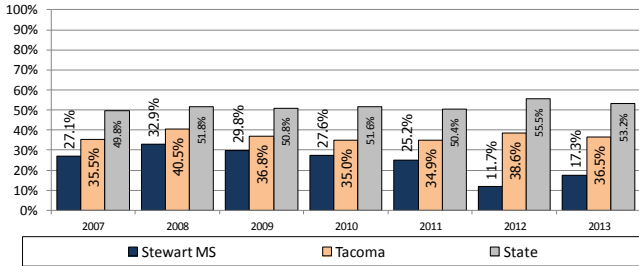
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Grade 7 Math: Demographic Gap



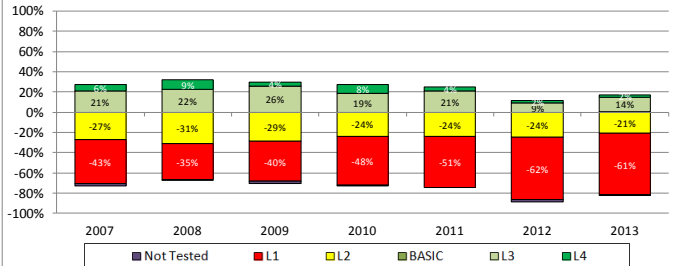
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Grade 8: Math



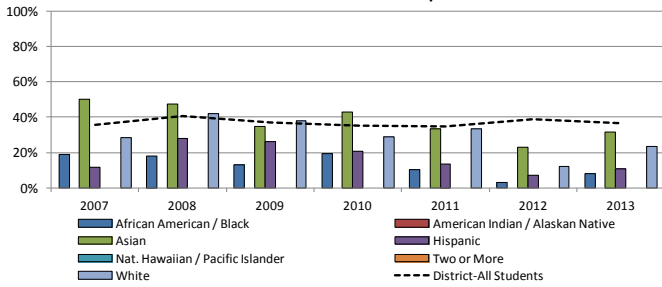
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Grade 8 Math: Percent of Students by Level



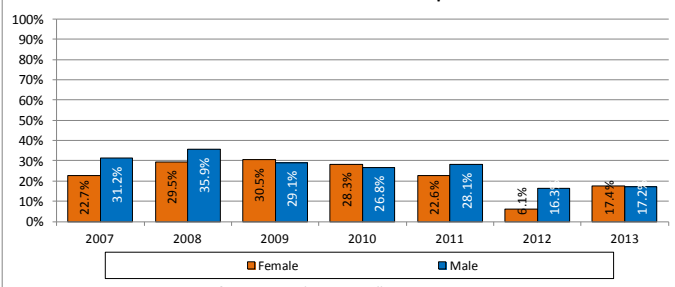
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Grade 8 Math: Ethnic Gap



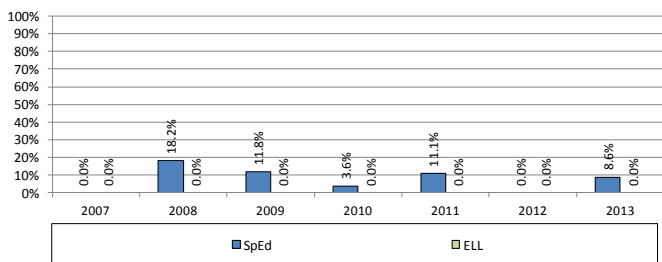
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Grade 8 Math: Gender Gap



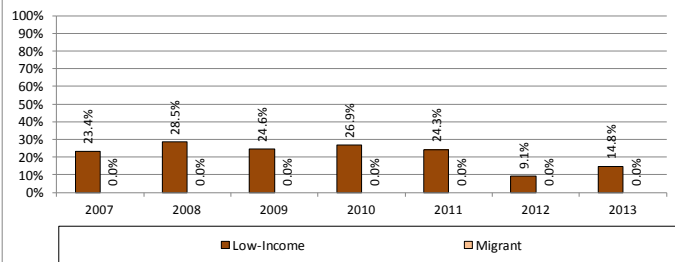
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Grade 8 Math: Learning Program Gap



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Grade 8 Math: Demographic Gap



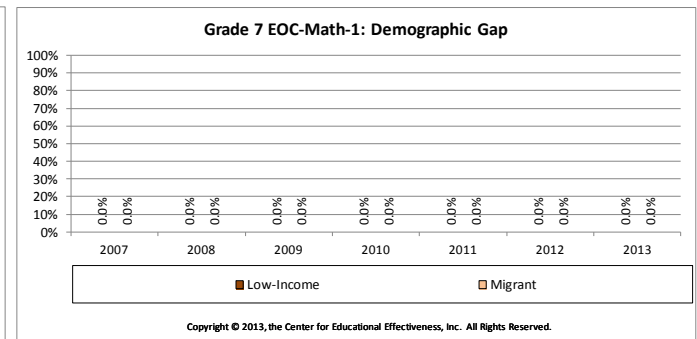
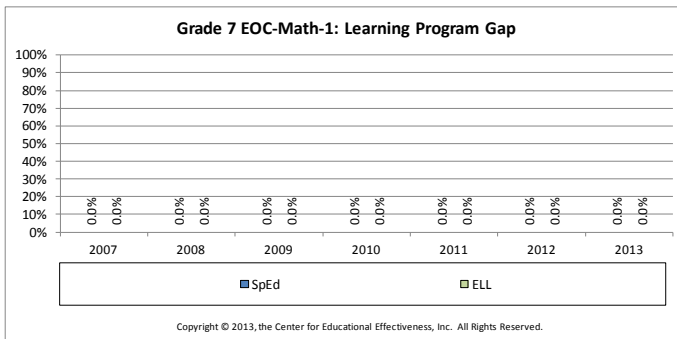
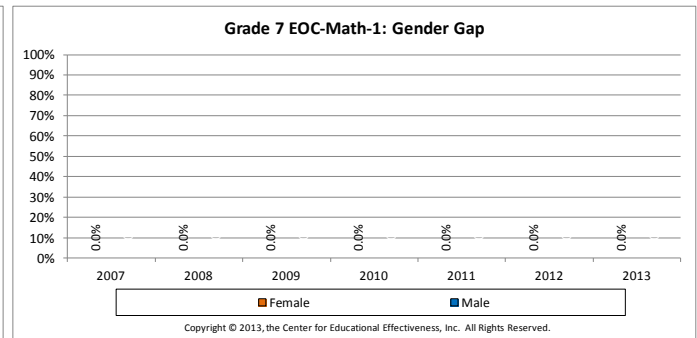
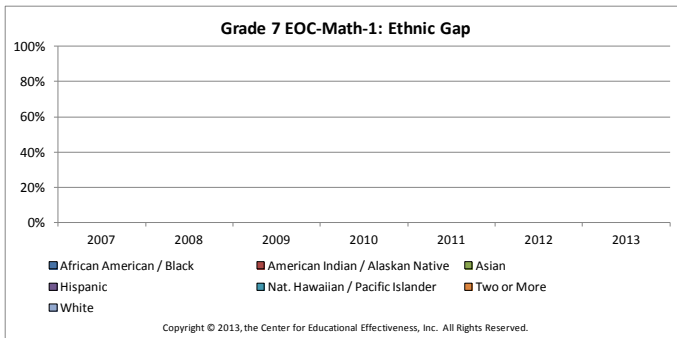
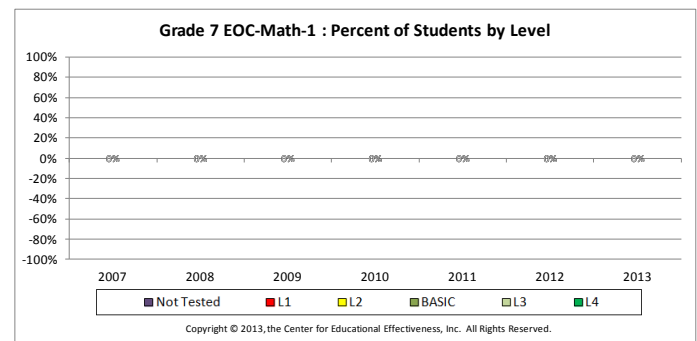
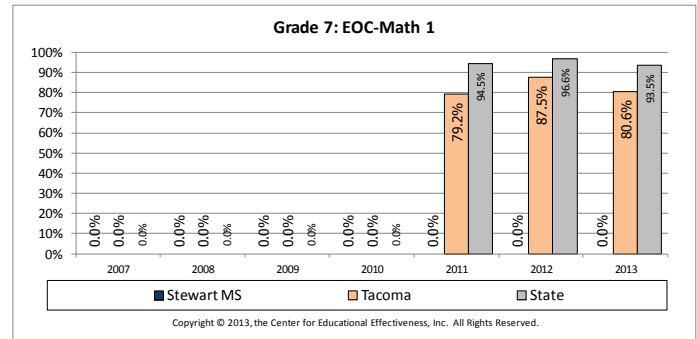
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End-of-Course Math-1 Grade 7

NOTE: End-of-Course assessments are not taken by all students at this grade level

% Meeting Standard includes students who "previously passed" the assessment in an earlier test window and are in this grade cohort.

Percent by Level and all disaggregated data does NOT include Previously Passed students. It is a consistent snapshot of ONLY the students who took the assessment in spring of each year.

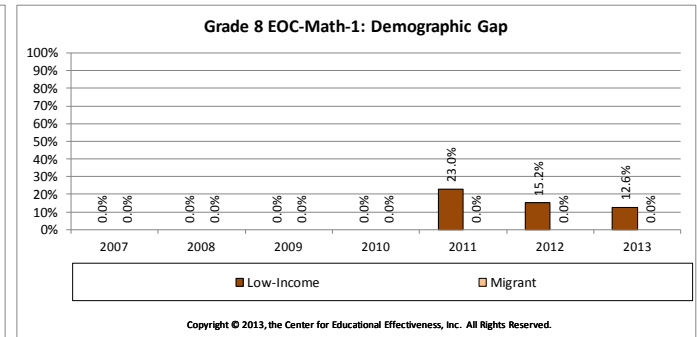
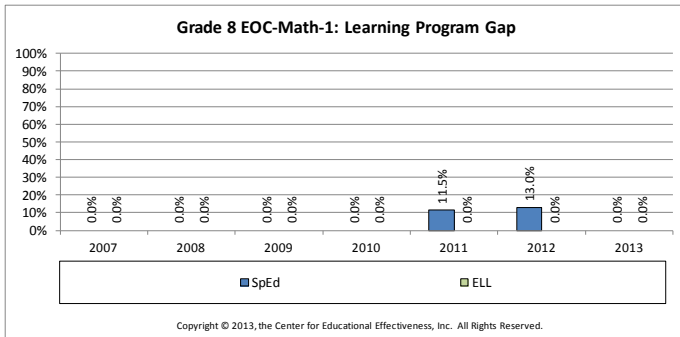
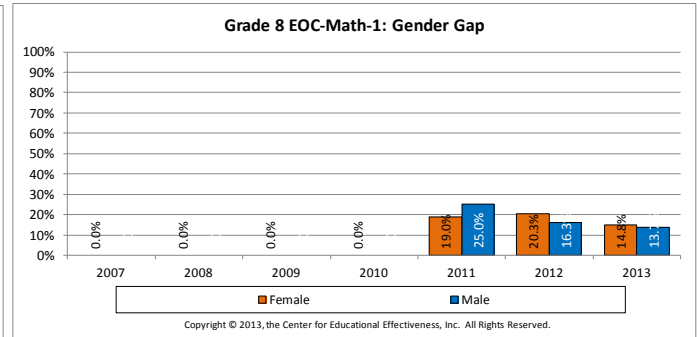
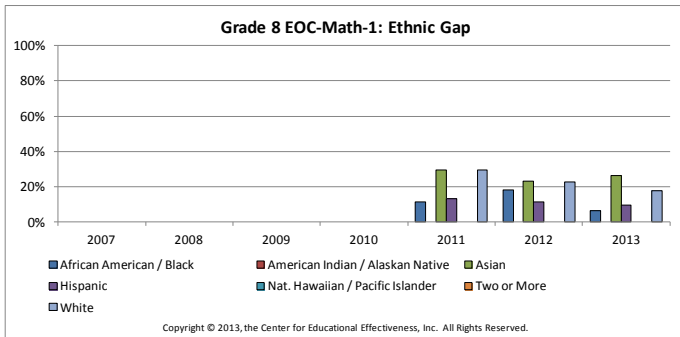
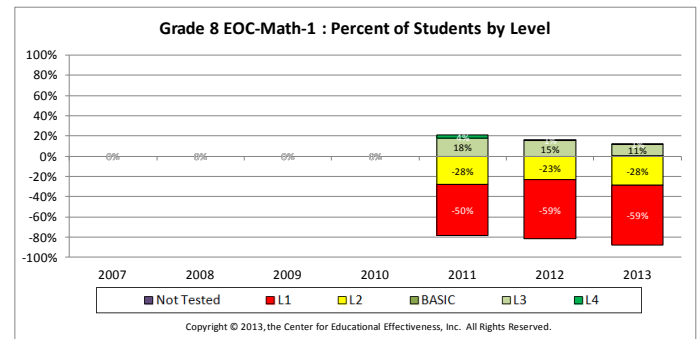
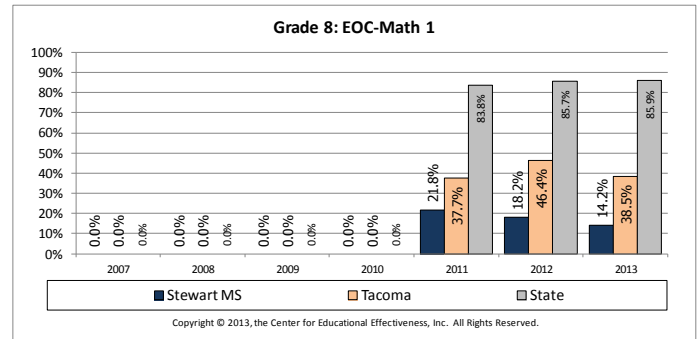


End-of-Course Math-1 Grade 8

NOTE: End-of-Course assessments are not taken by all students at this grade level

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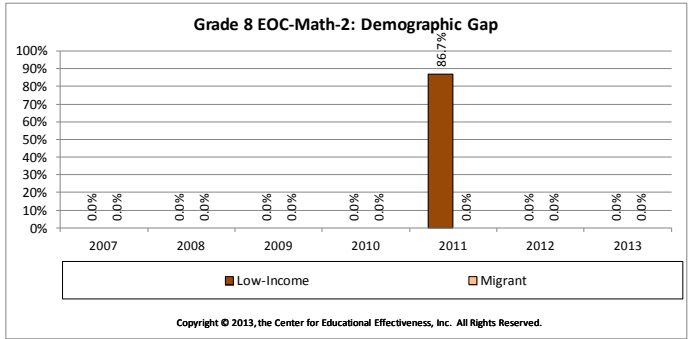
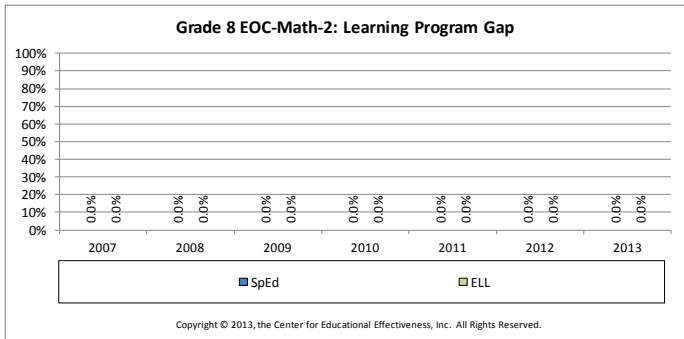
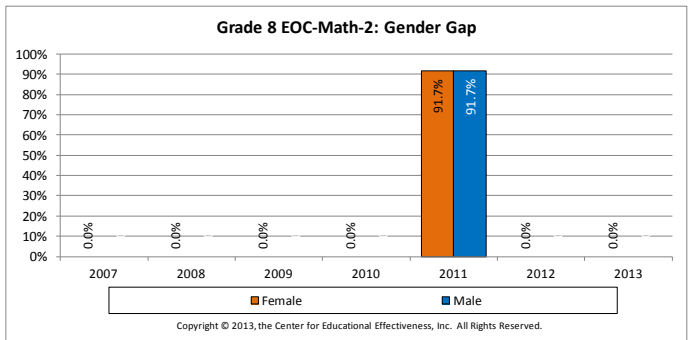
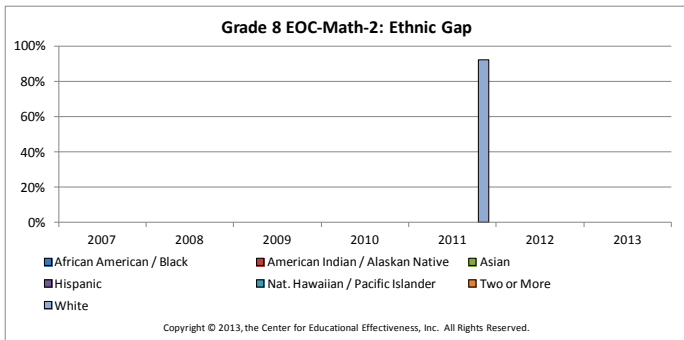
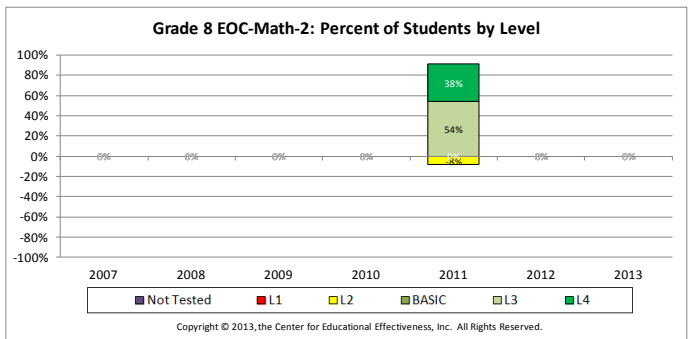
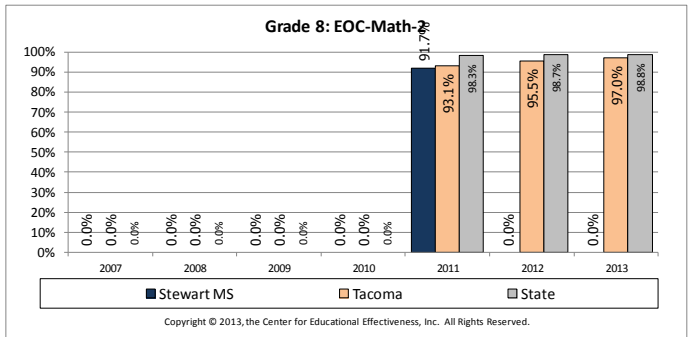


End-of-Course Math-2 Grade 8

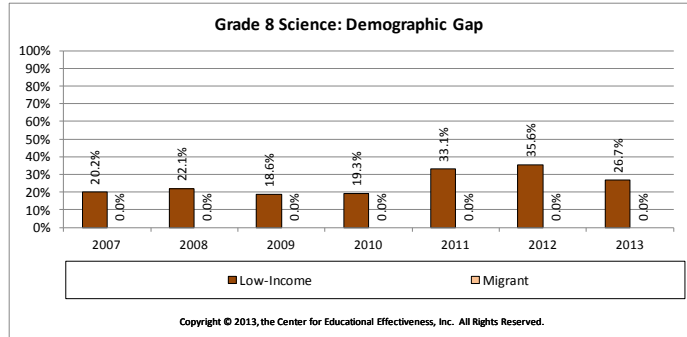
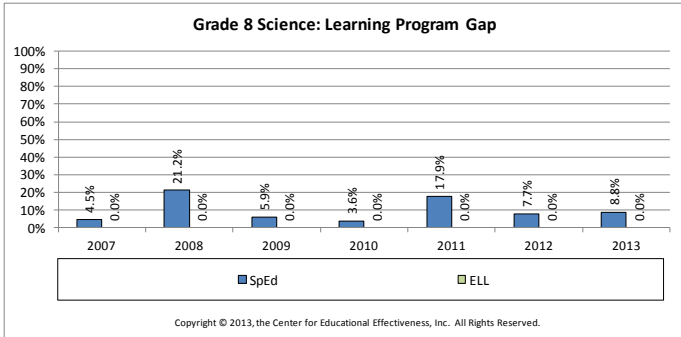
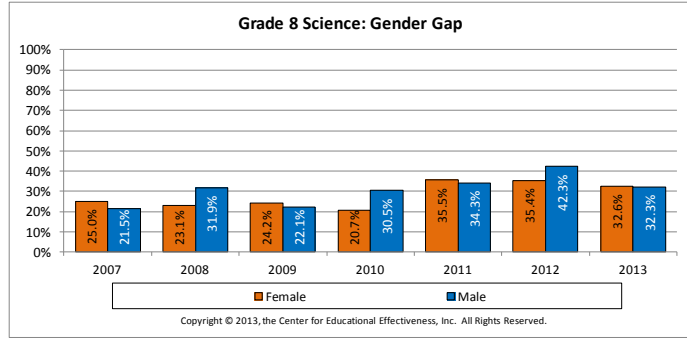
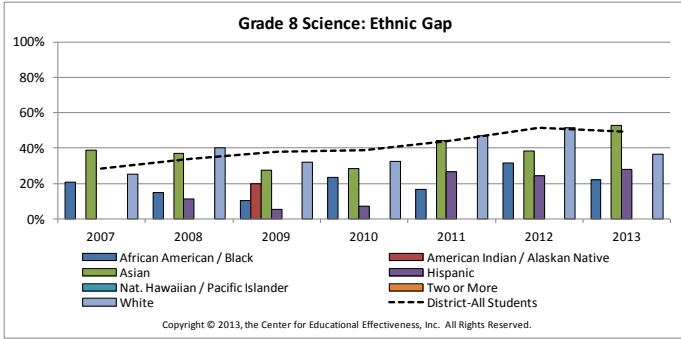
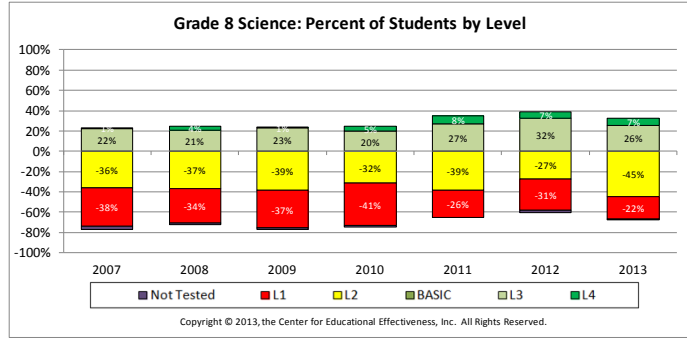
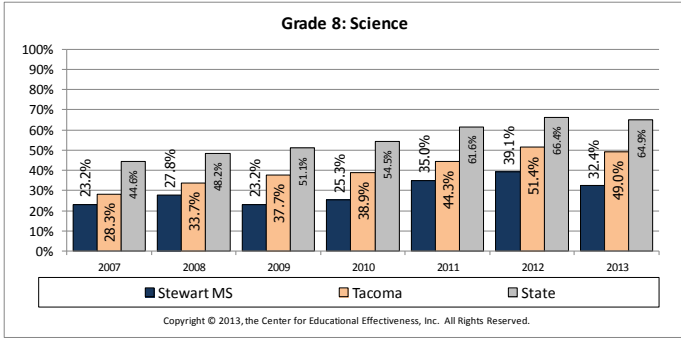
NOTE: End-of-Course assessments are not taken by all students at this grade level

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Science Grade 8

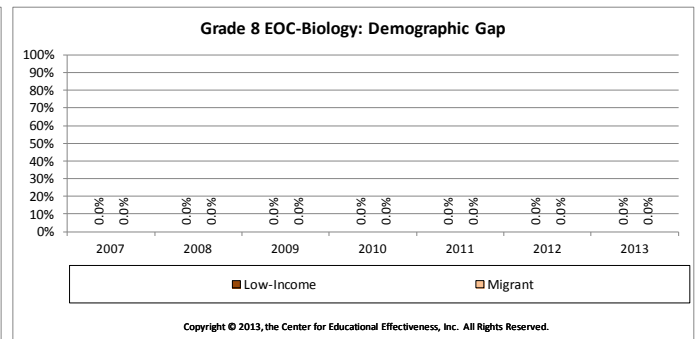
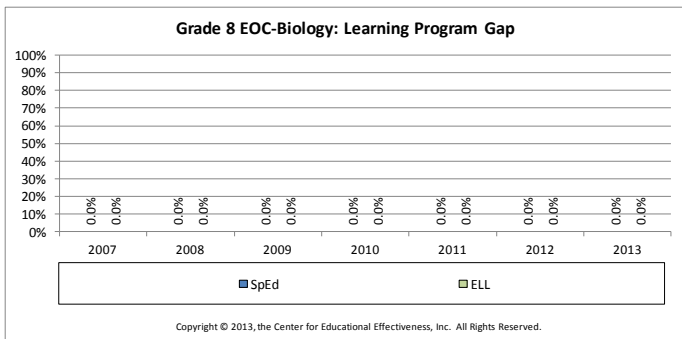
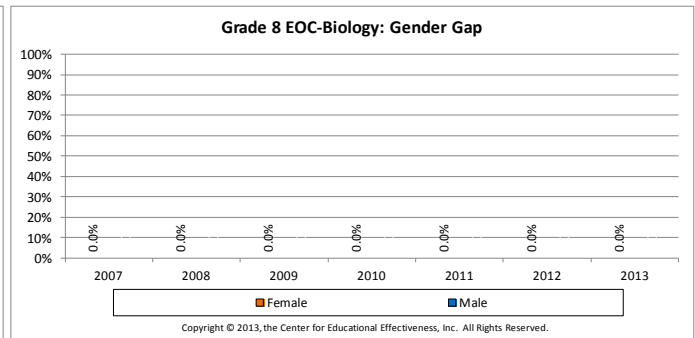
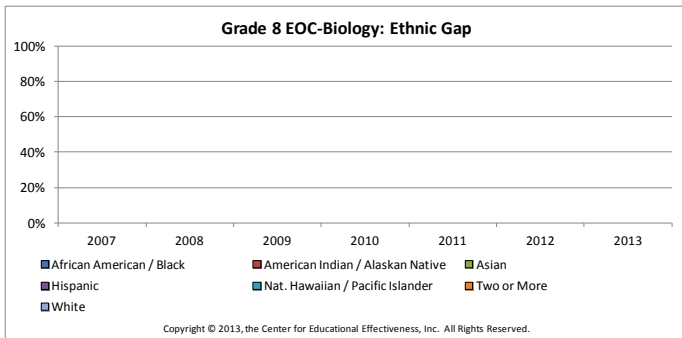
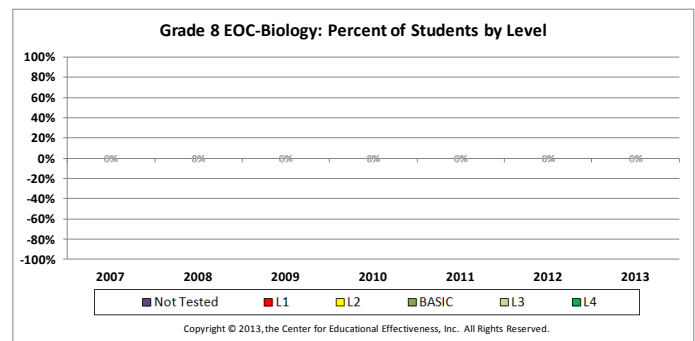
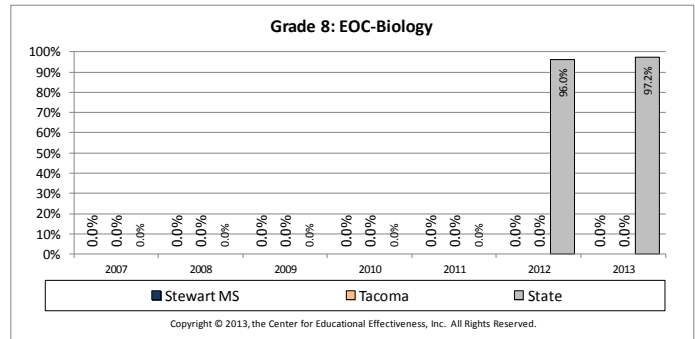


End-of-Course Biology Grade 8

NOTE: End-of-Course assessments are not taken by all students at this grade level

% Meeting Standard includes students who "previously passed" the assessment in an earlier test window and are in this grade cohort.

Percent by Level and all disaggregated data does NOT include Previously Passed students. It is a consistent snapshot of ONLY the students who took the assessment in spring of each year.



MERIT - Assessment of Progress

Stewart Middle School

Tacoma School District

March 21, 2013



School and Classroom Practices Study

Prepared by



BAKER ■ EVALUATION ■ RESEARCH ■ CONSULTING

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Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

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Stewart Middle School Assessment of Progress

Introduction

In 2010, the Tacoma School District (SSD) applied for and received a federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) for three of their schools, including Stewart Middle School and two other middle schools. As part of the application process, The BERC Group, Inc. conducted a School and Classroom Practices Study (SCPS) at Stewart Middle School. The BERC Group a) reviewed district level practices and policies to identify potential supports and barriers that may impact the district's ability to implement an intervention; b) collected classroom observation data focusing on instructional practices within the school; and c) conducted qualitative interviews and focus groups focusing on the alignment of school structures and practices with OSPI's Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools. Findings noted in the initial report were used to complete the application for SIG support and were incorporated into the ongoing implementation of improvement goals and action plans at the school and district levels. In 2011 and 2012, The BERC Group conducted follow-ups to the initial report, highlighting changes the school and district have made over the last year related to the School Improvement Grant (SIG).

In March 2013, The BERC Group visited the school once again to conduct an Assessment of Progress to highlight changes the school and district made over the last year. The findings in this report are based on information gathered from the following sources:

- 1) a review of changes in district level practices and policies to support an intervention model;
- 2) a classroom observation study focusing on instructional practices within the school;
- 3) qualitative interviews and focus groups focusing on the alignment of school structures and practices with OSPI's *Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools*; and
- 4) survey of school staff, students, and families.

Evaluators obtained information during a site visit on March 21, 2013. Approximately 67 people, including district and building administrators, union leaders, certificated and non-certificated staff members, counselors, parents, and students participated in interviews and focus groups. In addition, evaluators conducted 27 classroom observations to determine the extent to which Powerful Teaching and Learning™ was present in the school. Finally, evaluators accessed additional information about the school and district, including school improvement plans, student achievement data, and additional school documents.

The following section describes the federal intervention model Tacoma School District and Stewart Middle School chose to adopt. This section also includes a comparative overview of the district findings from all SCPS studies, a description of the support provided to the school by the district, and a summary of the changes made at the school level. Subsequent sections of the report offer a detailed review of the school's alignment to the *Nine Characteristics of High*

Performing Schools based on classroom observations, interviews and focus groups, and survey data. Under each of the *Nine Characteristics* indicators, the report will highlight how the school has addressed issues brought to light in the previous studies.

Implementation of the Intervention Model

In an effort to improve education and educational opportunities across the nation, the federal government provided funding for School Improvement Grants to support the lowest performing districts and schools. Schools and districts accepting SIG money chose from among four federally defined intervention models for their lowest performing schools: *Closure*, *Restart*, *Turnaround*, and *Transformation*. The school closure model refers to a district closing a school and enrolling the students who attended the school in other higher-achieving schools in the district. The restart model occurs when a district converts the school or closes and reopens it under management of an educational management organization (EMO). The turnaround model includes replacing the principal and rehiring no more than 50% of the school's staff, adopting a new governance structure, and implementing a research-based instructional program aligned to state standards. Over the last three years, this model has produced significant gains in student achievement and has helped schools prepare for the longer process of transformation into a high performing organization.¹ The transformation model requires replacing the school principal addresses four areas critical to transforming persistently low-achieving schools: developing teacher and principal leader effectiveness, implementing instructional reform strategies, extending learning time and creating community connections, and providing operating flexibility and sustained support.

Tacoma Public Schools and Stewart Middle School chose to adopt and implement the *Turnaround* model. The table in Appendix A of this report describes the specific requirements for the *Turnaround* model in more detail and shows a comparison of rankings for each requirement from each of the School and Classroom Practices Studies.

District and School Level Change

Tacoma Public Schools employs approximately 1,810 teachers serving 28,529 students in 35 elementary schools, 9 middle schools, 5 comprehensive high schools, and 14 alternative learning sites. Approximately 60% of the district's teachers possess a master's degree, and the average years of teaching experience is 12.9 years. Stewart Middle School employs 42 teachers serving approximately 600 students. Approximately 71% of GMS teachers possess graduate degrees, and the average years of teaching experience is 5.2 years. Compared to the district, Stewart employs a greater percentage of teachers with a master's degree, but teachers have less experience.

¹ Mass Insight (June 2010). *School Turnaround Models*. Boston, MA.: Mass Insight Education and Research Institute.

The SIG grants for this TPS cohort, awarded to Giadrone, Jason Lee, and Stewart Middle Schools, have had a significant impact in the district, both practically and philosophically. "SIG was intended to break the mold, and in Tacoma Public Schools, we did that," commented district personnel. With the grant, TPS made decisive moves for the SIG schools as a cohort, for all TPS middle schools, and for the entire district-wide. These three SIG schools started from very difficult places, yet now have moved to the forefront in school improvement and are now "leading from the middle" according to the district.

According to district personnel, a number of challenges predated the grant, particularly in the area of instruction. One person said, "Prior to SIG, we did not have a well-articulated and teacher-supported instructional framework. We had a curriculum map but hadn't looked at it for about 10 years." It was difficult to make gains with three successive math adoptions and no cohesive support for language arts teachers. Although the grant period held many challenges for TPS, including significant central office turnover and a teacher strike, the district took several positive and clear steps. These included better articulation of curriculum maps, new benchmark assessments, and new curriculum adoptions. They implemented a new data system that will provide real-time data. They have also established a deeper and more structured focus on instruction, with broader implementation of teacher collaboration and peer observation through "studio" models. The district has committed to the 5 Dimensions of Teaching and Learning (5D) of the Center for Educational Leadership, infusing 5D teacher development initially into math and language arts and then into other content areas. A district officer commented, "Where we are now is significantly different, primarily around the instructional system in place and curricular support."

The SIG program also encouraged the district to reflect on the goals of the entire system. In math, for example, one person said, "Three years ago, we focused on articulating what we wanted, and it was algebra for all 8th graders, the same for special education, and support for teachers." While the needs of SIG schools instigated these conversations, some of the resulting improvement strategies were directed toward all middle schools. For instance, all middle schools developed a similar math focus and had a common set of resources, including curriculum support, time for teachers to collaborate, and the Teacher Development Group (TDG) for teacher growth.

During the first year of these grants, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) provided SIG principals some latitude in hiring, so they could build staffs appropriate to the goals and plans for the school. From the district perspective, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was essential for these three SIG schools. One person said, "It was crucial. It was really important, and I would stress that. It was really important to be able to do the things we were required to do [by OSPI]. We could not have done it in any other way."

However, the process for moving teachers into and out of SIG schools early in the grant period contributed to teacher concerns over reassignment and displacement, and this was one of the key issues in a 2011 teacher strike. One person said, "SIG was a large process: closing one school and emptying two others. There were a lot of displaced people, and the system was not designed to accommodate that. When people didn't know where they were going, it caused a lot of stress. One outcome of the strike was a new system for addressing teacher reassignment and displacement, now known as "Section 83." Whereas displacement decisions had been made on the basis of seniority, Section 83 takes other factors into consideration. This is a significant

change for TPS and the union. As OSPI identifies new TPS schools for targeted improvement, there have been questions about whether there will be a new MOU. According to the central office, "With Section 83, our hiring practices have changed, so positions are really open. It's good for teachers wanting to move. We've evolved, so we don't need the MOU in the same way."

Reflecting on their work with the union in the context of these grants, district personnel described the relationship between the district and union as "still strong, with a sense of trust." They believe the strike and its resolution ultimately left both the district and the union "stronger and wiser, with better relationships." Further, a district representative noted, "Many times, districts go through strikes and it's devastating, but the principals and teachers didn't miss a beat. It says a lot for the teachers and the leaders, especially for the SIG schools."

The teacher and principal evaluation processes are moving forward for TPS, and they plan to implement a new evaluation tool in fall of 2013. While the district did not participate in the Teacher/Principal Evaluation Pilot this year, the education directors and some principals attended reliability training. Those involved in leadership of the new evaluation process are "working closely together to do this, not with the lens of evaluation but of learning." According to district staff, this perspective is easier to establish because teachers have already had a number of classes on 5D as an *instructional framework*. All districts trainings pertaining to curriculum and instruction align with the 5D model. One person commented, "The feedback from other districts is that they wished they had the instructional framework first and then developed an evaluation that lays over it. Tacoma administrators have focused on this is an instructional framework... It's really a different conversation."

When considering the future, district personnel indicated that all three SIG schools have paid close attention to sustainability. However, the issues of sustainability are very specific to each school, as they depend on the specific strategies for school improvement and the activities that have been funded by the grant. SMS staff members know some positions funded by SIG will be eliminated next year, though the exact number remains to be determined. Multiple staff members expressed concerns that SMS would not be able to sustain its vision as a Science, Technology, Reading, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STREAM) School without the staffing to offer a variety of courses. "I think it will be a label only," one staff member predicted. "If you don't staff [the school] to be able to offer science and engineering opportunities, I don't think that makes it an engineering school."

District personnel acknowledged challenges ahead, given the fiscal implications of maintaining the enriched school models of the SIG schools, as well as incentives for staff members for additional work outside the normal contract. One person observed, "Teachers got rewards for their work around additional leadership opportunities, not financial reward for achievement. We had teachers that became true leaders, and we had support for them financially around that." District personnel noted that, while SIG provided this opportunity, it will not be part of the sustainability model. One said, "We looked at it really carefully and tried to come up with a sustainability model. The financial incentive will not be there to support it [teacher leadership], but the career ladder will still be there."

Finally, the grants prompted an important philosophical change at the central office. During the early grant period, the district addressed the needs of SIG schools by making exceptions to

district operations, allowing SIG schools the flexibility to do things quickly and differently. Examples of flexibility included late arrival, a different conference schedule, or electives outside the basic education model. The requests of the SIG schools generated conversations about district priorities, expectations, and functioning. One person said, "It led us to thinking differently about innovation."

During 2011-2012, OSPI identified TPS as a New Innovation Zone and four TPS schools for inclusion on the inaugural list of 22 Washington Innovative Schools. The district is seeking ways to obtain and vet new ideas, and there is a link on the TPS website where the public can offer innovations. "We are really partnering with the community around what is the next wave for the students of tomorrow. Our children are different, and their jobs are being created as we speak...We are really trying to sustain innovation."

As the three-year grant period comes to a close, one person said, "I'm proud of the teachers and the principal of the three schools and the work they've done. They went into it because they believed in the vision. It hasn't been status quo - at 3:30 you're out the door. They've given up time and heart to create new systems. It's been a lot of hard work and they have seen results."

School and Classroom Level Findings

Survey Results

Stewart Middle School staff, families, and students also completed a survey designed to measure whether these groups see evidence of the *Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools* in the school. The staff survey includes factors around each of the *Nine Characteristics*, and the family and student surveys include factors around each of the characteristics, except *Focused Professional Development*. Individual survey items were scored on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral/undecided, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree). Researchers consider a "4" or "5" response on an individual survey item a positive response. Likewise, an overall factor score of 4.0 and above is a positive response. No students or family members were surveyed in 2011. The number of staff members completing the survey varied the years of administration, ranging from a minimum of 21 staff members in 2011 to a maximum of 39 in 2012. The number of students surveyed increased from 40 in 2012 to 401 in 2013. Additionally, the items on the staff survey also changed between 2012 and 2013; however, the constructs remain the same. These facts should all be taken into consideration when interpreting the results of the surveys.

A summary of the survey findings appears in Figure 1, 2 and 3. All staff and student factor scores fall below 4.0, as did all but one factor of the family scores. These results suggest stakeholder perceive these characteristics are in place to a moderate degree. Overall, results fluctuated on the staff survey, with some increases and some decreases. On the parent survey, results generally improved. However, these results represent a small subset of parents and may not be generalizable to the greater population. For students results declined. However, it is unknown the extent to which this represents a true decline because previously only 40 students took the survey, and this year a far greater percentage of the population completed the survey.

For staff members, the *Focused Professional Development* (3.81) factor scored the highest, and it improved each year, while the *Monitoring Teaching and Learning* (3.11) factor scored the lowest for 2013. For families, the *Supportive Learning Environment* (4.08) factor scored the highest, and it was in the positive range, while the *Effective Leadership* (3.76) factor scored the lowest for 2013. For students, the *Monitoring Teaching and Learning* (3.50) factor scored the highest and the *Family and Community Involvement* (3.18) factor scored the lowest for 2013. Researchers considered survey findings in scoring the rubric, and the results are included in the following discussion of the school's alignment to the *Nine Characteristics*. Appendix B includes the frequency distribution for all surveys, organized around the *Nine Characteristics*.

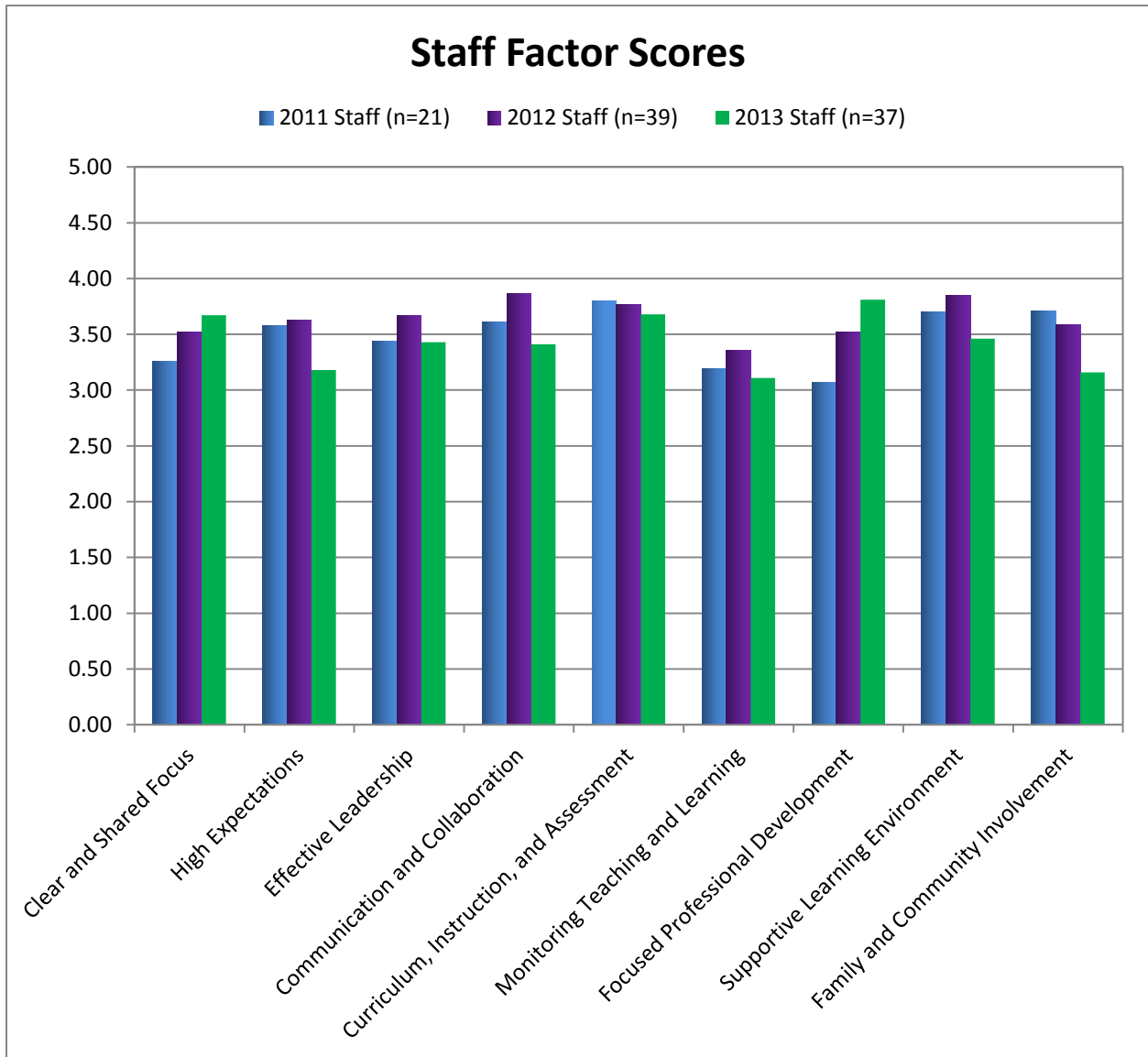


Figure 1: Staff Survey Factor Scores

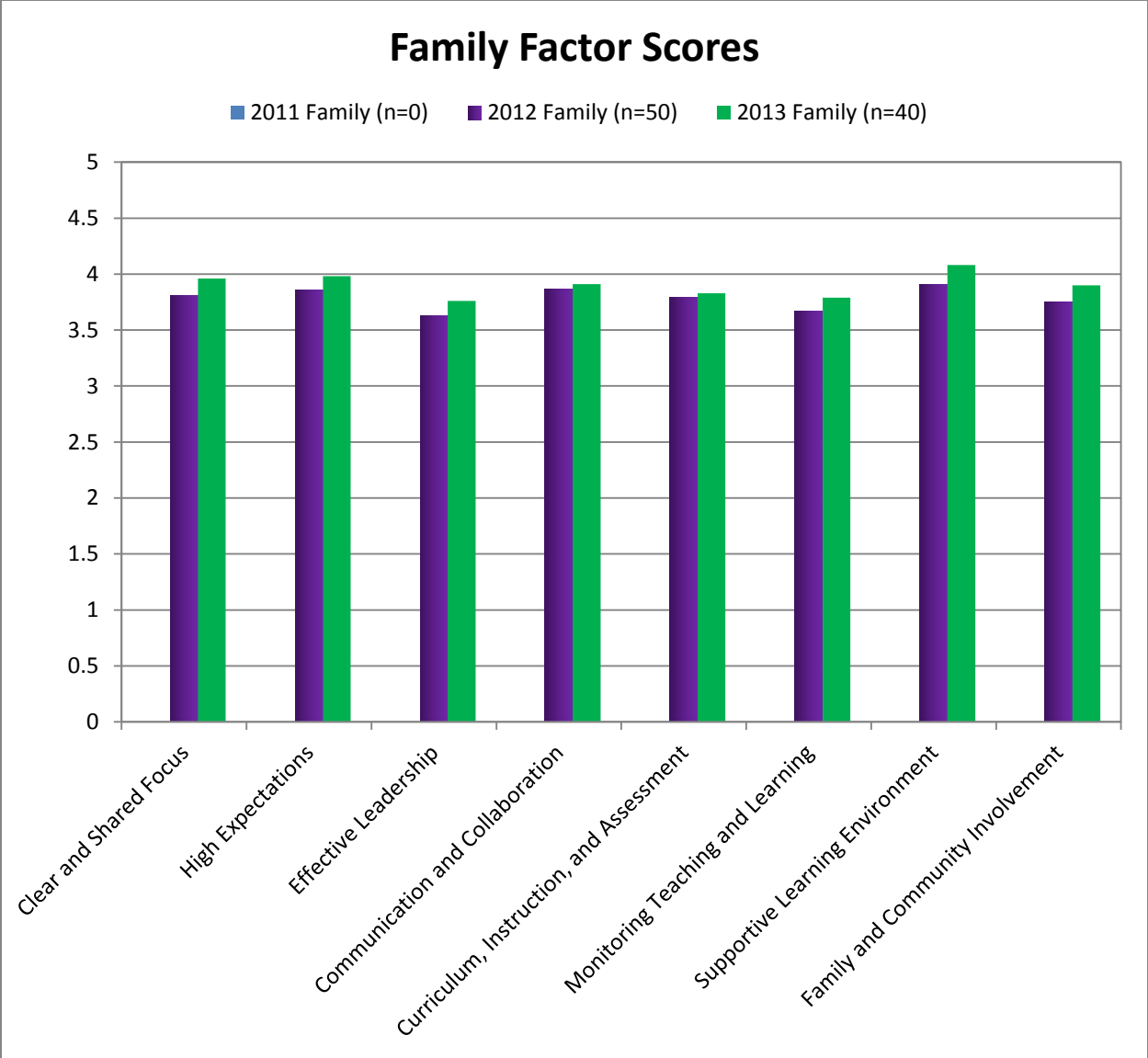


Figure 2: Family Survey Factor Scores

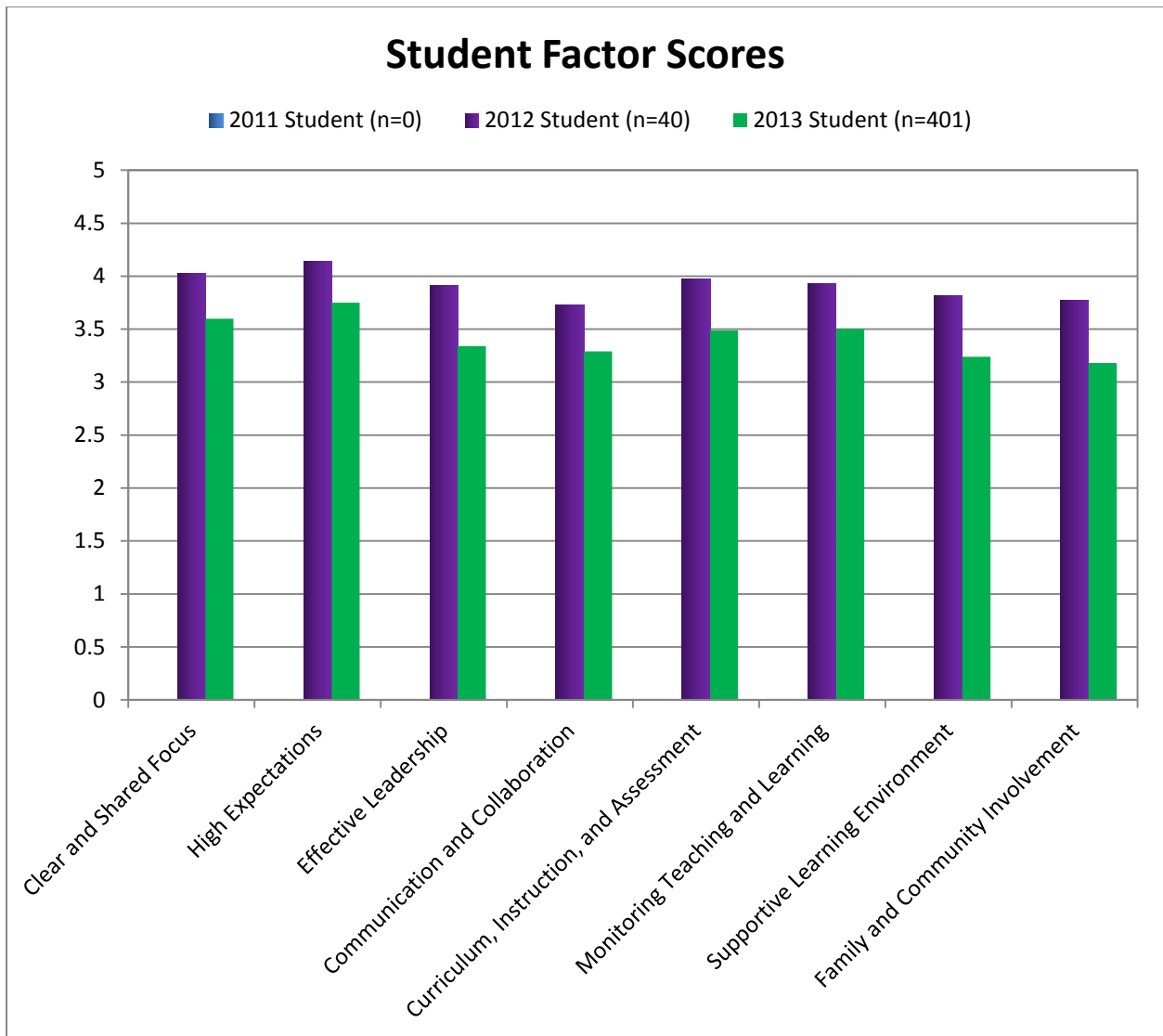


Figure 3: Student Survey Factor Scores

School and Classroom Practices Study Findings

Using data collected through the School and Classroom Practices Study and survey results, research team members reached consensus on scores for 19 Indicators organized around the *Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools*. Each Indicator was scored using a rubric with a continuum of four levels that describe the degree to which a school is effectively implementing the Indicator. The four levels are:

- 4 – Leads to continuous improvement and institutionalization (meets criteria in column 3 on this indicator plus additional elements)
- 3 – Leads to effective implementation
- 2 – Initial, beginning, developing
- 1 – Minimal, absent, or ineffective

Indicators with a score of a 3 or above represent strengths in the school, and Indicators with a score of 2 or below warrant attention. Table 1 includes rubric scores for all the Indicators, including the results from the School and Classroom Practices Study conducted in 2009, 2011, 2012, and the current Assessment of Progress.

Table 1:
Indicator Scores for the Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools

Indicators	Rubric Score 2009	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
Clear and Shared Focus				
Core Purpose – Student Learning	3	2	2	2
High Standards and Expectations for All Students				
Academic Focus	3	2	3	3
Rigorous Teaching and Learning	2	1	2	2
Effective School Leadership				
Attributes of Effective School Leaders	3	2	2	3
Capacity Building	2	2	2	2
Distributed Leadership	2	2	2	2
High Levels of Collaboration and Communication				
Collaboration	2	3	3	3
Communication	3	2	3	3
Curriculum, Assessments, and Instruction Aligned with State Standards				
Curriculum	2	2	3	3
Instruction	3	2	2	2
Assessment	2	3	3	3
Frequent Monitoring of Teaching and Learning				
Supporting Students in Need	3	3	3	3
Focused Professional Development				
Planning and Implementation	2	2	3	3
Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	2	2	3	3
Supportive Learning Environment				
Safe and Orderly Environment	3	2	2	2
Building Relationships	3	2	3	2
Personalized Learning for All Students	3	2	2	3
High Levels of Family and Community Involvement				
Family Communication	3	3	3	3
Family and Community Partnerships	3	3	3	3

Clear and Shared Focus

Everyone knows where they are going and why. The focus is on achieving a shared vision, and all understand their role in achieving the vision. The focus and vision are developed from common beliefs and values, creating a consistent direction for all involved.

Indicators	Rubric Score 2009	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
Clear and Shared Focus				
Core Purpose – Student Learning	3	2	2	2

Core Purpose – Student Learning. Core Purpose – Student Learning. The Stewart Middle School mission and vision has gone through several iterations during the SIG process. In 2010, the former principal developed a mission and vision statement, and briefly presented them to the staff. Parents and students reported they were not involved with the process of drafting this mission and vision statement. When Ms. Gates Cortez took leadership in the spring of 2012, she began the process of developing a more comprehensive and valid mission and vision statement. The SDCM drafted the initial mission and vision statements, and presented them to the whole staff for feedback and revision. “There was input from absolutely everyone,” one staff member said. The revised mission and vision statements were approved through a whole-staff vote.

In 2013, 68% of staff members agreed the school’s mission and goals were developed collaboratively, compared to 51% in 2012 and 50% in 2011. Similarly, 59% of staff members agreed the school allocates resources in alignment with school improvement goals, up three percentage points from 2012, and 57% of staff members agreed important decisions were based on the goals of the school (up six percentage-points from 2012). However, only 39% of staff members agreed the building has a data-driven improvement plan with measurable goals, compared to 44% who agreed the school’s improvement plan was data driven in 2012 and the 53% who agreed in 2011.

The new mission and vision statement are still in the initial stages of roll-out. They do not appear on the school’s website, nor did the parents and community members appear aware of them during focus groups. Of the students surveyed, 53% agreed they understood the mission and purpose of the school. These results are reflective of the initial stage, and moving forward, school leadership needs to focus on sharing the results of this work with stakeholders.

Several staff members expressed a belief that SMS’s focus this year is around establishing structure for staff and students, particularly in regards to school-wide discipline. “In general, our population needs more structure, and that’s where we’re going,” one staff member said. Many focus group respondents said there was a particularly strong focus on student behavior this year. One staff member explained:

I think at the macro level, there's not a ton of focus this year from the administration, scholastically. We're not looking at grades. We're not talking about grades. We're not talking about improvement or decline. I don't think that's a bad thing because we're so behind on management and we're trying to get that in place.

High Standards and Expectations for All Students

Teachers and staff believe that all students can learn and meet high standards. While recognizing that some students must overcome significant barriers, these obstacles are not seen as insurmountable. All students are offered an ambitious and rigorous course of study.

Indicators	Rubric Score 2009	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
High Standards and Expectations for All Students				
Academic Focus	3	2	3	3
Rigorous Teaching and Learning	2	1	2	2

Academic focus. Each year, SMS has taken on a new academic focus. Initially, SMS was a Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) School. The previous principal added an Arts emphasis, turning it into a STEAM School. The current principal has added a new focus on Reading, calling it a STREAM School, placing more focus on the core subjects. One staff member said, "I think the common core of subjects (language arts, math, humanities, and science) were seriously neglected [in the past] in order to support the lavish elective offerings." Another staff member agreed:

Looking to the beginning and where we are now, we have more of a focus on core content. At the beginning when we were STEM, and then STEAM. There was a large focus on electives, building the children's passion in those electives and trying to get them to come to school based on their passion. We've moved towards understanding the kids need more of the basics . . . I see the transition to more of a traditional middle school servicing the whole child in all of the areas, not just the arts.

Across focus groups, staff members expressed a belief that SMS was transitioning away from its STREAM concept with the new emphasis on core curriculum. One staff member said, "I am watching this school become a traditional school. I think [the principal] is tightening the organization, which is great. But we had a lot of art programs, and now we have cut those in half. In technology, all we have left is robotics."

Budget reductions drove most of those decisions to eliminate course offerings. As one staff member said, "I think the staff has to understand we cannot afford to offer the things we offered when we first got the SIG grant. As we have had to tighten our expenditures, some things had to be cut." According to staff members, the former principal had hoped to counter the loss of SIG funding by increasing enrollment at SMS to 700 to 750 students. Instead, SMS had a net loss of 40 students this year. Staff members attributed the school's declining enrollment to two factors: the district's decision to close open enrollment to Stewart and the media campaign surrounding the new school bond, which emphasized the poor physical condition of the 88-year-old school.

Despite the staff's renewed focus on standards, survey data reveal some concerns among staff expectations regarding students' ability to meet them. Only 45% of staff survey respondents agreed the staff believes all students can meet state standards. Sixty percent of students surveyed agreed their teachers believe all students can do well. The survey data also showed 53% of staff members agreed they hold one another accountable for behavior that is respectful of diversity.

Rigorous teaching and learning. Several staff members reported the increased focus on authentic pedagogy was helping to drive rigorous instruction. The science department has begun using interactive notebooks, for example, and the math department has been focused on structured student math talk and an emphasis on open-ended questions and problem solving. One staff member said, "I think there's a curiosity being ingrained into the instruction that helps kids develop their own thinking." A building administrator expressed a similar sentiment, saying, "We're teaching teachers how to articulate their purpose, and students how to articulate their learning."

Due to the school-wide emphasis on Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) strategies, all students in the school are now required to have binders. One staff member said, "I've seen students who did not care last year come to me frantically saying, 'Where's my binder?' They can't get into class without it." Another staff member felt the new school schedule has also contributed to increased rigor:

Last year, there was block scheduling. There were perks to that, but with seeing the kids on a daily basis, I think the rigor has increased. I can give homework with a greater expectation of it being turned in. I've seen other teachers increasing homework loads.

However, when asked about rigor, another staff member said frankly, "We are not there. There's a belief and there's a value in rigor, but there's a discrepancy between that belief and what it really looks like."

Special education students attend a resource room class in math and/or reading, depending on their Individual Education Plan (IEP), while still attending core classes with mainstream students. During these classes, special education students use the same curricula that general education students use in their intervention classes: Read 180 and Springboard for reading, and MTM Math.

Classroom observations in 2013 using the STAR Classroom Observation Protocol™ yielded the following scores on the five essential components (3s and 4s combined): Skills (59%), Knowledge (37%), Thinking (22%), Application (22%), and Relationships (63%). Overall alignment with Powerful Teaching and Learning is 47%. Scores in all areas decreased, and observers saw an increase in negative student behavior. These results are consistent with interviews and focus groups, suggesting that instruction is uneven across classrooms.

Effective School Leadership

Effective instructional and administrative leadership is required to implement change processes. Effective leaders are proactive and seek help that is needed. They also nurture an instructional program and school culture conducive to learning and professional growth. Effective leaders have different styles and roles. Teachers and other staff, including those in the district office, often have a leadership role.

Indicators	Rubric Score 2009	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
Effective School Leadership				
Attributes of Effective School Leaders	3	2	2	3
Capacity Building	2	2	2	2
Distributed Leadership	2	2	2	2

Attributes of effective school leaders. SMS has had significant changes in building administration during the SIG process. In the fall of 2011, Janet Gates-Cortez arrived at Stewart as the co-director of the school. This arrangement remained in place until approximately March when the first principal, John Ketler, left Stewart to continue to run the Tacoma School of the Arts (SOTA) and the Tacoma Science and Math Institute (SAMI). At that point, Ms. Gates-Cortez took over as the full-time principal of Stewart. In her first full school year as principal, she's focused on bringing structure to a school that has struggled with consistent leadership.

Most of the focus group respondents said they the new principal is an effective leader for change. Staff members often described her as calm and approachable. Others saw her as a strong instructional leader. One staff member said, "The one thing I appreciate about Janet is she knows good instruction. She believes in research. It's not just, 'Let's try this.' These kids really need good instruction. She knows it. She's pushing for it. She does it in a very warm way, but she does it in a firm way at times."

Another staff member said:

Now we're trying to bring the structure back, and the accountability . . . There are things you have to have in place, traditional or not, whether it's for staff or students. [In the past] some people may have felt like, 'This is great, I like this model.' Now it's, 'Oh, we have all these things we have to do! All these obligations!' But the reality is, that's what a true school looks like.

However, some staff members expressed concerns that this new focus on structure might eliminate the STREAM emphasis that makes Stewart unique. One staff member said, "I don't know if Janet can get us to a point where we can still stand out from the other middle schools and still raise our student test scores. We still have some staff who are stuck in their reality of what Mr. Ketler was trying to do when they were hired."

Capacity building. The school staff engages in formal, ongoing, and regularly scheduled collective professional learning opportunities. Teachers receive frequent support from the instructional coaches in the areas of math, literacy, and classroom management. They also have opportunities to learn from peers through the studio model. Most focus group respondents felt their professional development needs were being met.

Survey data suggest expectations for adult performance within SMS are not consistently high or communicated effectively. Only 36% of staff members surveyed agreed staff are held accountable for new behaviors and practices needed to achieve the preferred future, and only 38% agreed their principal (or supervisor) talks to them about their professional growth. Similarly, only 38% agreed the leadership team clearly communicates how behavior and practices will be different in the preferred future. However, 73% of staff members surveyed agreed they talk to their principal/supervisor about their progress on performance goals, and 88% agreed they actively participate in the process of their performance evaluation.

Focus group respondents expressed concerns that the building administration is not visible enough. One staff member said, "Janet is not as visible as we would like to see. We see her during walkthroughs, and she visits some classes, but we would like to see her on a more frequent basis, giving us feedback on our instruction." Another staff member said, "The administration seems to be stuck handling the discipline issues that keep coming to the office." The building administrators hoped the building's increased focus on school-wide discipline would free them for more frequent observations. One administrator said, "That's part of the reason we're focusing on classroom management, right now . . . The more kids are here, the less we're able to be in the classrooms." Survey data confirm low visibility of building administration. Only 45% of students surveyed agreed they see their principal all around the school, compared to 63% in 2012.

Only 46% of staff members surveyed agreed administrators intentionally recruit and retain a diverse and highly qualified staff, compared to 61% in 2012 and 56% in 2011.

Distributed leadership. In 2011, the former leadership team was replaced with a new team called the Site-Centered Decision-Making (SCDM) team. This consisted of the co-directors, coaches, a counselor, and teachers. This team met once a week and made many of the building level decisions. During the 2011 and 2012 assessments, many focus group respondents expressed concerns about a lack of transparency in the decision-making process and were frustrated by the lack of opportunity to have their voice heard. Additionally, the criteria for selecting teacher leaders was not clear and no formal expectations appeared to be in place for that designation. Survey results show this has not changed in 2013. Only 28% of staff members agreed a clear and collaborative decision-making process is used to select individuals for leadership roles in the building, compared to 50% in 2012. However, some focus group respondents felt there was more transparency and staff input into the decision-making process this year. One staff member said:

The decision making process has become a lot more transparent. We used to refer to the leadership team as the vortex room. It just existed on its own. They didn't think about the students, the teachers, the community, the data . . . Decisions would come out of nowhere.

Another staff member agreed, saying, "This year, ideas are coming from everyone. We discuss it. We see how it goes. We reflect on it." In 2013, 66% of the staff members surveyed agreed the building leadership team listens to their concerns, compared to 67% in 2012 who agreed administrators consider various viewpoints and obtain a variety of perspectives when making decisions, and 50% in 2011.

Although staff input into the decision-making process has improved, researchers found limited student and family input into school-wide decisions. A student and a parent participate on the SCDM, and one staff member said, "They've been very active partners." Similarly, one community member said:

I definitely think they do a good job of involving everyone. I sat in on the construction meeting, and . . . there was someone [invited to come] for everything. There was a school board member, a parent, someone in one of the groups the kids were involved in, different facets of people who had some kind of connection to Stewart. I can definitely tell they try to involve everyone. I think one thing they do very well is reach out to the community.

However, survey data reveal only 53% of students agree they can make decisions that affect them at their school (compared to 72% in 2012), and only 41% of family members agreed school staff asks for their ideas and suggestions on important decisions (consistent with 40% in 2012). This suggests that, while a few selected students or parents may have input into the decision-making process, the majority of parents and students do not.

High Levels of Collaboration and Communication

There is strong teamwork across all grades and with other staff. Everybody is involved and connected to each other, including parents and members of the community to identify problems and work on solutions.

Indicators	Rubric Score 2009	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
High Levels of Collaboration and Communication				
Collaboration	2	3	3	3
Communication	3	2	3	3

Collaboration. At the start of the 2010-2011 school year, the existing schedule changed and provided an opportunity to offer a two-hour block on Friday mornings for professional development in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Staff members appreciate the time and find it beneficial. However, focus group respondents reported this time often gets taken up with whole-staff announcements or trainings. One staff member said, "We've been having a lot of AVID trainings, which have really been beneficial, but 45 minutes of it is supposed to be individual planning time because that's part of our contract." Another staff member said, "Our collaboration time is a three-minute hall monitoring time when we sit outside and talk." A third staff member added, "Everybody wants to [collaborate]. That's a core value of everybody here. It's just trying to find those minutes to do it."

Some elective teachers have collaborated with core teachers to extend learning activities across classrooms. For example, a dance teacher has aligned choreography to help support the science standards, and a choir teacher has chosen songs that support social studies curriculum. "I look at curricula outside of mine to align what I'm teaching," one elective teacher explained.

Only 32% of staff members agreed teachers collaboratively plan lessons, and only 40% agreed the school meets regularly to monitor implementation of the school improvement plan. However, 62% of staff members agreed the school's staff collaborates to improve student learning.

Communication. In 2011-2012, the school made significant attempts to improve communication. Staff members described efforts to improve both internal and external communication. Longitudinal survey data suggest this effort has paid off. Eighty-four percent of staff members agreed the school communicates effectively with families and the community using a variety of methods (compared to 90% in 2012 and 69% in 2011). Of the family members surveyed, 76% agreed the school's staff communicates with them in a way that is convenient, 75% agreed their child's teachers respond promptly when they have a question or concern, and 64% the school provides opportunities to learn more about the school. All of the family scores were consistent with 2012 survey results. Student scores were markedly lower than the staff and family scores. Only 44% of students agreed their parents or guardians have

a good idea what goes on at school (compared to 63% in 2012) and 53% agreed their teachers talk to them about how they are doing in class (compared to 73% in 2012).

Survey and focus group data reveal limited access to translation services. Of the students surveyed, 38% agreed interpreters are available for them and their parents if needed (down from 45% in 2012).

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessments Aligned with State Standards

The planned and actual curriculums are aligned with the Essential Academic Learning Requirements and Grade level Expectations. Research-based teaching strategies and materials are used. Staff understands the role of classroom and state assessments, what the assessments measure, and how student work is evaluated.

Indicators	Rubric Score 2009	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
Curriculum, Assessments, and Instruction Aligned with State Standards				
Curriculum	2	2	3	3
Instruction	3	2	2	2
Assessment	2	3	3	3

Curriculum. As discussed in the High Standards and Focus section of this report, SMS is trending towards a renewed focus on core curriculum with the change in building administration. Along with this comes a new focus on the standards. One staff member explained:

We had to redefine innovation and purpose. It was a little loosey-goosey. Innovation wasn't about the standards. It was more about having the kids engaged and wanting to come to school, not that school is to get kids to a certain standard, and innovation is how you're going to get them there. It's been a big deal to get teachers to understand everything needs to be standards-driven, and you need to be super clear.

Stewart Middle School and the Tacoma School District will adopt the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) next year. According to focus group respondents, the language arts and math curricula at SMS are CCSS-aligned, but the staff has not had extensive training in CCSS, although the math and language arts teachers have received professional development on their respective curricula. The district is currently offering a book study on CCSS aimed at humanities teachers and has invited some staff members from SMS to participate.

Classroom observation and survey data reveal most teachers are posting learning objectives. Survey results indicate 87% of staff members agreed the school's programs are aligned with state learning standards, and 69% agreed the staff demonstrates a thorough understanding of the state learning standards.

Instruction. Several staff members believed the building's studio model was having a positive impact on instruction. One staff member said, "We are using a studio model in all areas except the electives. I think this model is an excellent process to help improve our instruction, because

you get to see a peer teaching a lesson using specific instructional strategies. The downside is lost time in our own classrooms. We have lots of subs in the building.” The staff has had professional development in research-based instructional strategies through the studio process, coaching, and department-specific training, such as Teacher Development Group (TDG) training for math instructors. However, some focus group respondents felt the staff had yet to translate this training into effective classroom practice. One staff member said,

They want to make instructional change as far as to become more effective teachers, but . . . I’m not sure if it’s resistance or a lack of time to put the planning in. I think they see the value, but what we see in the classroom is not reflective of what we see in TDG with best practices, what we talk about.

Building-wide, there is an increasing belief that effective instruction depends upon strong classroom management, and that middle school students in particular require a great deal of structure. During classroom observations, researchers noted student behavior kept a number of otherwise well-planned lessons from being successful. Some focus group respondents expressed a belief that an initial lack of structure also prohibited the project-based focus of the STEAM concept from fully succeeding at Stewart. One staff member said:

When [the SIG process] got started, there was a lot of frantic energy about innovation, integration, and trying to do project-based stuff, but no thought of how middle schoolers would react to that style . . . I think the expectations fell to the sidelines. But this year, we started with the expectations in place. At least the expectations are there. Now that we’ve got them under control, I’d like to try to get back to project-based learning now that we understand the management piece is essential.

As described earlier in this report, the Tacoma School District has adopted the 5D instructional model. According to a district representative, 5D has infused district-offered teacher development in math and reading. The district is planning to expand it into other areas. Focus group interviews revealed conversations about powerful teaching and learning are taking place at SMS, although they are often limited to within particular departments. When asked if the staff had a common vocabulary to talk about teaching and learning, one staff member replied, “Within [my department] I’d say we have a common language because we go through the studio process regularly. But I often have trouble talking across disciplines.”

STAR classroom observation data reflected an overall decrease from observations in 2012 and from the baseline observations in 2009. Researchers found students were constructing knowledge and/or manipulating information to build on prior learning, to discover new meaning, and/or to develop conceptual understanding, not merely recall, in 41% of classrooms observed, a decrease of 21 percentage-points from observations in 2012. Researchers observed student collaboration in 30% of the classrooms observed (a decrease of 20 percentage-points), and found evidence of differentiation in 44% of classrooms (an increase of three percentage-points). Survey data also reflected a decline in using some of these teaching strategies. Only

13% of staff members agree instruction is personalized to meet the needs of each student. Survey results indicate 36% of staff members agreed students are provided tasks that require higher-level thinking skills, compared to 84% of staff members who agreed instructional strategies emphasized higher-level thinking and problem-solving skills in 2012. Of the students surveyed, 54% agreed their classes challenge them to think and solve problems (compared to 68% in 2012), and 64% of students agreed their teachers teach them to think and solve problems (compared to 72% in 2012).

Assessment. The SMS staff continues to implement a range of formative and summative assessments, building their capacity and practice for using assessment data to inform instruction. Staff members reported more frequent progress monitoring this year, both formal and informal. Focus group respondents often mentioned an increased focus on Measure of Academic Progress [MAP] data, the Math Benchmark Analysis (MBA), and Scholastic Reading Inventory [SRI] results. "We're SRI testing more frequently," one staff member said. "If I'm wondering about a kid, I can access their SRI data. It's usually current." Another staff member agreed, saying, "[Students] take the SRI test and graph their progress to see how they're doing in terms of reading. We've started doing the same thing in terms of math." Other teachers reported intentionally monitoring student progress through formative assessments such as exit slips. The math department is currently focused on developing common assessments.

Of the staff surveyed, 69% agree the school uses assessments aligned to standards and instruction, and 60% agreed regular unit assessments are used to monitor student progress. Only 45% agreed common benchmark assessments are used to inform instruction. In 2012, for comparison, 79% of staff members agreed teachers use assessment methods that are ongoing and aligned with core content.

Frequent Monitoring of Learning and Teaching

A steady cycle of different assessments identify students who need help. More support and instructional time are provided, either during the school day or outside normal school hours, to students who need more help. Teaching is adjusted based on frequent monitoring of student progress and needs. Assessment results are used to focus and improve instructional programs.

Indicators	Rubric Score 2009	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
Frequent Monitoring of Teaching and Learning				
Supporting Students in Need	3	3	3	3

Supporting students in need. In 2011, SMS had shifted to a full inclusion model with an emphasis on differentiated instruction. Last year, staff members were struggling to differentiate for the widely varying ability levels in their classrooms, and staff and students expressed concerns that higher-achieving students were not being challenged. This year, the school re-introduced the resource room model. Special education students now attend a resource room class in math and/or reading (depending on their IEPs), while still attending core classes with mainstream students. For the most part, staff members expressed positive opinions about the change.

One staff member said, "We could pretend, but the reality is, there were things [special education students] were missing. This isn't the best fit, but it's a closer fit than the other, and it's a place to pull back and start again." Another staff member said, "It's not that the inclusion idea was bad. It's just that it wasn't supported properly. Teachers weren't trained, and kids weren't scheduled appropriately. It's sad we had to revert to this total pull-out. It could have been solved in a different way." Staff members said the Tacoma School District will be moving back to a full inclusion special education model within the next five years. Some focus group respondents expressed uncertainty about the change. Others suggested that SMS teachers will need more training in differentiated instruction in order to make the upcoming return to a full inclusion model more successful than SMS's last attempt.

In addition to supporting special education students, intervention classes are also available for general education students who struggle with math and reading. "One example of how we're trying to systematically support differentiation is the intervention classes," one staff member said. According to focus group respondents, these classes focus on pre-teaching concepts students will be studying in their regular classes. For instance, a math teacher explained:

We just moved out of equations in my general class, and we're moving on to graphing. But two weeks ago, I moved out of equations in my intervention class and started on graphing. I've been pre-teaching them. So next week, they'll already have the vocabulary. They'll have some kind of grasp on it.

The intervention classes also support English Language Learners (ELLs). Because Level One and Level Two ELLs attend a different middle school in the district, SMS's ELL population is primarily made up of Level Three students. These students have satisfactory English skills to function in the general community, but typically lack the academic language skills to be successful in class. They attend the READ 180 intervention classes to help strengthen their English skills.

Last year, SMS opened the Panther Center to help support students who needed additional help. However, focus group respondents reported the Panther Center quickly became a source of behavioral, rather than academic, support. One staff member explained, "The moment they opened the Panther Center, they closed ISS [in-school suspension] and all those kids were sent to us." This year, however, SMS has separated the ISS program from the Panther Center, freeing it for its initial purpose. Students can request to come to the Panther Center to get extra help with reading assignments, or teachers can send them there if they perceive a need for extra support. Some teachers use the Panther Center as a means of differentiating instruction for students with low reading levels, sending them there to work on alternative assignments with a tutor while the rest of the class works on something else.

Survey data indicate 41% of staff members agree data from classroom observations leads to meaningful change in instructional practice, 43% agree assessment data are used to identify student needs and appropriate instructional intervention, 35% agree they monitor the effectiveness of instructional interventions, 24% agree struggling students receive early intervention and remediation to acquire skills, and 47% agree students are encouraged to self-reflect and track progress towards goals. As mentioned in the previous section, only 13% of staff members agree instruction is personalized to meet the needs of each student.

Focused Professional Development

A strong emphasis is placed on training staff in areas of most need. Feedback from learning and teaching focused extensive and ongoing professional development. The support is also aligned with the school or district vision and objectives.

Indicators	Rubric Score 2009	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
Focused Professional Development				
Planning and Implementation	2	2	3	3
Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	2	2	3	3

Planning and implementation. When asked how SMS determined the professional development needs of its staff, one staff member said, "I think a lot of what we've done this year was based on the mission and our common agreements. You look at compassionate schools. We've done a lot of work on building relationships with the kids, building classroom strategies, relationships, and management." Fifty percent of staff members surveyed agreed appropriate data are used to guide building-directed professional development. Although there still does not seem to be a formal process in place to guide professional development planning, focus group data indicate the staff does have some input into it.

When asked about the quality of their professional development, staff members typically reacted positively. "Our PD lately has been pretty good," one staff member said. A few staff members expressed concerns that some trainings, such as the recent STEM conferences a group of staff members attended, were not offered to the entire staff. "The trainings we went to are really good, but not everyone got a chance to go to those," one staff member said. "That's the most maddening thing of everything that's happened. We're claiming to be a STEM school, a few of us have gone to formal STEM training. Somehow we got a state award out of it, and we're not really a STEM school in a systematic way."

Curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The staff has received professional development in the use of instructional materials and classroom-based assessments. The language arts staff has received training on the new Springboard curriculum. This year, staff members have also had training in AVID strategies, classroom management, and culturally responsive teaching. As mentioned earlier, staff members regularly receive coaching in instruction and classroom management from the building coaches and from peers through the studio model. In addition, teams have attended trainings in STEM and TDG. A few focus group respondents were especially enthusiastic about their recent professional development in culturally responsive teaching, which was a follow-up to an earlier training. One staff member said, "It was powerful and effective. They gave us a lot of tools . . . It's been nice to have something more focused around the needs of our students, and how we can meet those needs in ways that will be more meaningful and culturally responsive."

Survey data indicate 47% of staff members agree teachers engage in classroom-based professional development activities (e.g. Peer coaching) that focus on improving instruction; 84% of staff members agree teachers engage in professional development activities to learn and apply new skills and strategies; 71% agree they have opportunities to learn effective teaching strategies for the diversity represented in the school; and 65% agree they are provided training to meet the needs of a diverse student population in the school.

Supportive Learning Environment

The school has a safe, civil, healthy, and intellectually stimulating learning environment. Students feel respected and connected with the staff and are engaged in learning. Instruction is personalized and small learning environments increase student contact with teachers.

Indicators	Rubric Score 2009	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
Supportive Learning Environment				
Safe and Orderly Environment	3	2	2	2
Building Relationships	3	2	3	2
Personalized Learning for All Students	3	2	2	3

Safe and orderly environment. Student behavior has been an ongoing concern for SMS. In 2010-2011, Stewart Middle School had no school-wide classroom management or discipline practice in place and behavioral issues were frequent throughout classrooms during observations conducted by researchers. Researchers continued to observe behavioral issues during the 2013 assessment.

Several staff members attributed the behavioral issues to an influx of first-year teachers in 2010. One staff member said, "We made this transition with a lot of new people, and [the discipline system] went out the door. We lost control about four years ago, and it's been hard ever since." Another staff member agreed, saying, "The first year and a half [under the former administration] set a tone for the students to do anything they wanted to. Everything was *laissez faire*. Now we are paying the price as we try to tighten things down."

As discussed earlier in this report, the staff is focused on gaining control of student behavior this year. One staff member said, "I feel that everyone is working towards providing a safe, positive environment. I think that's number one in importance to our staff here as well as the administration." This year, the staff has had professional development in classroom management, much of it through one of the building coaches, who is emphasizing strong routines and relationships and a focus on positive behavior. One staff member said:

We've been through a lot of trainings that improve classroom management . . . You have to set up your classroom culture in the beginning of the year. I think a lot of teachers are better at that. For the first time in three years, we've had school-wide rules. Now that management seems to be getting a little more under control, it allows for more work and engagement to take place because less time has been spent on nonsense.

At the beginning of second semester, SMS adopted the Safe and Civil Schools model, and teachers are now deliberately teaching students how to behave in class through the Conversation Help Activity Movement Participation Success (CHAMPS) tool. As one student described, "We just started honor levels. You start at Level One, but if you have infractions you get a blue slip, which knocks you down. Every two weeks you get a fresh start." Some staff members feel this new system is starting to have an impact on student behavior. One staff member said, "We've put in place a lot more systems of expectations so students know what things look like, sound like, in the locker room, in the hallway. I think behavior performance has been impacted. I'd like to say it's improved." Another staff member agreed behavior had improved this year, explaining, "We had a fight last week. I thought about it, and realized it was the first fight we had in quite a while. Last year, it was a more commonplace issue."

However, efforts to establish school-wide discipline are still in the initial stages. Of the staff surveyed, only 30% agreed the school is orderly and supports learning, and only 31% agreed staff members enforce consistent behavior expectations and consequences in their classrooms. This is a slight decrease from previous results, in which 36% and 44% in 2012, respectively, agreed rules for student behavior are consistently enforced by school staff. Multiple focus group respondents, both staff and students, agreed student discipline varied widely from classroom to classroom. "Some teachers have structure and hold kids accountable, and some teachers are too nice and don't follow the rules," one student said. Another staff member noted, "The kids have too much time, and not enough controlled time. They're accelerating the high maintenance that this structure requires. Plumbers are finding apples and t-shirts in the pipes."

Staff complaints about the condition of SMS's 88-year-old building have been consistent throughout the SIG process. As mentioned earlier in this report, the school successfully passed a bond for a new building at the current site. The new building will preserve the historically significant front of the current school. Construction will begin next year, and is estimated to be finished in 2017.

Building relationships. The percentile score for Indicator 15 of the STAR Observation Protocol has fluctuated during each year of observations, from a high of 92% in 2012 to a low of 56% in 2011. In 2013, researchers observed 70% of classrooms reflected a supportive learning environment. Much of this fluctuation can likely be explained by staff turnover. However, as in the 2012 assessment, researchers found evidence the staff was working to build more positive relationships within the building. The classroom management coach places a strong emphasis on relationship building. Staff members are also trying to celebrate staff and student achievements through Positive Paws. One staff member said, "Those little celebrations are so important. I'm seeing it more and more — never enough, but I'm seeing it grow."

Survey results indicate 59% of staff members agree students believe adults in the building genuinely care about them, while 66% agree the staff value and respect all students. Of the students surveyed, 51% agree adults who work at the school care about all students, not just a few. Only 49% of students agree they trust their teachers and only 55% agree adults in the

school show respect to them. These results are generally lower than previous results on similar items. For example, in 2012, 92% of staff members agreed they show they care about all students; and 87 agreed they respect the cultural heritage of all students.

Personalized learning for all students. During the 2012 assessment, school leadership acknowledged general education teachers were struggling to successfully differentiate instruction for the special education students integrated into their classes. In 2010-2011, SMS eliminated all special education classes and moved to a full inclusion model, with insufficient training and support to help classroom teachers adjust to the change, according to teachers. In 2012, school leadership outlined a plan to blend general education classes with special education classes, and to establish intervention classes for students struggling with math and reading. As described earlier in this report, the school has followed this plan. This year SMS re-established a resource room after having switched to a full inclusion model in 2010-2011. In addition, the Panther Center is open for students who need additional support during the school day.

High Level of Family and Community Involvement

There is a sense that all have a responsibility to educate students, not just the teachers and staff in schools. Families, as well as businesses, social service agencies, and community colleges/universities all play a vital role in this effort.

Indicators	Rubric Score 2009	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
High Levels of Family and Community Involvement				
Family Communication	3	3	3	3
Family and Community Partnerships	3	3	3	3

Family communication. Staff members and parents participating in focus groups reported that the school communicates with families via report cards, telephone calls, e-mails, newsletters, teacher websites, and an automated phone system. A majority (72%) of the family members surveyed agree the school staff keeps them informed about school activities and events (up five percentage-points from 2012). One parent said, "I see the school seems to be more welcoming to the community. Before, there were no people out there trying to pull you in. I feel in the last three years you see that. Whether you want to be or not, you feel like you're pulled into the [school] community."

The vast majority (95%) of family members surveyed agreed they feel welcome at the school (up 13 percentage-points from 2012). However, only 46% of the students surveyed agreed their families felt welcome at school. It's notable that 401 students completed surveys in 2013, compared to only 40 family members. Survey data also indicate 50% of staff members agree the school encourages parent involvement, while 41% of students surveyed agree there are ways for their families to participate at school. Only 30% of staff members agree teachers effectively communicate student progress to parents; similarly, only 36% of students agree their teachers talk to their families about how they are doing in school.

Family and community partnerships. SMS continues to have strong relationships with several community organizations. Communities That Care (CTC), a group sponsored by the organization Safe Streets, began meeting at SMS last year, and is involved in determining evidence-based strategies to make a difference for youth in the community. "[The principal] comes to every single Community That Cares meeting, and has been very supportive in showing that the school wants CTC in her building," said one CTC member. The Girl Scouts of America offers a program called Girl Talk during both lunches to give girls a safe space to explore their problems and look for solutions to them. The Male Improvement Program (MIP) offers mentoring to at-risk male students. Although MIP is primarily aimed at young men of color, it is open to all boys in the school. MIP mentors students afterschool and on weekends as well as during school hours. Americorps hosts an afterschool mentoring program called PAWS,

which seeks to tie youth-selected activities and interests into academics. For example, two Americorps volunteers run Playlist Club afterschool, where students read a chapter from a book, then create a playlist of songs that relate to their reading. SMS also houses Olive Crest, a non-profit organization with the goal of providing help for students, families, and the community in improving their family structure. They offer a preventative model to help families who are under the watch of Child Protective Services (CPS). Olive Crest attempts to help parents provide a better environment for their children before CPS removes the children from their home. Although there is not currently an active Parent Teacher Association (PTA) at SMS, one of the parents interviewed reported the school is trying to start one.

Survey data reveals the school still has work to do in building family and community partnerships. Only 32% of staff members agree community organizations and/or family volunteers work regularly in classrooms and in the school (down 19 percentage-points from last year). Family survey results show 54% of family members agree the school works with community organizations to support children, 50% agree the school helps to connect families with community resources, and 55% agree community volunteers work regularly with the school. However, the partnerships currently in place offer strong academic and emotional support for SMS students, and all of the parents and community members interviewed spoke highly of the school's efforts to build partnerships within the community. One parent said, "I see [the principal] out at a lot of community events. She really could stay at Stewart, but she gets out at community events, and that says a lot."

Summary and Recommendations

Tacoma Public Schools and Stewart Middle School chose to implement the Turnaround Model. Over the past three years, SMS has made substantial changes and improvements; however, turnaround efforts have been inconsistent, largely due to significant changes in building leadership and policy. This is the first full year SMS has been under the leadership of the new principal. Generally, staff members believe their new principal is an effective leader for change, but feel leadership issues throughout the SIG process hindered their improvement efforts. Several staff members expressed regret that grant funding is ending, with few sustainable changes in place as a result of the SIG process. Much of the SIG funding was dedicated to hiring elective teachers to support the transition to a STEAM school. Now, due to the loss of SIG funding and a decrease in projected enrollment for the 2013-2014 school year, several of those positions are in danger of being cut. Multiple staff members expressed fear that SMS would become a more traditional middle school as course offerings diminished due to the expected decrease in staffing. Others expressed the belief that SMS was only now beginning the process of implementing the structure and behavioral expectations necessary to successfully implement the STREAM model with middle school students.

The current assessment of progress resulted in improved rubric alignment with the Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools compared to last year. In 2011, most scores fell in the "Initial, beginning, developing" stage. This year, as in 2012, there is a split in scores between the "Initial, beginning, developing" stage and the "leads to effective implementation" stage. Scores for the individual rubrics shifted slightly this year with one category in the Effective School Leadership section of the rubric and one under the Supportive Learning Environments section moving from the "initial, beginning, and developing" stage to the "leads to effective implementation" stage. However, another category under the Supportive Learning Environment section of the rubric dropped from "leads to effective implementation" to the "initial, beginning, and developing," stage, primarily due to low survey data.

Over the past two years, as the district and school have begun to implement the Turnaround model, school and district staff members have taken measures to address the recommendations made in our initial assessment. Progress toward these critical areas is noted below, as well as further recommendations that align with the *Student and School Success Principle Indicators*, which are part of Indistar.

- **Develop a new competency model.** As noted earlier in this report, the Tacoma School District has committed to the 5 Dimensions of Teaching and Learning (5D) of the Center for Educational Leadership, infusing 5D teacher development initially into math and language arts and then into other content areas. The district and school should continue to provide support around this tool. This aligns to *Student and School Success Principle 2: Staff evaluation and professional development*, especially IG04 (*The school*

communicates clear goals and measures for employees' performance that reflect the established evaluation system and provide targeted training or assistance for an employee receiving an unsatisfactory evaluation or warning.) and IG06 (The principal regularly evaluates a range of teacher skills and knowledge, using a variety of valid and reliable tools.).

- **Conduct an action planning process to identify a mission and vision statement, specific goals, and strategies for school improvement.** In our initial assessment, we recommended the creation of a clear and shared mission. We also recommended this vision should then be shared with all stakeholders to focus skills and energy and to drive decision-making and resource allocation. In 2012, little progress had been made in this area. Following our 2012 assessment, the SCDM drafted a new mission and vision statement, and brought it to the whole staff for revision. The staff voted to approve the revised mission and vision statements in the 2012-2013 school year. Moving forward, the staff needs to focus on making the new mission and vision statements highly visible for all stakeholders. At the time of this report, the mission and vision statements were not apparent on the school's website. This recommendation aligns to *Student and School Success Principle 7: Family and community engagement – Goals and Roles*, especially key indicator IVA02 (*The school's key documents [Parent Involvement Policy, Mission Statement, Compact, Homework Guidelines, and Classroom Visit Procedures] are annually distributed and frequently communicated to teachers, school personnel, parents [families] and students.*).
- **Improve school leadership structures.** In 2011, a concern expressed by some staff members was that there was not a strong climate of support and respect for staff members to share their work, concerns, and suggestions with school leadership. Some staff members reported feeling uncomfortable talking to administration openly about their concerns and reported that their ideas do not always seem to be heard or considered. The change in leadership that occurred in the spring of 2012 has brought significant improvement to these issues. A site-based decision team was formed, with representatives from every department. Several focus group respondents felt the staff had more input into the decision making process, although survey data shows the majority of parents and students still lack buy-in when it comes to school-wide decisions. Building upon the changes, we recommend strengthening and formalizing the leadership structure and clarifying decision-making processes. This recommendation aligns with *Student and School Success Principle 1: Strong leadership – Team structure*, especially key indicator ID08 (*A Leadership Team consisting of the principal, teachers who lead the Instructional Teams, and other key professional staff meets regularly [twice a month or more for an hour each meeting].*) and *Student and School Success Principle 7: Family and community engagement – Goals and Roles*, especially key indicator IVA01 (*Parent [Family] representatives advise the School Leadership Team on matters related to family-school relations.*).

- **Provide ongoing professional development and coaching for instructional leaders and classroom teachers in effective classroom practices.** As described in the High Standards and Expectations and the Focused Professional Development sections of this report, the SMS staff has received a great deal of training around effective classroom practices, much of it led by the building’s coaches. In 2011-2012, we recommended the adoption of a defined instructional model to provide the necessary direction to refine the professional development and coaching efforts in the building. The district’s adoption of the 5-D model has helped to bridge this gap, at least within departments. Moving forward, the staff should work on developing cross-curricular conversations around instructional research and strategies to help develop a common vocabulary with which to talk about teaching and learning within the building. This recommendation aligns with *Student and School Success Principle 2: Staff evaluation and professional development – Professional development*, especially key indicator IF07 (*Professional development of individual teachers includes an emphasis on indicators of effective teaching.*)

Appendix A

Scoring of the conditions under each model as **"In Place"** or **"Able to Put in Place"** is based on:

- (1) The condition for the model does not currently exist and essential pieces for implementing the condition do not exist (e.g., policies, procedures, collective bargaining language, and programs or processes are not in place). This scoring level does not mean that the condition cannot be implemented; but rather that implementation will be more demanding, require more extensive engagement of all parties, and require greater external support and assistance.
- (2) Essential pieces to implement the condition exist (e.g., no significant barriers are contained in the current collective bargaining agreement; existing programs lend themselves to adaption). The condition can be implemented at an acceptable level with some support and assistance.
- (3) The condition is currently in place at an acceptable level.
- (4) The condition is currently in place at a high level and could be considered as an exemplar.

The ratings in the table below come from an analysis of district personnel ratings combined with data collected by The BERC Group.

X" Required "O" Permissible

Actions	Turn Around	Transform	Rubric 2009	Rubric 2011	Rubric 2012	Rubric 2013	Comment
Teachers and Leaders							
Replace the principal.	X	X(O)	3	4	4	4	SMS replaced the principal in accordance with grant stipulations and application.
Use locally adopted competencies to measure effectiveness of staff who can work in a turnaround environment; use to screen existing and select new staff.	X		3	4	4	4	According to district personnel, locally adopted competencies are used to evaluate and select staff candidates per the MOU for SIG. Public Impact competencies are used with SIG schools
Screen all existing staff, rehiring no more than 50% of the school staff.	X	O	3	4	4	4	Accomplished in accordance with grant stipulations and application.
Implement such strategies as financial incentives and career ladders for recruiting, placing, and retaining effective teachers.	X	X	2	2	2	3	According to district, there are leadership opportunities for recruiting and placing effective teachers and MOU does not allow displaced teachers.
Implement rigorous, transparent, and equitable evaluation systems for teachers and principals which are developed with staff and use student growth as a significant factor.	X	X	2	2	3	3	Early implementation phase. According to district, AWSP model used in SIG for principal, principal rater-reliability trained in 5D model, Standard 7 for student growth negotiated.

Teachers and Leaders (Cont.)	Turn Aroun d	Trans Form	Rubri c 2009	Rubri c 2011	Rubric 2012	Rubric 2013	Comment
Identify and reward school leaders who have increased student achievement and graduation rates. Identify and reward school leaders who have increased student achievement and graduation rates; Identify and remove school leaders and teachers who, after ample opportunities to improve professional practice have not done so.	0	X	2	2	2	2	There are no inhibitors in the CBA to effective accountability or to rewards for student achievement. The intent is to use "building based" gains as the means of assessment. District indicates school leaders are identified and given increased autonomy as indicated by increases in student achievement data.
Provide additional incentives to attract and retain staff with skills necessary to meet the needs of the students (e.g., bonus to a cohort of high-performing teachers placed in a low-achieving school.	0	0		2	2	2	Teachers are being paid to participate in additional training and there is compensation for the extended day. There are no formal bonuses.
Ensure school is not required to accept a teacher without mutual consent of the teacher and principal regardless of teacher's seniority.	0	0	3	4	4	4	Both principal and teacher can opt out of teacher placement. MOU protects this autonomy.

Instructional and Support Strategies	Turn Around	Trans Form	Rubric 2009	Rubric 2011	Rubric 2012	Rubric 2013	Comment
Use data to select and implement an instructional program that is research-based and vertically aligned to each grade and state standards.	X	X		2	3	4	District indicates curriculum adoptions for math and literacy are research-based and vertically aligned. Recently adopted humanities curriculum as well.
Provide staff ongoing, high quality, job-embedded professional development aligned with the school's comprehensive instructional program and designed with school staff.	X	X	2	2	3	3	Professional development is school directed and much of it is delivered by coaches. District provides training in key programs for middle schools. Some areas not covered by school or district.
Ensure continuous use of data (e.g., formative, interim, and summative assignments) to inform and differentiate instruction to meet the academic needs of individual students.	X	X		2	3	3	Data Dashboard is developed and available for all schools. Staff members are making progress in this area, but full implementation and application are still under development.
Institute a system for measuring changes in instructional practices resulting from professional development.	0	0	1	1	3	3	Using the CEL/UW learning walks model.
Conduct periodic reviews to ensure the curriculum is implemented with fidelity, having intended impact on student	0	0	2	2	3	3	District indicates middle school director visits frequently to review progress.

achievement, and modified if ineffective.							
Implement a school-wide response to intervention model.	0	0	2	1	2	3	District indicates schools address through advisory and intervention (LAP).
Provide additional supports and professional development to teachers to support students with disabilities and limited English proficient students.	0	0		2	2	2	Some elements in place. Special education staff are involved in math/literacy adoptions.

Instructional and Support Strategies (cont.)	Turn Around	Trans Form	Rubric 2009	Rubric 2011	Rubric 2012	Rubric 2013	Comment
Use and integrate technology-based supports and interventions as part of the instructional program.	0	0		3	3	3	The staff has access to some technology and technology training and integration has increased. District indicates computer access is included as part of the curriculum adoption.
Secondary Schools: Increase graduation rates through strategies such as credit recovery programs, smaller learning communities, etc.	0	0		2	3	3	Personalized student learning, enrichment activities, transition activities, and college awareness activities support individualized learning and connection to adults and school.
Secondary Schools: Increase rigor in coursework, offer opportunities for advanced courses, and provide supports designed to ensure low-achieving students can take advantage of these programs and coursework.	0	0	2	2	2	2	Teachers are working to increase rigor with specific academic programs and standards-based grading.
Secondary Schools: Improve student transition from middle to high school.	0	0		2	2	2	AVID strategies are becoming more widespread through the building to help support the transition to high school and college.
Secondary Schools: Establish early warning systems.	0	0	3	3	3	3	District indicates Dashboard/Charge available to schools. At school level, not yet fully systematized.

Learning Time and Support	Turn Around	Transform	Rubric 2009	Rubric 2011	Rubric 2012	Rubric 2013	Comment
Establish schedules and strategies that provide increased learning time. Increased learning time includes longer school day, week, or year to increase total number of school hours.	X	X	2	2	2	2	Basic elements in place.
Provide appropriate social-emotional and community-oriented services and support for students.	X	0	3	3	3	3	There are measures in place to support students in need of additional socio-emotional services.
Provide ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement.	0	X	3	3	3	3	School leadership continues to work in this area. Community partnerships are strong, but family partnerships are still limited.
Extend or restructure the school day to add time for such strategies as advisories to build relationships.	0	0		2	2	2	A mentor class was added in 2010-2011, which has replaced the previous advisory class.
Implement approaches to improve school climate and discipline.	0	0	2	2	2	2	The school adopted the Safe and Civil Schools model for school-wide discipline this year, but has yet to implement it fully and effectively.
Expand program to offer pre-kindergarten or full day kindergarten.	0	0					NA

Governance	Turn Around	Transform	Rubric 2009	Rubric 2011	Rubric 2012	Rubric 2013	Comment
Adopt a new governance structure to address turnaround schools; district may hire a chief turnaround officer to report directly to the superintendent.	X	O	2	3	4	4	District indicates MS director was hired to oversee SIG schools and superintendent is actively involved.
Grant sufficient operational flexibility (e.g., staffing, calendar, budget) to implement fully a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student achievement and increase high school graduation rates.	X Principal	X School	2	3	4	4	The MERIT schools have used flexibility in operations such as staffing, schedules, and calendar. District has increased access to key district resources and personnel.
Ensure school receives intensive ongoing support from district, state, or external partners.	O	X	3	3	4	4	District indicates this is in place and notes recognition of some SIG schools from other entities including OSPI.
Allow the school to be run under a new governance agreement, such as a turnaround division within the district or state.	O	O			4	4	District indicates innovative status allows schools to operate under increased autonomy.
Implement a per-pupil school based budget formula that is weighted based on student needs.	O	O			2	2	In Year 2, district indicated this is a focus of Year 3.

Appendix B

Table 2: Staff Survey Demographics

Participant Demographics: Staff

	2011	2012
<i>Gender</i>		
<i>Male</i>	33.3%(n=7)	28.9%(n=11)
<i>Female</i>	66.7%(n=14)	71.1%(n=27)
<i>Race</i>		
<i>American Indian/Alaskan Native</i>		
<i>Asian</i>	5.0%(n=1)	5.1%(n=2)
<i>Black African American</i>		5.1%(n=2)
<i>White</i>	70.0%(n=14)	74.4%(n=29)
<i>Hispanic/Latino/a</i>		2.6%(n=1)
<i>Pacific Islander</i>		
<i>Declined to identify</i>	25.0%(n=5)	12.8%(n=5)
<i>Staff Role</i>		
<i>Certificated Staff</i>	95.2%(n=20)	87.2%(n=34)
<i>Classified Staff</i>		7.7%(n=3)
<i>Administrator</i>	4.8%(n=1)	5.1%(n=2)
<i>Years Teaching at this School</i>		
<i>1st year</i>	85.0%(n=17)	23.7%(n=9)
<i>2nd or 3rd year</i>		71.1%(n=27)
<i>4th or 5th year</i>	5.0%(n=1)	
<i>6th-9th year</i>	5.0%(n=1)	2.6%(n=1)
<i>10th year or more</i>	5.0%(n=1)	2.6%(n=1)
<i>Total years Teaching</i>		
<i>1st year</i>	23.8%(n=5)	7.9%(n=3)
<i>2nd or 3rd year</i>	9.5%(n=2)	47.4%(n=18)
<i>4th or 5th year</i>	23.8%(n=5)	13.2%(n=5)
<i>6th-9th year</i>		2.6%(n=1)
<i>10th year or more</i>	42.9%(n=9)	28.9%(n=11)
<i>National Board Certified</i>		
<i>Yes</i>	5.3%(n=1)	7.7%(n=3)
<i>No</i>	94.7%(n=18)	92.3%(n=36)

**Participant Demographics: Staff
(Continued)**

	2013
<i>Gender</i>	
Male	21.6% (n=8)
Female	70.3% (n=26)
<i>Subject Area</i>	
Missing	10.8% (n=4)
Other	21.6% (n=8)
Electives	13.5% (n=5)
LA/Social Studies	18.9% (n=7)
Math/Science	35.1% (n=13)
<i>Total number of years teaching</i>	
More than 11	37.8% (n=14)
8-11 years	8.1% (n=3)
4-7 years	18.9% (n=7)
1-3 years	27% (n=10)
Less than a year	5.4% (n=2)
Missing	2.7% (n=1)
<i>Years Teaching at this School</i>	
More than 11	
8-11 years	
4-7 years	5.4% (n=2)
1-3 years	62.2% (n=23)
Less than a year	32.4% (n=12)
<i>Position</i>	
Administrator	5.4% (n=2)
Paraprofessional or Instructional Aid	2.7% (n=1)
Classified Support Staff	5.4% (n=2)
Certificated Support Staff	18.9% (n=7)
Certificated Staff	67.6% (n=25)

Table 3: Student Survey Demographics

Participant Demographics: Student

	2012	2013
<i>Gender</i>		
<i>Male</i>	47.4%(n=18)	52.9% (n=202)
<i>Female</i>	52.6%(n=20)	47.1% (n=180)
<i>Race</i>		
<i>American Indian/Alaska Native</i>		3% (n=12)
<i>Asian</i>	10%(n=4)	7.5% (n=30)
<i>Black/African American</i>	17.5%(n=7)	16.2% (n=65)
<i>Hispanic/Latino(a)</i>	7.5%(n=3)	12.2% (n=49)
<i>White</i>	62.5%(n=25)	49.4% (n=198)
<i>Pacific Islander</i>		2.7% (n=11)
<i>Declined</i>	2.5%(n=1)	9% (n=36)

Table 4: Family Survey Demographics**Participant Demographics: Parents**

	2012	2013
<i>Race</i>		
<i>American Indian/ Alaska Native</i>	4% (n=2)	5% (n=2)
<i>Asian</i>	6% (n=3)	7.5% (n=3)
<i>Black/African American</i>	16% (n=8)	15% (n=6)
<i>White</i>	66% (n=33)	67.5% (n=27)
<i>Hispanic/Latino/a</i>	4% (n=2)	5% (n=2)
<i>Decline to Identify</i>	4% (n=2)	
<i>Relationship to Student</i>		
<i>Mother</i>	76% (n=38)	60% (n=24)
<i>Father</i>	18% (n=9)	27.5% (n=11)
<i>Sibling</i>		5% (n=2)
<i>Grandparent</i>		7.5% (n=3)
<i>Legal guardian or Designee</i>	2% (n=1)	
<i>Other caregiver</i>	4% (n=2)	
<i>Free or Reduced Lunch?</i>		
<i>Yes</i>	64% (n=32)	53.8% (n=21)
<i>No</i>	36% (n=18)	46.2% (n=18)
<i>English is the Primary Language</i>		
<i>Yes</i>	94% (n=47)	92.5% (n=37)
<i>No</i>	6% (n=3)	7.5% (n=3)
<i>School Provides Interpretor Services when Needed</i>		
<i>Yes</i>		
<i>No</i>	8.2% (n=4)	
<i>Not Applicable</i>	91.8% (n=45)	
<i>The school provides information in my own language</i>		
<i>Yes</i>	95.8% (n=46)	
<i>No</i>	4.2% (n=2)	
<i>Not Applicable</i>		

Clear and Shared Focus

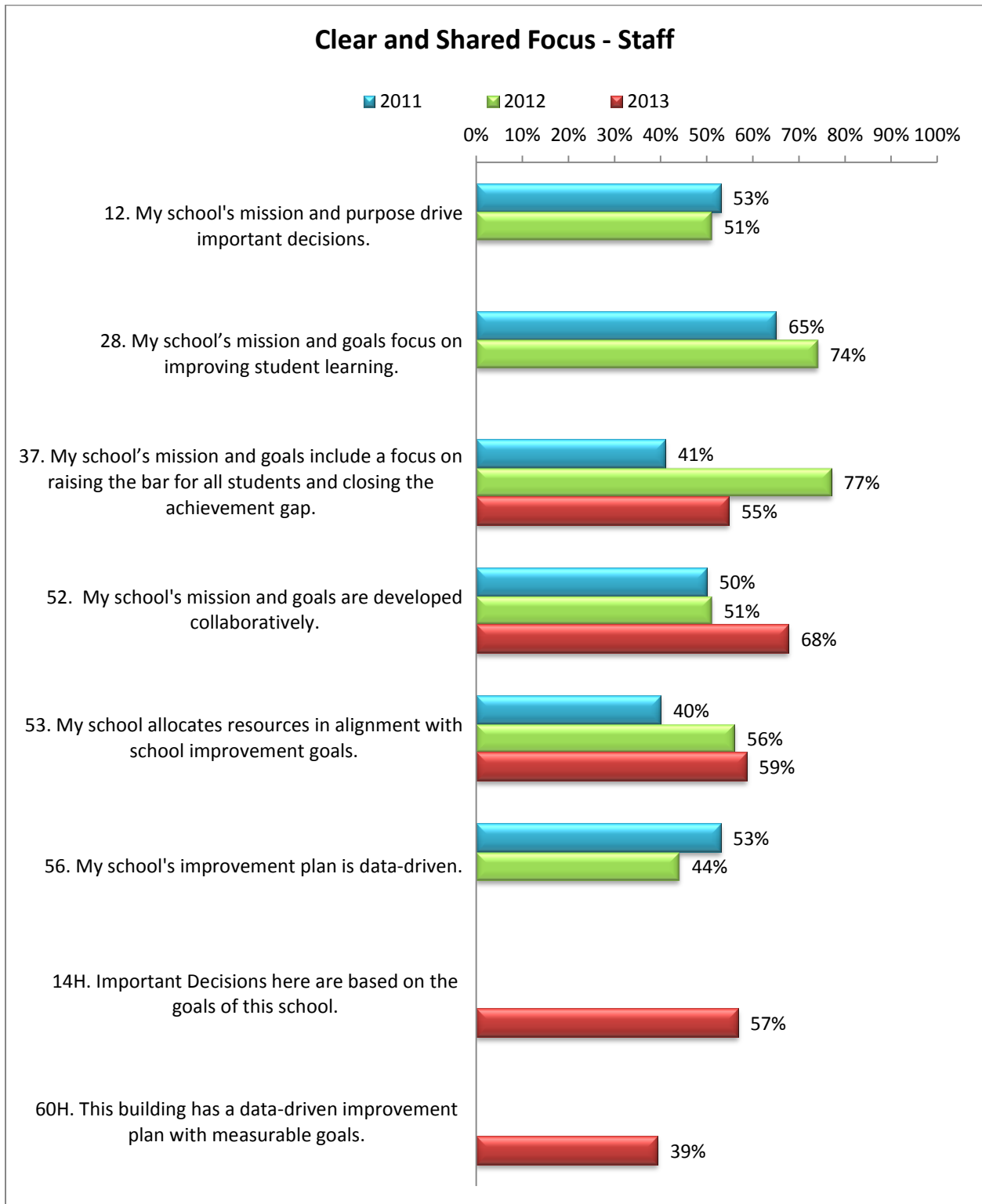


Figure 4: Staff Survey Results – Clear and Shared Focus

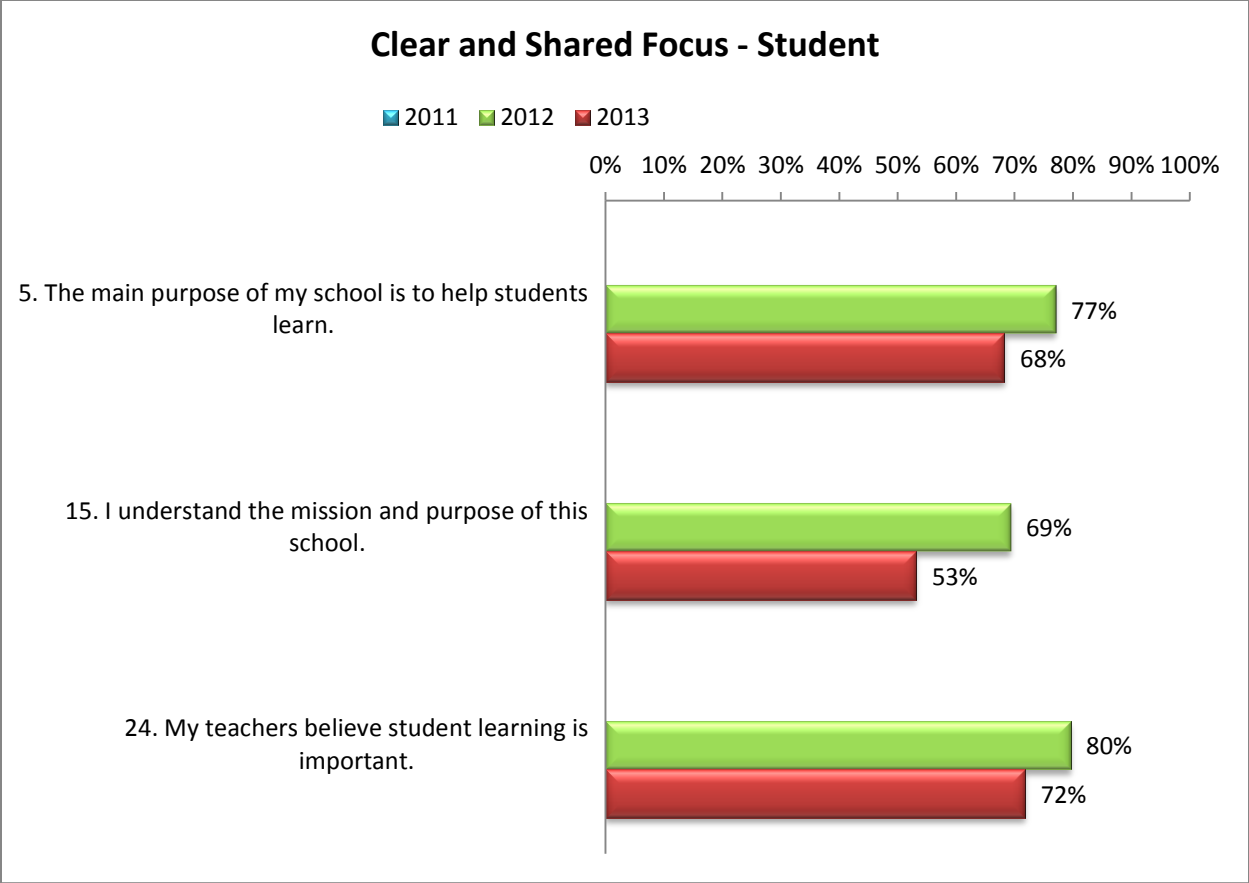


Figure 5: Student Survey Results - Clear and Shared Focus

Clear and Shared Focus - Family

■ 2011 ■ 2012 ■ 2013

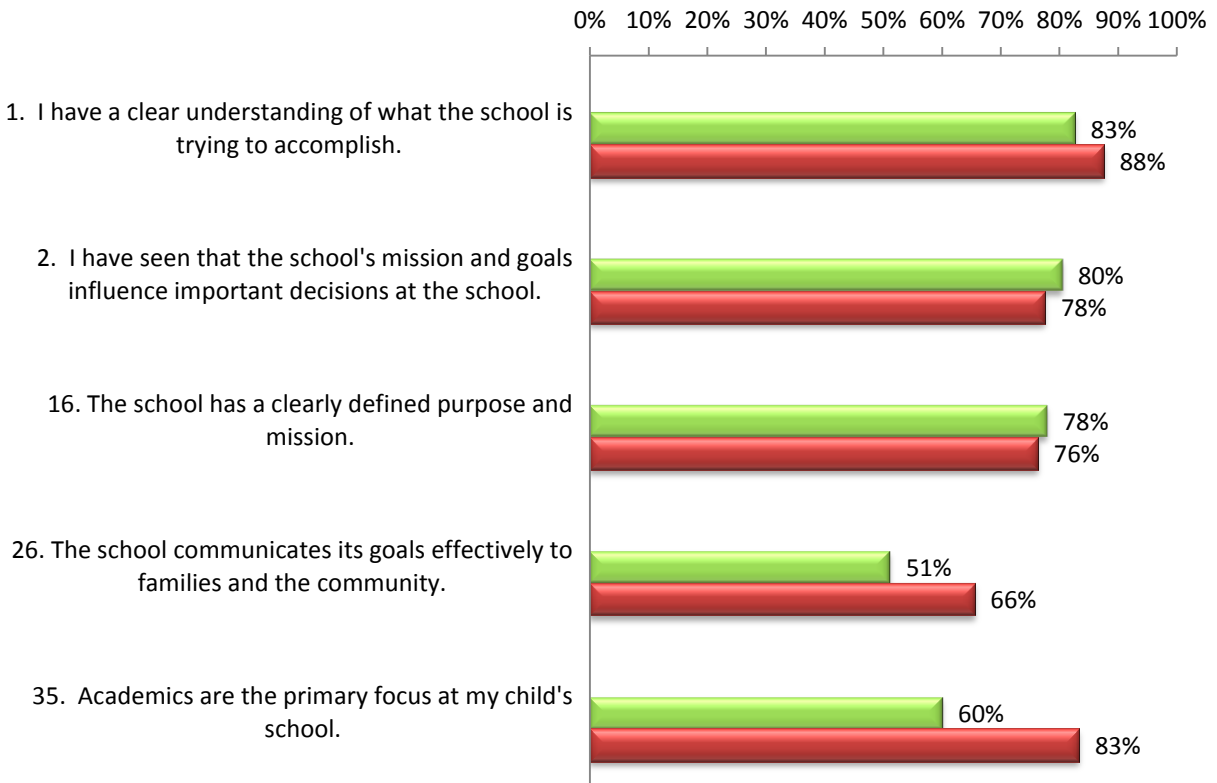


Figure 6: Family Survey Results - Clear and Shared Focus

High Standards and Expectations

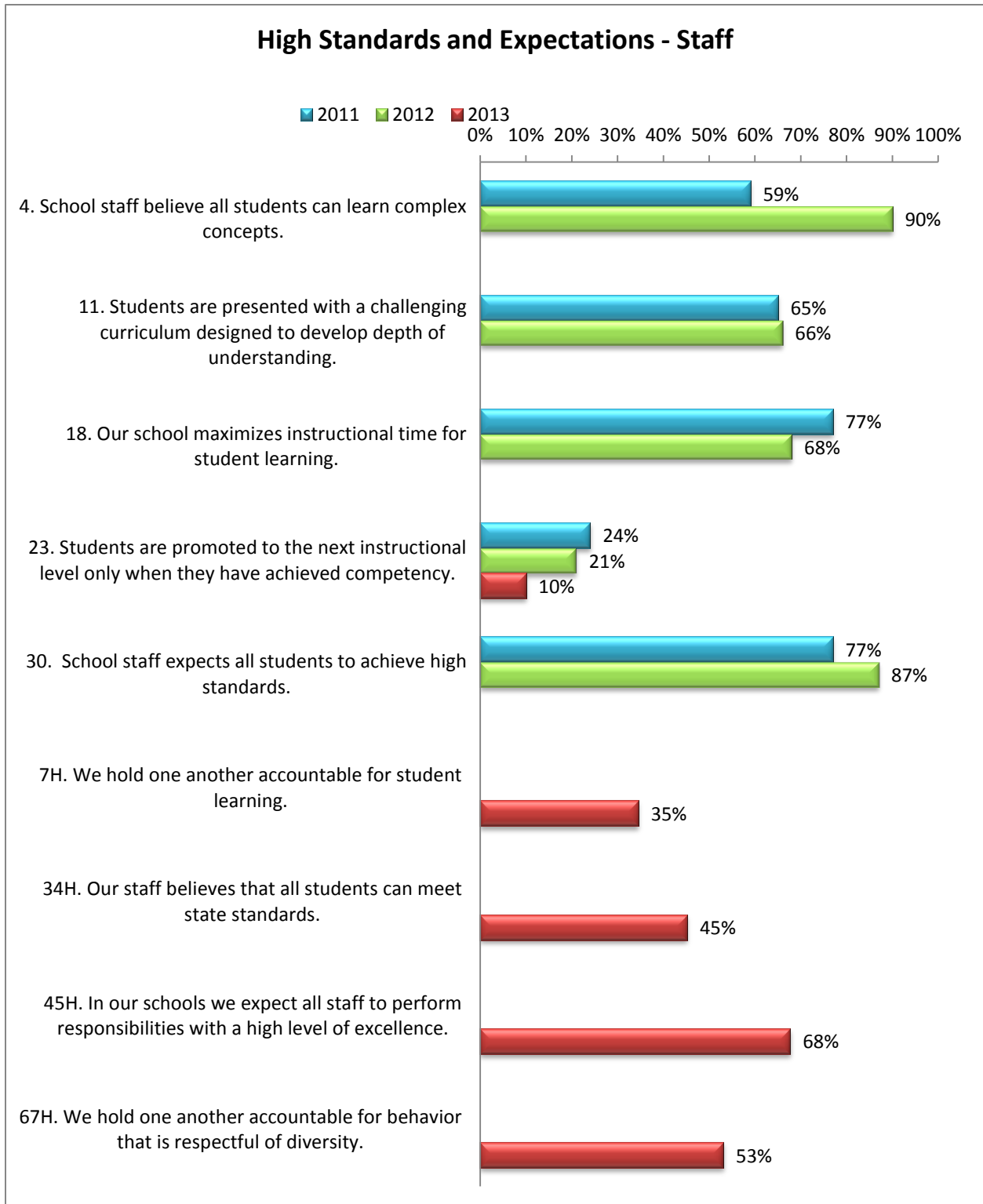


Figure 7: Staff Survey Results – High Standards and Expectations

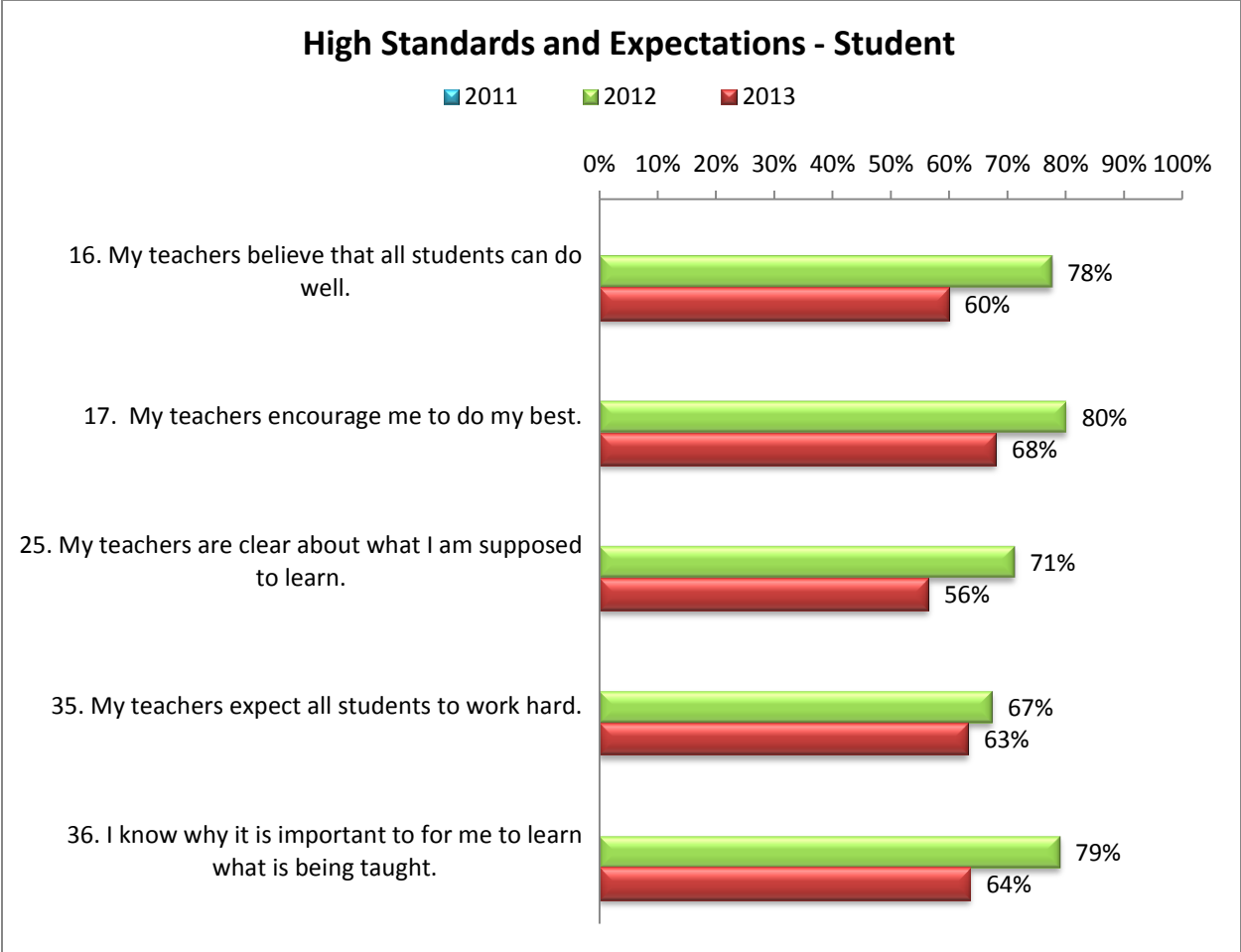


Figure 8: Student Survey Results - High Standards and Expectations

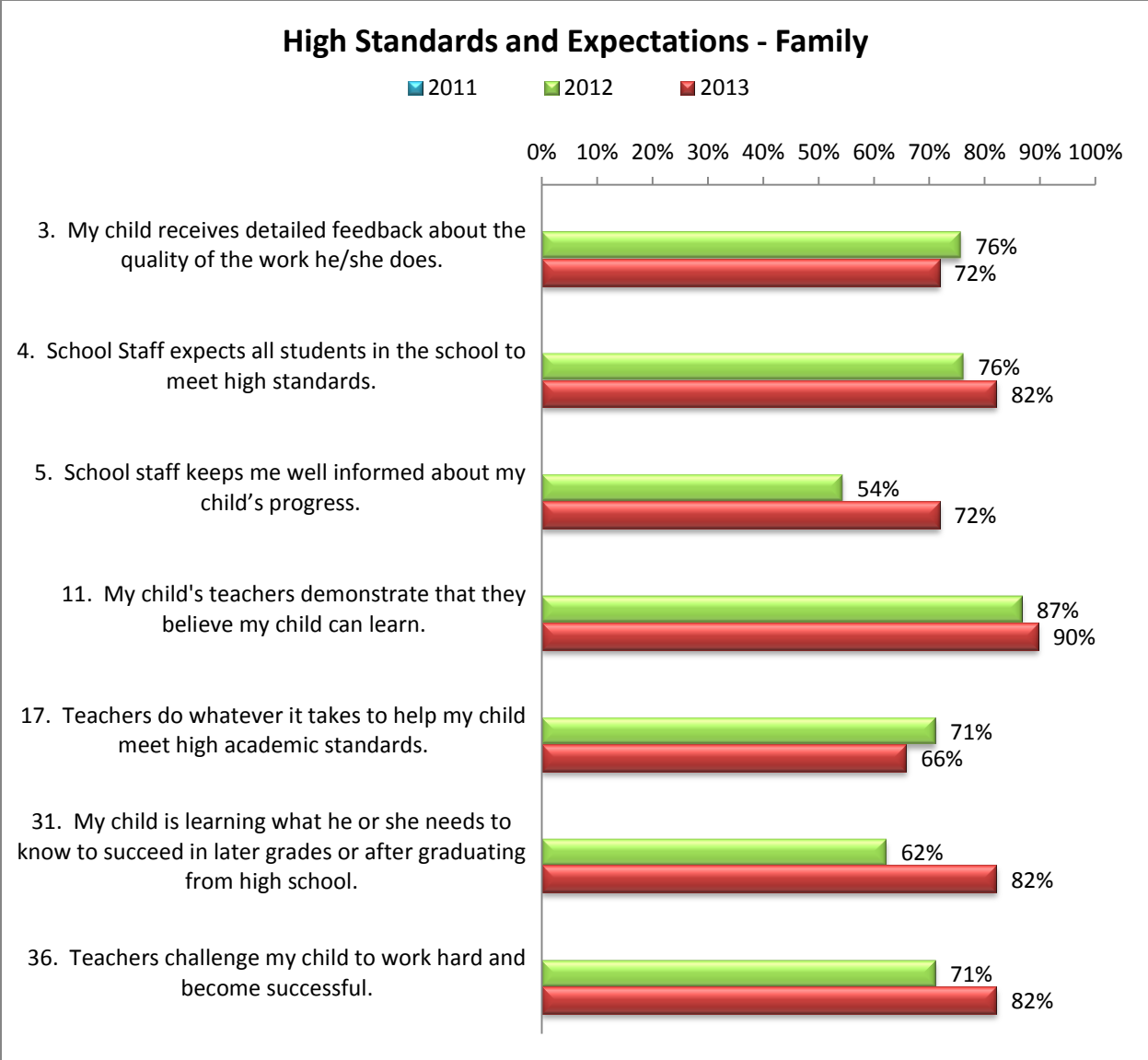


Figure 9: Family Survey Results - High Standards and Expectations

Effective School Leadership

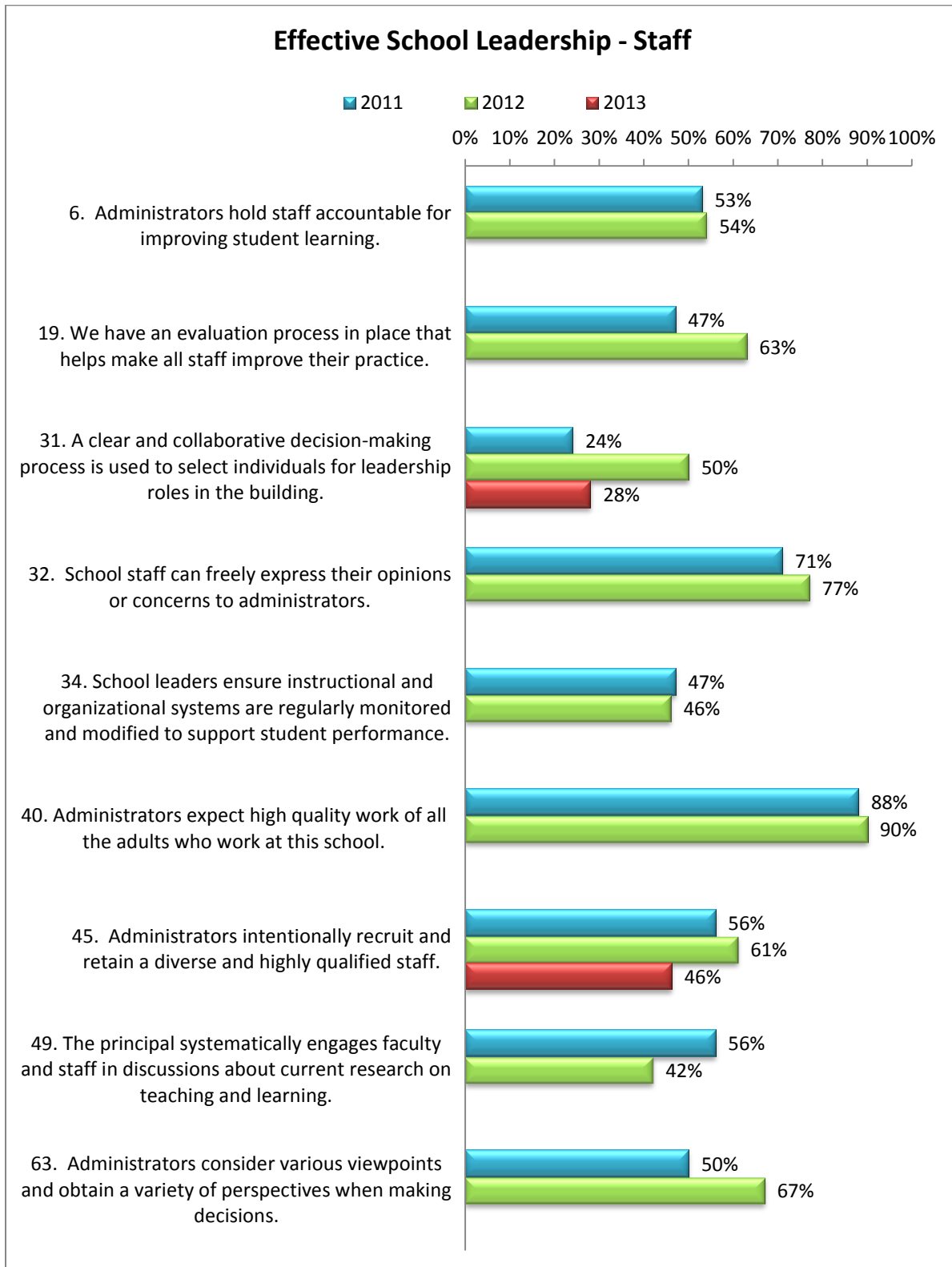


Figure 10: Staff Survey Results – Effective School Leadership

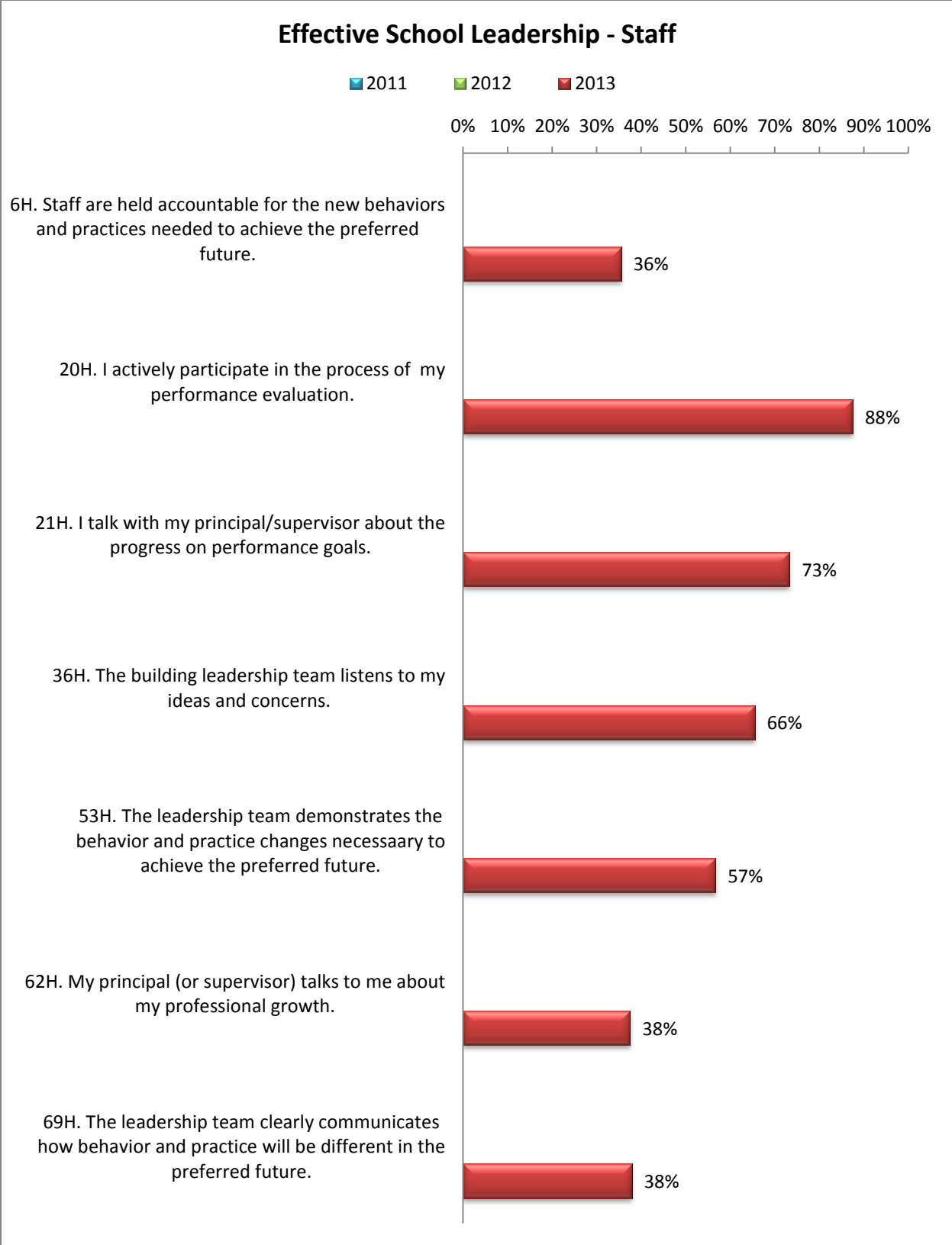


Figure 11: Staff Survey Results – Effective School Leadership (cont.)

Effective School Leadership - Student

■ 2011 ■ 2012 ■ 2013

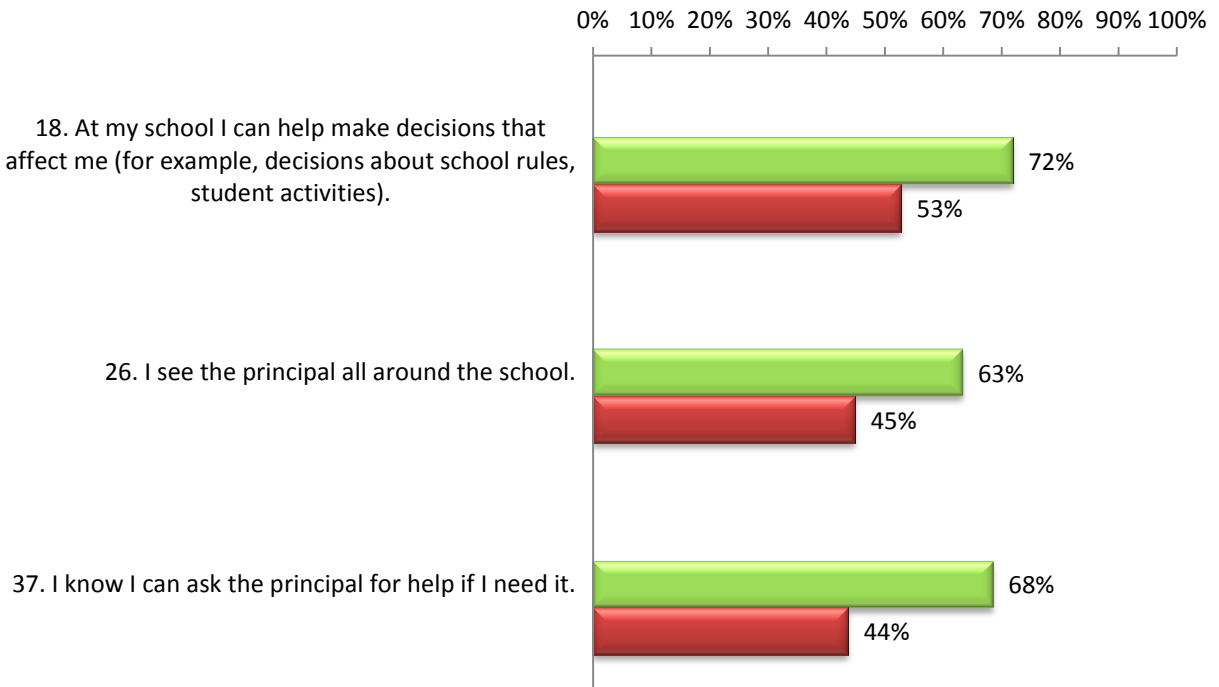


Figure 12: Student Survey Results - Effective School Leadership

Effective School Leadership - Family

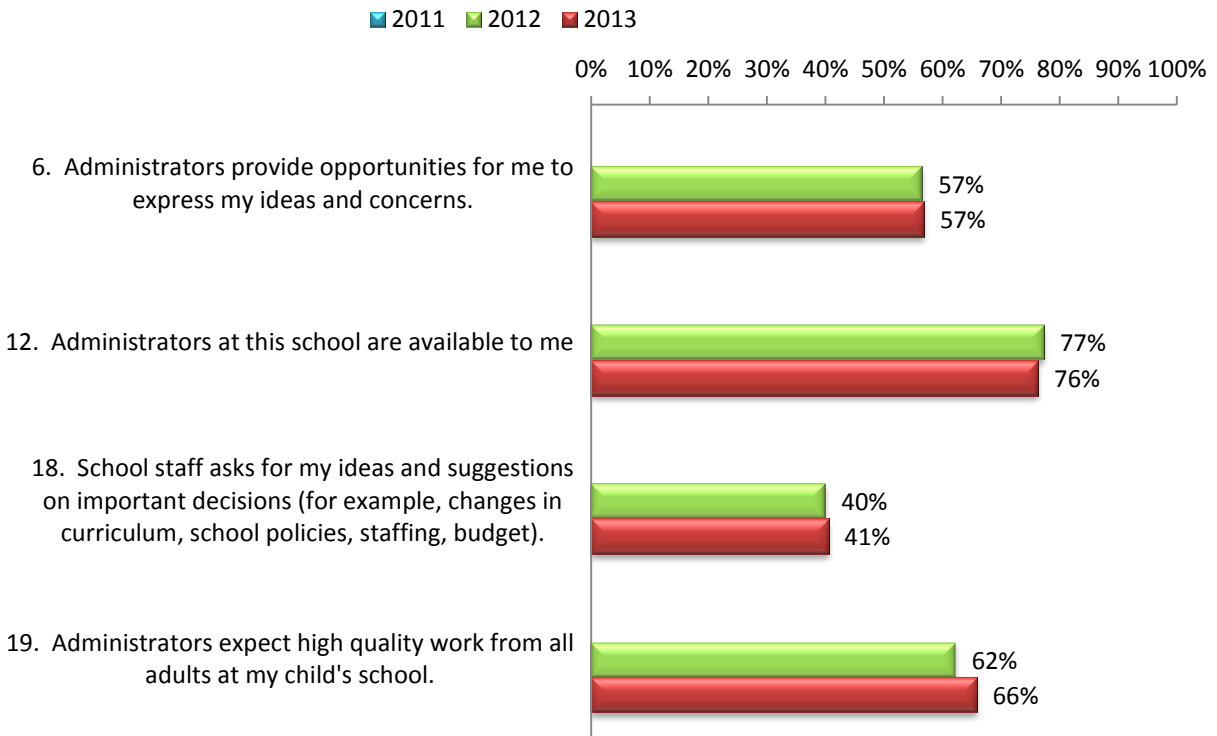


Figure 13: Family Survey Results - Effective School Leadership

High Levels of Communication and Collaboration

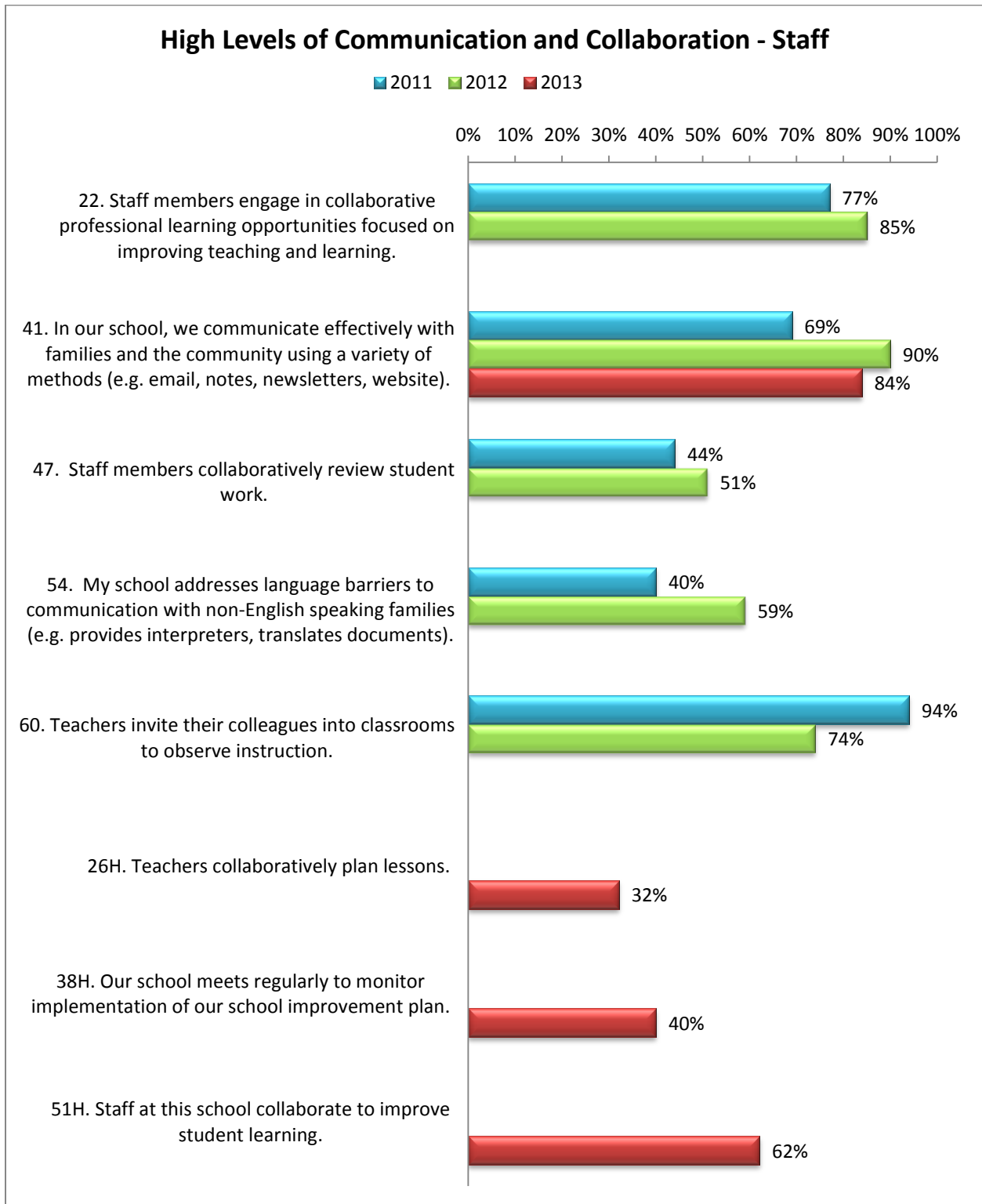


Figure 14: Staff Survey Results – High Levels of Communication and Collaboration

High Levels of Communication and Collaboration - Student

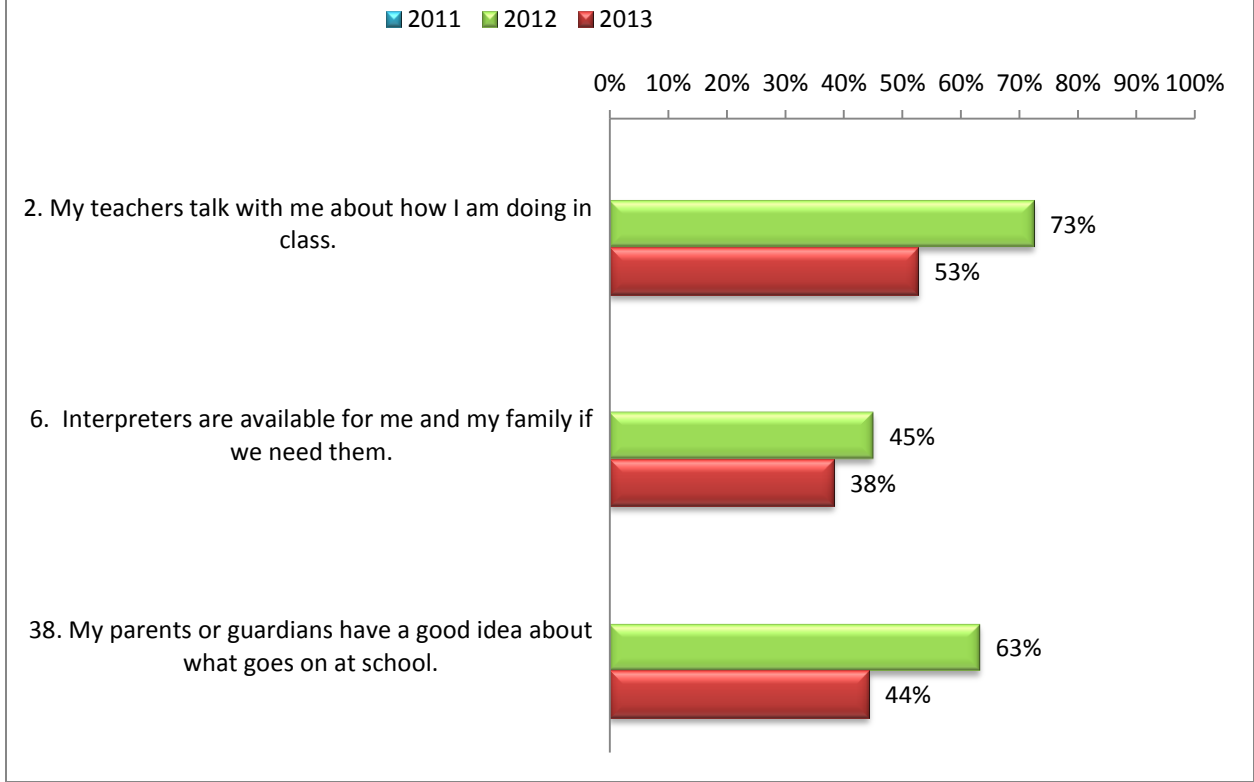


Figure 15: Student Survey Results - High Levels of Communication and Collaboration

High Levels of Communication and Collaboration - Family

■ 2011 ■ 2012 ■ 2013

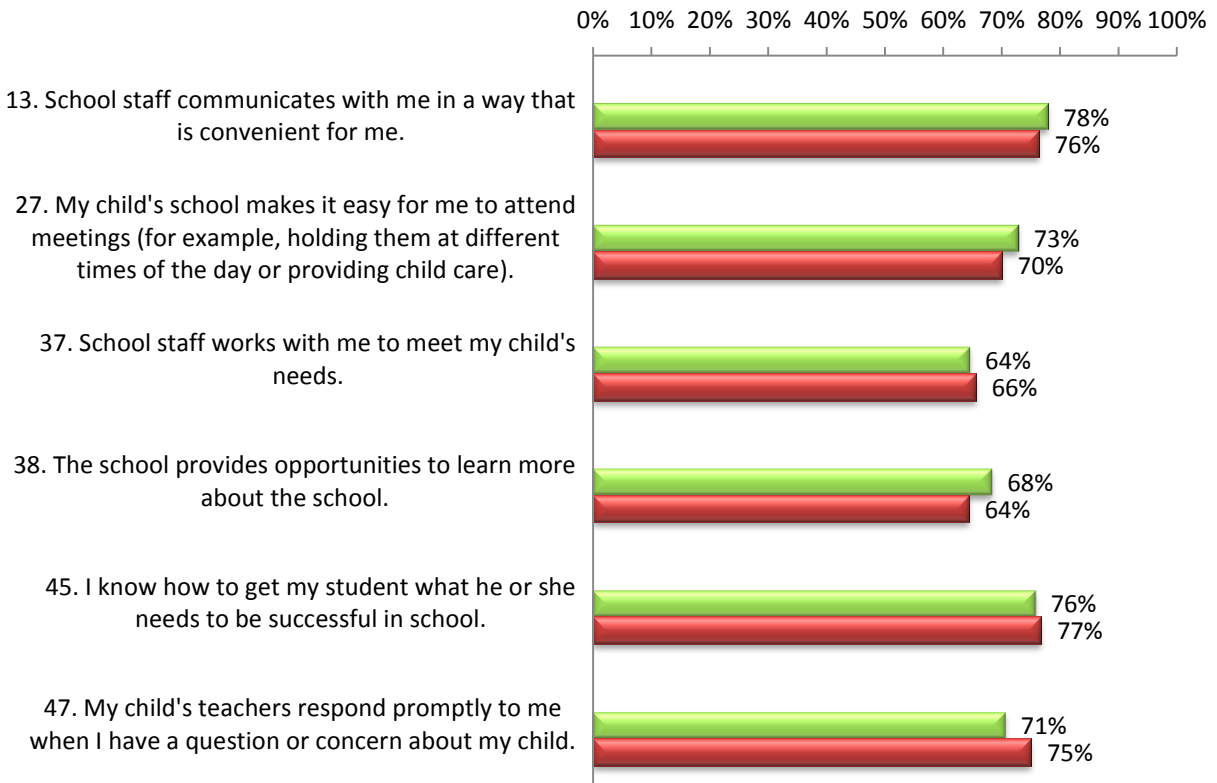


Figure 16: Family Survey Results - High Levels of Communication and Collaboration

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

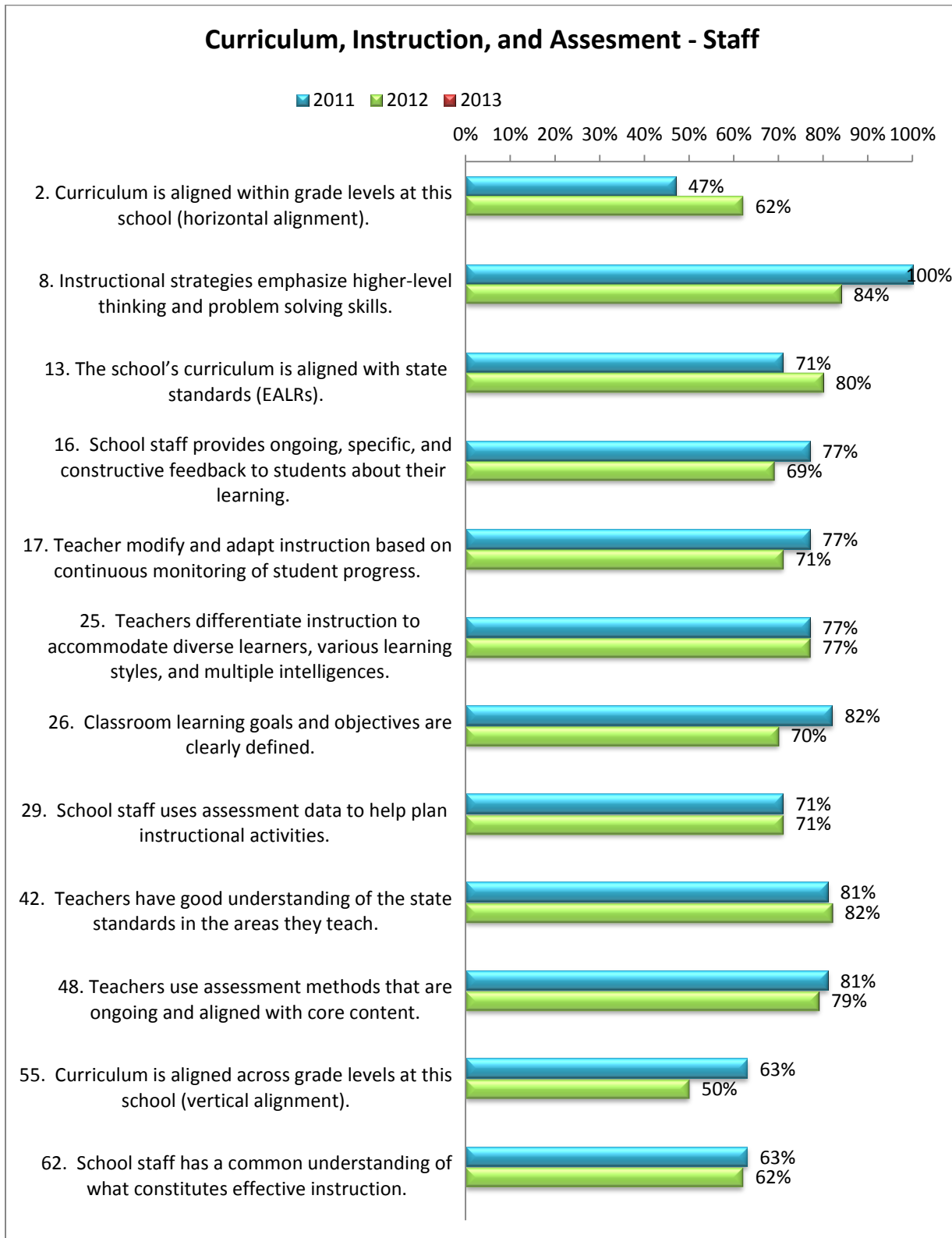


Figure 17: Staff Survey Results – Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment - Staff

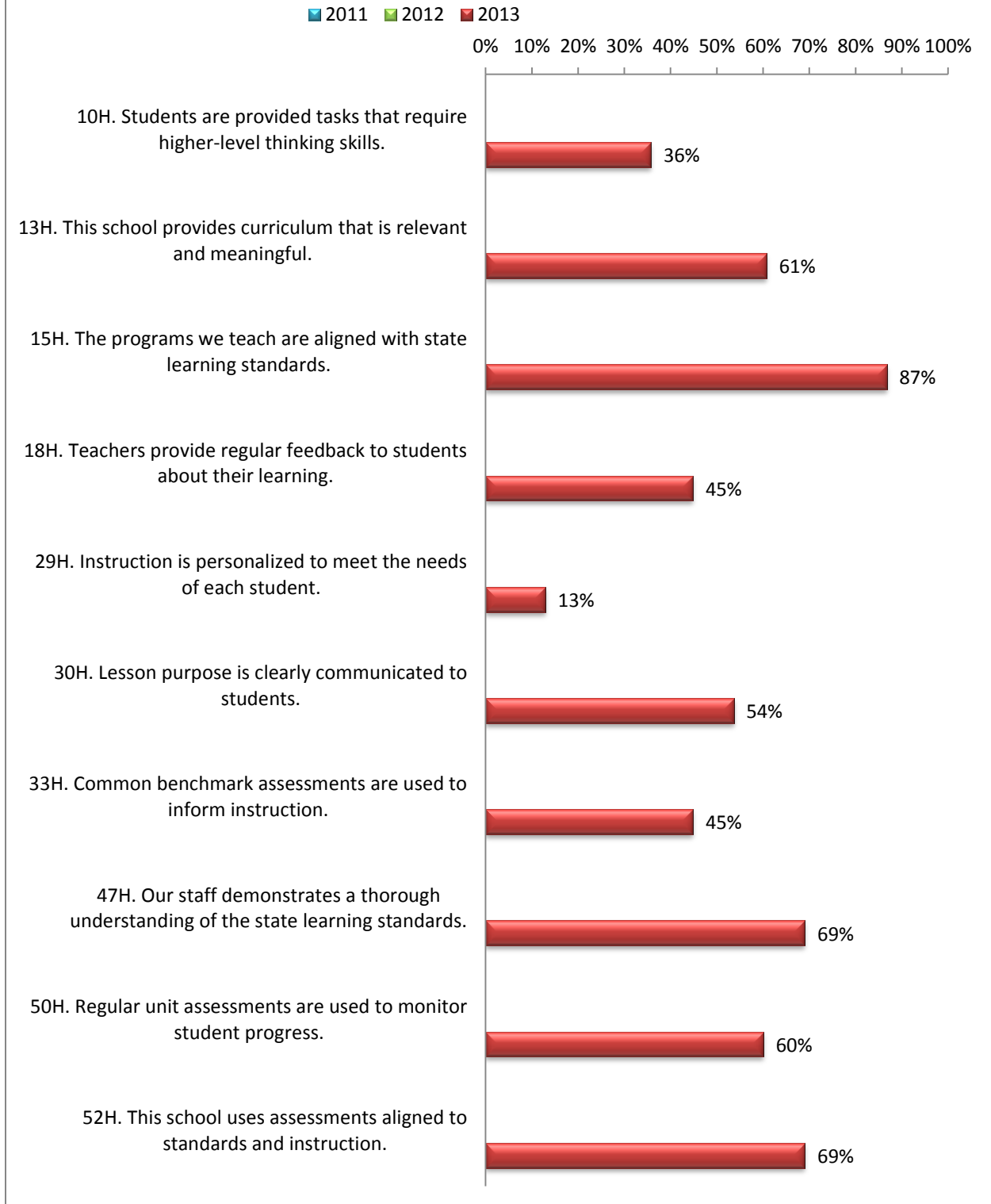


Figure 18: Staff Survey Results - Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment (cont.)

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment - Student

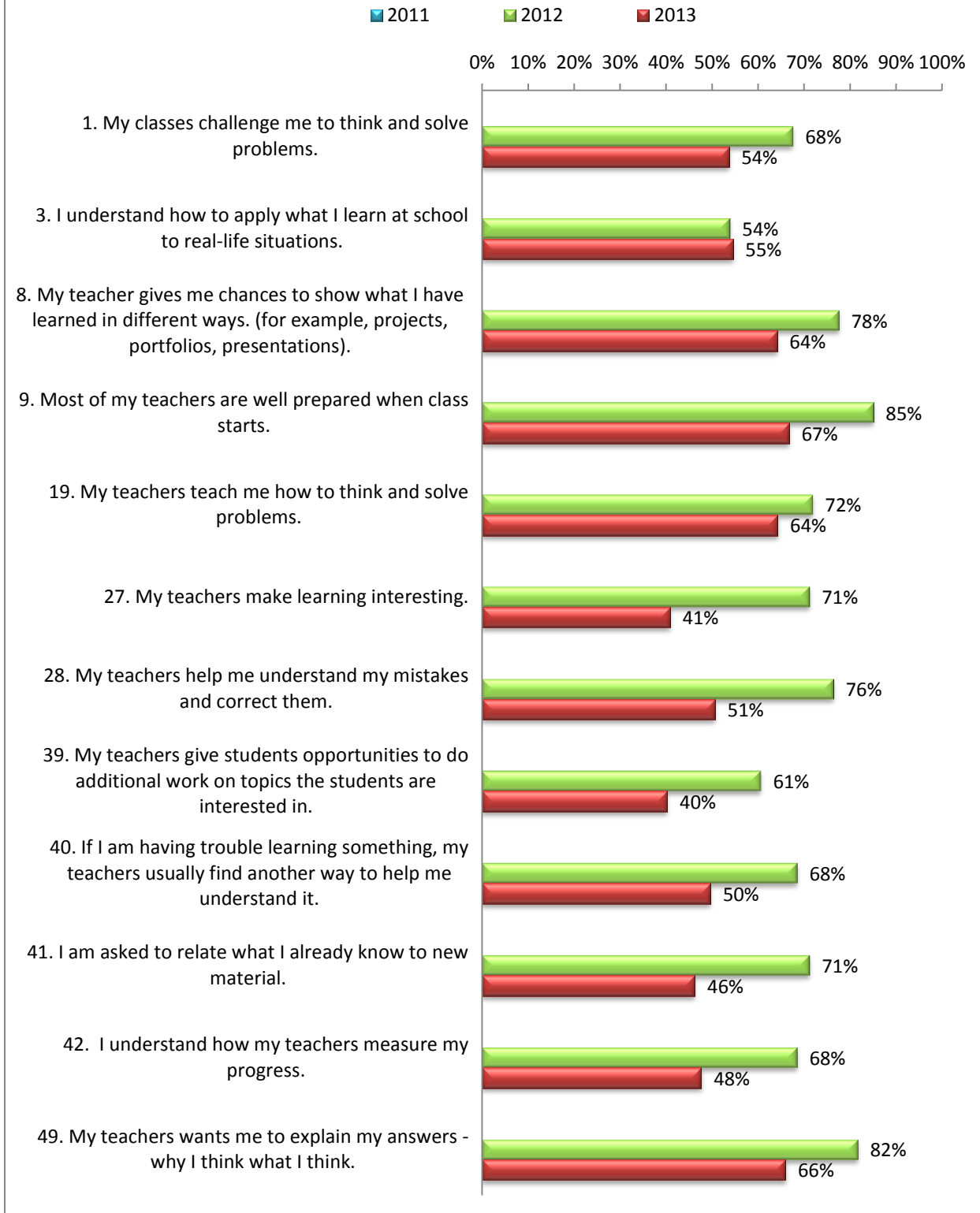


Figure 19: Student Survey Results - Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment - Family

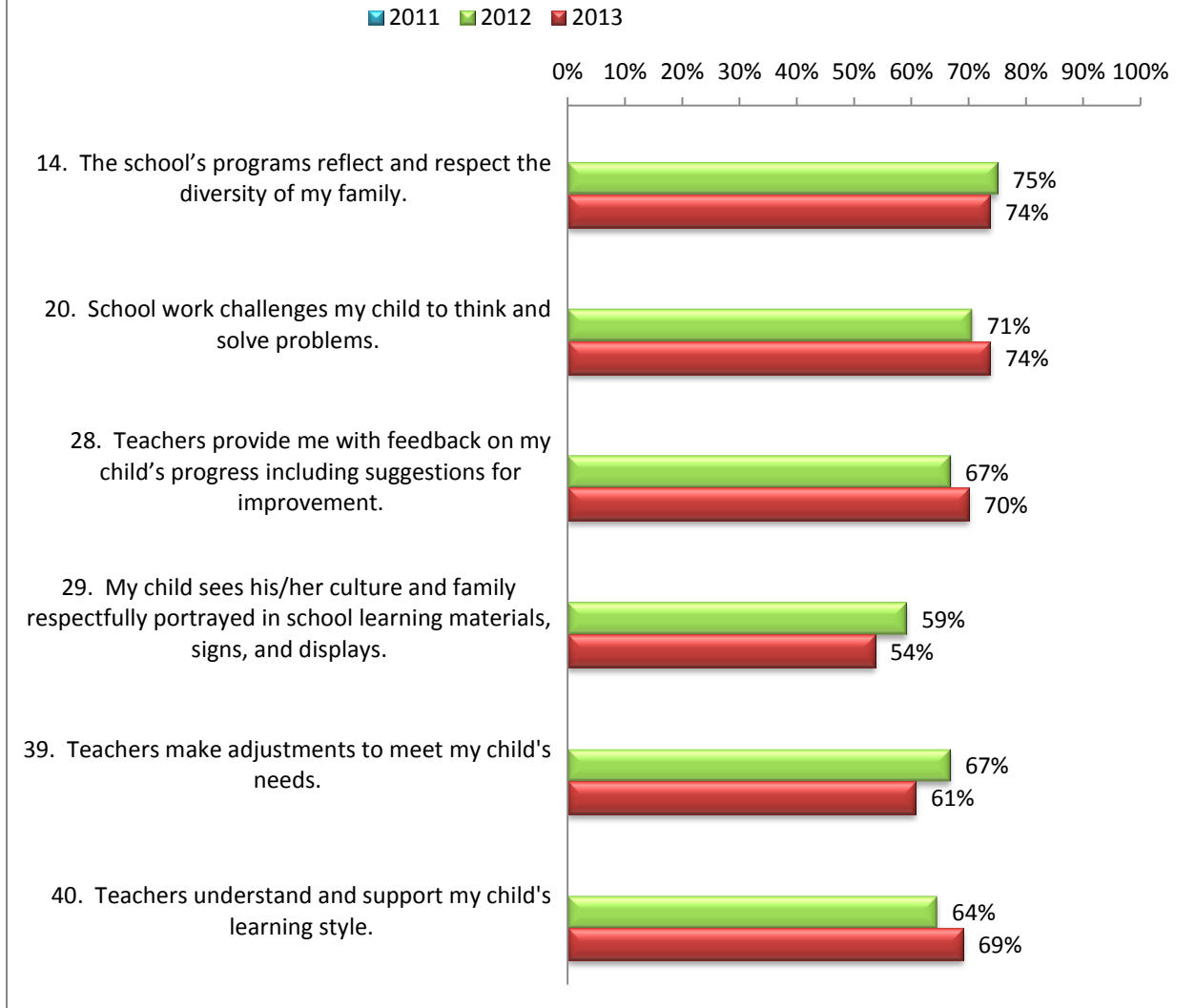


Figure 20: Family Survey Results - Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Frequent Monitoring of Learning and Teaching

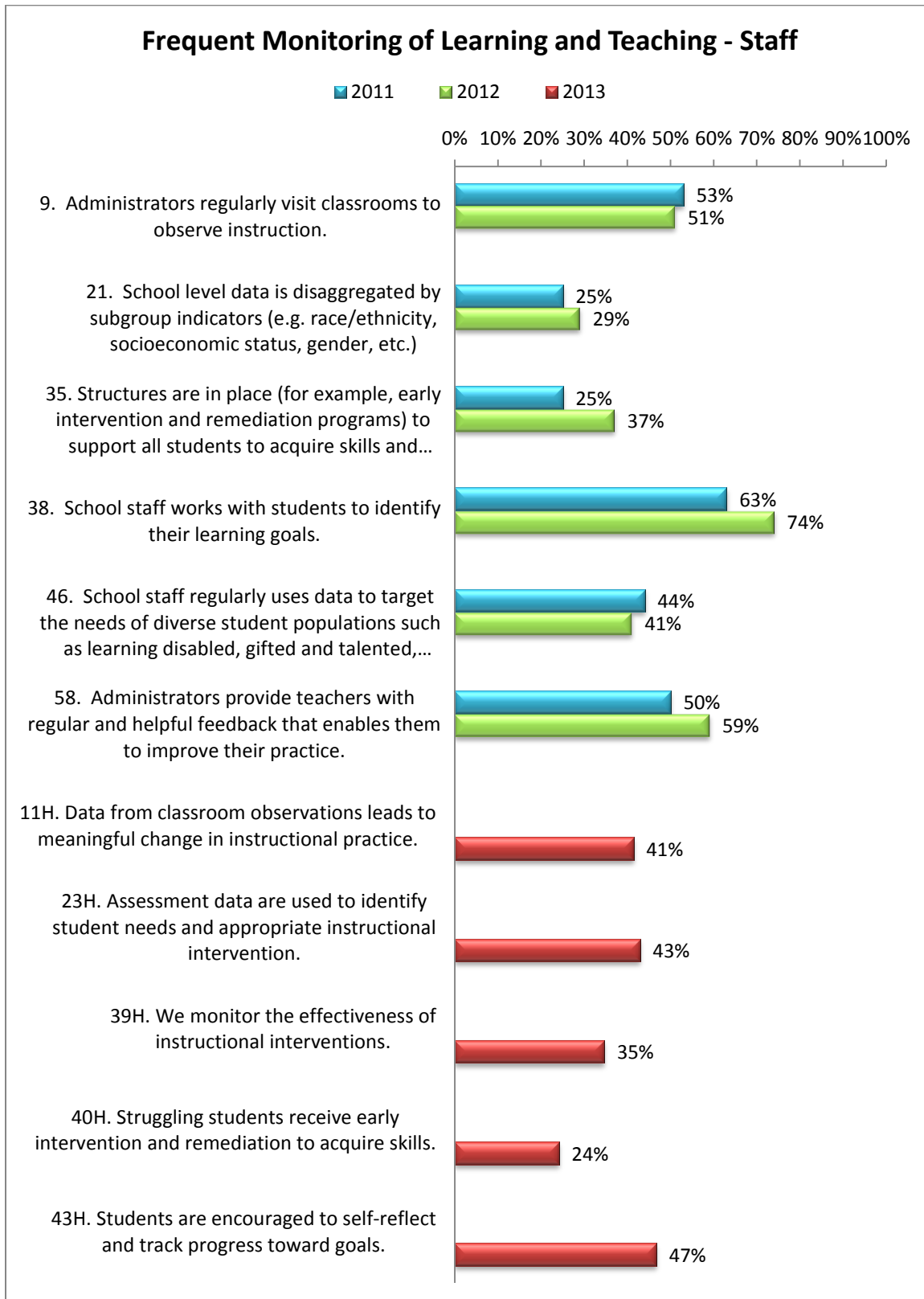


Figure 21: Staff Survey Results - Frequent Monitoring of Learning and Teaching

Frequent Monitoring of Learning and Teaching - Student

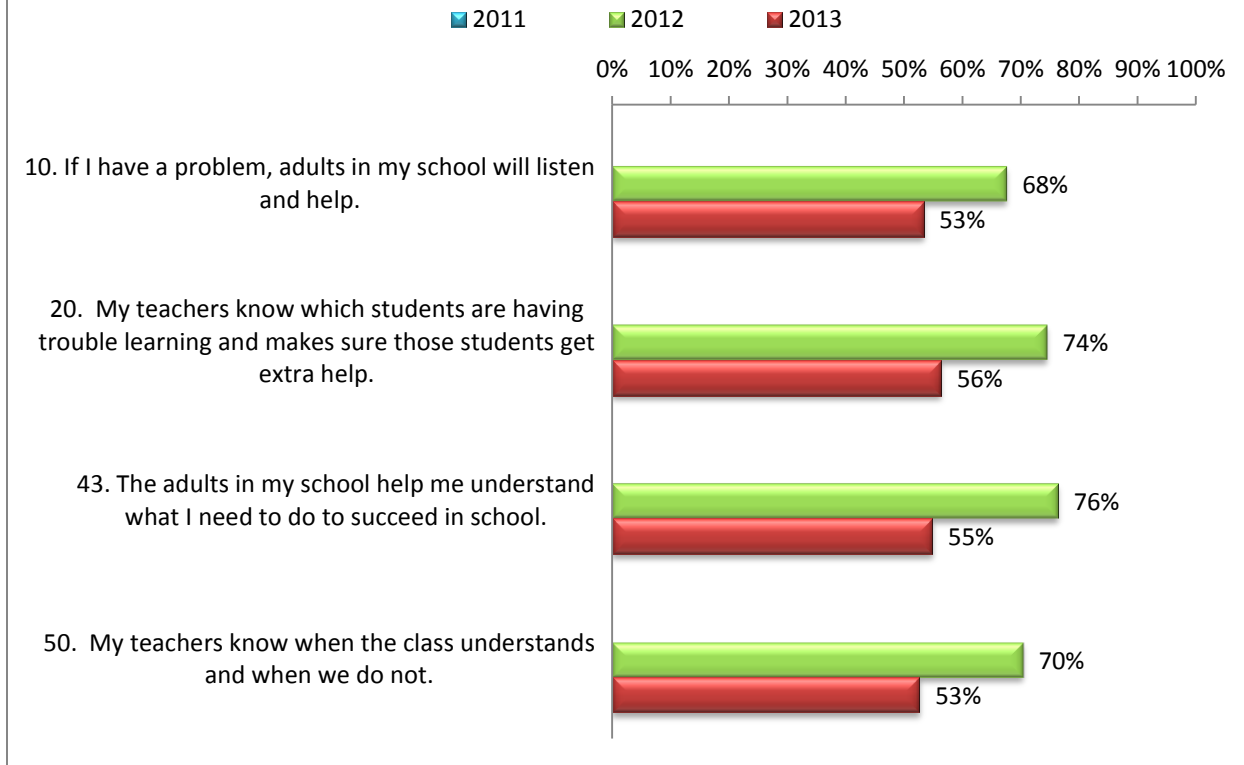


Figure 22: Student Survey Results - Frequent Monitoring of Learning and Teaching

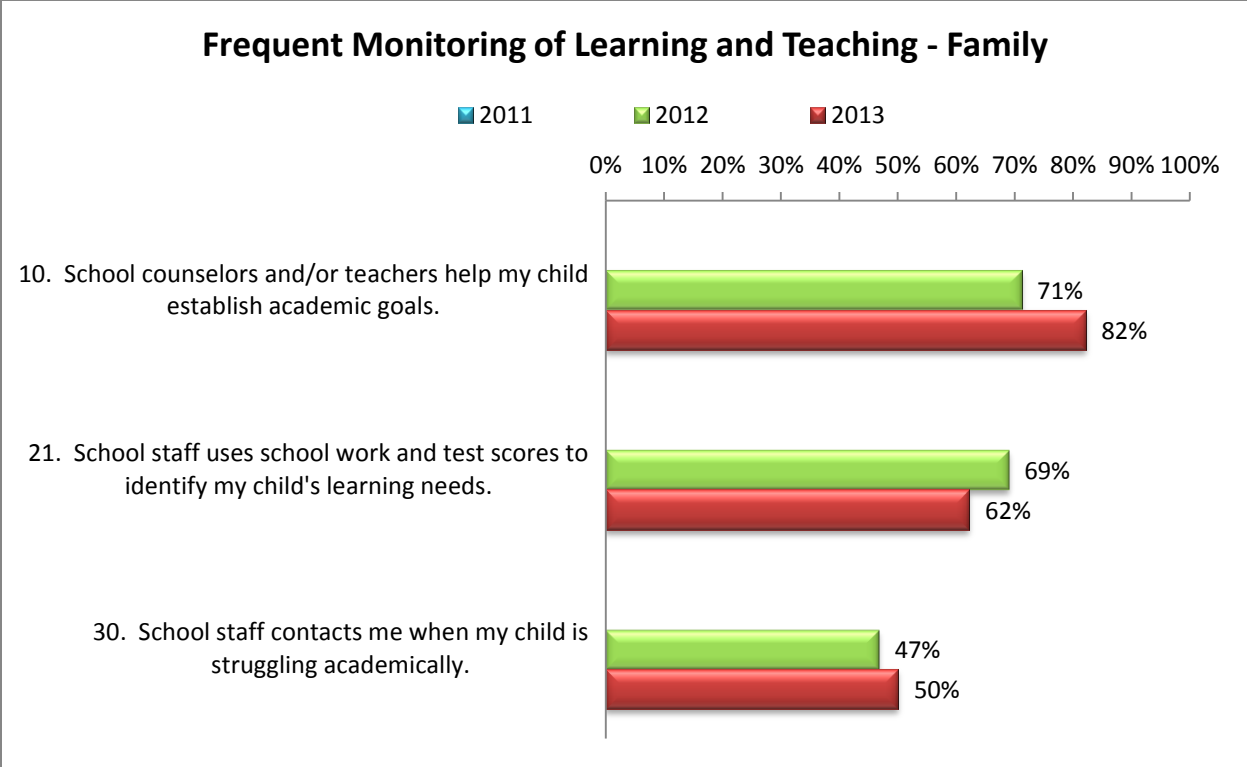


Figure 23: Family Survey Results - Frequent Monitoring of Teaching and Learning

Focused Professional Development

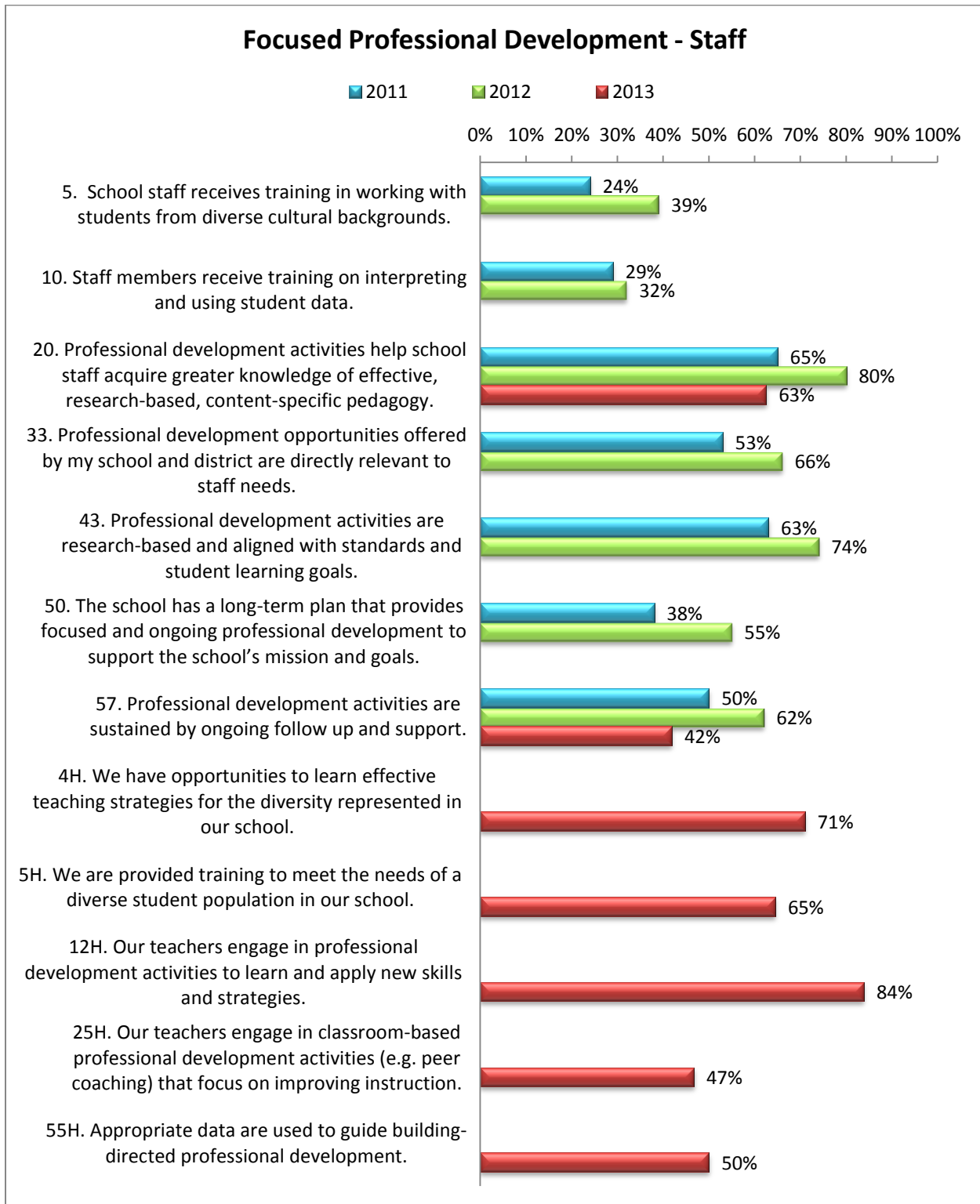


Figure 24: Staff Survey Results - Focused Professional Development

Supportive Learning Environment

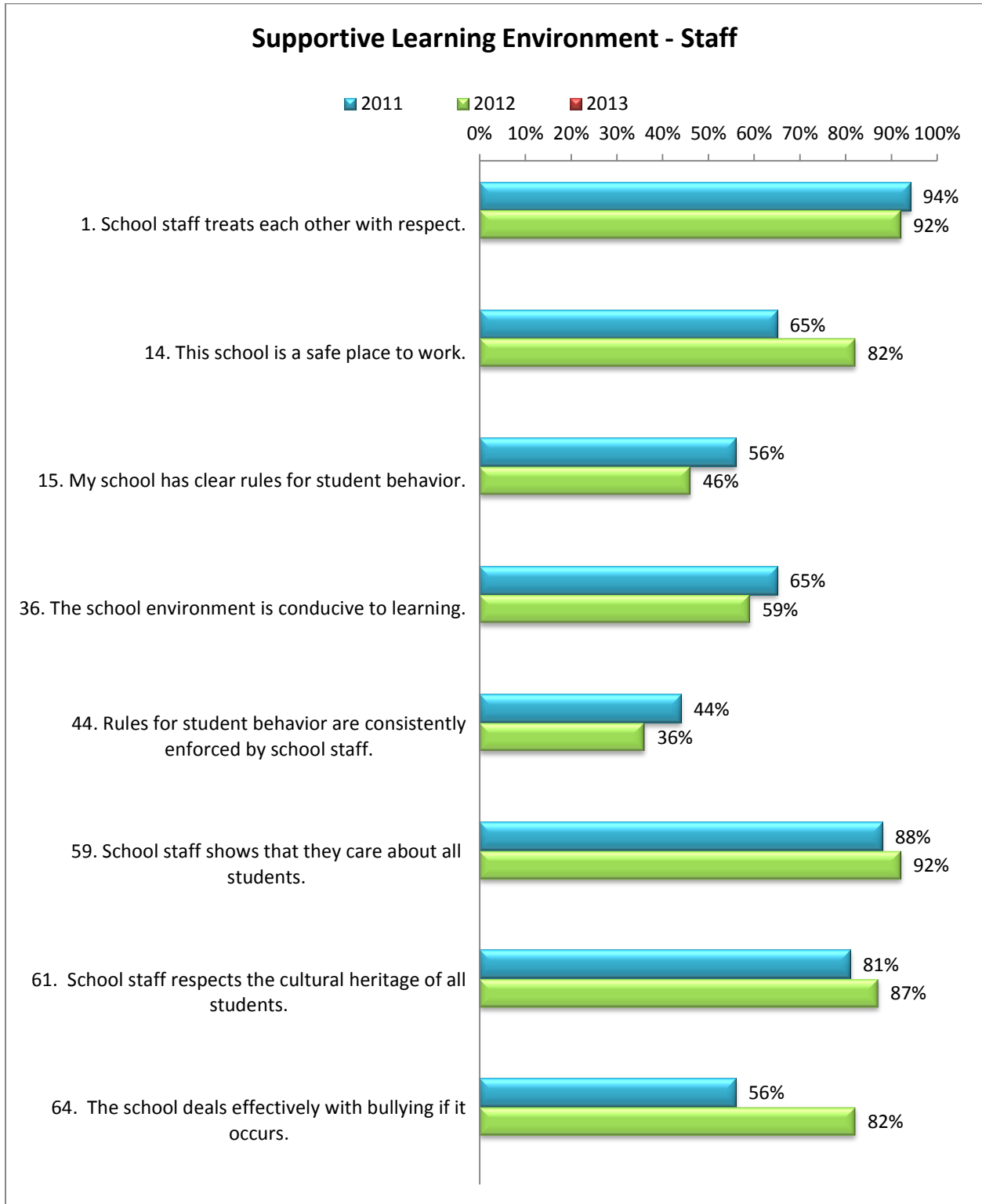


Figure 25: Staff Survey Results - Supportive Learning Environment

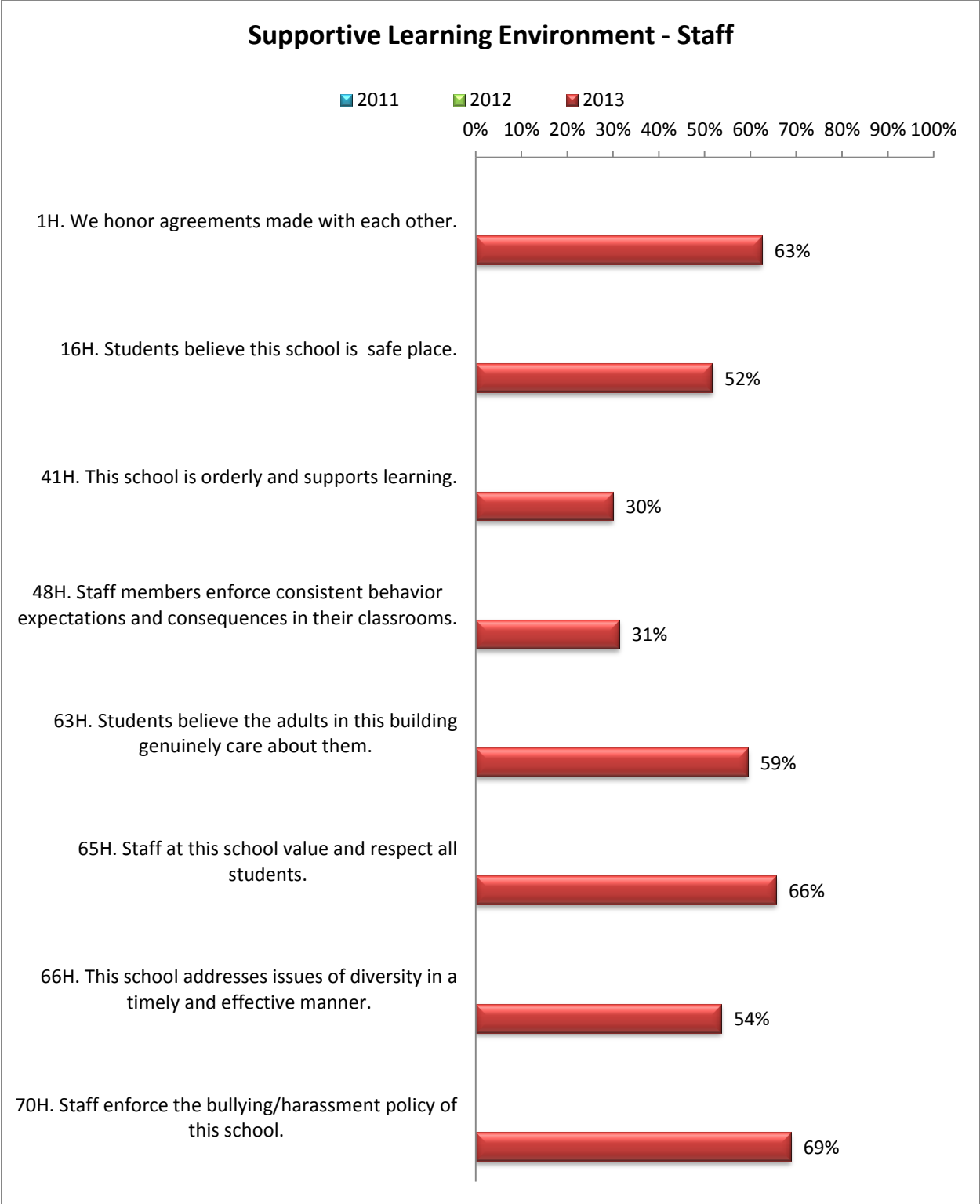


Figure 26: Staff Survey Results - Supportive Learning Environment (cont.)

Supportive Learning Environment - Student

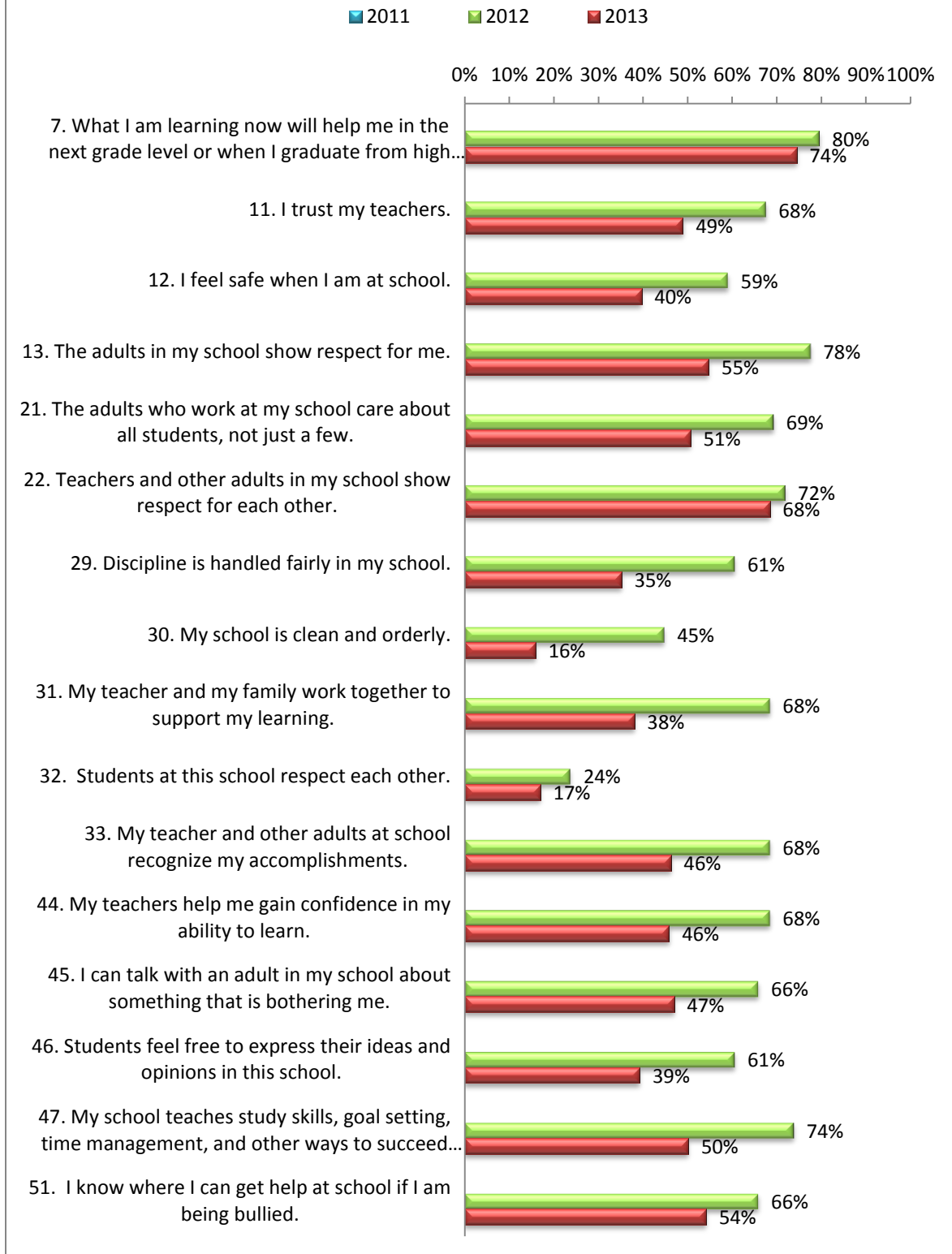


Figure 27: Student Survey Results - Supportive Learning Environment

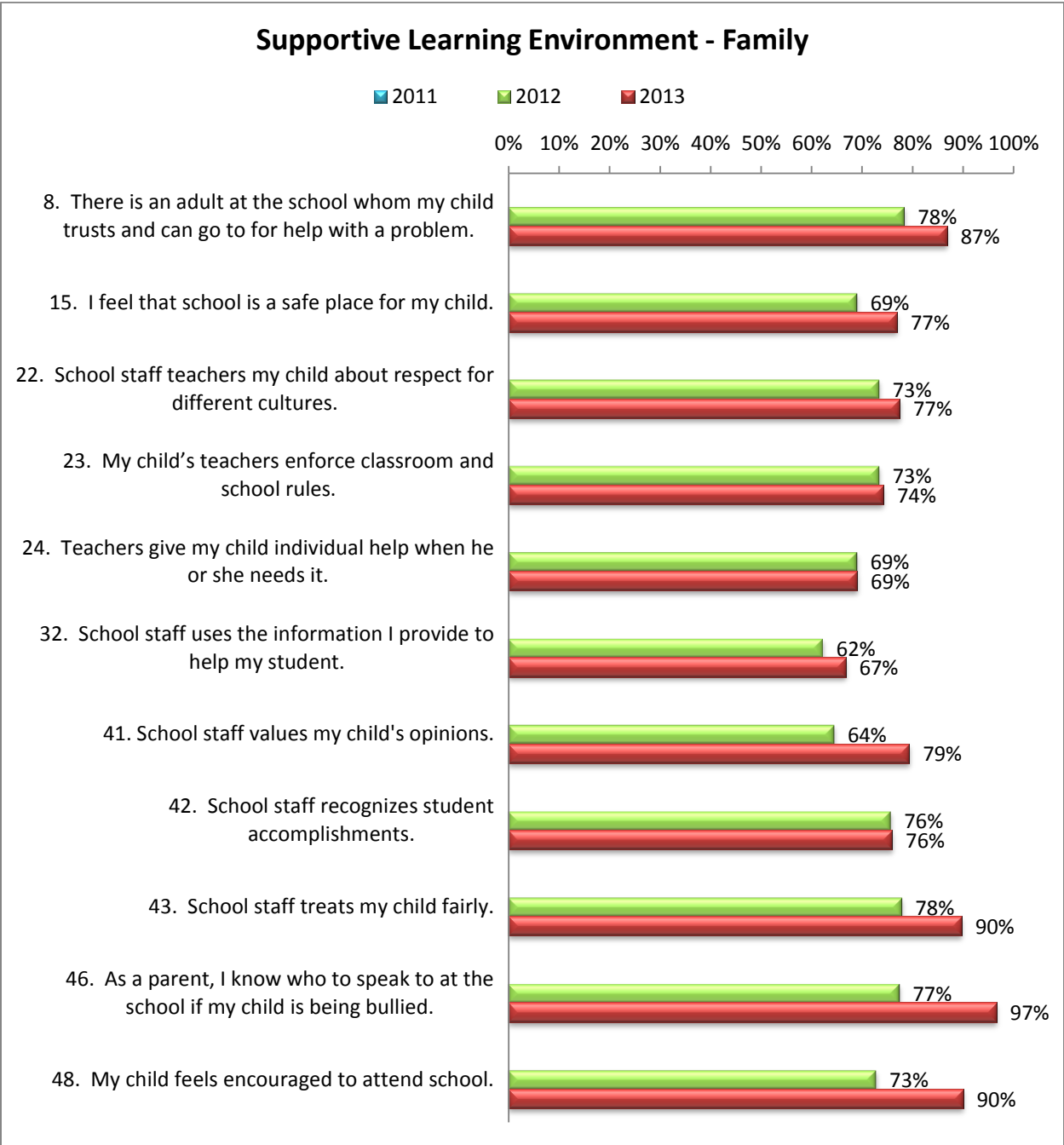


Figure 28: Family Survey Results - Supportive Learning Environment

Family and Community Involvement

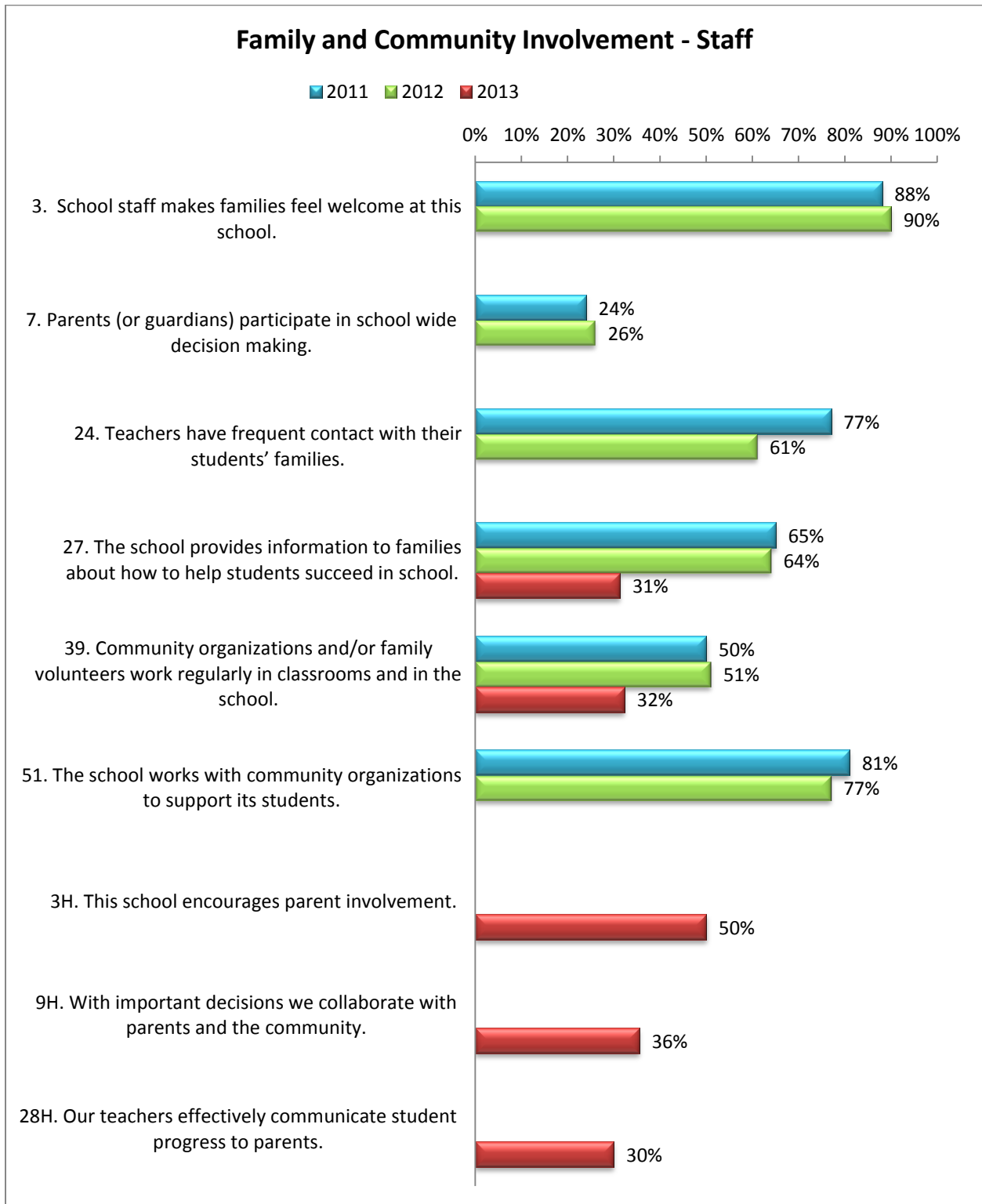


Figure 29: Staff Survey Results - Family and Community Involvement

Family and Community Involvement - Student

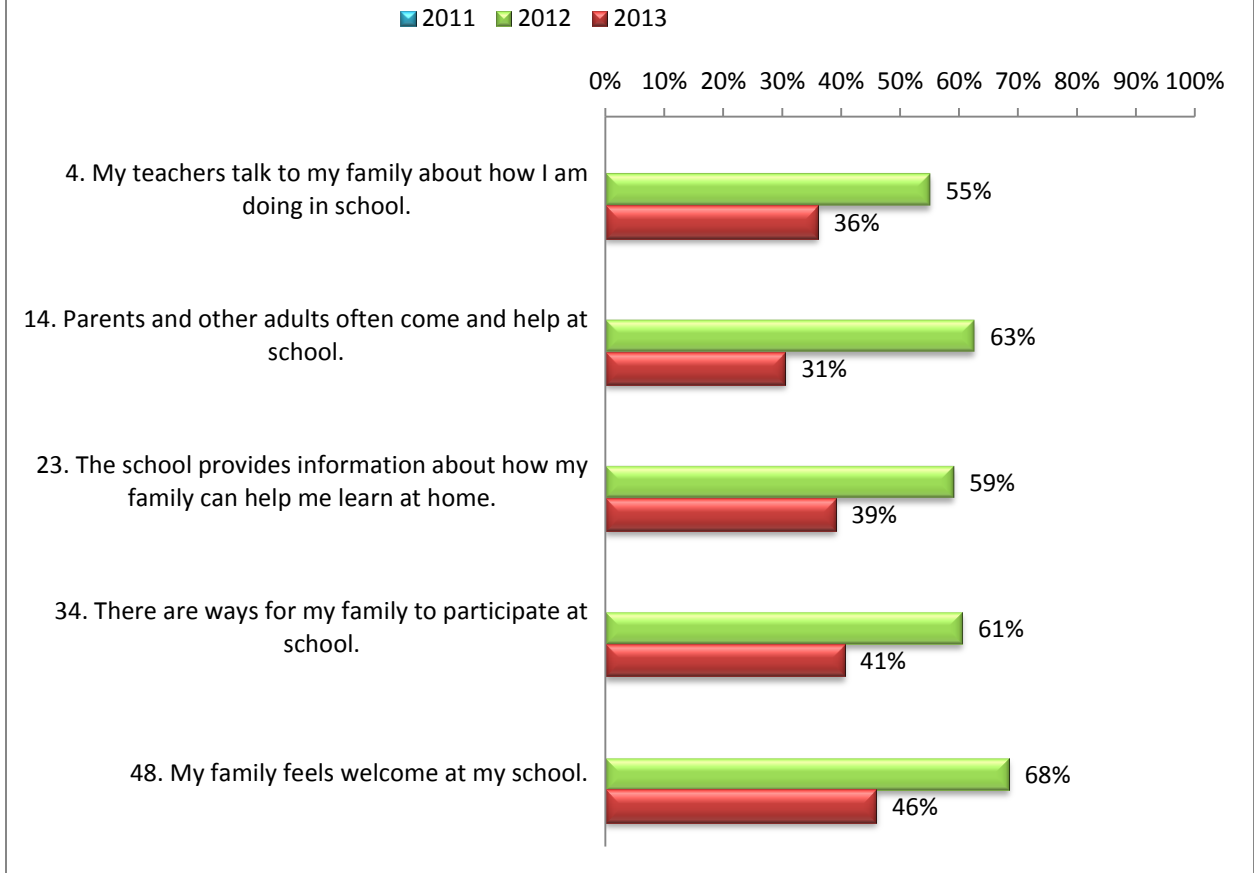


Figure 30: Student Survey Results - Family and Community Involvement

Family and Community Involvement - Family

2011 2012 2013

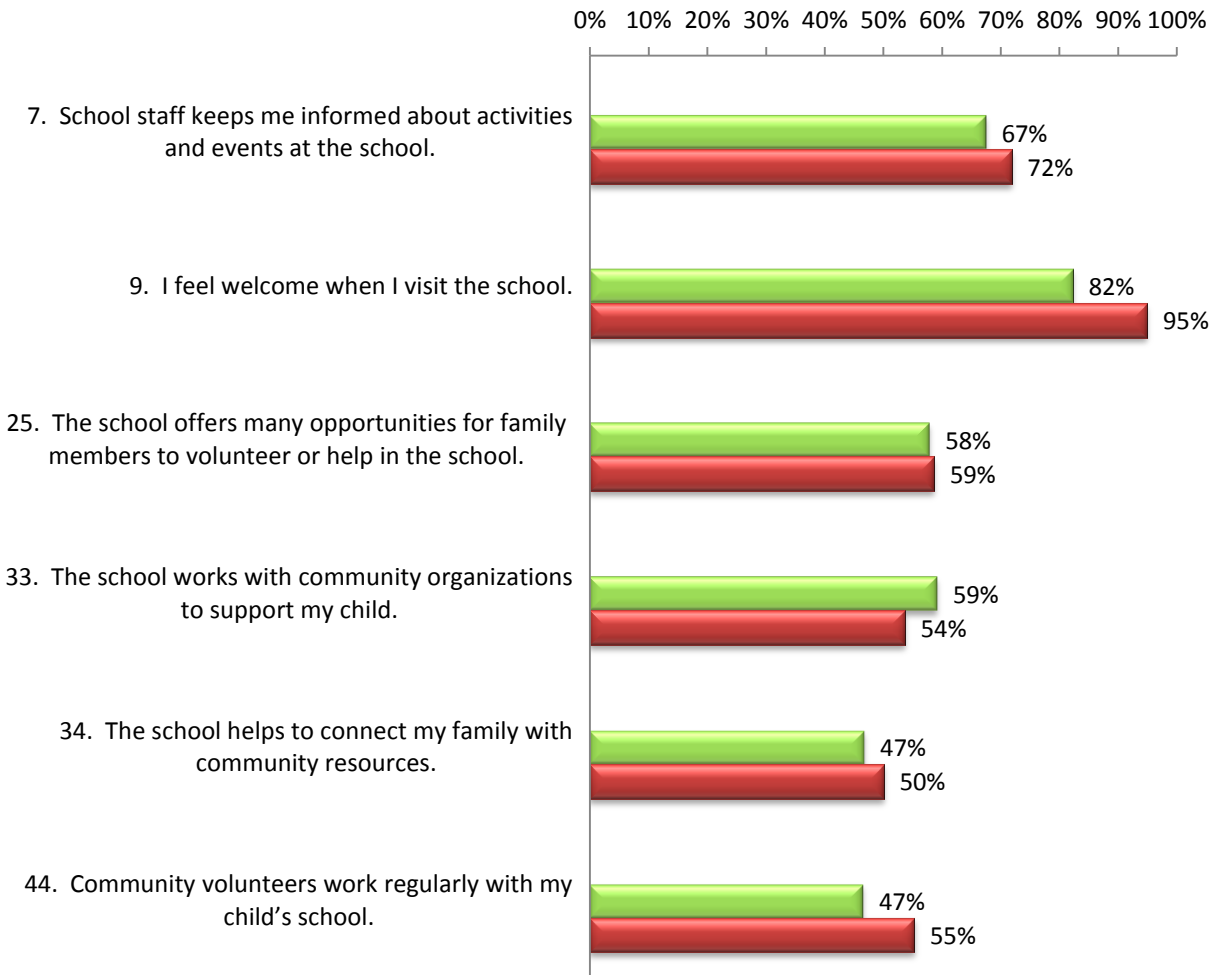


Figure 31: Family Survey Results - Family and Community Involvement



DRAFT
Required Action
District Academic
Performance Audit:

Washington Middle
School and
Yakima School
District

March 2014

DRAFT

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This report was prepared for the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction under contract to Educational Service District 113 and other Educational Consultants.

Individuals participating in the Academic Performance Audit include:

- Dr. Dana Anderson, Superintendent, Educational Service District 113
- Dr. Andrew Eyres, Assistant Superintendent, Educational Service District 113
- Rich Staley, Assistant Superintendent, Educational Service District 113
- Jim Ridgeway, Educational Consultant, Office of Student and School Success
- Dr. Sue Cohn, Educational Consultant, Office of Student and School Success



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I. Introduction

In spring 2010, Washington Middle School in the Yakima School District was awarded a [School Improvement Grant](#) (SIG) for three years (2010 through 2013) to fully and effectively implement a federally approved intervention model. The district selected the [Transformation model](#). Among other things, this required the school and district to replace the principal and address five areas critical to transforming persistently low-achieving schools: developing teacher and principal leader effectiveness, implementing instructional reform strategies, extending learning time, creating community connections, and providing operating flexibility and sustained support. While the school has shown progress in some areas, this progress is not consistent. For instance, Level I data on state assessments demonstrate cohort improvement from sixth to seventh grade in both Reading and Math; however, these same data demonstrate declines in cohort proficiency from seventh to eighth grade in both content areas. Inconsistent and persistent lack of progress for the “all students” group and subgroups on state assessments in Reading and Mathematics over the last three years led to the identification of the district as a Required Action District.

The purposes of this report are (a) to identify potential reasons for Washington Middle School’s low performance and lack of progress and (b) to recommend next steps for Yakima School District and Washington Middle School leaders and staff in building educator and system capacity to substantially improve student outcomes. Findings in this report are intended to assist district and school leaders in identifying an approved federal or state school improvement model appropriate for the school. Recommendations in the report will inform the district’s Required Action District (RAD) application and the school and district Student and School Success Action Plan.

Sources of Data: This report is based on information gathered from the following sources:

- 1) Review of extant district- and school-level data (e.g., Student and School Success Action Plan; 2012-13 End-of-Year Report; staff, student, parent surveys; Assessment of Progress Report)
- 2) Superintendent and district leader analysis of current practices and policies impacting the ability of district and school leadership and staff to effectively implement an intervention
- 3) Classroom visits focusing on instructional practices within the school
- 4) Qualitative interviews and focus groups looking at the alignment of district and school structures and practices with [Turnaround Principles](#) described in federal guidance
- 5) Demographic and achievement data
- 6) Additional documents provided by the school and district during the on-site visit (e.g., daily schedule, student/teacher schedule, written staff comments)

Evaluators obtained information during an interview with the district leadership on March 4, 2014 and on-site visit on March 10, 2014. Approximately 47 people, including district and building administrators, union leadership, and staff members, participated in interviews and focus groups. In addition, evaluators visited 26 classrooms to determine the extent to which classroom practices aligned with research-based instructional practices. Finally, evaluators reviewed data previously gathered about the school and district; these included improvement plans, coaching critiques, and additional school documents.

Organization of Report: Section II of this report describes requirements for Required Action Districts (RADs). The next section (Section III) summarizes findings and recommendations aligned with

Turnaround Principles for both the district and school. Section IV provides an overview of the district and school. This is followed by detailed explanations of the three recommendations, including the evidence supporting the Academic Performance Audit Team’s conclusions; strengths and concerns; and requirements of the school, district and Office of Student and School Success (Section V). This report concludes with summary and next steps (Section VI) and questions for local improvement teams to consider during their planning processes (Section VII).

Appendices in this report include the following:

- Appendix A: Required Action District Frequently Asked Questions
- Appendix B: School Data Dashboard
- Appendix C: Assessment of Progress Report

II. Required Action Districts

Beginning December 1, 2013 and each December thereafter, the Superintendent of Public Instruction is required by state legislation ([E2SSB 5329](#)) to annually identify challenged schools in need of improvement and a subset of such schools that are the persistently lowest-achieving schools in the state. The criteria for determining persistently lowest achieving schools are determined by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and must include the school’s lack of progress over a number of years for both its “all students” group and subgroups. As required by state legislation (E2SSB 5329 and E2SSB 6696), the State Board of Education (SBE) can designate districts with at least one school determined to be persistently lowest achieving as Required Action Districts (RADs).

A summary of requirements for RADs follows. Specific requirements are described in OSPI’s *Required Action Districts: Level One Plan Guidance* available at:

<http://www.k12.wa.us/StudentAndSchoolSuccess/RequiredActionDistricts.aspx>

- **Academic Performance Audit:** Each RAD receives an academic performance audit by an external review team. The audit team consists of persons with expertise in comprehensive school and district reform; the team identifies the potential reasons for the school’s low performance and lack of progress. (RCW 28A.657.040)
- **Community Collaboration and Public Hearing:** In order to ensure successful collaboration, the required action plan must be developed with administrators, teachers and other staff, parents, unions representing any employees within the district, students, and other representatives of the local community. The local school board must conduct a public hearing to allow for comment on the proposed required action plan. (RCW 28A.657.050).
- **Implementation of an Approved School Improvement Model:** The district must select and implement an approved school improvement model for the receipt of federal or state funds for school improvement. The model must address concerns raised in the academic performance audit and be intended to improve school performance to allow the district to exit Required Action District status within three years of implementation of the plan. Approved *federal* school improvement models include **Closure, Restart, Transformation, and Turnaround**. The approved *state* school improvement model is the **Synergy Model**.
- **Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) Assistance and Review:** The OSPI can provide assistance in developing a plan if requested. The district will submit the plan first to OSPI to review and approve that the plan is consistent with federal and state guidelines, as applicable. (RCW 28A.657.060)

- **State Board of Education (SBE) Approval:** Following OSPI's review of the plan, each district will submit its plan to the SBE for final approval. (RCW 28A.657.060)
- **Implementation of RAD Plan for three Years:** After approval of the RAD plan, the district is required to implement the plan for three years. The school improvement model must be fully implemented, along with other requirements of the plan. OSPI will provide technical assistance and federal or state funds for implementation of the plan. The district will report regularly to OSPI on the progress it is making in meeting student achievement goals based on the state's assessments, identifying strategies and assets used to solve audit findings and establishing evidence of meeting plan implementation benchmarks in the plan. (RCW 28A.657.090)
- **Semi-annual Reports to the State Board of Education:** During each year of the implementation of the plan, OSPI will report to the SBE semiannually on the progress made by all RADs. (RCW 28A.657.100)
- **Evaluation of Progress:** The OSPI will evaluate progress of each RAD and must recommend to the SBE that a school district be released from the designation after the district implements the plan for three years, has made progress using criteria under RCW 28A.657.020, including progress in closing the educational opportunity gap, and no longer has a school identified as persistently lowest achieving.

Intervention Models: Required Action Districts receive funds targeted to make lasting gains in student achievement and to implement required elements of the selected school improvement model. The model must address concerns raised in the academic performance audit and be intended to improve school performance to allow the district to exit Required Action District status within three years of implementation of the plan. Models are briefly described below.

- **Closure Model** (federal model): District closes school and enrolls students who attended the school in other higher achieving schools in the district.
- **Restart Model** (federal model): District converts the school or closes and reopens it under management of an educational management organization (EMO) or charter organization.
- **Transformation Model** (federal model): District replaces principal and addresses five areas critical to transforming persistently low-achieving schools: developing teacher and principal leader effectiveness, implementing instructional reform strategies, extending learning time, creating community connections, and providing operating flexibility and sustained support.
- **Turnaround Model** (federal model): District replaces principal and rehires no more than 50% of the school's staff, adopts a new governance structure, and implements a research-based instructional program aligned to state standards.
- **Synergy Model** (state model): District fully and effectively implements Turnaround Principles described in federal guidance (e.g., ensures principal has capacity to lead turnaround effort and teachers are effective and able to improve instruction; provides operational flexibility for principal to support school turnaround plans in key areas; ensures school significantly extends learning time for students and for teacher collaboration; ensures school improvement initiatives include rigorous, research-based instructional programs, practices, and models; and provides school with technology, training, and support for using data to inform instruction and continuous improvement).

Selection of any of these models may require modification or addition of local school board policy and procedures and/or collective bargaining agreements.

III. Executive Summary and Recommendations

A thorough review of extant and collected data by the Academic Performance Audit Team led to the identification of a number of concerns; an analysis of these concerns resulted in the formulation of three recommendations. Legislation enacted in 2012 by the Washington State Legislature (E2SSB 5329) requires the district and school to explicitly address the concerns and recommendations when selecting the intervention model and completing the Required Action Plan (submitted to the State Board of Education in June 2014) and Student and School Success Action Plan (submitted to the Office of Student and School Success in October 2014). The school and district's action plan will need to address:

- **Recommendation 1: Expand the instructional core to ensure (a) all students receive grade-level appropriate instruction and curriculum that are research-based, rigorous, and aligned with State academic content standards; and (b) interventions are differentiated based on student needs.**
- **Recommendation 2: Ensure the principal and leadership team demonstrate the capacity to (a) lead and engage staff in the school's data-based action-planning process, (b) monitor changes in educator practice and student outcomes resulting from the plan, and (c) revise plans as needed to shift educator practice and significantly increase student learning.**
- **Recommendation 3: Ensure the learning environment is safe, mutually respectful, and honors the cultures and families of the students represented in the school.**

Turnaround Principles and Indicators identified across these three recommendations are tightly coupled, that is, they are intended to support district and school leadership teams to collaborate and build coherence at each stage of the action-planning process. This tight coupling also enables teams to scaffold their S.M.A.R.T. Goals and Tasks as they create the Required Action Plan and Student and School Success Action Plans.

Academic Performance Audit Team members learned about a number of practices at the school and district levels that we believe will serve leadership and staff well as they address these recommendations. These are described in the *Strengths* section that follows each recommendation; many represent practices suggested in research as critical to boosting educator practice and increasing student outcomes.

IV. District and School Overview

The Yakima School District is located primarily within the boundaries of the City of Yakima. Serving a diverse population of over 15,000 students, Yakima is the 18th largest district in Washington, the second largest in Eastern Washington, and the largest Latino-majority district in the state (source: Yakima SD Website, Accessed April, 2014). The district employs approximately 857 teachers serving students attending two high schools, five middle schools, fourteen elementary schools, one alternative high school, one technical school, and one online high school. Forty-three certificated staff members are assigned to Washington Middle School (WMS). Sixty-five percent of WMS teachers possess masters' degrees, and the average teaching experience is 11 years. Washington Middle School serves approximately 681 students (Source: OSPI Report Card). During focus group, district and school leaders indicated there has been a dramatic turnover of teaching staff at Washington Middle School.

While many staff members are relatively new to Washington Middle school, they are high energy (BERC Assessment of Progress Report, 2013) and committed to improving their individual and collective

capacity to improve outcomes for students. Washington Middle School's Student and School Success Action Plan shows attention to at least one Expected Indicator in each research-based Turnaround Principle. A review of the current plan indicates that a majority of Expected Indicators have action plans and tasks in the initial stages of implementation. However, several remain at the beginning stages of development. This assessment of the school's plan is consistent with an analysis of data collected during interviews with district leaders on March 4, 2014, extant data (e.g., student performance and demographic data, Student and School Success Action Plans), and data collected during an on-site visit by the Academic Performance Audit Team on March 10, 2014.

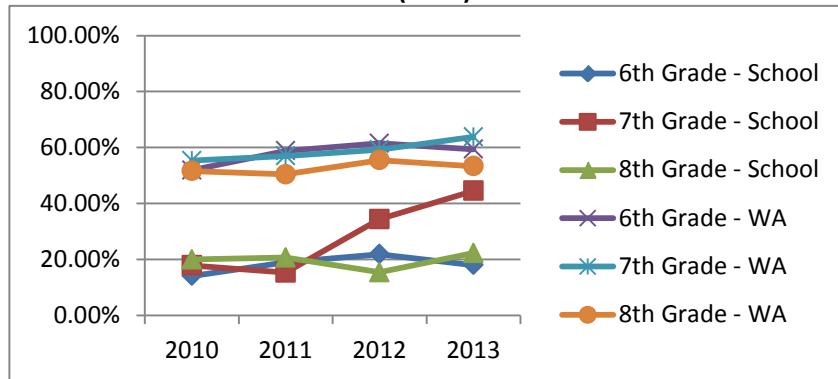
The following charts and tables provide additional background information regarding Washington Middle School. While growth is evident in Mathematics, it is important to note that Reading achievement has generally trended downward over the past three years. For a little over a year, Washington has focused on incorporating Bill Daggett's framework around Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships. According to staff reports, this model helps staff, students, and parents understand two frameworks: a knowledge taxonomy and the different levels of knowledge from recall (low level) to combining knowledge for logical patterns and creativity (high level) (Source: BERC 2013 Report).

DRAFT

Washington Middle School Summary – Yakima School District

<p>Student Demographics</p> <p>Source: OSPI State Report Card</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Table 1. The table provides a profile of students in the 2012-13 school year.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr style="background-color: #4F7942; color: white;"> <th colspan="3">Enrollment</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>October 2012 Student Count</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">694</td> </tr> <tr> <td>May 2013 Student Count</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">692</td> </tr> <tr style="background-color: #4F7942; color: white;"> <th colspan="3">Gender (October 2012)</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Male</td> <td style="text-align: right;">352</td> <td style="text-align: right;">50.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Female</td> <td style="text-align: right;">342</td> <td style="text-align: right;">49.3%</td> </tr> <tr style="background-color: #4F7942; color: white;"> <th colspan="3">Race/Ethnicity (October 2012)</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Black</td> <td style="text-align: right;">9</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hispanic</td> <td style="text-align: right;">637</td> <td style="text-align: right;">91.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>White</td> <td style="text-align: right;">40</td> <td style="text-align: right;">5.8%</td> </tr> <tr style="background-color: #4F7942; color: white;"> <th colspan="3">Special Programs</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Free or Reduced-Price Meals (May 2013)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">673</td> <td style="text-align: right;">97.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Special Education (May 2013)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">60</td> <td style="text-align: right;">8.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Transitional Bilingual (May 2013)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">261</td> <td style="text-align: right;">37.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Migrant (May 2013)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">197</td> <td style="text-align: right;">28.5%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Enrollment			October 2012 Student Count		694	May 2013 Student Count		692	Gender (October 2012)			Male	352	50.7%	Female	342	49.3%	Race/Ethnicity (October 2012)			Black	9	1.3%	Hispanic	637	91.8%	White	40	5.8%	Special Programs			Free or Reduced-Price Meals (May 2013)	673	97.3%	Special Education (May 2013)	60	8.7%	Transitional Bilingual (May 2013)	261	37.7%	Migrant (May 2013)	197	28.5%																																
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Figure 2. Grade-Level Achievement Data on State Assessments in Math from Baseline (2010) to 2013



**Student Achievement-
Whole School**

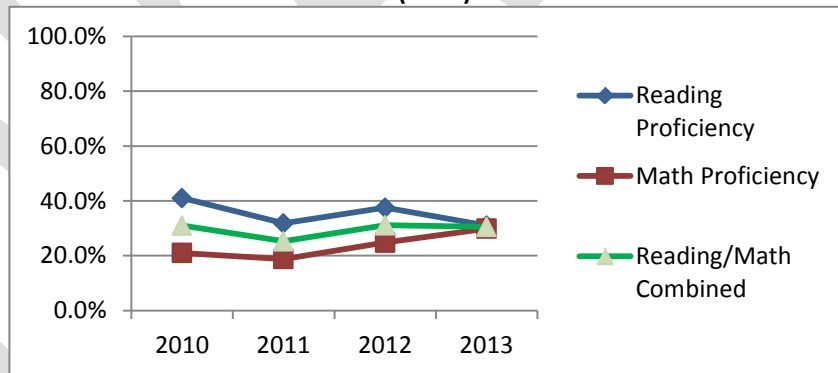
Source: OSPI
State Report
Card

Note: Cells shaded in green represent increases over time; cells shaded in red represent decreases over time.

Table 3. Whole School Achievement Data on State Assessments from Baseline (2010) to 2013

Washington Middle School	2010	2011	2012	2013	Change Baseline to 2013
Reading	41.0%	31.8%	37.5%	31.0%	-10.0%
Mathematics	21.0%	18.8%	24.8%	29.9%	8.9%
Reading/Math Combined*	31.0%	25.3%	31.1%	30.5%	-.5%

Figure 3. Whole School Achievement Data on State Assessments from Baseline (2010) to 2013



*Reading/Math Combined: Weighted average of student performance on state assessments in Reading and Math; only continuously enrolled students are included in the weighted average.

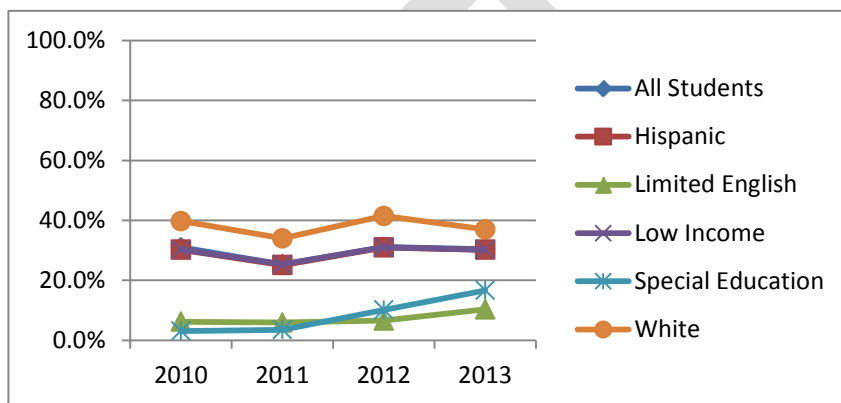
Student Achievement-Subgroup Data

Source: OSPI State Report Card

Table 4. Subgroup Achievement Data on State Assessments from Baseline (2010) to 2013 in Reading/Math Combined

Washington Middle School	2010	2011	2012	2013
All Students	31.0%	25.3%	31.1%	30.5%
Hispanic	30.2%	25.1%	30.9%	30.2%
Limited English	6.2%	5.9%	6.6%	10.3%
Low Income	30.3%	25.4%	31.0%	30.2%
Special Education	3.1%	3.6%	10.2%	16.7%
White	39.7%	34.0%	41.5%	37.0%

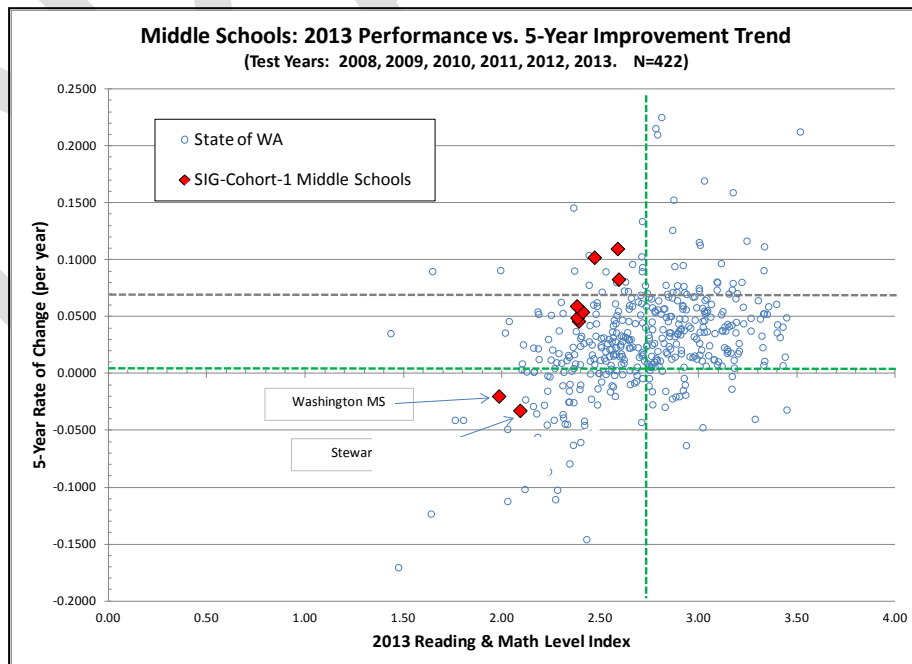
Figure 4. Subgroup Achievement Data on State Assessments from Baseline (2010) to 2013 in Reading/Math Combined



Student Achievement-Whole School

Source: Center for Educational Effectiveness and OSPI State Report Card

Figure 5. Five-Year Improvement Trend from 2009 to 2013



V. Recommendations

Recommendation 1: The school's Improvement Plan should address how the instructional core will be expanded to ensure (a) all students receive grade-level appropriate instruction and curriculum that are research-based, rigorous, and aligned with State academic content standards; and (b) interventions are differentiated based on student needs.

The findings informing this recommendation are segmented into the following areas, each of which aligns with Turnaround Principles:

- **1.A - System to Place Students in Core and Intervention for Language Arts and Mathematics** (Turnaround Principle 4: Strengthen the school's instructional program based on student needs and ensure that the instructional program is research-based, rigorous, and aligned with State academic content standards)
- **1.B - Professional Development, Technical Assistance, and Support** (Turnaround Principle 2: Ensure teachers are effective and able to improve instruction)
- **1.C - Professional Learning Communities and Use of Data** (Turnaround Principle 5: Use data to inform instruction and for continuous improvement, including by providing time for collaboration on the use of data)

Each segment includes a brief description of current practice, concerns identified in data, and strengths upon which to build. A list of specific Turnaround Principles and Indicators that must be addressed by the school and district, recommendations for the Office of Student and School Success, and questions for leadership teams to consider as they move forward with Recommendation #1 conclude the section.

1.A - System to Place Students in Core and Intervention for Language Arts and Mathematics

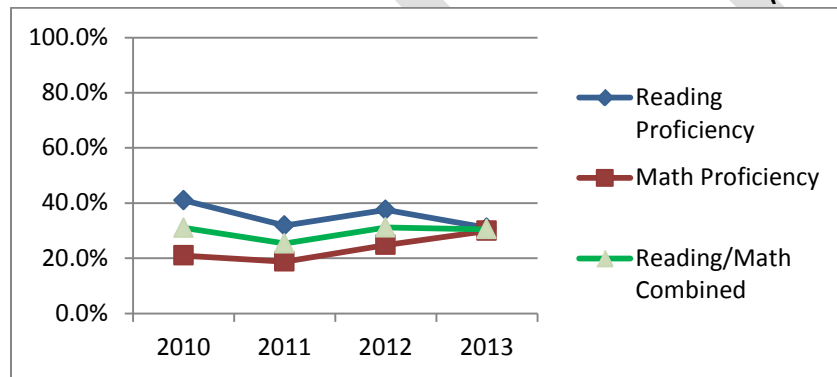
Washington Middle School (WMS) leadership and staff described their system for placing students in Language Arts and Mathematics classes. As indicated below, all sixth grade students are double-dosed (i.e., placed in block classes) for both Language Arts and Mathematics, and placement for seventh and eighth grade students is determined by proficiency on state assessments (Measurements of Student Progress [MSP]).

- **All 6th Grade Students:** All students in sixth grade are placed in blocked classes (i.e., double-dosed) even if they are at grade level in Language Arts or Mathematics. Similar to the curriculum for Level I seventh and eighth graders described below, the READ 180 and Carnegie Math curriculum serve as both the core and the intervention curriculum. Staff clarified that students in double-blocked READ 180 classes, regardless of grade level, do not receive core instruction and curriculum in Language Arts.
- **Level I 7th and 8th Grade Students:** All seventh and eighth grade students scoring at Level I on the MSP are placed in double blocks that use READ 180 for the Language Arts curriculum and Carnegie Math for the Mathematics curriculum. In each case, the curriculum serves as both the core and intervention curriculum. Approximately 60% of 7th and 8th students are enrolled in double-block classes. Staff clarified that students enrolled in Mathematics interventions receive their instruction from a mathematics teacher.
- **"Bubble" 7th and 8th Grade Students:** Students scoring 370-400 on the MSP receive an intervention, but not necessarily in a blocked class.
- **"Grade level" 7th and 8th Grade Students:** These students are placed in a one-period Language Arts class and one-period Mathematics class; each uses grade-level curriculum, rather than READ 180 or Carnegie Math. WMS also offers honors Language Arts classes for seventh and eighth graders and one section of Algebra 1 for eighth graders.

Staff and leadership indicated this system was built to support below-benchmark students. They added that they incorporate the intervention into the block, because “students won’t or can’t stay [after school] if the intervention is optional.” Staff described several benefits to this system. First, it reduces the number of transitions during the school day. Next, the opportunities for students to build relationships with their teachers increase. Finally, because many students are below benchmark, the system serves a majority of the students well. As one teacher stated, “This system means Washington Middle School students probably get more intervention time than most middle school students in the district.”

Concerns: There is a lack of evidence indicating this system is serving Washington Middle School students well. As illustrated in the figure below, data on state assessments in Reading and Mathematics over the last several years indicate a lack of consistent progress. While Mathematics Proficiency increased by approximately 9% (from 21% in 2010 to almost 30% in 2013), Reading Proficiency decreased by 10% (from 41% to 31%) over the same period.

Whole School Achievement Data on State Assessments from Baseline (2010) to 2013



*Reading/Math Combined: Weighted average of student performance on state assessments in Reading and Math; only continuously enrolled students are included in the weighted average.

The use of the same curriculum for core and intervention does not ensure all students receive rigorous, grade-level appropriate instruction and curriculum. This may be one reason student achievement in Reading has declined since baseline. Several staff indicated they believe that this is not a concern among some of their peers: “Some staff members believe that having only 60% of students at standard is all right.”

The block system as described is not generally structured for students to exit. Rather, the intervention becomes the “destination,” that is, students do not receive interventions based on progress monitoring and then return to their core class once the deficit is addressed. Rather, students generally remain in the intervention regardless of their progress. For example, when asked about the number of students who exit READ 180, staff responded: “We do exit some from READ 180, especially 8th grade students. If they exit, then they move into regular English and pick up an elective. In fact, we have students who may exit over the next few weeks.” The supports provided to the student to transition smoothly from a double-block class using an intervention curriculum to a single period class using grade-level curriculum—particularly during the middle of a term—were not described.

Staff survey results cited in the 2012-13 Assessment of Progress Report indicate that more than 80% of staff members report they have data, and nearly an equal percentage reported that data are used to monitor interventions. School leadership and staff would benefit from an analysis of how reported high levels of staff use of data to monitor interventions align with student outcomes on state assessments.

Strengths upon which to build: As leadership and staff consider how to ensure all students receive grade-level instruction and curriculum, they will also want to determine (a) how to most effectively differentiate within the core curriculum and (b) how to provide additional interventions. Both READ 180 and Carnegie Math can serve as effective intervention curriculum for their students. Teachers in these content areas indicated they received training in how to implement both programs with fidelity. Additionally, coaching support is provided by the district around these programs. Teachers reported positive impacts on student learning as a result of the curriculum and indicated that students are now using specific strategies more frequently and with more success. Both students and teachers indicated that posting charts showing progress with the computerized portion of the Carnegie Math Program and with READ 180 is a strong incentive for students to complete their work. All of these factors are strengths upon which staff can build as they address this recommendation.

Interviewees indicated that improvement in Math Student Growth Percentiles seems to indicate positive impact of their efforts. However, the Student Growth Percentiles in Reading are not showing similar improvement on state assessments as a result of implementing READ 180. Noting this contrast is an important step in using data to inform instruction and next steps for the school to consider.

Additionally, the school's current Student and School Success Plan indicates the ILT will maintain the process of regularly monitoring and making adjustments to continuously improve the core instructional program based on identified student needs (Indicator P4-IIA03). The plan also includes the following tasks:

- "An instructional cycle will be developed to reflect ongoing use of data from formative assessments that demonstrates the teachers differentiation based on those data. Regardless of the type of assessment the instruction should reflect differentiation for second language students, students struggling with literacy, and those students who are having difficulty in mathematics." (Indicator P4-IIB04)
- "Content teams will identify the common post-tests that will be looked at for the assessment and follow up treatment." (Indicator P4-IIB05)

Though not completed as scheduled, the inclusion of these tasks provides evidence that the ILT understands how assessments can be used to inform core instruction and to determine interventions that can be delivered within core instruction.

These strengths can inform the work of leadership and staff as they develop S.M.A.R.T. Goals and tasks associated with this recommendation.

1.B - Professional Development, Technical Assistance, and Support

District leaders identified two goals for all schools: (1) create a culture of high expectations for learning, focusing on five strategies that address English language development (referred to as the 5 Yakima School District Strategies [5 YSD Strategies]) and three performance tasks that align with Smarter Balanced Assessments and the International Center for Leadership in Education Initiative and increase rigor/relevance; and (2) establish a mutually safe, respectful learning environment (e.g., knowing student interests and using that knowledge when planning instruction). The district recognizes that a degree of tension exists between the building and district professional development goals.

Both district and school personnel described a variety of supports available for teachers to improve their practice. District leaders indicated that Washington Middle School needed enhanced coaching support, so the district allocated funds to provide a Carnegie Math coach, district-assigned Math Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA), instructional facilitator, and leadership coach. Staff also reported seeing the use of the 5 YSD Strategies across the curriculum, citing use of the Frayer Model as an example. One staff member opined, “We hope students will eventually make the connections.” The ILT described receiving walkthrough data from administrators focused on the “10/2” and other 5 YSD Strategies. Interviewees also indicated that the regional Educational Service District (ESD 105) continues to provide support for instructional improvement and use of specific structures for gauging shifts in practice.

Concerns: Interviewees described several challenges. New teachers have not received training in the Safe and Civil Schools Initiative, described by interviewees as a cornerstone for creating a safe and supportive learning environment for students at Washington Middle School. There are also a number of inexperienced teachers, so they need a high level of support to build their instructional capacity.

While teachers have access to a variety of professional development opportunities and ongoing technical assistance, evidence suggests teachers are not yet consistently implementing research-based instructional practices with fidelity. BERC researchers reported an 11% decrease in the use of Powerful Teaching and Learning from 2011-12 to 2012-13, with only 26% of lessons showing clear evidence (scoring a 3 or 4) of Powerful Teaching and Learning in 2012-13. Additionally, while many teachers (veteran and teachers new to the profession) were provided language acquisition strategies, interviewees reported that not all have demonstrated success in implementing these strategies in the classroom. This was confirmed through classroom visits conducted by audit team members. This observation also aligns with other interviewee comments that delivery of instruction is a struggle for teachers and most continue to rely on direct instruction. Yet another challenge identified by district and school personnel is the constant “teacher churn.”

Themes emerging during the classroom visits conducted by audit team members also suggest room for growth. Team members used the 5 YSD Strategies as their lens during the 8-12 minute visits in 26 classrooms and observed the following across multiple classrooms:

- Passive compliance over active engagement was observed.
- Discourse was limited, and students did not have many opportunities to speak to their content understanding and intellectual engagement.
- An opportunity to extend student learning was not always provided.
- Objectives and activities did not always match, and/or objectives were not communicated with students.
- Many activities were not aligned with expressed outcomes (learning targets).
- Individualized learning pace was observed; however, the time spent with small groups was often not well defined and reverted to one-on-one interaction between teacher and student.
- Teachers tended to ask students low-level questions and provided negative feedback to correct errors in student thinking and work; some teacher questions were answered by the teacher with minimal wait time.

Strengths upon which to build: Both district and school leaders communicated a strong commitment to providing the professional development and technical assistance essential to build educator capacity to increase learning outcomes for Washington Middle School students. Teachers report a similar commitment to improving their craft. Additionally, the district has developed a number of initiatives to

support educators to increase their leadership and instructional capacity. While a strength, these multiple learning opportunities also bring challenges. It is essential that district and school leadership identify and focus on those initiatives that will have the highest impact on educator skills, so they can reduce the “initiative fatigue” described by building staff. District leaders also recognized the impact on Washington Middle School of the performance of students coming to WMS from “feeder pattern” schools.

Additionally, across the 26 classroom visits, a number of strengths were observed by audit team members:

- Student progress in classrooms is regularly tracked and posted on the walls in the classroom, particularly for Carnegie Math and READ 180.
- Technology (e.g., software, a projector and document camera, video) was integrated in many classrooms.
- Many classrooms employed journaling as a way of recording student ideas and provided content.
- Agendas were also seen as a way to keep students focused.

1.C - Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and Use of Data

District leaders described the collaboration of content and grade-level teams as a strength for Washington Middle School. Though opportunities for collaboration have been reduced since the sunset of School Improvement Grant funding in June 2013, staff continue to meet regularly in PLCs.

Concerns: Results on state assessments and the lack of a coherent system that ensures all students receive grade-level, standards-based instruction and curriculum and differentiated instruction as needed suggest staff teams have not maximized the opportunity provided in their PLCs to analyze student work and determine instructional changes needed to boost student achievement.

Strengths upon which to build: The PLC structure in which all staff members have been organized provides a strong foundation for staff to engage in this work. BERC researchers reported that PLC time provides staff the opportunity to have discussions around upcoming assessments, previous professional development learning, items discussed in the building leadership team, and the transition to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). One staff member shared, “One transformation we have had [in our PLCs] is with the curriculum materials in math and aligning them to the CCSS. It has been really positive.”

Interviewees from both the school and district reported a variety of data (e.g., Math Benchmark, diagnostic testing for new students) are both available and used by teachers when identifying student needs. They also indicated that district Assessment staff trained the building Instructional Leadership Team (ILT), and, in turn, the ILT trained staff. In the 2012-2013 Assessment of Progress Report, The BERC Group reported systems are in place to support the use of data, “at least at the district level.” Researchers indicated that staff and leaders reported their efforts to use data and manage instructional decision-making have grown over time. Moreover, there has been an increased use of data in Years 2 and 3 of the School Improvement Grant Initiative. BERC researchers concluded the evidence implies development of district capacity to manage and use data, and teacher capacity is under development. Together, school and district interviews and findings in the Assessment of Progress Report indicate that the foundation has been laid for teachers to be able to access and utilize an assessment system that includes both summative and formative data. Such a system supports teachers in monitoring student

progress toward identified standards and determining when interventions are needed, the type of intervention most likely to meet student needs, if the intervention is successful, and if not, next steps.

Requirements for Recommendation #1

In light of concerns raised for this recommendation, Washington Middle School and the Yakima School District must address the following Turnaround Principles and Indicators when selecting the school improvement model and crafting the Required Action Plan and Revised (Initial) Student and School Success Action Plan (submitted to the State Board of Education in June 2014) and Student and School Success Action Plan (submitted in October 2014):

Washington Middle School

- Principle 2: Provide targeted professional development (PD) to build teacher capacity aligned with the district's instructional framework (Danielson) and monitor impacts of PD in educator practice and student outcomes. (Indicators P2-IF11 and/or P2-IF12)
- Principle 3: Extend learning time for students and time for teacher collaboration within and/or beyond the school day, week, or year, and monitor progress of these extended learning opportunities on educator capacity and student learning. (Indicators P3-IVD05 and/or P3-IVD06)
- Principle 4: Align instructional strategies with student learning needs; regularly monitor and make adjustments to continuously improve the core instructional program based on identified student needs. (Indicator P4-IIA03)
- Principle 4: Expand teacher and instructional coach practices that support identification of student learning needs and differentiation of instruction based on needs. (Indicator P4-III A07)
- Principle 5: Expand the capacity of teacher teams (grade-level and/or departmental) to monitor and assess mastery of standards-based objectives and to make instructional adjustments to the core instructional program based on student needs. (Indicator P5-IID12)

Yakima School District

- Principle 2: Provide differentiated professional development and technical assistance to teachers to move instruction to increased levels of rigor and relevance for students. (Indicator P2-C)
- Principle 2: Build capacity within the coaching cadre to (a) support expanded teacher core instructional practices and differentiated instruction and (b) train on the adopted instructional framework. (Indicator P2-C)
- Principle 2: Ensure coherence across professional development and teaching/learning practices within the school. (Indicator P2-C)
- Principle 3: Allocate resources (e.g., personnel, fiscal, and professional development and technical assistance) to support additional learning time for students and staff. (Indicator P3-A)
- Principle 4: Provide training and support on systems of intervention that result in accelerated student learning. (Indicator P4-B)
- Principle 5: Provide appropriate assessment tools, data management systems, and training on the interpretation of data. (Indicator P5-A)

These Turnaround Principles and Indicators are tightly coupled. Therefore, district and school leadership teams can scaffold the S.M.A.R.T. Goals and Tasks as they revise/create the Required Action Plan submitted to the State Board of Education and the Student and School Success Action Plan submitted to the Office of Student and School Success. The Wise Ways documents on Indistar® describe research-based practices leadership teams can implement as they craft action plans around school- and district-level Indicators.

Office of Student and School Success: Additional next steps for the Office of Student and School Success to support both Washington Middle School and the Yakima School District follow.

- Principle 2, 4, and 5: Provide and monitor professional development and technical assistance to school staff and district instructional coaches consistent with the plan. Suggestions follow:
 - Implementing an instructional program that ensures all students receive rigorous, grade-level appropriate instruction and interventions based on student needs (Principles 4 and 5)
 - Collaborating in professional learning communities (PLCs) and using data to inform instruction (Principles 4 and 5)
 - Monitoring progress of school-based initiatives (Principle 5)
- Principle 2: Convene ongoing meetings among external and internal professional development providers to improve coherence and alignment of supports provided to the school.

Recommendation 2: The school and district action plans will need to demonstrate expanded capacity of the principal and leadership team to demonstrate their ability to (a) lead and engage staff in the school's data-based action-planning process, (b) monitor changes in educator practice and student outcomes resulting from the plan, and (c) revise plans as needed to significantly increase student learning.

The findings informing this recommendation are segmented into two areas, each of which aligns with the identified Turnaround Principles:

- **2.A – Principal Leadership** (Turnaround Principle 1: Provide strong leadership; Principal 2: Ensure teachers are effective and able to improve instruction; Principle 5: Use data to inform instruction and for continuous improvement, including by providing time for collaboration on the use of data)
- **2.B – Distributed Leadership** (Turnaround Principle 1: Provide strong leadership; Principal 2: Ensure teachers are effective and able to improve instruction; Principle 5: Use data to inform instruction and for continuous improvement, including by providing time for collaboration on the use of data)

Each segment includes a brief description of current practice, concerns identified in data, and strengths upon which to build. A list of specific Turnaround Principles and Indicators that must be addressed by the school and district, recommendations for the Office of Student and School Success, and questions for leadership teams to consider as they move forward with Recommendation #2 conclude the section.

2.A – Principal Leadership

As indicated in the Introduction to this report, Washington Middle School was awarded a School Improvement Grant (SIG) for three years (2010-11 through 2012-13) to fully and effectively implement the federal Transformation model. This required the school and district to replace the principal and address five areas critical to transforming persistently low-achieving schools: developing teacher and principal leader effectiveness, implementing instructional reform strategies, extending learning time, creating community connections, and providing operating flexibility and sustained support. To comply with the requirement to replace the principal, Yakima School District leaders moved a sitting principal from another school in the district to Washington Middle School at the end of the 2009-10 school year. The superintendent opened the position to in-district candidates and chose the new principal based upon his background, experience, and skills.

The current principal is in his fourth year at Washington Middle School. At the time of on-site visit, district leaders shared they had not yet determined who will lead the school in 2014-15 and beyond. The

district also did not identify the approved federal or school improvement model that will be implemented at Washington Middle School over the next three years. However, all but the federal Restart and Closure models require the district to replace the principal and/or ensure the principal has demonstrated the capacity to turnaround schools and lead improvement efforts. To satisfy this requirement, district leaders are developing clarity regarding the competencies they will use to ensure Washington Middle School is led by an individual who can lead, facilitate, and manage transformational change.

District leaders indicated they will use an interview protocol that focuses on turnaround competencies in the selection process. Among the competencies considered in the selection are the following:

- Data literate and capable of developing a data-informed culture
- Instructionally focused and able to lead teachers to believe they are better at their craft as a result of their interactions with the principal
- Student focused and able to make students feel they will be better because of their interactions with the principal
- Guided by experiences, ideas, and convictions that will serve as the compass for setting direction, including a strong conviction that all students can learn and succeed at high levels
- Capable of working well as a member of a team and understanding the role of central services from the district office that can be accessed to support the school
- Displaying an affect that builds energy within the school
- Showing compassion, humanity, and cultural sensitivity that allow for increased engagement among parents and community members
- Ability to work “with people,” not “at people”; ability to build relationships with the people they serve

Concerns: Though the school engaged in an intensive transformation effort over the last four years, a variety of data reviewed by the Academic Performance Audit Team indicate that changes in instructional, leadership, and schoolwide practices were not sufficient to turn around the school’s persistent low performance. When considering in-school influences, research indicates that the impact of principal leadership is second only to that of teacher practices in improving student outcomes (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Hence, the district will be well-served by taking this opportunity to select an individual who demonstrates competencies identified in research as essential for turning around schools and leading the change process. Additionally, several interviewees reported district and building leaders appear to be perceptually parallel as opposed to aligned. It will be important for district and building leadership to align and focus their priorities for Washington Middle School’s improvement initiatives.

Strengths upon which to build: Principal competencies shared by district leaders align with those identified in research as essential to successfully turn around performance in persistently low-achieving schools and accelerate learning outcomes for all students. The use of these competencies as the foundation for the selection process enables the district to ensure the principal leading the transformation effort has capacity to (a) engage the leadership team, staff, and community in the challenging work of continuous school improvement; (b) use a variety of evidence to track progress toward building educator capacity and boosting student learning; and (c) collaborate with district and school leadership to address concerns described in this report as contributing to the school’s lack of progress.

District leaders also indicated they will provide a level of operational flexibility to the principal: “If something is needed, then that goes to the top of the list.” They also indicated the principal needs to feel free to challenge district policies and practices in a respectful, private manner: “Someone closer to the action may have a better answer. We always want rationale and to see data to support the change, and the school needs to stick with the change long enough to see if works.” District leaders also indicated they are “more prepared to support” the school since going through the SIG process.

2.B – Distributed Leadership

The principal described “building a shared leadership team” as a high priority. During his first year, he reorganized the Leadership Team, now known as the Instructional Leadership Team or ILT, to include department leaders, instructional coaches, and district liaisons. Interviewees indicated that prior to this reorganization, several teams—including the Core Team and Department Leaders—provided leadership in the school. The principal also decided that the ILT, rather than the Core Team, would provide guidance and serve as the decision-making body for schoolwide initiatives. Departments choose their representative to the ILT; this process contrasts with the self-selection process described by interviewees for the Core Team. It also ensures that each staff member has representation on the school’s decision-making team. The ILT meets twice monthly; team members indicated that one of the two district liaisons assigned to the school regularly attends these meetings and the other does not.

To develop the capacity among team members for shared leadership, the principal and an external consultant led a three-day workshop for the ILT in summer 2013. Among the goals for the retreat were to create shared leadership, build leadership team capacity, analyze data for teachers to have input into school systems, and develop meeting structures (e.g., using template when creating meeting agendas) to maintain a focus on student learning. The team also crafted five goals for the team: distribute and share leadership; integrate literacy strategies across all classes; build trust; improve student/teacher relationships; and provide language support for all learners.

The ILT continues to develop a shared vision for its role in guiding the work of the school and managing growth in service of student success. The ILT is also focused on building ownership of the school’s improvement plan among teacher leaders. A data review model was developed to engage team members in the process of informing and monitoring the impact of change efforts. Interviewees indicated there is an expectation that ILT members work on transferring the experiences of the leadership team to their departmental efforts, and some of this work is beginning to gain traction. Interviewees cited writing across classes (e.g., journaling) every day in every class as an example of a schoolwide effort.

Concerns: The ILT’s role in leading school climate initiatives such as dress code, attendance, and Safe and Civil Schools was not clearly defined or guided by the ILT. While the Safe and Civil Schools Initiative is a schoolwide priority, the ILT reported it does not regularly analyze school climate data (e.g., attendance and discipline data) showing the impact of the initiative on a regular basis. Rather, ILT members describe the principal as collecting and publishing these data. Similarly, team members indicated they seldom gather and analyze data in order to understand the level of implementation or impact of other initiatives. Additional concerns surfaced by interviewees include the following: the ILT does not determine or have a strong voice in selecting, providing and monitoring results of staff professional development, and its roles and responsibilities with respect to the work in the PLCs are not clearly defined. Finally, ILT members indicated minimal knowledge of the Turnaround Principles. These Principles and associated Indicators provide the foundation for Required Action Plans and Student and

School Success Action Plans that must be submitted by Required Action Districts and their identified schools.

Strengths upon which to build: The ILT is developing a common vision of shared leadership, beginning to learn its responsibilities, and creating norms and processing elements to support its work. The team is also exploring the process for progress monitoring and seeking strategies for gathering and assessing the impact of the school's success initiatives. For instance, team members reported that agendas now focus on school goals and identification of data to track progress. Interviewees report the ILT has an emerging understanding of its role as an agent for change, describing the team as moving from a "funnel" of information to serving as an "engine" in support of continuous improvement.

The commitment of team members to (a) grow their individual and collective capacity for shared leadership, (b) maintain a focus on continuous instructional improvement, (c) engage peers in the school's change efforts, (d) use a variety of data to track progress of improvement initiatives, and (e) facilitate the growth of others will support the principal and staff as they engage in the challenging and continuous work of school reform.

Finally, BERK researchers indicated that district staff report systems are in place to support use of data (at least at the district level). Interviewees also described efforts to use data and manage instructional decision-making have grown over time. Increased use and understanding of the role of data in the change process serve as strengths for the principal, ILT and others to utilize in their action planning and progress monitoring.

Requirements for Recommendation #2

In light of concerns raised for this recommendation, Washington Middle School and the Yakima School District must address the following Turnaround Principles and Indicators when selecting the school improvement model and crafting the Required Action Plan and Revised (Initial) Student and School Success Action Plan (submitted to the State Board of Education in June 2014) and Student and School Success Action Plan (submitted in October 2014):

Washington Middle School

- Principle 1: Ensure principal capacity to maintain a focus on instructional improvement and student learning outcomes. (Indicator P1-IE08)
- Principle 1: Develop shared/distributed leader capacity to facilitate a continuous improvement process; guide and manage the review of data, selection of strategies, and implementation of improvement efforts; and monitor the effectiveness of these efforts. (Indicator P1-ID10)
- Principle 2 (and/or 5): Set goals for Professional Development and monitor the extent to which staff has changed practice and impacted student learning. (Indicators P2-IF14 and/or P5-IID06)
- Principle 3: Establish a team structure for collaboration with specific duties and time for instructional planning. (Indicators P3-IVD05 and/or P3-IVD06)
- Principle 5: Use a variety of data to assess strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum and instructional strategies. (Indicator P5-IID08)

Yakima School District

- Principle 1: Identify leader competencies required of a transformational leader and ensure an individual with these skills is leading the school. (Indicator P1-A)
- Principle 1: Support and engage with school leaders to expand their capacity for transformational leadership. (Indicator P1-A, P1-B, P1-C)

- Principle 3: Allocate resources (e.g., personnel, fiscal, professional development and technical assistance) to support time for teacher collaboration and instructional planning. (Indicator P3-A)
- Principle 5: Provide technology, training, and support for school leadership to collect and analyze a variety of data to track changes in educator practice and student learning. (Indicator P5-A)

Similar to the requirements for Recommendation 1, the Turnaround Principles and Indicators listed above are tightly coupled. Therefore, district and school leadership team can scaffold the S.M.A.R.T. Goals and Tasks as they revise/create the Required Action Plan submitted to the State Board of Education and the Student and School Success Action Plan submitted to the Office of Student and School Success. The Wise Ways documents on Indistar® describe research-based practices leadership teams can implement as they craft action plans around school- and district-level Indicators.

Office of Student and School Success: Additional next steps for the Office of Student and School Success to support both Washington Middle School and the Yakima School District follow.

- Principle 1: Develop and disseminate research-based guidance to support districts to recruit, select, and retain leaders demonstrating capacity to turnaround the school and lead the transformational effort.
- Principle 1: Provide training and support to district leaders who are charged with developing principal capacity as transformational leaders.
- Principle 5: Provide training and support to build principal and school leadership team capacity to use data to create, implement, monitor, and if needed, revise school improvement plans written in S.M.A.R.T. Goal format; plans should explicitly identify expected changes in educator practice and student learning and evidence that will be used to track progress toward these changes.

Recommendation 3: The school and district action plans will need to identify how they will ensure the learning environment is safe, mutually respectful, and honors the cultures and families of the students represented in the school.

The findings informing this recommendation are segmented into the following areas, each of which aligns with Turnaround Principles:

- **3.A – School and Classroom Environment** (Turnaround Principle 6: Establish a school environment that improves school safety and discipline; address other non-academic factors that impact student achievement, such as students’ social, emotional, and health needs)
- **3.B – Parent/Family and Community Engagement** (Turnaround Principle 7: Provide ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement)

Each segment includes a brief description of current practice, concerns identified in data, and strengths upon which to build. A list of specific Turnaround Principles and Indicators that must be addressed by the school and district, recommendations for the Office of Student and School Success, and questions for leadership teams to consider as they move forward with Recommendation #3 conclude the section.

While not directly related to the learning environment, it is important to note that school staff members reported a lack of recognition from the district office and administration about the positive changes that have occurred at Washington Middle School. District leaders agreed that they emphasized success in other schools and failed to actively communicate and formally recognize success at Washington Middle School. The audit team suggests district and building administration recognize the school’s efforts,

achievements, and successes at the individual, department, and building level; doing so will help build staff commitment and encourage staff members to incorporate new philosophies and try evidence-supported ideas outside of their comfort zone. The audit team also recommends district and building leaders and staff build a supportive foundation and create additional opportunities to strengthen relationships among staff (certified and classified). While accountability must be maintained, it would behoove school and district leaders to consider more formal ways of recognizing staff accomplishments and celebrating their life and career events with staff, students, parents, community members, and the rest of the district.

Additionally, multiple written comments from staff members indicated an interest in transitioning Washington Middle School from a “comprehensive” to an “alternative” middle school. These comments were submitted at the conclusion of the on-site visit, so audit team members did not have an opportunity to understand expectations for this reorganization. Questions to consider:

- How would the school look different? For example, would it be theme-based (e.g., STEM)? Other?
- How would the transition to an alternative school increase student engagement and academic press?
- What roles and responsibilities would the principal, ILT, and staff fulfill in an alternative school environment, and how would they be held accountable to substantially raise student achievement?
- What federal or school improvement model would be implemented?
- What would be the impact of a theme-based alternative school on the community? What happens to the students and families who are not aligned to the theme-based school?

3.A – School and Classroom Environment

When asked to describe their “big buckets” or priorities this year, the ILT cited multiple initiatives implemented by the school to build a positive and safe learning environment for students and staff. Among these are the Safe and Civil Schools Initiative, “Dress 4 Success,” use of student ID badges, Rising Start (award), and perfect attendance rewards. All staff, except those new to Washington Middle School, received intensive professional development (20 days) in order to implement the Safe and Civil Schools Initiative with fidelity. Additionally, the school instituted a uniform policy (“Dress 4 Success”) that requires all students to wear black-, white-, or gray-colored clothing; only the Washington Middle School logo is allowed to show. Students are also required to display their name badges when on campus. Each morning, students assemble outside the school. Security and other personnel greet all students as they enter the building; they also ensure students are properly attired and have their name badges prominently displayed. The principal noted that the last day of school is a “free dress” day for students who bring a polo shirt with the Washington Middle School logo to leave with the school. The following year, these polo shirts are given to students whose families can’t afford them and to students who do not come “Dressed 4 Success.”

Members of the ILT also described the student survey given this year; the goal was to identify the likes and dislikes of students and to use student interests in designing and implementing lessons. This survey emerged from an ILT discussion in response to “I teach/I learn” surveys.

Concerns: Survey data around staff and student perceptions related to the learning environment differ significantly. The BERC Group reported the following data from staff and student surveys administered in spring 2013: 78% of staff members agreed that Washington Middle School is orderly and supports learning, 60% of staff members agree that staff enforce consistent behavior expectations and

consequences in their classrooms, and 74% of staff agree students think school is a safe place. Yet, only 51% of students agree they feel safe at school, and 30% of students agree that students respect each other.

Interviewees shared frustrations that some staff members do not adhere to the common agreements for Safe and Civil Schools and do not require their students to comply with schoolwide expectations. They also reported new staff members have not received professional development; this may impact their ability to effectively implement the initiative. The success of a schoolwide initiative relies directly on the commitment of all staff to implement the initiative with fidelity. Staff members also described a contrast among their peers with respect to beliefs about students. They indicated some staff members share a growth mindset and believe all students can learn and achieve to high levels. They also reported that in contrast, some of their peers adhere to a fixed mindset philosophy; this philosophy evidences itself in a variety of ways (e.g., assigning students to intervention classes that become “destinations” and not ensuring all students receive grade-level, standards-based instruction and curriculum).

When asked about student engagement, one staff member responded by asking team members, “Why don’t Washington Middle School students show up and do their best every day?” Another responded, “Their whole life is gang life.” Yet another offered, “They like knowing that at some point they will be going to high school—even if they don’t pass their classes at Washington.” A final comment was that “their life has been a series of adverse experiences, so it’s not hard to understand.”

Together, these concerns may result in the “passive compliance” versus “culture of learning” described by some interviewees and observed by audit team members. While students were observed to generally follow classroom and school rules, their ability to describe the purpose of their learning, the discourse among students and between students and teachers, and the level of questions posed to students suggest an opportunity for leadership and staff to collectively re-focus their energy on creating a “culture for and of learning.”

Strengths upon which to build: Audit team members observed students adhering to dress codes, displaying name badges, transitioning between classes and lunch in an orderly manner, and following classroom rules. Team members noted that student behavior was not generally seen as an impediment to learning. Additionally, interviewees reported a safer and more respectful environment has resulted from the “Dress 4 Success” initiative and other practices instituted as part of the Safe and Civil Schools Initiative.

3.B – Parent/Family and Community Engagement

The 2012-13 End-of-Year Report for Washington Middle School indicated that staff members continue to make efforts to communicate and involve families through phone calls, e-mails, letters and flyers sent home, family/parent nights, monthly newsletters to the community, use of the website to post events, and posting notices on the reader board.

Concerns: Interviewees reported minimal parent involvement. This was confirmed in the narrative in the End-of-Year Report; although the report included a number of methods to communicate with parents and families, staff indicated parent involvement remains low. BERCC researchers also reported, “The lowest staff and student perceptions around the nine characteristics of high-performing schools related to Family and Community Involvement, rating this attribute at 3.42 and 4.27 respectively (scale is 1-5, with 5 representing ‘Strongly Agree’). Additionally, on the same survey, only 55% of students agreed, ‘My family feels welcome at this school.’”

Strengths upon which to build: District leaders identified having a sense of “compassion, humanity and cultural sensitivity that allows for increased engagement among parents and community members” as one of the criteria that will be used in the principal selection process. Additionally, members of the ILT and district leadership agreed that they “need help with this [increasing parent/family and community engagement].” The commitment and leadership at both the district and school levels will be significant as the school crafts and implements plans to engage parents, families, and the community in supporting student learning and schoolwide improvement efforts.

Requirements for Recommendation #3

In light of concerns raised for this recommendation, Washington Middle School and the Yakima School District must address the following Turnaround Principles and Indicators when selecting the school improvement model and crafting the Required Action Plan and Revised (Initial) Student and School Success Action Plan (submitted to the State Board of Education in June 2014) and Student and School Success Action Plan (submitted in October 2014):

Washington Middle School

- Principle 2: Provide professional development around culturally responsive leadership and instructional practices and monitor the extent to which these practices are implemented and impact student outcomes. (Indicators P2-IF07 and/or P1-IF12)
- Principle 6: Ensure all staff members demonstrate an understanding of community cultures, customs, and values, and model a respect for them. (Indicator P6-IIIC01)
- Principle 7: Collaborate with parents and community members to identify and implement strategies to engage parent and the community in the school’s improvement efforts. (Indicator P7-IVA13)

Yakima School District

- Principle 2: Provide professional development around culturally responsive leadership and instructional practices and monitor the extent to which these practices are implemented and impact student outcomes. (Indicator P2-C)
- Principle 7: Engage parents and community in the transformation process. (Indicator P7-B)

Similar to the requirements for Recommendations 1 and 2, the Turnaround Principles and Indicators listed above are tightly coupled. Therefore, district and school leadership team can scaffold the S.M.A.R.T. Goals and Tasks as they revise/create the Required Action Plan submitted to the State Board of Education and the Student and School Success Action Plan submitted to the Office of Student and School Success. The Wise Ways documents on Indistar® describe research-based practices leadership teams can implement as they craft action plans around school- and district-level Indicators.

Office of Student and School Success: Additional next steps for the Office of Student and School Success to support both Washington Middle School and the Yakima School District follow.

- Principle 6: Disseminate research-based guidance around culturally responsive leadership and instructional practices and provide professional development and technical assistance to support district and school leaders and other staff to build their capacity to improve their practice.
- Principle 7: Disseminate research-based guidance to support schools and districts to engage their parents/families and communities in transformational efforts.

VI. Summary and Next Steps

As stated in the Executive Summary, a thorough review of extant and collected data by the Academic Performance Audit Team led to the identification of a number of concerns; an analysis of these concerns resulted in the formulation of three recommendations. Legislation enacted in 2012 by the Washington State Legislature (E2SSB 5329) requires the district and school to explicitly address the concerns and recommendations when selecting the intervention model and completing the Required Action Plan (submitted to the State Board of Education in June 2014) and Student and School Success Action Plan (submitted to the Office of Student and School Success in October 2014). Recommendations include:

- **Recommendation 1: Expand the instructional core to ensure (a) all students receive grade-level appropriate instruction and curriculum that are research-based, rigorous, and aligned with State academic content standards; and (b) interventions are differentiated based on student needs.**
- **Recommendation 2: Ensure the principal and leadership team demonstrate the capacity to (a) lead and engage staff in the school's data-based action-planning process, (b) monitor changes in educator practice and student outcomes resulting from the plan, and (c) revise plans as needed to shift educator practice and significantly increase student learning.**
- **Recommendation 3: Ensure the learning environment is safe, mutually respectful, and honors the cultures and families of the students represented in the school.**

The district and school leadership teams should review their current Student and School Success Action Plans, and make necessary revisions to ensure the recommendations contained within this report are adequately addressed. As indicated in the Executive Summary, the Academic Performance Audit Team believes the *Strengths* articulated in the narrative will serve the school and district well as they address the three recommendations described in this Academic Performance Audit Report.

Further requirements and general timelines for completion of the Required Action Plan are provided below.

RCW 28A.657.050

Required action plans — Development — Publication of guidelines, research, and models — Submission — Contents — Effect on existing collective bargaining agreements. (Effective until June 30, 2019.)

- (1)(a) The local district superintendent and local school board of a school district designated as a required action district must submit a required action plan to the state board of education for approval. Unless otherwise required by subsection (3) of this section, the plan must be submitted under a schedule as required by the state board. A required action plan must be developed in collaboration with administrators, teachers, and other staff, parents, unions representing any employees within the district, students, and other representatives of the local community.
- (b) The superintendent of public instruction shall provide a district with assistance in developing its plan if requested, and shall develop and publish guidelines for the development of required action plans. The superintendent of public instruction, in consultation with the state board of education, shall also publish a list of research and evidence-based school improvement models, consistent with turnaround principles, approved for use in required action plans.
- (c) The local school board must conduct a public hearing to allow for comment on a proposed required action plan. The local school district shall submit the plan first to the office of the superintendent of public instruction to review and approve that the plan is consistent with federal and state

guidelines, as applicable. After the office of the superintendent of public instruction has approved that the plan is consistent with federal and state guidelines, the local school district must submit its required action plan to the state board of education for approval.

- (2) A required action plan must include all of the following:
- (a) Implementation of an approved school improvement model required for the receipt of federal or state funds for school improvement for those persistently lowest-achieving schools that the district will be focusing on for required action. The approved school improvement model selected must address the concerns raised in the academic performance audit and be intended to improve student performance to allow a school district to be removed from the list of districts designated as a required action district by the state board of education within three years of implementation of the plan. The required action plan for districts with multiple persistently lowest-achieving schools must include separate plans for each school as well as a plan for how the school district will support the schools collectively;
 - (b) Submission of an application for federal or state funds for school improvement to the superintendent of public instruction;
 - (c) A budget that provides for adequate resources to implement the model selected and any other requirements of the plan;
 - (d) A description of the changes in the district's or school's existing policies, structures, agreements, processes, and practices that are intended to attain significant achievement gains for all students enrolled in the school and how the district intends to address the findings of the academic performance audit; and
 - (e) Identification of the measures that the school district will use in assessing student achievement at a school identified as a persistently lowest-achieving school, which include closing the educational opportunity gap, improving mathematics and reading or English language arts student achievement, and improving graduation rates as defined by the office of the superintendent of public instruction that enable the school to no longer be identified as a persistently lowest-achieving school.
- (3)(a) For any district designated for required action, the parties to any collective bargaining agreement negotiated, renewed, or extended under chapter 41.59 or 41.56 RCW after June 10, 2010, must reopen the agreement, or negotiate an addendum, if needed, to make changes to terms and conditions of employment that are necessary to implement a required action plan. For any district applying to participate in a collaborative schools for innovation and success pilot project under RCW 28A.630.104, the parties to any collective bargaining agreement negotiated, renewed, or extended under chapter 41.59 or 41.56 RCW after June 7, 2012, must reopen the agreement, or negotiate an addendum, if needed, to make changes to terms and conditions of employment that are necessary to implement an innovation and success plan.

Timeline

April - May 23, 2014	<p>District and school create Required Action Plan; plan must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of approved school improvement model • Application for state funds • Budget • Description of how the district intends to address the findings of the academy performance audit • Initial Revisions to Student and School Success Action Plan (i.e., Indicators identified in the Academic Performance Audit must be assessed on Indistar®. Additional S.M.A.R.T. Goals and tasks may be included; they are required to be included in the October 30, 2014 submission.) • Identification of measures that the school and district will use to assess student achievement • Collective bargaining agreements (reopen or negotiate an addendum to support plan) • Parent/guardian notification of RAD status and process for creating plan <p>District and school share Required Action Plan with stakeholder groups, including local board of education, and incorporate feedback into final Required Action Plan submitted to the Office of Student and School Success.</p>
May 23, 2014	District submits revised Student and School Success Action Plan on Indistar®. Office of Student and School Success reviews Required Action Plan and initial revisions to Student and School Success Action Plan.
May 28, 2014	Office of Student and School Success submits Required Action Plan to State Board of Education.
June 6, 2014	District presents Required Action Plan to State Board of Education for approval.
October 30, 2013	District and school submit Student and School Success Action Plans on Indistar®.

VII. Questions for Leadership Teams to Consider

The questions below emerged during the data review on March 4, 2014 and the onsite visit on March 10, 2014. They are intended to support leadership teams as they engage in dialogues around these recommendations. Leadership teams are NOT required to address the questions in their Required Action Plan or Student and School Success Action Plans. Rather, these questions are only intended to inform their collaborative work.

Recommendation 1: Expand the instructional core to ensure (a) all students receive grade-level appropriate instruction and curriculum that are research-based, rigorous, and aligned with State academic content standards; and (b) interventions are differentiated based on student needs.

Questions to Consider

The following questions can inform the work of the leadership team as it develops/ revises the Student and School Success Action Plan:

- *Systems to Place Students*
 - How can staff most effectively (a) differentiate within the core curriculum and (b) provide additional interventions as needed that enable students to continue to receive grade-level standards-based instruction and curriculum?
 - What data and process can leadership and staff use to assess their current level of development around this recommendation?

- What supports are needed to strengthen the core instructional program?
- How can the instructional facilitator, TOSA, and other coaches support staff and leaders to implement an effective instructional program that ensures all students receive grade-level, standards-based instruction and curriculum?
- *Professional Development (PD), Technical Assistance, and Support*
 - How does PD engage staff in developing practices that will shift beliefs about students and learning?
 - How does PD build educator capacity to deliver effective core and interventions for all students?
 - How is PD differentiated to support teachers new to the profession or to the school?
 - What criteria are used to determine the impact of strategies on educator practice and student learning?
 - How are data about program effectiveness shared? For example, the Safe and Civil Schools Initiative was identified by ILT members as one of the school's priorities. Yet they indicated that behavior data are not consistently shared with them, so it's challenging to know the impact of the program.
 - How can the components of the Danielson Instructional Framework inform the work of leadership and staff? For instance, the ILT expressed frustration because the TPEP work has taken time away from instructional professional development.
- *Professional Learning Communities and Use of Data*
 - What is the impact of the PLC process on teacher practice?
 - How do staff and leadership measure fidelity of implementation and impact of extended learning time opportunities (i.e., PD for staff and interventions for students)? For example, staff surveys reveal that 57% agree the staff collaborates to improve student learning.
 - What strategic and intensive interventions are provided? How are data used to identify the intervention and determine when students exit from intervention and return to core?
 - What data protocols are used in collaborative team meetings? How do teams determine the effectiveness of their efforts in improving student outcomes?
 - What practices are in place for teacher use of data to inform instruction (e.g., PLCs, PD to use data to inform instruction)?
 - What protocols have been established to support teams in using data to inform classroom and student instructional decisions? How do teams determine the effectiveness of their protocols in increasing educator capacity and student achievement?
 - How do different data sources come together to form a coherent assessment system?

Recommendation 2: Ensure the principal and leadership team demonstrate the capacity to (a) lead and engage staff in the school's data-based action-planning process, (b) monitor changes in educator practice and student outcomes resulting from the plan, and (c) revise plans as needed to shift educator practice and significantly increase student learning.

Questions to Consider:

The following questions can inform the work of the leadership team as it develops/ revises the Student and School Success Action Plan:

- *Principal Leadership*
 - Given the myriad of administrative responsibilities, how do principals maintain their focus on instructional improvement and student learning outcomes?
 - What practices are used by principals to turn around performance in persistently low-achieving schools?

- How do principals distribute leadership and engage others in the continuous improvement process?
- What data do principals collect to determine if instructional and behavior initiatives are implemented with fidelity? How are these data used to inform decision-making and action-planning processes?
- How do principals determine fidelity of implementation and impact of extended learning time for staff and students?
- What resources are provided to align the Yakima School District’s goal to increase the rigor and relevance of lessons, and what are the implications of this process for the principal, ILT, and staff as they craft/revise their action plans?
- *Distributed Leadership*
 - How is leadership distributed across staff in the school, and how are decisions impacting instruction, curriculum and assessments made?
 - What is the role of teacher teams and school leaders in the improvement of core instructional practices? How will school leadership and the ILT ensure all students receive core instruction?
 - What is the role of ILT in designing professional development, and how can “initiative fatigue” be addressed? Team members indicated they are not directly involved in designing staff PD. They also indicated a number of initiatives are brought to the school from the district (e.g., 5 YSD Strategies).
 - How does the leadership team measure fidelity of implementation and impact of extended learning time for staff and students?
 - How will the school leadership and ILT measure the effectiveness of Washington Middle School’s PLC process?
 - What data does the leadership team collect to measure if instructional and behavior initiatives are implemented with fidelity? How are these data used to inform decision-making and action-planning processes?

Recommendation 3: Ensure the learning environment is safe, mutually respectful, and honors the cultures and families of the students represented in the school.

Questions to Consider

The following questions can inform the work of the leadership team as it develops/revises the Student and School Success Plan:

- *School and Classroom Environment*
 - How is the effectiveness of the Safe and Civil Schools Initiative and other similar initiatives monitored? What difference are these making for students?
 - What are the roles and responsibilities of the ILT with respect to the school and classroom environment?
 - What is the role of the School Resource Office, and how does this individual support building student capacity to engage in appropriate civic and school community behaviors?
 - What is the level of multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) for students with non-academic factors?
 - Have barriers to achievement for students from low-income and mobile families been addressed through MTSS or another source? If so, how?
- *Parent/Family and Community Engagement*

- How does the school reach out to parents/families and the community to seek their input?
- What are the meaningful ways that parents and families are engaged?
- How are parents involved in decision making, vision creation, and support of the mission?

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VIII. Appendix

Appendix A: Required Action District Frequently Asked Questions

Appendix B: School Data Dashboard

Appendix C: Assessment of Progress Report

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Required Action District (RAD), Level One Frequently Asked Questions

1. Which school districts can become a required action district?

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is required to annually recommend to the State Board of Education (SBE) school districts for designation as required action districts. A district with at least one school identified as persistently lowest achieving will be designated as required action district. The SBE may designate a district that received a school improvement grant in 2010 or 2011 as a required action district if after three years of voluntarily implementing a plan the district continues to have a school identified as persistently lowest achieving and meets the criteria for designation established by the superintendent of public instruction. See **RCW 28A.657.020** and **RCW 28A.657.030** for additional information.

2. How does a school district superintendent request reconsideration?

A school district superintendent may request reconsideration of the superintendent of public instruction's recommendation. The reconsideration shall be limited to a determination of whether the school district met the criteria for being recommended as a required action district. A request for reconsideration must be in writing and received by superintendent of public instruction within ten days of receipt of the letter notifying the school district of the superintendent's recommendation. See **RCW 28A.657.030** for additional information.

3. What are the requirements for required action districts?

a) **External Review (Academic Performance Audit):** OSPI will provide an external review team to conduct an academic performance audit of the district and each persistently lowest achieving school. The audit will identify potential reasons for the school's low performance and lack of progress. The review team will consist of persons who have expertise in comprehensive school and district reform. The team may not include staff from the agency, the school district that is the subject of the audit, or members or staff of the SBE. The audit is based on criteria developed by OSPI and **must include** but not be limited to an examination of the following:

- Student demographics
- Mobility patterns
- School feeder patterns
- The performance of different student groups on assessments
- Effective school leadership
- Strategic allocation of resources
- Clear and shared focus on student learning
- High standards and expectations for all students
- High level of collaboration and communication
- Aligned curriculum, instruction, and assessment to state standards
- Frequency of monitoring of learning and teaching
- Focused professional development
- Supportive learning environment
- High level of family and community involvement
- Alternative secondary schools best practices and
- Any unique circumstances or characteristics of the school or district.

Audit findings must be made available to the local school district, its staff, the community, and the SBE. See **RCW 28A.657.040** for additional information.

b) **School Improvement Model:** The district must select and implement a federal- or state-approved school improvement model. Federal models include Closure, Restart, Transformation, and Turnaround. The district may adopt Washington State's Synergy Model that was developed by the Office of Student and

School Success. The selected model must address the concerns raised in the academic performance audit and be designed to increase educator capacity and substantially improve student achievement.

- c) **Required Action Plan:** The local district superintendent and local school board of a school district designated as a required action district must submit a required action plan to the SBE for approval. The SBE will establish submission dates for required action plans. A required action plan must be developed in collaboration with administrators, teachers, and other staff; parents; unions representing any employees within the district; students; and other representatives of the local community. The school board must conduct a public hearing to allow for comment on a proposed required action plan. See **RCW 28A.657.040** and **RCW 28A.657.050** for additional information.
- d) **Online action-planning platform (Indistar[®]):** Districts and schools must use OSPI's approved online action-planning platform (Indistar[®]) to create, implement, monitor, and revise their required action plans. Staff in OSPI's Office of Student and School Success will provide support to district and school teams to use Indistar[®] as the platform for their action planning.
- e) **Parent notification:** A district designated as a required action district must notify all parents of students attending a school identified as a persistently lowest achieving school in the district of the SBE's designation of the district as a required action district and the process for complying with the required action district requirements. See **RCW 28A.657.040** through **28A.657.100**.
- f) **Collective Bargaining Agreement:** The parties to any collective bargaining agreement negotiated, renewed, or extended under chapter 41.59 or 41.56 RCW after June 10, 2010 by a required action district must reopen the agreement, or negotiate an addendum, if needed, to make changes to terms and conditions of employment that are necessary to implement a required action plan. If the school district and the employee organizations are unable to agree on the terms of an addendum or modification to an existing collective bargaining agreement, the parties, including all labor organizations affected under the required action plan, must request the public employment relations commission to, and the commission shall, appoint an employee of the commission to act as a mediator to assist in the resolution of a dispute between the school district and the employee organizations. See **RCW 28A.657.040** for specific guidance for mediation of an addendum or modification of an existing collective bargaining agreement and other information.
- g) **Professional development and technical assistance (PD/TA):** School and district teams will engage in required PD/TA to build leadership and instructional capacity to effectively implement their action plan.

4. What elements must be included in the Required Action Plan?

- a) **The plan must include the following.**
 - i. **Selection and implementation of an approved school improvement model.** The approved school improvement model selected must address the concerns raised in the academic performance audit and be intended to improve student performance to allow a school district to be removed from the list of districts designated as a required action district by the SBE within three years of implementation of the plan. The required action plan for districts with multiple persistently lowest achieving schools must include **separate plans** for each school as well as a plan for how the school district will support the schools collectively.
 - ii. **Funding:** The district must submit an application to OSPI for federal or state funds for school improvement.
 - iii. **Budget:** The plan must include a budget that provides for adequate resources to implement the selected model and any other requirements of the plan.

- iv. **Changes to existing policies, practices, etc.:** The plan must include descriptions of changes in the district's or school's existing policies, structures, agreements, processes, and practices that are intended to attain significant achievement gains for all students enrolled in the school.
- v. **Academic Performance Audit:** The district must also describe how it intends to address the findings of the academic performance audit.
- vi. **Data measures:** The plan must identify the measures that the school district will use in assessing the school's student achievement. Measures will include those related to closing the educational opportunity gap, improving mathematics and reading or English language arts student achievement, and improving graduation rates as defined by OSPI; these measures will also be used to determine the school's status as a persistently lowest achieving school.

- b) **Assistance with the required action plan:** OSPI will provide guidelines for the development of required action plans, as well as a list of research and evidence-based school improvement models to be implemented in the plan. If requested, OSPI will provide a school district with assistance in developing its plan. The local school board will first submit the plan to OSPI to review and approve that the plan is consistent with federal and state guidelines, as applicable. After OSPI approves the plan is consistent with federal and state guidelines, the local school district must submit its required action plan to the SBE for approval. See **RCW 28A.657.040** for additional information.
- c) **Review of the required action plan:** The required action plan developed by a district's school board and superintendent must be submitted to the SBE for approval. The SBE shall approve a plan proposed by a school district only if the plan meets the requirements in RCW 28A.657.050 and provides sufficient remedies to address the findings in the academic performance audit to improve student achievement. Any addendum or modification to an existing collective bargaining agreement, negotiated under RCW 28A.657.050 or by agreement of the district and the exclusive bargaining unit, related to student achievement or school improvement shall not go into effect until approval of a required action plan by the SBE. *Note.* The SBE must accept for inclusion in any required action plan the final decision by the superior court on any issue certified by the executive director of the public employment relations commission under the process in RCW 28A.657.050. See **RCW 28A.657.060** for additional information.
- d) **Timeline for implementing the action plan:** If federal or state funds for this purpose are available, a required action plan must be implemented in the immediate school year following the district's designation as a required action district. See **RCW 28A.657.060** for additional information.
- e) **Technical Assistance and Progress Monitoring:** OSPI must provide the required action district with technical assistance and federal or state funds for school improvement, if available, to implement an approved plan. The district must submit a report to OSPI that provides the progress the district is making in meeting the student achievement goals based on the state's assessments, identifying strategies and assets used to solve audit findings, and establishing evidence of meeting plan implementation benchmarks as set forth in the required action plan. OSPI will report to the SBE twice a year on the progress of a required action district in implementing the required action plan. See **RCW 28A.657.090** for additional information.

5. How can a required action district be released from the designation?

OSPI must recommend to the SBE that a school district be released from the designation as a required action district after the district implements a required action plan for a period of three years; has made progress as defined by the superintendent of public instruction using the criteria adopted under RCW 28A.657.020 including progress in closing the educational opportunity gap; and no longer has a school within the district identified as persistently lowest achieving. The SBE shall release a school district from the designation as a required action district upon confirmation that the district has met the requirements for a release.

If the SBE determines that the required action district has not met the requirements for release after at least three years of implementing a required action plan, the board may recommend that the district remain in required action and submit a new or revised plan under the process in RCW 28A.657.050, or the SBE may direct that the school district be assigned to level two of the required action process as provided in RCW 28A.657.105. If the required action district received a federal school improvement grant for the same persistently lowest achieving school in 2010 or 2011, the SBE may direct that the school district be assigned to level two of the required action process after one year of implementing a required action plan under this chapter if the district is not making progress. Before making a determination of whether to recommend that a school district that is not making progress remain in required action or be assigned to level two of the required action process, the SBE must submit its findings to the education accountability system oversight committee under RCW 28A.657.130 and provide an opportunity for the oversight committee to review and comment. See **RCW 28A.657.100** for additional information.

Additional information regarding the required action plan follows.

6. What if the SBE rejects the required action plan?

If the SBE does not approve a proposed plan, it must notify the local school board and local district's superintendent in writing with an explicit rationale for why the plan was not approved. With the assistance of OSPI, the superintendent and school board of the required action district shall either: (1) submit a new plan to the SBE for approval within forty days of notification that its plan was rejected, or (2) submit a request to the required action plan review panel established under RCW 28A.657.070 for reconsideration of the SBE's rejection within ten days of the notification that the plan was rejected. See **RCW 28A.657.040** for information.

7. What is the required action plan review panel?

A required action plan review panel is composed of five individuals with expertise in school improvement, school and school district restructuring, or parent and community involvement in schools. Two of the panel members shall be appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives; two shall be appointed by the president of the Senate; and one shall be appointed by the governor. The panel is to provide an objective, external review of a request from a school district for reconsideration of the SBE's rejection of the district's required action plan or reconsideration of a level two required action plan developed only by the superintendent of public instruction as provided under RCW 28A.657.105. The review and reconsideration by the panel shall be based on whether the SBE or the superintendent of public instruction gave appropriate consideration to the unique circumstances and characteristics identified in the academic performance audit or level two needs assessment and review of the local school district. See **RCW 28A.657.070** for additional information.

9. What happens if the school district does not submit the required action plan in time?

The SBE may direct the superintendent of public instruction to require a school district that has not submitted a final required action plan for approval, or has submitted but not received SBE approval of a required action plan by the beginning of the school year in which the plan is intended to be implemented, to redirect the district's Title I funds based on the academic performance audit findings. See **RCW 28A.657.080** for information.

2013 School Data Dashboard

Site:	Washington MS
District:	Yakima

READING (MSP / HSPE)

STATUS (Percent Meeting Standard)						IMPROVEMENT per Year (change in percentage points per year over 5 years)			
	Reading 2013	Reading 2012	Change	Change in Percent	For 2013, Above or Below Your District?	School Trend vs. District	School	District	
Grade 6	23.8%	28.9%	↓	-5.1%	Below ●	Grade 6 ●	-4.9%	-4.9%	
Grade 7	31.4%	36.2%	↓	-4.8%	Below ●	Grade 7 ●	-1.7%	0.5%	
Grade 8	34.1%	46.2%	↓	-12.1%	Below ●	Grade 8 ●	-3.5%	-3.8%	

MATHEMATICS (MSP / EOC)

STATUS (Percent Meeting Standard)						IMPROVEMENT per Year (change in percentage points per year over 5 years)			
	Math 2013	Math 2012	Change	Change in Percent	For 2013, Above or Below Your District?	School Trend vs. District	School	District	
Grade 6	18.0%	21.9%	↓	-3.9%	Below ●	Grade 6 ●	1.6%	1.6%	
Grade 7	44.5%	34.4%	↑	10.1%	Below ●	Grade 7 ●	4.3%	4.5%	
Gr. 8 (MSP)	22.3%	15.4%	↑	6.9%	Below ●	Gr. 8 (MSP) ●	-1.4%	0.7%	

WRITING

STATUS (Percent Meeting Standard)						IMPROVEMENT per Year (change in percentage points per year over 5 years)			
	Writing 2013	Writing 2012	Change	Change in Percent	For 2013, Above or Below Your District?	School Trend vs. District	School	District	
Grade 7	40.2%	47.7%	↓	-7.5%	Below ●	Grade 7 ●	-2.5%	-0.4%	

SCIENCE (MSP / EOC)

STATUS (Percent Meeting Standard)						IMPROVEMENT per Year (change in percentage points per year over 5 years)			
	Science 2013	Science 2012	Change	Change in Percent	For 2013, Above or Below Your District?	School Trend vs. District	School	District	
Gr 8. (MSP)	20.5%	30.8%	↓	-10.3%	Below ●	Gr 8. (MSP) ●	3.4%	3.7%	

Interpretation Tips: STATUS is a simple comparison between 2013 and 2012 results. Above or Below the District compares the School's 2013 results to the District's to determine whether the school is above or below the district (equal means +/- 2%). IMPROVEMENT is a 5-year trend in percentage points per year. Larger positive values are better – implying greater improvement each year. Negative values indicate a declining trend in the percent of students meeting standard.

2013 School Data Dashboard

Site:	Washington MS
District:	Yakima

READING: Impact of Programs for Level-1 Students

STATUS (Percent at Level-1)						5-Yr Trend: Is percent at Level-1 declining (percentage points / year)?			
	2013 % at Level-1	2012 % at Level-1	Change (we want values < 0%)		Is Level-1 larger than the District?	School Trend vs. District	School	District	
Grade 6	30.8%	26.0%	●	4.8%	Larger ●	Grade 6 ●	2.6%	2.0%	
Grade 7	18.6%	23.1%	●	-4.5%	Larger ●	Grade 7 ●	0.0%	-0.1%	
Grade 8	35.5%	24.9%	●	10.6%	Larger ●	Grade 8 ●	3.4%	2.3%	

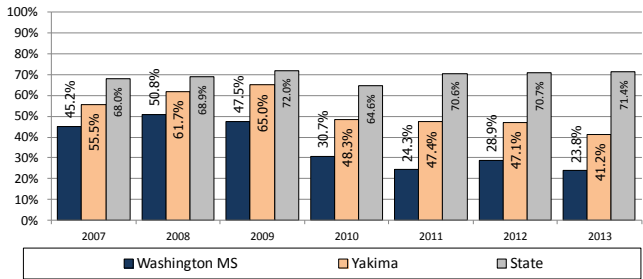
MATH: Impact of Programs for Level-1 Students

STATUS (Percent at Level-1)						5-Yr Trend: Is percent at Level-1 declining (percentage points / year)?			
	2013 % at Level-1	2012 % at Level-1	Change (we want values < 0%)		Is Level-1 larger than the District?	School Trend vs. District	School	District	
Grade 6	58.6%	50.0%	●	8.6%	Larger ●	Grade 6 ●	-1.5%	-1.0%	
Grade 7	28.6%	40.3%	●	-11.7%	Larger ●	Grade 7 ●	-5.9%	-5.2%	
Grade 8	47.9%	54.8%	●	-6.9%	Larger ●	Grade 8 ●	1.3%	-0.8%	

Interpretation Tips: STATUS is a simple measure of the percentage of students at Level-1 (Level-1 is defined as "well below standard" for MSP, HSPE, and EOC). A smaller percentage at Level-1 is better. This is a direct measure of the impact of programs for struggling students. For Change, we want the percentage of students at Level-1 to decline— i.e., negative values are best. The 5-year Trend looks at whether the school is shrinking its percentage of students at Level-1 over time. The values are percentage points per year. The larger negative values are better-- implying greater decline in the percentage of students performing at Level-1.

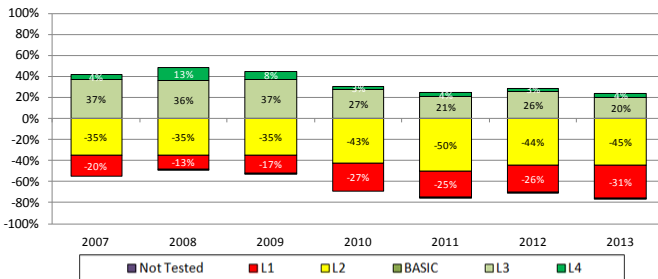
Reading Grade 6

Grade 6: Reading



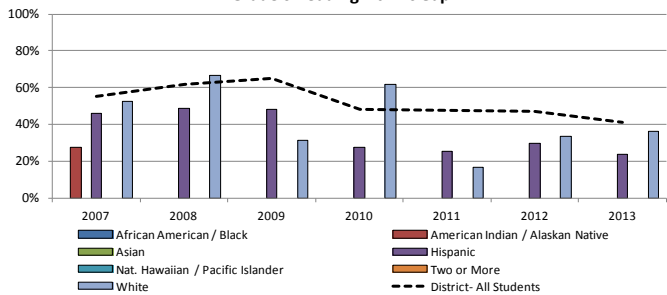
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Grade 6 Reading: Percent of Students by Level



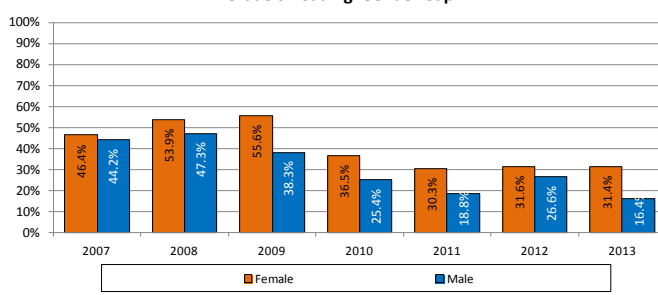
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Grade 6 Reading: Ethnic Gap



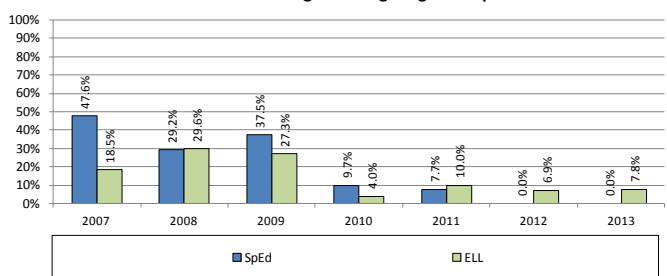
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Grade 6 Reading: Gender Gap



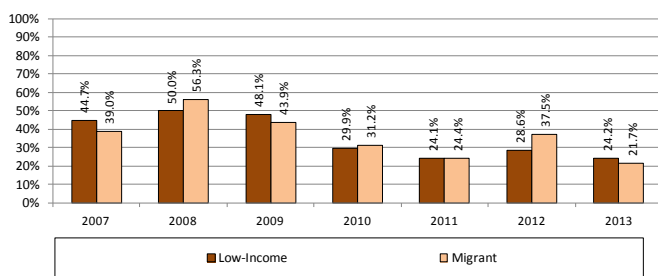
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Grade 6 Reading: Learning Program Gap



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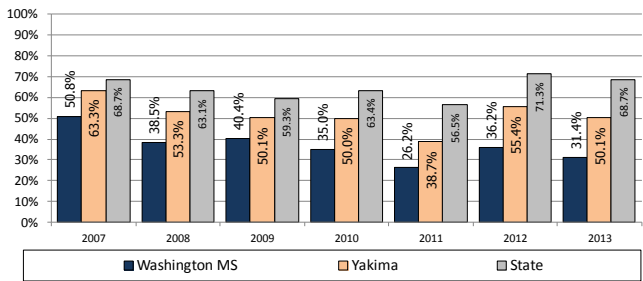
Grade 6 Reading: Demographic Gap



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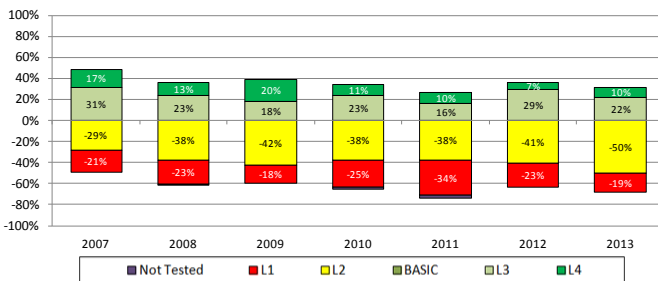
Reading Grade 7

Grade 7: Reading



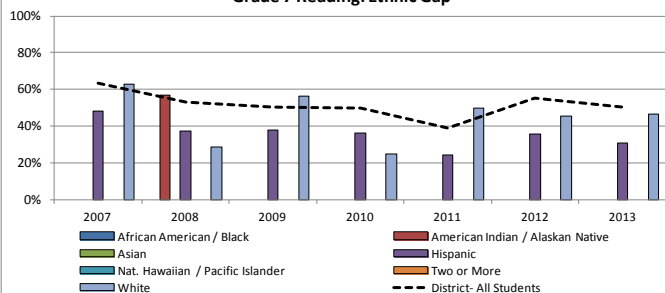
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Grade 7 Reading: Percent of Students by Level



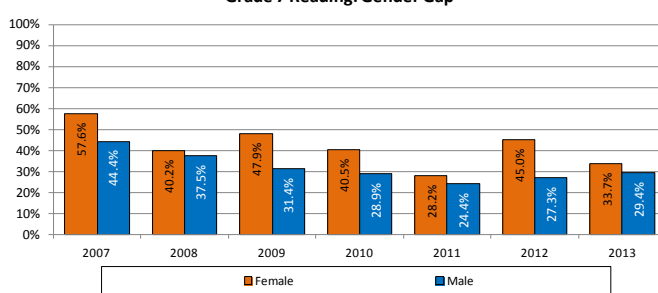
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Grade 7 Reading: Ethnic Gap



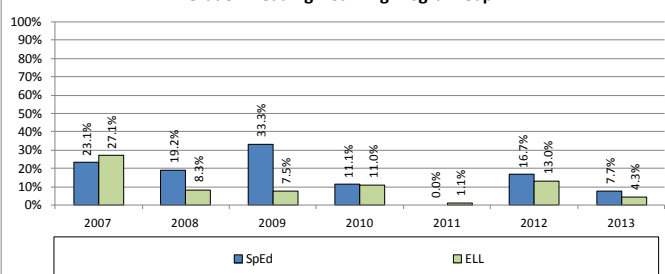
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Grade 7 Reading: Gender Gap



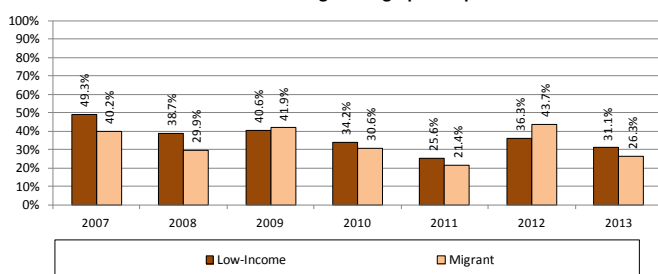
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Grade 7 Reading: Learning Program Gap



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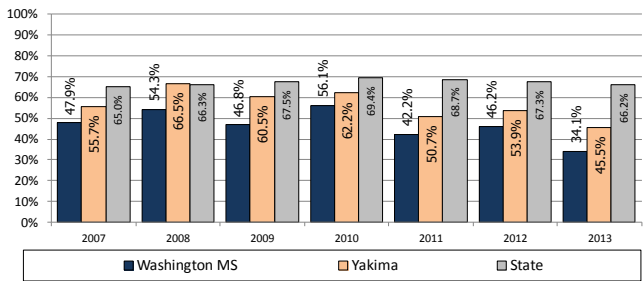
Grade 7 Reading: Demographic Gap



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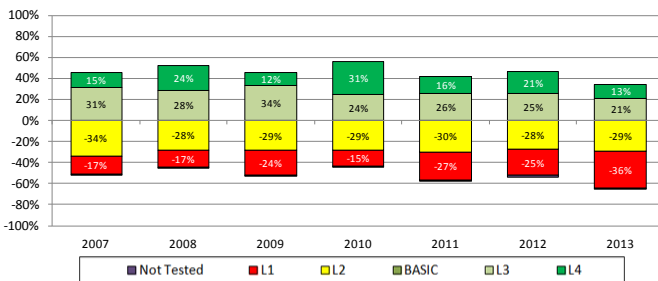
Reading Grade 8

Grade 8: Reading



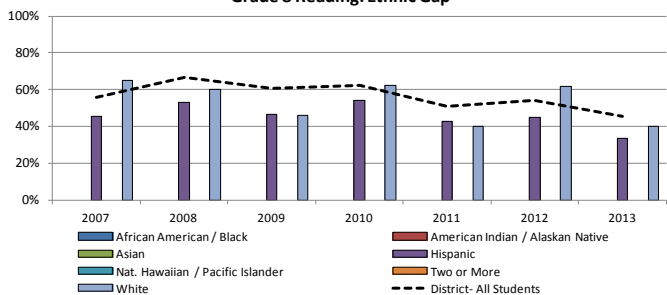
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Grade 8 Reading: Percent of Students by Level



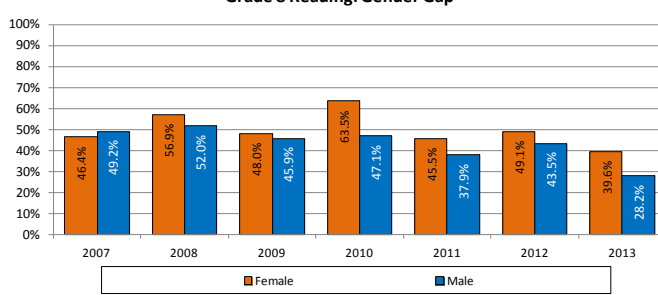
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Grade 8 Reading: Ethnic Gap



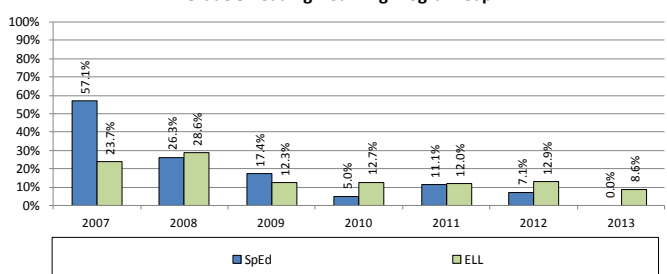
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Grade 8 Reading: Gender Gap



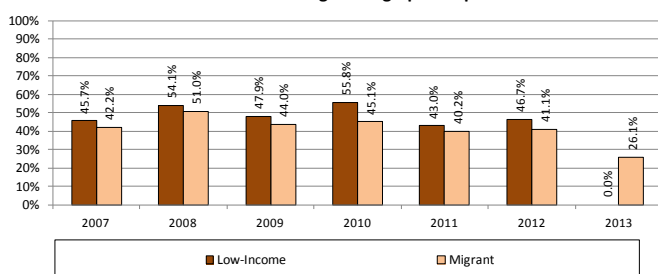
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Grade 8 Reading: Learning Program Gap



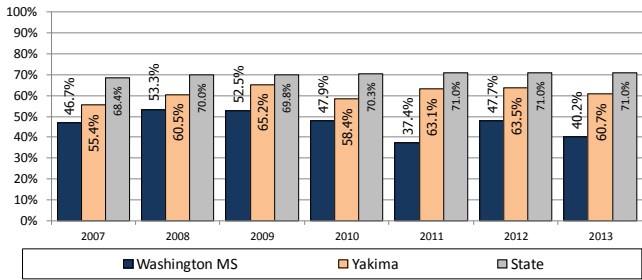
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Grade 8 Reading: Demographic Gap



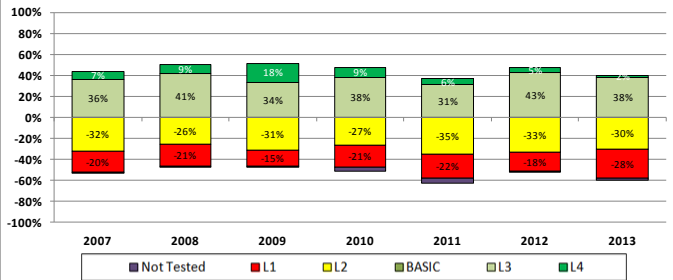
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Grade 7: Writing



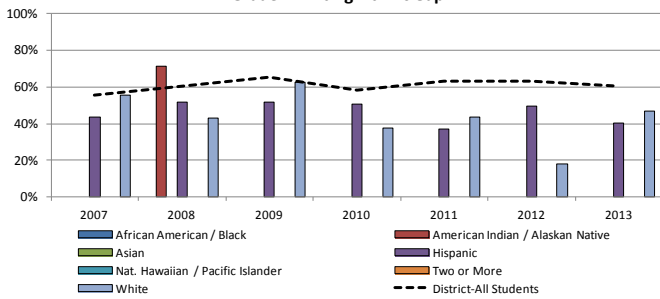
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Grade 7 Writing: Percent of Students by Level



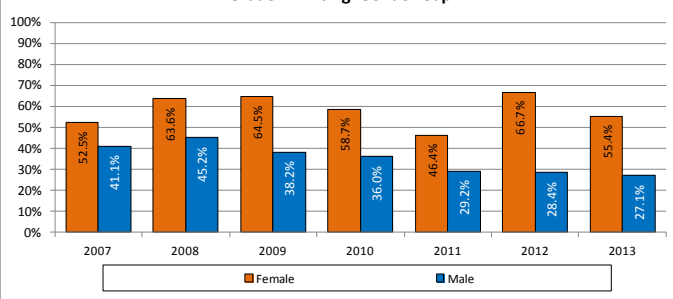
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Grade 7 Writing: Ethnic Gap



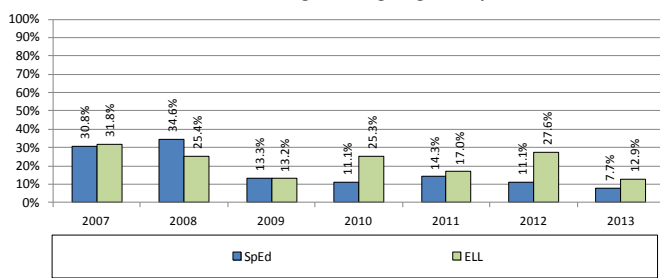
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Grade 7 Writing: Gender Gap



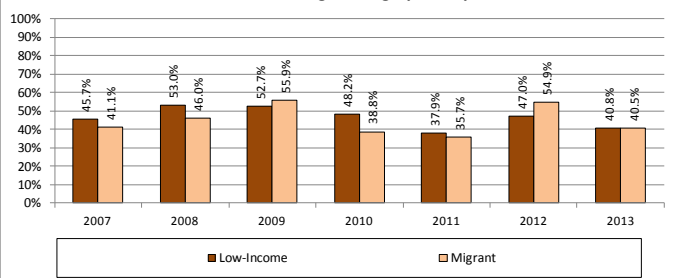
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Grade 7 Writing: Learning Program Gap



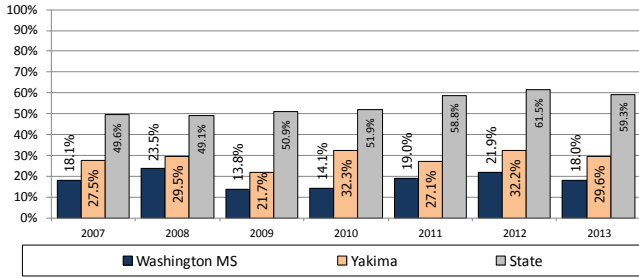
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Grade 7 Writing: Demographic Gap



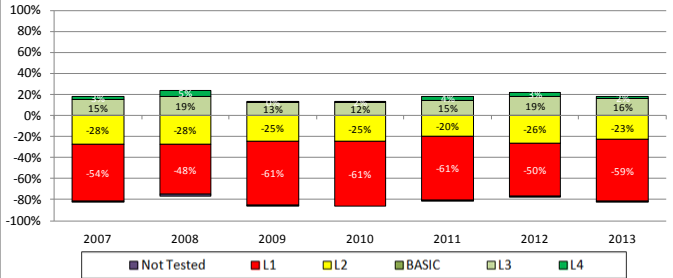
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Grade 6: Math



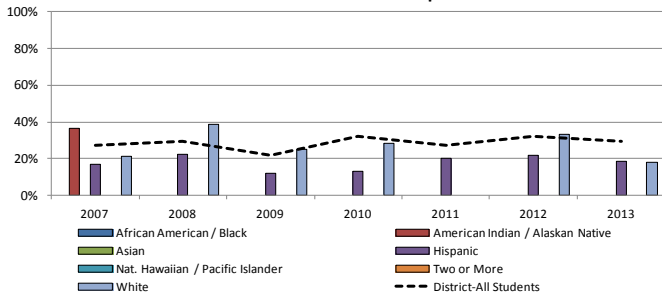
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Grade 6 Math: Percent of Students by Level



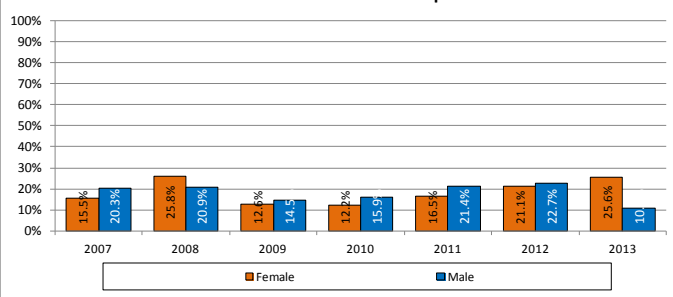
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Grade 6 Math: Ethnic Gap



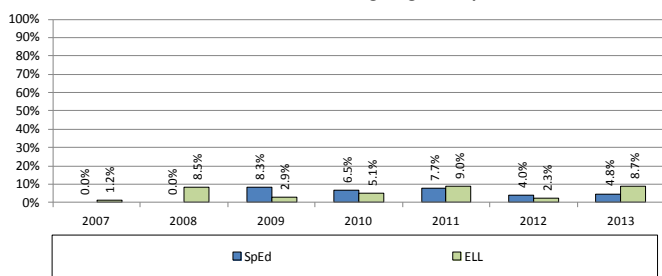
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Grade 6 Math: Gender Gap



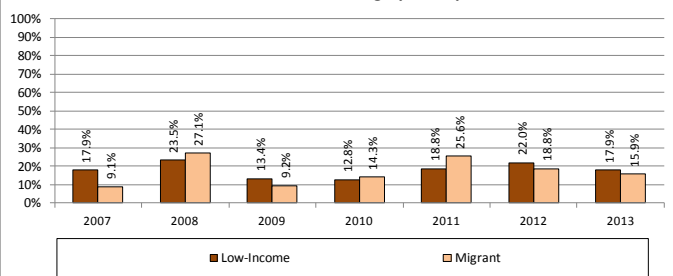
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Grade 6 Math: Learning Program Gap



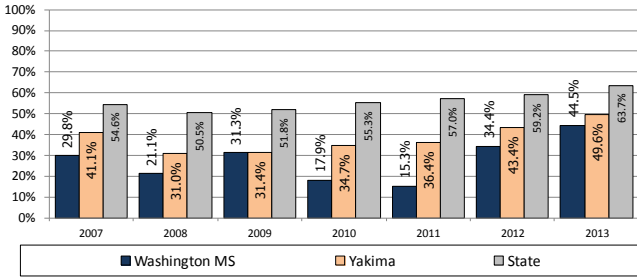
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Grade 6 Math: Demographic Gap



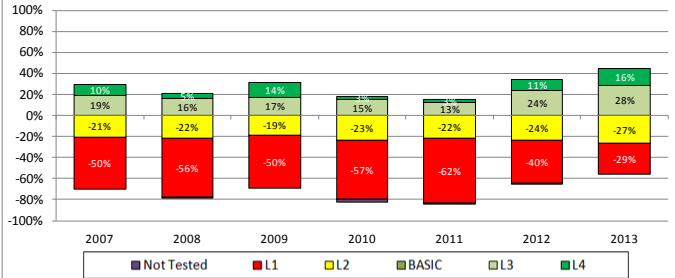
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Grade 7: Math



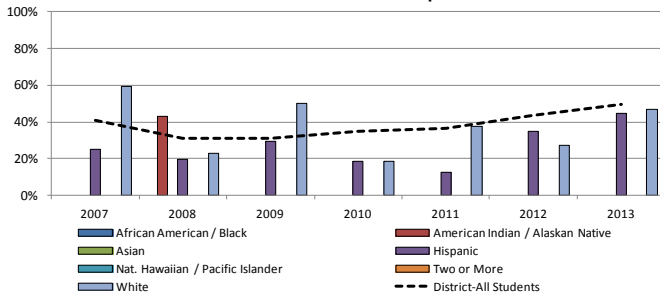
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Grade 7 Math: Percent of Students by Level



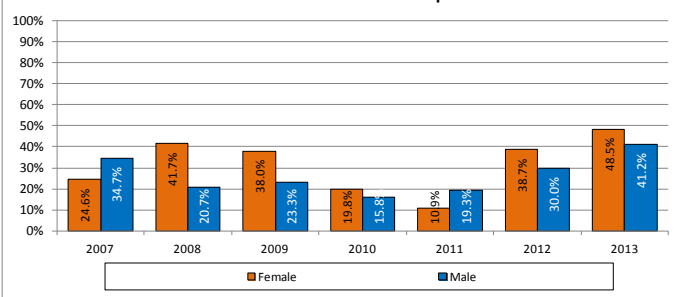
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Grade 7 Math: Ethnic Gap



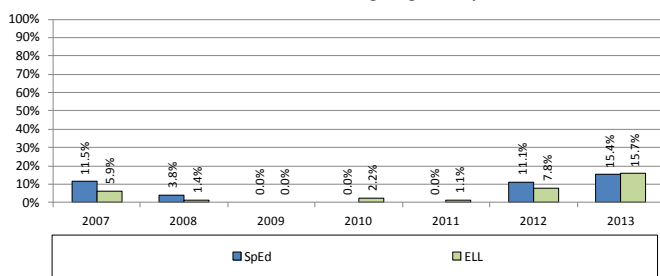
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Grade 7 Math: Gender Gap



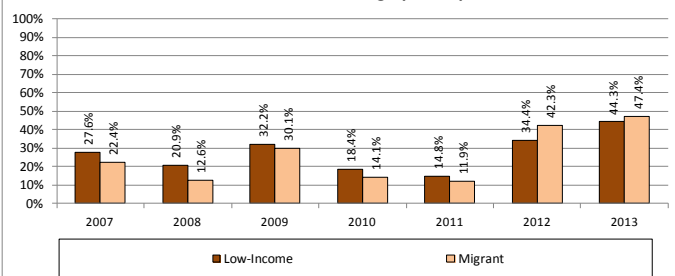
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Grade 7 Math: Learning Program Gap



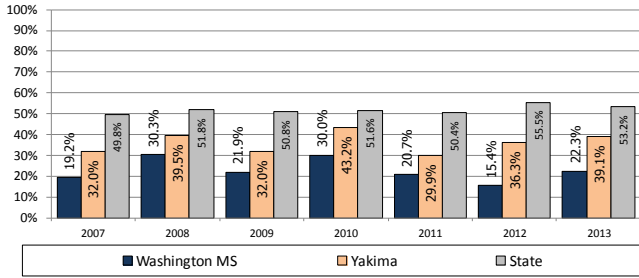
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Grade 7 Math: Demographic Gap



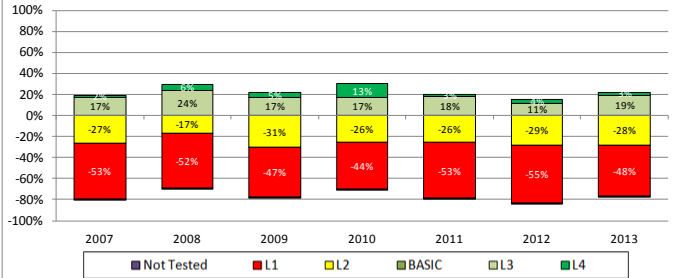
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Grade 8: Math



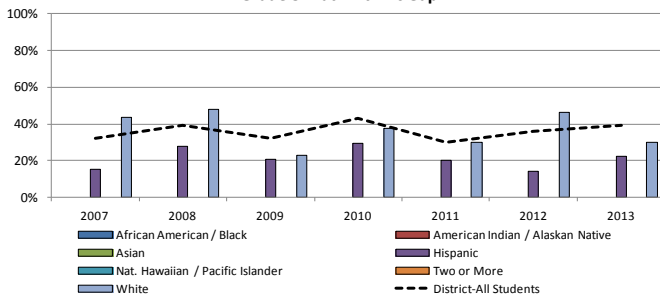
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Grade 8 Math: Percent of Students by Level



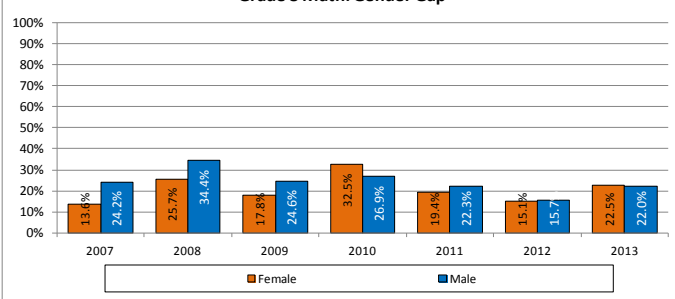
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Grade 8 Math: Ethnic Gap



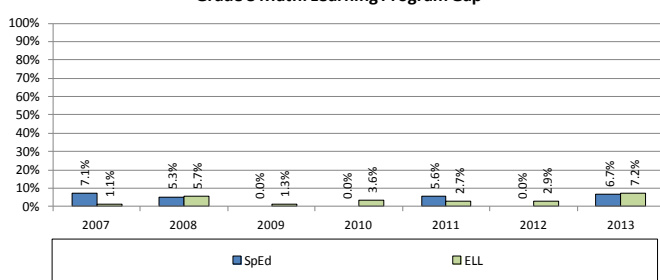
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Grade 8 Math: Gender Gap



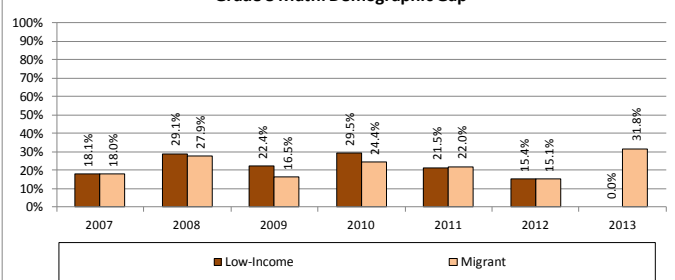
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Grade 8 Math: Learning Program Gap



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Grade 8 Math: Demographic Gap



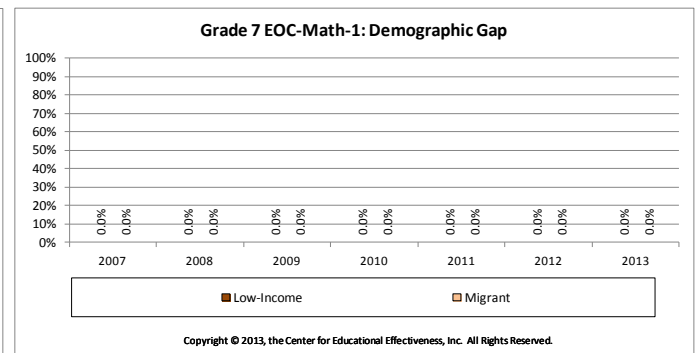
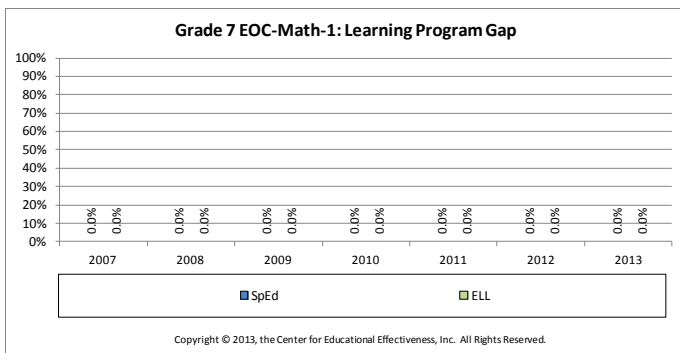
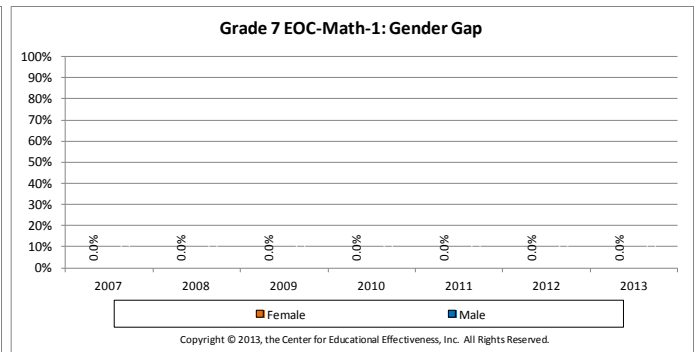
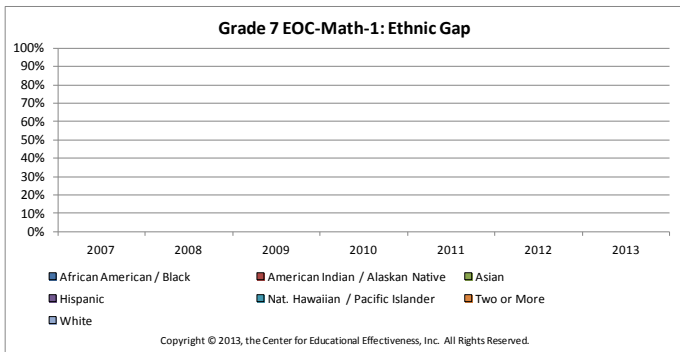
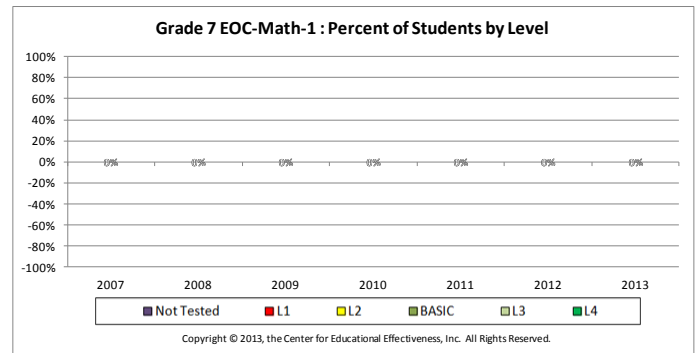
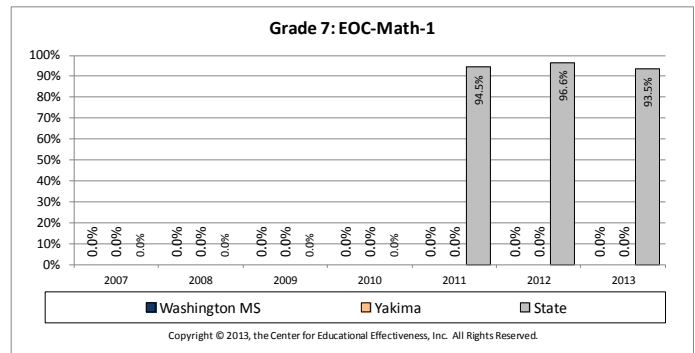
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End-of-Course Math-1 Grade 7

NOTE: End-of-Course assessments are not taken by all students at this grade level

% Meeting Standard includes students who "previously passed" the assessment in an earlier test window and are in this grade cohort.

Percent by Level and all disaggregated data does NOT include Previously Passed students. It is a consistent snapshot of ONLY the students who took the assessment in spring of each year.

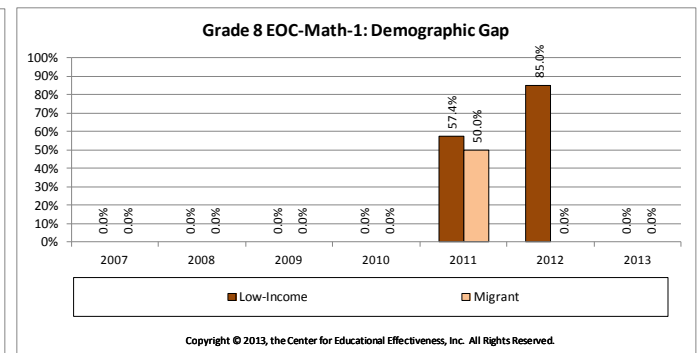
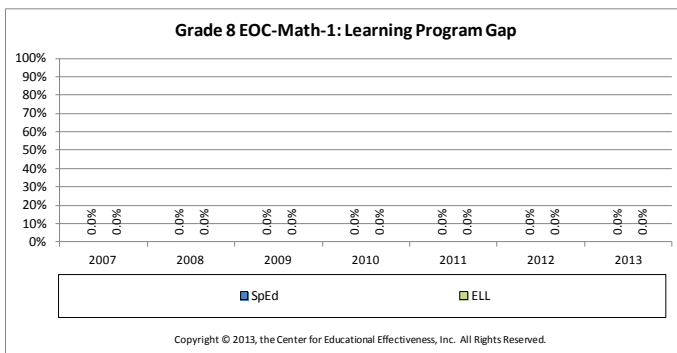
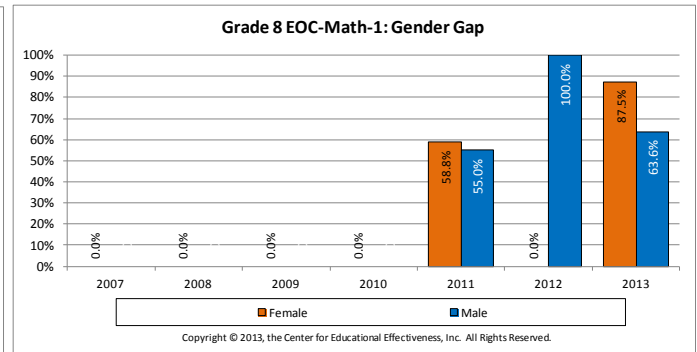
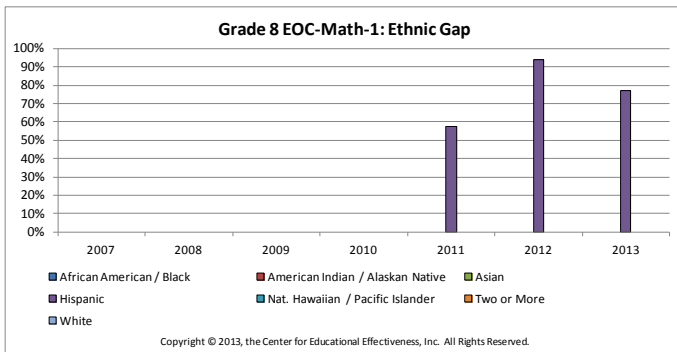
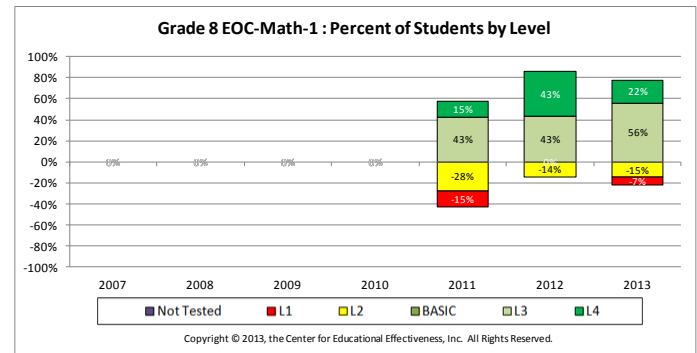
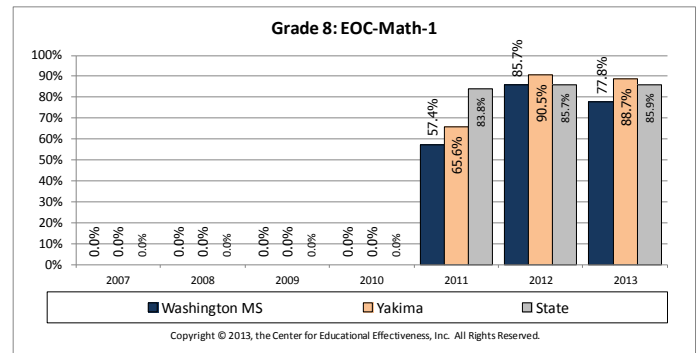


End-of-Course Math-1 Grade 8

NOTE: End-of-Course assessments are not taken by all students at this grade level

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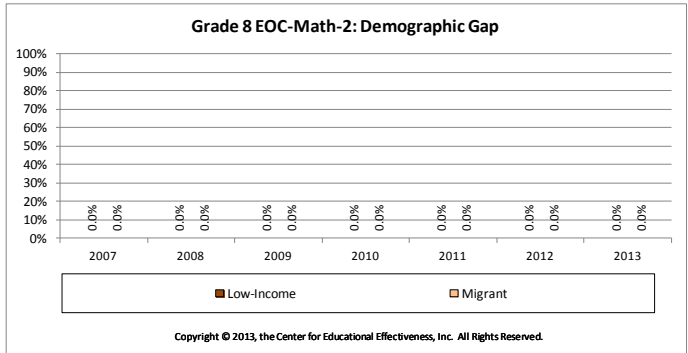
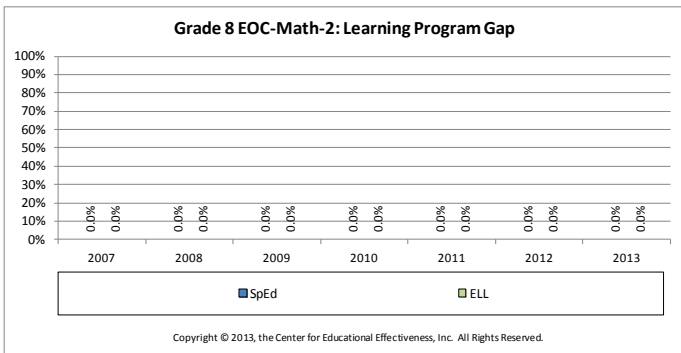
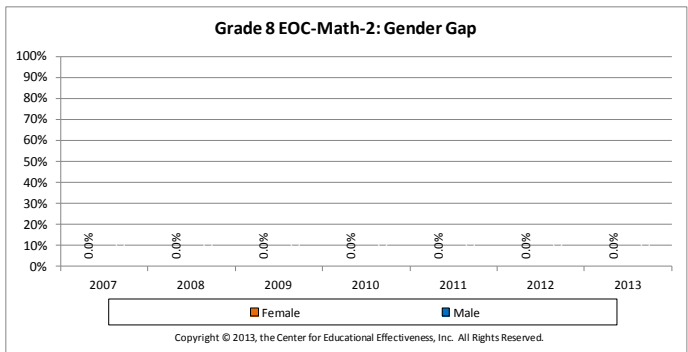
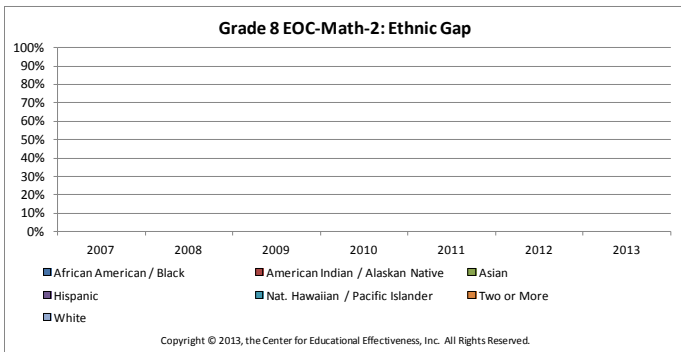
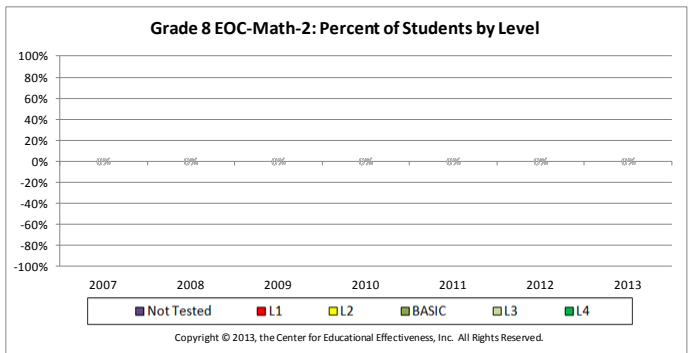
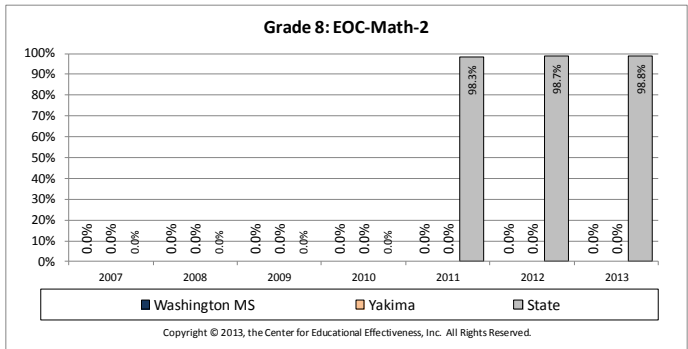


End-of-Course Math-2 Grade 8

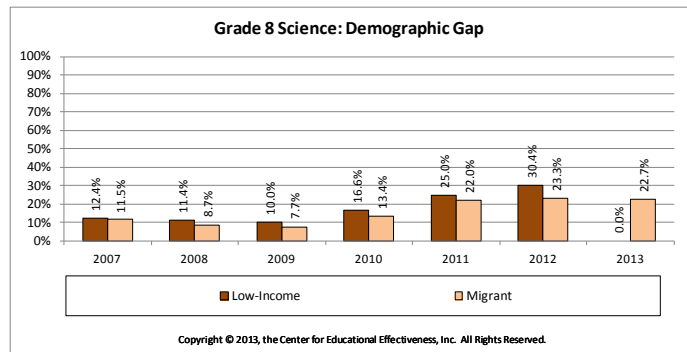
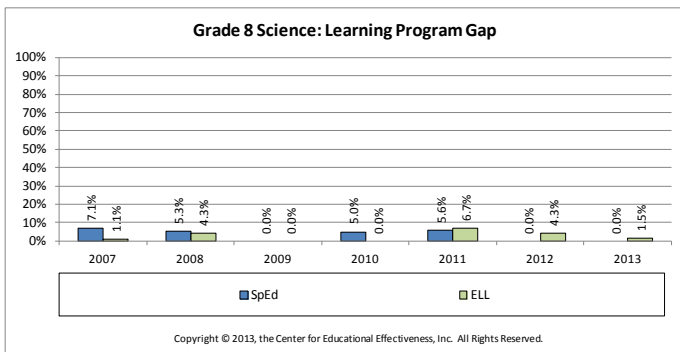
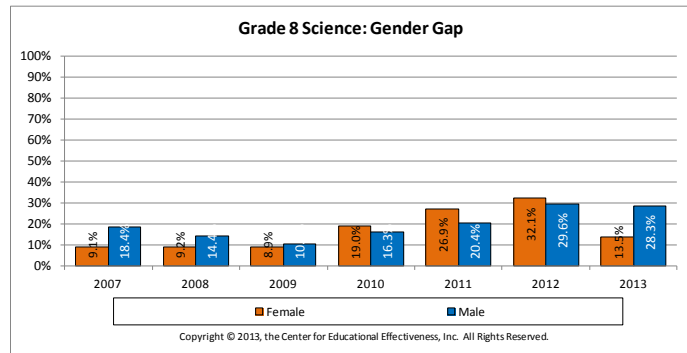
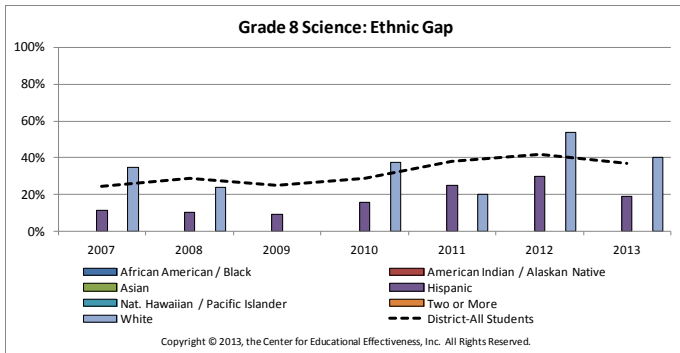
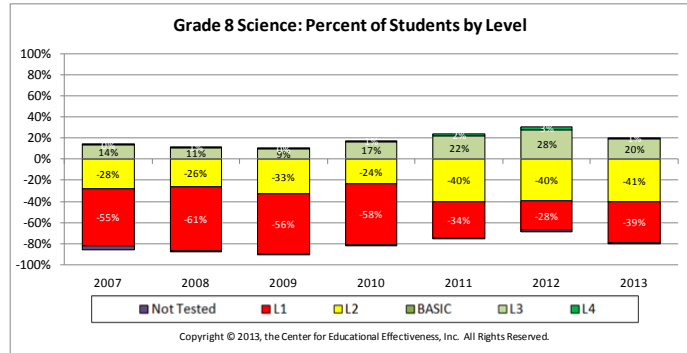
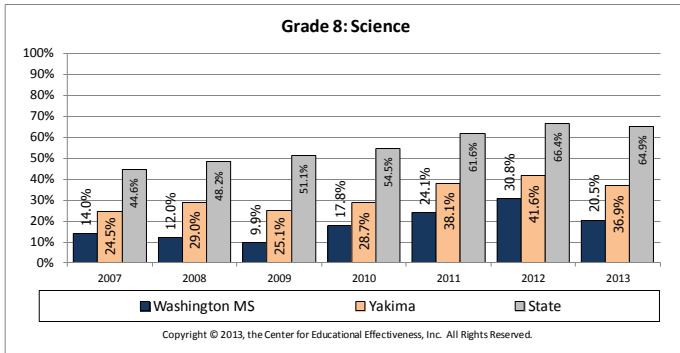
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Science Grade 8

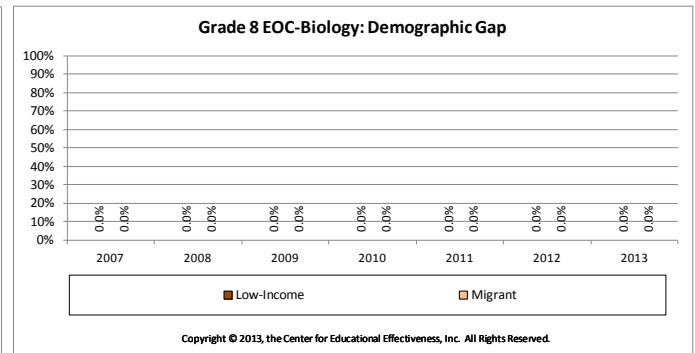
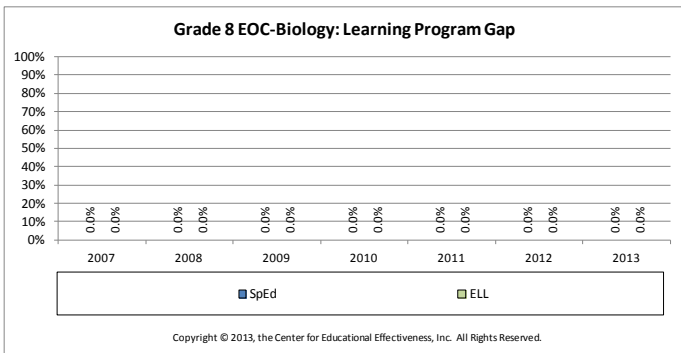
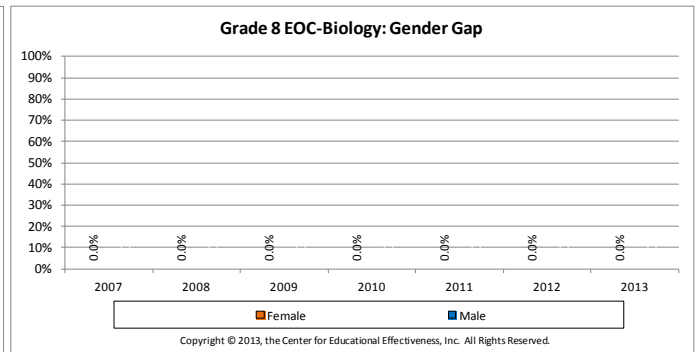
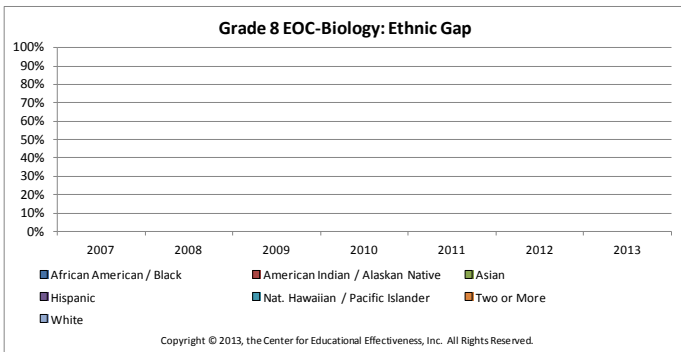
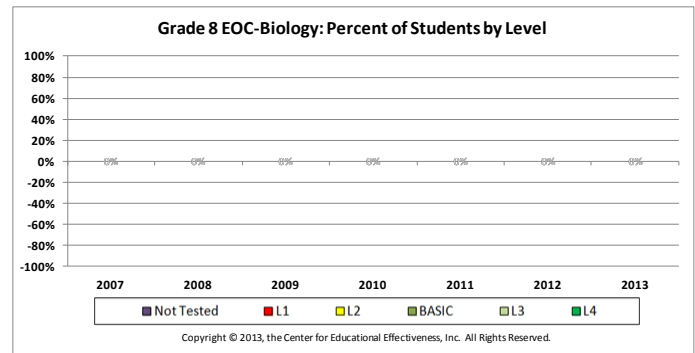
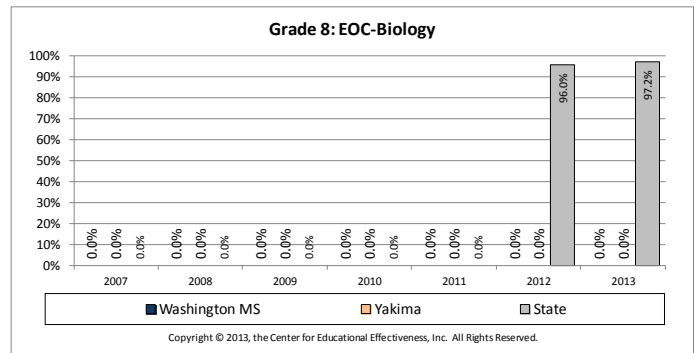


End-of-Course Biology Grade 8

NOTE: End-of-Course assessments are not taken by all students at this grade level

% Meeting Standard includes students who "previously passed" the assessment in an earlier test window and are in this grade cohort.

Percent by Level and all disaggregated data does NOT include Previously Passed students. It is a consistent snapshot of ONLY the students who took the assessment in spring of each year.



MERIT - Assessment of Progress

Washington Middle School

Yakima School District

April 16, 2013



School and Classroom Practices Study

Prepared by



BAKER ■ EVALUATION ■ RESEARCH ■ CONSULTING

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Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

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Washington Middle School Assessment of Progress

Introduction

In 2010, the Yakima School District (YSD) applied for and received a federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) for three of its schools, one of which was Washington Middle School (WMS). As part of the application process, The BERC Group, Inc. conducted a School and Classroom Practices Study (SCPS) at Washington MS. The BERC Group a) reviewed district level practices and policies to identify potential supports and barriers that may impact the district's ability to implement an intervention; b) collected classroom observation data focusing on instructional practices within the school; and c) conducted qualitative interviews and focus groups focusing on the alignment of school structures and practices with OSPI's Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools. Findings noted in the initial report were used to complete the application for SIG support and were incorporated into the ongoing implementation of improvement goals and action plans at the school and district levels. In 2011 and 2012, The BERC Group conducted follow-up studies to the initial report, highlighting changes the school and district made. Evaluators repeated the data collection process used for the first report.

In April 2013, The BERC Group visited the school once again to conduct an Assessment of Progress to highlight changes the school and district made over the course of the grant. The findings in this report are based on information gathered from the following sources:

- 1) a review of changes in district level practices and policies to support an intervention model;
- 2) a classroom observation study focusing on instructional practices within the school;
- 3) qualitative interviews and focus groups focusing on the alignment of school structures and practices with OSPI's *Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools*; and
- 4) surveys of school staff, students, and parents.

Evaluators obtained information during a site visit on April 16, 2013. Approximately 24 people, including building administrators, union leaders, certificated and non-certificated staff members, counselors, parents, and students participated in interviews and focus groups. In addition, evaluators conducted 35 classroom observations to determine the extent to which Powerful Teaching and Learning™ was present in the school. Finally, evaluators accessed additional information about the school and district, including school improvement plans, student achievement data, and additional school documents.

The following section describes the federal intervention model Yakima School District and Washington Middle School chose to adopt. This section also includes a comparative overview of the district findings from all SCPS studies, a description of the support provided to the school by the district, and a summary of the changes made at the school level. Subsequent sections of the report offer a detailed review of the school's alignment to the *Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools* based on classroom observations, interviews and focus groups, and survey data. Under each of the *Nine Characteristics* indicators, the report will highlight how the school has addressed issues brought to light in the previous studies.

Implementation of the Intervention Model

In an effort to improve education and educational opportunities across the nation, the federal government provided funding for School Improvement Grants to support the lowest performing districts and schools. Schools and districts accepting SIG money chose from among four federally defined intervention models for their lowest performing schools: *Closure*, *Restart*, *Turnaround*, and *Transformation*. The school closure model refers to a district closing a school and enrolling the students who attended the school in other higher-achieving schools in the district. The restart model occurs when a district converts the school or closes and reopens it under management of an educational management organization (EMO). The turnaround model includes replacing the principal and rehiring no more than 50% of the school's staff, adopting a new governance structure, and implementing a research-based instructional program aligned to state standards. Over the last two years, this model has produced significant gains in student achievement and has helped schools prepare for the longer process of transformation into a high performing organization.¹ The transformation model requires replacing the school principal addresses four areas critical to transforming persistently low-achieving schools: developing teacher and principal leader effectiveness, implementing instructional reform strategies, extending learning time and creating community connections, and providing operating flexibility and sustained support.

Yakima School District and WMS chose to adopt and implement the *Transformation* model. The table in Appendix A of this report describes the specific requirements for the transformation model in more detail and shows a comparison of rankings for each requirement from each of the studies. In response to the model, WMS has implemented some major changes including replacing roughly 30% of the staff, hiring a new principal, providing more opportunities for student data collection and analysis, extending learning time for students, and reorganizing the master schedule. The following section addresses how these changes unfolded, as well as the district's role in supporting the new model.

District and School Level Change

The district employs approximately 857 teachers serving approximately 14,800 students attending two high schools, five middle schools, fourteen elementary schools, one alternative high school, one tech school, and one online high school. Washington Middle School employs 43 certificated staff members. Sixty-five percent of WMS teachers possess masters' degrees, and the average teaching experience is 11 years. Washington Middle School serves approximately 681 students.²

Three years ago, the change process began at each of the three MERIT schools (Adams Elementary, Washington Middle, and Stanton Academy) with an adjustment in leadership (new principals at Adams Elementary School and Washington Middle School, an assistant principal was added to support the remaining Stanton Academy principal). Similarities and common practices have been put into place at each of the three schools, including the extension of instructional time to each schedule, an increase in teacher collaboration time, the integration of

¹ Mass Insight (June 2010). *School Turnaround Models*. Boston, MA.: Mass Insight Education and Research Institute.

² Data collected from OSPI's School Report Card.

the new teacher evaluation model, and increased professional development opportunities for MERIT school staff. Compared to other schools in the district, the three MERIT schools receive a variety of differentiated support from the district. District representatives use a "rapid response" system to better support the MERIT efforts and a Central Services Representative is designated to support each school by means of participating in ILT meetings and providing targeted support.

While reflecting on the journey of each school since the inception of the grant, district and union leadership identified areas of strength, areas to continue to address, and discussed the impact the grant has made on district wide practices. Improved school cultures, increased and intentional use of data, and the creation of collaborative climates are a few examples of ways the schools have grown. "Systems are in place, staff are coming together as true PLCs (Professional Learning Communities)," "Staff are extremely supportive and have strong relationships with the leader," and "We are seeing turn around [efforts] for what's beneficial for kids, not for adults" are some of the comments mentioned during discussions with district leaders. The number of students who still need to meet standards, overcoming a level of fatigue of staff members, and ways to sustain current growth after grant money dissipates remain areas of challenge and focus for personnel. "People are tired. There is still some grouching but it's not near where it used to be. A challenge is that they got used to having additional support but will now have to work without it or a longer day. People will say it was hard work, but they know what it did for the kids," reflected one focus group member. District personnel discussed ways to sustain growth at each of the schools, identifying the need to support collaborative efforts, to maintain reading and math benchmark assessments, and, in some cases, to uphold an extended learning schedule.

District personnel indicate participation in the grant process has impacted some district level practices, with some strategies extending into newly identified priority schools. Hiring new teachers under the grant MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) has reportedly helped to create "great teachers with a stronger sense of accountability" who "want to be here." Earlier exposure to the new teacher evaluation model has also affected the district, with one interviewee saying, "What we learned about the teacher evaluation system for the whole district is a blessing in disguise . . . we've had time to practice and develop work around the system." Leaders seem to recognize the impact the grant has made in the MERIT schools and consider the implications to school success once the money is gone. "Going forward, we want to maintain results and keep moving them up with fewer resources," explained one district representative, "Money is not everything. Now that our instruction is better, we know what it takes to get results. The grant gave us leverage to do things, to get things done. Now that leverage is done."

School and Classroom Level Findings

Survey Results

Washington MS staff, students, and families also completed a survey designed to measure whether these groups see evidence of the *Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools* in the school. The staff survey includes factors around each of the *Nine Characteristics*, and the family surveys include factors around each of the characteristics, except *Focused Professional Development*. Individual survey items were scored on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral/undecided, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree). Researchers consider a "4" or "5" response on an individual survey item a positive response. Likewise, an overall factor score of 4.0 and above is a positive response. These surveys were not administered in the initial assessment.

A summary of the survey findings appears in Figures 1 through 3. Most staff survey scores are below a 4.0, indicating the factors do not exist to a high degree. Most student survey factor scores hover around 3.5 and almost all are slightly lower than the previous survey administration. On all factors, family scores were higher than the previous results and higher than staff and student scores. All family survey factors scored above a 4.0. The highest factor score for staff was in the area of *Clear and Shared Focus* (4.11) and the lowest was in *High Expectations* (3.33). In contrast students and families both scored *High Expectations* (3.77 and 4.43, respectively) as the highest and both scored *Family and Community Involvement* as the lowest 3.42 and 4.27. Students also scored *Supportive Learning Environment* low at a 3.43.

Researchers considered survey findings in scoring the rubric, and the results are included in the following discussion of the school's alignment to the *Nine Characteristics*. Appendices B, C, and D includes the frequency distribution for the three surveys, organized around the *Nine Characteristics*.

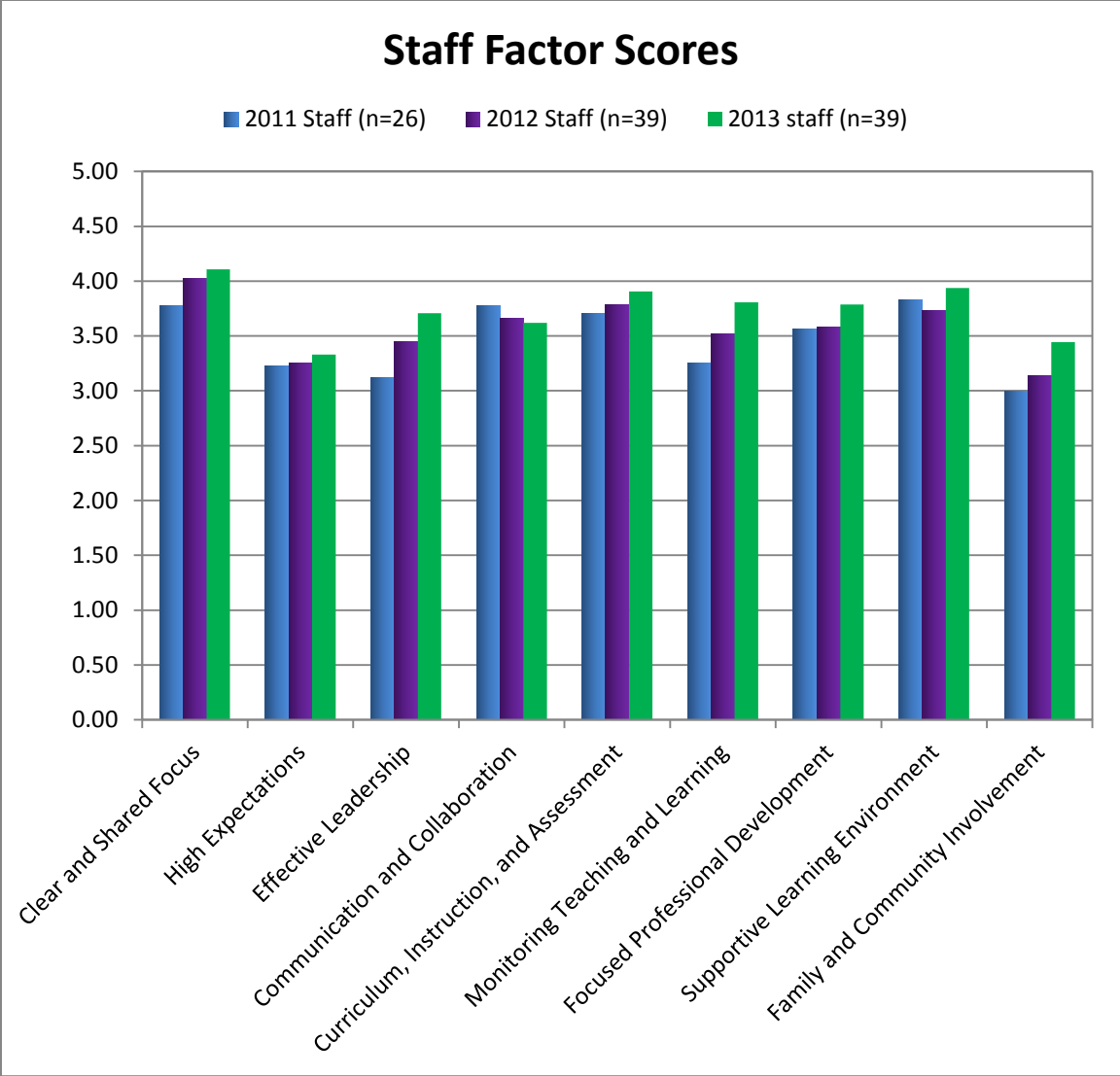


Figure 1. Staff Survey Factor Scores

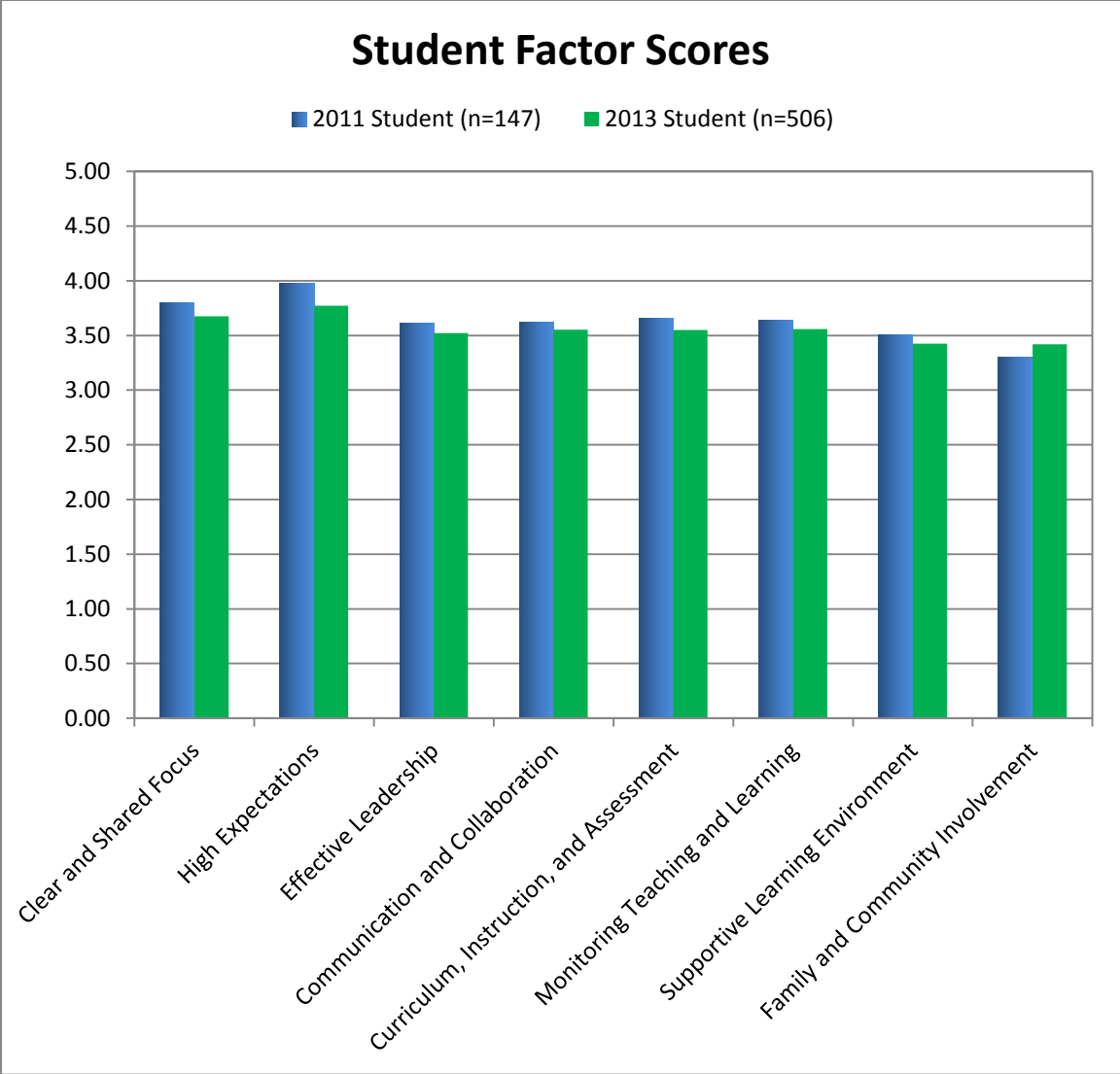


Figure 2. Student Survey Factor Scores

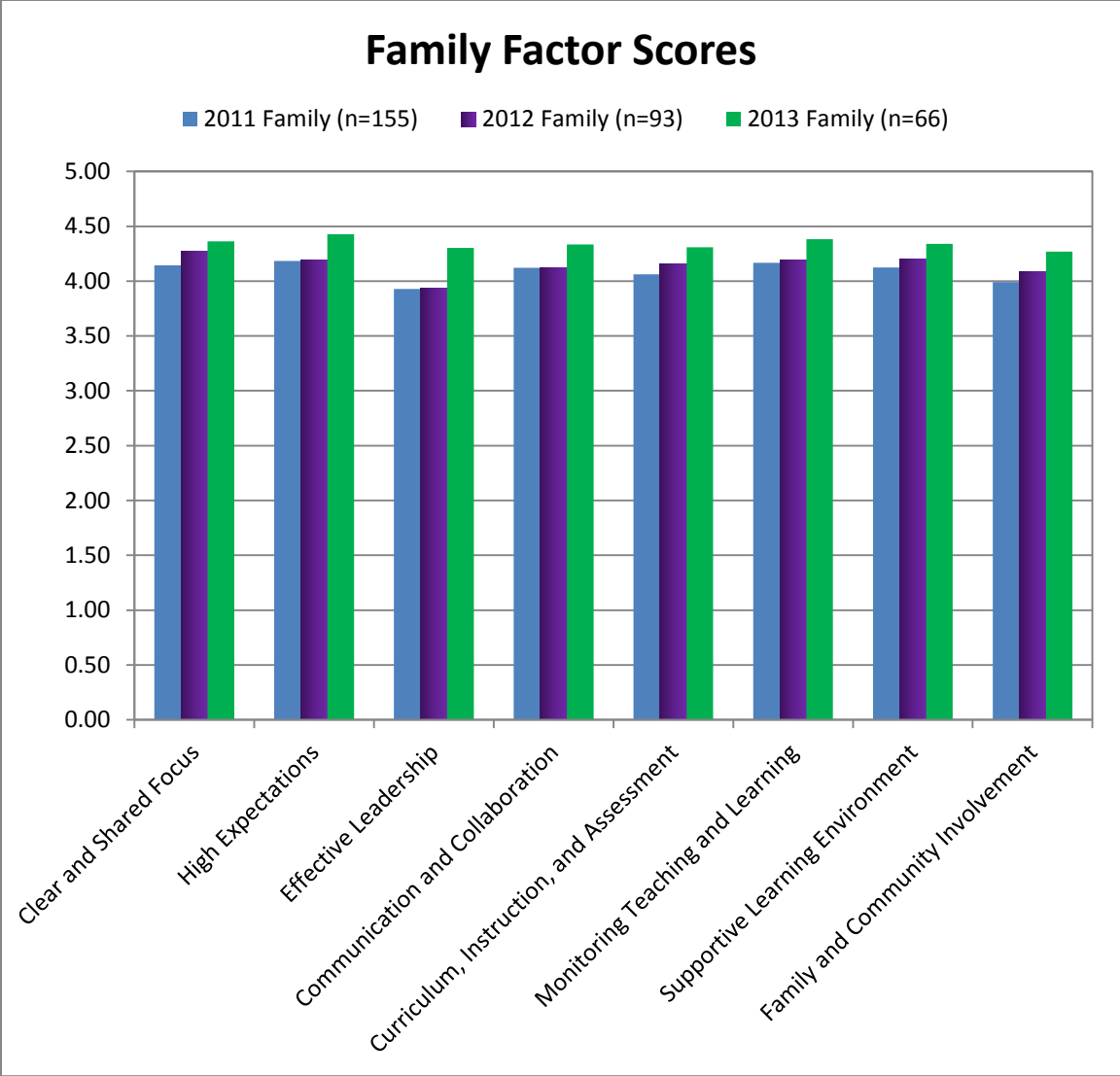


Figure 3. Family Survey Factor Scores

School and Classroom Practices Study Findings

Using data collected through the School and Classroom Practices Study and survey results from staff, students, and parents, research team members reached consensus on scores for 19 Indicators organized around the *Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools*. Each Indicator was scored using a rubric with a continuum of four levels that describe the degree to which a school is effectively implementing the Indicator. The four levels are:

- 4 – Leads to continuous improvement and institutionalization (meets criteria in column 3 on this indicator plus additional elements)
- 3 – Leads to effective implementation
- 2 – Initial, beginning, developing
- 1 – Minimal, absent, or ineffective

Indicators with a score of a 3 or above represent strengths in the school, and Indicators with a score of 2 or below warrant attention. Table 1 includes rubric scores for all the Indicators, including the results from the School and Classroom Practices Study conducted in 2010, 2011, 2012, and the current Assessment of Progress.

Table 1.
Indicator Scores for the Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools

Indicators	Rubric Score 2010	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
Clear and Shared Focus				
Core Purpose – Student Learning	3	3	3	3
High Standards and Expectations for All Students				
Academic Focus	3	2	3	3
Rigorous Teaching and Learning	2	2	2	2
Effective School Leadership				
Attributes of Effective School Leaders	3	2	2	2
Capacity Building	2	3	3	2
Distributed Leadership	2	2	2	2
High Levels of Collaboration and Communication				
Collaboration	2	2	2	3
Communication	3	3	3	3
Curriculum, Assessments, and Instruction Aligned with State Standards				
Curriculum	2	3	2	3
Instruction	3	2	2	2
Assessment	2	3	3	3
Frequent Monitoring of Teaching and Learning				
Supporting Students in Need	2	3	2	3
Focused Professional Development				
Planning and Implementation	2	2	2	2
Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	2	3	2	2
Supportive Learning Environment				
Safe and Orderly Environment	3	3	3	3
Building Relationships	3	2	2	3
Personalized Learning for All Students	3	2	2	3
High Levels of Family and Community Involvement				
Family Communication	3	2	2	2
Family and Community Partnerships	2	2	2	2

Clear and Shared Focus

Everyone knows where they are going and why. The focus is on achieving a shared vision, and all understand their role in achieving the vision. The focus and vision are developed from common beliefs and values, creating a consistent direction for all involved.

Indicators	Rubric Score 2010	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
Clear and Shared Focus				
Core Purpose – Student Learning	3	3	3	3

Core Purpose – Student Learning. The current mission of Washington Middle School is to, “in partnership with parents and community, to empower each child to achieve his/her fullest potential to become a lifelong learner and responsible citizen. We are committed to foster high expectations and promote positive attitudes to achieve equity and excellence in a safe and nurturing environment.” When discussing the school’s vision and mission with staff members, researchers received a variety of responses which echoed this statement. One staff member responded, “Our vision is to make sure that students are ready to go to high school and be successful in an academic, rich environment at high school and act socially in a positive way.” Another explained our mission is, “To make sure to knock down every barrier the students have to be able to interact in the future.” Another staff member stated the vision was, “Working with parents to do the best for their child.” While most staff members were unable to specifically state the vision and mission, they were in agreement that it was developed by staff the year before. Some staff members referenced the use of data to develop school goals and focus areas. As one staff member shared, “Our focus on student learning is always driven by data. The MSP and the benchmarks are the driving source to show progress for our students.”

The district has helped support this vision by adopting Read 180 and Carnegie Learning/Mathia last year district wide. The building has also continued to support its mission and vision by using SIG grant funds to provide in-depth professional development with these programs for the last two years, as well as providing intervention classes for math and reading for those students who did not meet standard. According to survey data, 78% of staff members agree the school’s mission and goals include a focus on raising the bar for all students and closing the achievement gap, and 71% agree the school's mission and goals were developed collaboratively. Sixty-four percent of students agree they understand the mission and purpose of the school.

High Standards and Expectations for All Students

Teachers and staff believe that all students can learn and meet high standards. While recognizing that some students must overcome significant barriers, these obstacles are not seen as insurmountable. All students are offered an ambitious and rigorous course of study.

Indicators	Rubric Score 2010	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
High Standards and Expectations for All Students				
Academic Focus	3	3	3	3
Rigorous Teaching and Learning	2	2	2	2

Academic focus. As mentioned previously, WMS staff members have increased their intentional focus on reading and math for those students who are not at benchmark. For those students who are not meeting standard they receive intervention during the normal school day in reading, math, or both depending on their needs. In order to schedule these necessary interventions, students schedules have been designed with core content being assigned first, then intervention classes being assigned second, and finally elective classes if the student's schedule permits. This change in scheduling philosophy has led to the elimination of some elective classes, reduction in elective classes such as AVID, and some students being in core classes for the entire day with no electives. The intense focus on core academics has concerned some staff members and some believe it is contrary the overall goal of Washington Middle School, which they described as; developing the whole student. As one staff member stated, "Our entire focus and resources are geared toward reading and math." Another staff member explained, "We used to have a very active AVID program, but now it is just a shell of what the AVID program should be, and opportunities to be in it and field trip activities associated with the program are all but gone." Another staff member shared, "Although we all understand the need for the intervention classes, I am not sure our lower end students see a way out. They do not know what they can do to climb out to go to something else or how to change their schedule." A teacher responded to this by stating, "We try to communicate this by having the interventions as stepping stones so they do not have to do them in high school and take the classes where they apply what they have learned in intervention classes to higher level classes and electives."

The school is providing support for more challenging coursework for those students who qualify. Washington offers Algebra 1 for high school credit, as well as advanced history and science. Placement for these courses is based on teacher recommendation and/or passing MSP in reading, math, and/or writing depending on the advanced course subject area. A staff member shared, "Honors science incorporates more projects that involve reading and writing along with research. The advanced math also incorporates higher math skills and integrating these math skills into the work. These students not only take the class but are expected to complete a science fair project for competition in the tri-cities." Another staff member explained, "Honors history has more reading and writing of historical fictions and biographies. To take advanced history, students must pass the reading and writing MSP, and for science we look at reading, math, and teacher recommendations. In the past there has been a 7th grade honors science, and honors math at 6th and 7th grade, but they were lost due to intervention classes."

Rigorous teaching and learning. This school year, Washington has focused on incorporating Bill Daggett's framework around Rigor, Relevance, and Relationship's. According to staff reports, this model helps staff, students, and parents understand two continuum's, one being knowledge taxonomy and the different levels of knowledge from recall (low level) to combining knowledge for logical patterns and creativity (high level). The other continuum is an Application Model, which has five levels of putting knowledge to use from knowledge for its own sake (low level), to using knowledge to solve real world problems and create projects (high level). One staff member explained, "We are using our discussions around Daggett's Rigor/Relevance framework and have set a goal to get lessons in Quad B 90% of the time."

Washington Middle School staff is in the initial stages and process of training staff in classroom observations this semester using the Next Network through Scholastic Partners. As one teacher shared, "We will finish training that group (department heads/leaders) this year and then they will train the rest of the staff next fall." Staff also has benchmark and other assessment data available to them the data through Data Director. This data is being used to help adjust curricular materials and in communicating with parents and students. One staff member shared, "We set high expectations with this data by communicating with the students and parents where they need to be and have them set goals of where they want to be." Staff members also shared with researchers that while they appreciate having Data Director and the scores, the district or school has not provided training on its use and all of its capabilities. A staff member explained, "While we all have access to Data Director, we have not been trained on it, we just know where to go to get the information and print a report." Another staff member shared, "Some departments use Data Director to create assessments, but they have been self-taught, and have friends in other districts who show them how to use it."

According to survey data, 32% of staff members agree students are promoted to the next instructional level only when they have achieved competency, 34% of staff believes that all students can meet state standards and 43% of staff hold each other accountable for student learning.

Effective School Leadership

Effective instructional and administrative leadership is required to implement change processes. Effective leaders are proactive and seek help that is needed. They also nurture an instructional program and school culture conducive to learning and professional growth. Effective leaders have different styles and roles. Teachers and other staff, including those in the district office, often have a leadership role.

Indicators	Rubric Score 2010	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
Effective School Leadership				
Attributes of Effective School Leaders	3	2	2	2
Capacity Building	2	3	3	2
Distributed Leadership	2	2	2	2

Attributes of effective school leaders. Since the implementation of the grant, school leaders have put an emphasis on reading, writing, and math, in an effort to improve scores in these areas. As mentioned previously, the district has supported this through the adoption of new curricular materials and more focused use of data. While the focus has been on these core areas, multiple staff members reported frustration with leadership beginning with the district office. "Leadership issues start with downtown," one staff member shared. Another added;

We never see anyone from the district office in our building. I have been here awhile and could not even identify our current superintendent or curriculum director...Teachers are frustrated because the change is not significant enough. We are not making gains. We get good feedback from the groups like BERK but our district leadership is not doing anything with the information you provide. The district and us get the reports but the district is not implementing any of the recommendations made or even creating opportunities for conversations between teachers, the building leaders, and district office administration.

Another staff member explained, "We read about great leaders but they (district office) are not following what the great leaders we read about do. We are the only multi-billion dollar business who does not hold people accountable from students to teachers to administration to the district and board."

Staff shared mixed feeling in regards to building leadership. Some staff members shared they believe the climate is very good considering the amount of work and stress that they have been under. "We are an exceptional place and I couldn't find a better place and group of people to come to work with," commented, one person, "For the most part I feel like we are doing great, but there is a small group of people that are unhappy because of change. It is a very small group and I think sometimes part of it is just the frustration of their job."

Other staff members shared the building administration is too wrapped up in data, and has forgotten some of the other nuances of education and duties such as discipline. As one staff member stated, "There is such an emphasis on keeping kids in class and not suspending them

or kicking them out of class, that discipline issues are not being dealt with. This ultimately effects the educational setting and environment more than anything else.”

Survey data indicates 93% of families believe administration provides opportunities for to express their ideas and concerns, and 57% of students believe they can ask the principal for help if they need it.

Capacity building. As part of the SIG grant Washington Middle School has been implementing the Danielson evaluation model based on grant requirements and thus is further ahead of other schools in the district. The new evaluation form has goal statements and a proof form to show teachers have made growth. Some teachers expressed concern about being able to show growth when many students have poor attendance. As one teacher stated, “We are held accountable for academic growth and do not see some students except for once every 20 days; some for half a year pending on the farm work their parents do, or are constant disrupters and not here to learn.”

According to interviewees, staff members use school-wide assessments and classroom assessments to help show growth. Staff members give pre- and post- assessments based on a standard and those scores are used to help show growth. When asked about classroom observations, interviewees reported that school leaders conduct classroom observations when necessary, and that some teachers are also doing classroom walk-throughs. One staff member shared, “Two years ago we got trained in Teachscape, and we were doing it more than administration. We spent a lot of money on that and it has gone by the wayside.” Another staff member explained, “The only time I get monitored is for my two observations a year. I was told I am not seen more because I am a competent teacher, but that does not change the fact that I want to grow and improve.”

Teachers also shared concern for the amount of time they are out of the building or classroom for professional development, and the lack of time given to implement these new programs and strategies. One staff member shared, “Math and reading teachers have been out of the classroom a lot the last three years to get trained. If you are not a math and reading teacher you are not at these trainings but expected to know all of the ideas and strategies of these new programs.” Another staff member described their professional training experience this way: “We’re told of focus trainings based on content at the beginning of the grant, however trainings have been a one size fits all based on your subject. If you are not in math or reading then the trainings have not matched your areas.” When researchers asked about cultural trainings within the building, dealing with poverty or cultural issues, staff members responded that there have been no professional development opportunities provided surrounding this since the grant. One staff member commented, “Before the SIG grant we had a book study on poverty, and some teachers have been trained in GLAD, but there has not been a district or building focus on this issue.” According to survey data, 92% of staff members agree they play an active role in the evaluation process. Additionally, 62% of staff members believe the leadership team demonstrates the behavior and practice changes necessary to achieve the preferred future.

Distributed leadership. Washington Middle School currently uses its department chairs as members of its leadership team. These meetings occur at least twice a month and agendas are developed and minutes are recorded. According to interviewees, it is the responsibility of the leadership team member to report “take back items” to their respective department members.

Administration realizes this has not been practiced consistently the last two years. Current building administration explained:

I am trying to create a more shared leadership process with department chairs with data, transition to the Common Core State Standards and other schedule decisions, to give these groups the decision-making power so I am not dictating anymore. I purposefully dictated most decisions the first two years and did not want to go with a distributed model at the beginning of SIG on purpose. The purpose of SIG is to make quick gains, thus I had final say and a lot more say on the process. I made big decisions which impacted the entire building. This year I am putting more of the decisions and questions to the department heads to have them make the decisions. I have backed off from making the decisions on everything.

While some staff members feel the department chair meetings provide collaborative decision-making, others do not. One staff member commented, "We have gotten a lot of lip service about a decision-making body, but I think the decisions are made and conversations are steered the way they want it to go. It has been a very top down model and it has not been an open building." Fifty-one percent of staff members agree there is a clear and collaborative decision-making process that is used to select individuals for leadership roles which is a 13 percentage-point increase from the previous year and 59% agree the building leadership team listens to their ideas and concerns.

High Levels of Collaboration and Communication

There is strong teamwork across all grades and with other staff. Everybody is involved and connected to each other, including parents and members of the community to identify problems and work on solutions.

Indicators	Rubric Score 2010	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
High Levels of Collaboration and Communication				
Collaboration	2	2	2	3
Communication	3	3	3	3

Collaboration. Currently Washington Middle School is implementing PLCs for an hour and forty-five minutes on Mondays during early release for students. Based on information in the school improvement plan the PLCs have standardized agendas and recorded minute forms, with the minutes communicated (via e-mail) to all members including administration. During this time staff is given the opportunity to have discussions around upcoming assessments, around previous professional development learning, around items discussed in the building leadership team, and around the transition to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). One staff member explained, "One transformation we have had is with the curriculum materials in math and aligning it to the CCSS. It has been really positive." The collaboration among staff is also being noticed by students. One student shared, "We see the math teachers work together on a test and they'll be working together in their meetings to help us." Students also shared "Seventh grade level teachers get together especially for reading and the different levels in math." Staff surveys reveal that 57% agree the staff collaborates to improve student learning.

Communication. WMS staff members communicate with parents in a variety of ways through phone calls home, letters and notes, and a monthly school newsletter printed in both English and Spanish. The principal also sends out a weekly agenda to all staff members and anyone else who has asked to be notified of weekly plans. When discussing communication home with parents, interviewees shared that the school mainly communicates with mailings (i.e. invitations, flyers) and phone calls. When needed interpreters are available for conferences and phone calls. Parents and students also have access to grades, attendance, and discipline through the district's family access software. While the school also uses e-mail as a form of communication it was shared that few parents have access to e-mail accounts. One parent suggested the method of communication that would be most beneficial for the school to use would be a Facebook page. The parent went on to explain; "A majority of parents have access to Facebook throughout the day, more so than e-mail. If the school wanted to communicate more effectively it would use Facebook...[The school] could share information about upcoming events and it could also serve as a format for parents to ask questions." Another parent stated, "I am more likely to share what I learn on Facebook with family, friends, and neighbors, than what I read on e-mail." Parent survey data indicates that 94% of parents believe staff communicates with them in a way which is convenient for them and 83% agree their child's teachers respond promptly when they have a question or concern about their child. Only 54% of students responding to the survey agree their parents have an idea of what goes on at school.

Researchers were unable to discover if WMS has a systematic communication plan for stakeholders, however there was a plan in place for staff. Both staff and administration shared that are some guidelines that are generally followed for communication within the building. "We have a building communication plan," shared one person, "content items go to department chairs who interact with administration." School leaders also explained, "While we have a communication plan this does not mean we do not have an 'open door policy' with all staff members."

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessments Aligned with State Standards

The planned and actual curriculums are aligned with the Essential Academic Learning Requirements and Grade level Expectations. Research-based teaching strategies and materials are used. Staff understands the role of classroom and state assessments, what the assessments measure, and how student work is evaluated.

Indicators	Rubric Score 2010	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
Curriculum, Assessments, and Instruction Aligned with State Standards				
Curriculum	2	3	2	3
Instruction	3	2	2	2
Assessment	2	3	3	3

Curriculum. As mentioned previously staff members at Washington Middle School continue to learn and implement Read 180 and the Carnegie Math/MATHia curriculum that are standards-based and focus on providing interventions for students. Read 180 has been supported by reading specialists who instruct a targeted group of students with the assistance of computer-based learning. Interviewees reported that the program helps meet students at their reading level and provides specific lessons to increase reading ability and confidence. MATHia provides a 60/40 split of instruction with 60% of instruction from the teacher and 40% computer-based. Of concern to some teachers is the lack of direction and focus on other subject areas such as social studies and science. One staff member shared, "While science and social studies have been GLAD trained, getting a focus on our curriculums and integrating this with what is going on in reading and math has not been well communicated." Another teacher stated similar concerns:

There is vertical and horizontal alignment occurring within math and language arts within the school. In social studies this occurs in pockets but they have not had a lot of alignment between grade level teams and transitions among elementary to middle school and middle school to high school. There is also no integration among reading, language arts, and social studies programs.

Staff members are also beginning work on alignment of curricular materials to CCSS. "We have begun to create a crosswalk of CCSS with state standards," commented one teacher. "It is taking a lot of time, as we are getting acquainted with CCSS but it is a beginning of how we are going to get there." Staff also shared with researchers that they are submitting their next generation assessments and will be meeting at the end of the year to develop a common core unit for the beginning of next school year. Survey data indicates 73% of staff members agree the curriculum is relevant and meaningful, and 83% agree that programs are aligned to state learning standards.

Instruction. As stated previously, WMS is implementing Daggett's Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships Model with the goal of having 90% of instruction in Column B this year. One person explained, "We are using Daggett as preparation for the Common Core State Standards and how do we plan for all four areas: Acquisition, Application, Assimilation, and Adaption. We

are getting away from regurgitation and beginning to get students to think about it and apply to themselves.”

According to reports from focus group participants, staff members are implementing five essential practices for every lesson that derived from the district office. The five practices include: 1) A two minute discussion for every ten minutes of a lesson; 2) Reflective writing, 3) Thinking component, 4) Write, pair, share, and 5) Gradual release (teacher do it, do it as a class, small group, individual).

Despite these strategies, STAR Classroom Observations results decreased this year with only 26% of lessons showing clear evidence (scoring a 3 or 4) of Powerful Teaching and Learning™, an eleven percentage-point decrease from observations in April 2012. Two components increasing last year were *Relationships* and *Application*. The *Relationships* Component scored the highest of any of the Components on the protocol with 92% of the classrooms observed scoring a three or four. Fourteen percent of lessons scored a 3 or 4 on the *Application* Component this year, which is a four percentage-point increase over findings in the 2011-12 report. The other three areas of the protocol all decreased from last year to this year; the *Knowledge* and *Thinking* Components decreased the most at 17 and 16 percentage-points, respectively. Student surveys indicate only 40% believe that teachers make learning interesting and 58% of students can apply what they have learned to real-life situations.

Assessment. According to interviewees, assessment data helps determine each student’s schedule. This is based on the type of interventions needed (if any) and the number of electives a student is allowed. The school currently uses RCBM, MSP, and benchmark tests along with teacher developed assessments to provide information on the growth of students during the course of the year. This data is used by staff to make adjustments in lesson planning with the curricular materials, and to help target interventions. “We want two years of growth with our intervention students with one year to do it,” explained one teacher. Teachers also have access on Data Director to the data and the ability to monitor progress, however as stated earlier, teachers have not been trained on Data Director and all of its capabilities in assessing targeted standards. One teacher stated, “I think all of us would be interested in receiving training on how to totally use Data Director to its full potential, and helping students succeed.” According to staff survey results, 78% agree staff use assessments aligned to instruction and standards and 78% believe unit assessments are used to monitor student progress.

Frequent Monitoring of Learning and Teaching

A steady cycle of different assessments identify students who need help. More support and instructional time are provided, either during the school day or outside normal school hours, to students who need more help. Teaching is adjusted based on frequent monitoring of student progress and needs. Assessment results are used to focus and improve instructional programs.

Indicators	Rubric Score 2010	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
Frequent Monitoring of Teaching and Learning				
Supporting Students in Need	2	3	2	3

Supporting students in need. WMS students participating in the focus group agreed that they believe the staff is aware of their needs. Evidence provided by students included the intervention classes (which most were in and exited out of), and non-sport activities after school like book club, and Indian club. One student shared, "Most teachers take the extra time to figure it out with the student." Another student went on to share, "Libraries and computer labs are open for us after school if we need them to finish homework." Students also highlighted an after school program offered last year called "Power Hour" which provided places in the school for students to work on homework, get help, and complete projects.

Some teachers participating in focus groups discussed a philosophical change in how special needs students are taught. WMS formerly used inclusion as a means of meeting the needs of those students who had an IEP, but are now using an elementary model where special education teachers meet with "small groups of five students with a para-educator all day long." One teacher shared, "We have exited out many of our IEP's and have transitioned some of them to 504's, but others just went straight off of the IEP."

Teachers also shared that all students who have not passed the MSP have a student learning plan (SLP) which is about 85% of the student population. The SLP has goals for the student, parent, and teacher to accomplish, however teachers shared this plan was more of a hoop to jump through and most believed it has little impact on instruction building wide. "We have general plans but nothing specific to the student," stated one person. Another staff member commented, "Most of the SLP's are just jumping through the hoop. However, with the Read 180 and Carnegie Math we are able to use the SLP more with these programs because of how these are set up and used."

Staff survey data reveals, 78% of staff members agree assessment data is used to identify student needs and appropriate instructional intervention and 70% believe struggling students receive early intervention and remediation to acquire skills. Sixty-two percent of students responding to the survey agree their teachers know which students are having trouble learning and make sure those students get extra help and 58% agree teachers know when the class understands and when they do not.

Focused Professional Development

A strong emphasis is placed on training staff in areas of most need. Feedback from learning and teaching focused extensive and ongoing professional development. The support is also aligned with the school or district vision and objectives.

Indicators	Rubric Score 2010	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
Focused Professional Development				
Planning and Implementation	2	2	2	2
Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	2	3	2	2

Planning and implementation. Focus group participants explained that the focus of professional development this year and the previous two years has been on math and reading. With the support of funds from the SIG grant, professional development was provided around curriculum including; Read 180 and Carnegie Math/Mathia. This professional development was beyond what the district already provided. For those staff members whose primary content area is not reading or math, they are relying on their colleagues in those areas for learning new vocabulary and strategies. One staff member commented, "District office and building administration need to do a better job of communicating strategies across the board so all content areas have an opportunity to share and learn in these trainings. This way different content areas know what the expectations are and can help each other out and work on strengths and challenges, especially among grade level teams where we share students." Another staff member made similar comments stating; "I would like to see time to plan with my colleagues and time to collaborate with other subjects to help them with understanding lexile reading scores, Read 180 data, and math data to help integrate this in content areas such as science and social studies."

Curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Staff members reported to researchers that the district has been active with professional development surrounding the CCSS. According to WMS staff members, the training on the CCSS has occurred during the school year primarily on Monday afternoons. The purpose for this training is to assist staff in developing lessons which align to the common core and create crosswalks between state standards and CCSS. Staff members also had staff training on the CCSS the past two years on their optional day at the end of the year. One staff member shared, "We call this our optional day - this is the day after school lets out and is a specified district training. This training is dictated from the district office and the past two years this has been around common core."

One of the other major areas of focus for professional development is implementing the newly adopted Danielson teacher evaluation model but as one teacher stated, "Our professional development with Danielson has been more 'on the job training' with it than anything." GLAD trainings have also been provided to those staff members who teach social studies and science. One staff member explained, "In previous years the focus has been on reading and math, and science and social studies were kind of forgotten. It was nice to see training in an area which will specifically help these other content teachers." As mentioned previously, the district uses Data Director to store and disseminate various forms of student assessment data, but staff members have not received in-depth training on how to use all aspects of the program, such as

creating their own assessments. According to staff survey data only 41% agree they are engaged in classroom-based professional development activities (e.g. peer coaching) that focus on improving instruction and 59% agree professional development activities are sustained by ongoing follow-up and support.

Supportive Learning Environment

The school has a safe, civil, healthy, and intellectually stimulating learning environment. Students feel respected and connected with the staff and are engaged in learning. Instruction is personalized and small learning environments increase student contact with teachers.

Indicators	Rubric Score 2010	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
Supportive Learning Environment				
Safe and Orderly Environment	3	3	3	3
Building Relationships	3	2	2	3
Personalized Learning for All Students	3	2	2	3

Safe and orderly environment. Some staff members shared with researchers that they believe WMS gets an unwanted and undeserved reputation for its building and students. One staff member explained, "A lot of this has to do with where we are located, compared to the other schools." Staff members also shared with researchers their belief that some district policies get in the way of making progress with discipline due to an emphasis on ensuring kids are in the classroom, which some believe has created a hostile environment with discipline. "There are two to three kids in every class who are disrespectful," one staff member explained, "it makes teaching really difficult. It is the same kids being sent to the office frequently. If parents of the good kids knew what was going on they would be so upset that a handful of kids are disrupting the education of others. These kids, we are forcing them to be here, so they get in trouble on purpose so they can be sent to the office." Teachers reported that the school does have a building discipline program which involves re-directs and steps. One teacher reported, "We have our building discipline program with re-directs, however it is hardest on the new teachers because they do not understand the culture and have so many other things that are on their plate." Another staff member shared in regards to building discipline; "Like any other school it is class to class but the tools are in place if you use them." According to staff survey data, 78% of staff members agree that WMS is orderly and supports learning and 60% of staff members agree that staff enforce consistent behavior expectations and consequences in their classrooms. Student survey data indicates only 30% agree students respect each other, and 51% of students agree they feel safe at school compared to staff survey data which shows that 74% of staff agree students think school is a safe place, while 83% of parents agree school is a safe place for their child.

Building relationships. According to classroom observations results, relationships are a strength at WMS. When asked how staff members build relationships with students, both staff members and students responded with comments such as: "[We build relationships with] Lots of compliments, from their dress to their smile to their work,"; "I try to attend their events after school from sporting activities to band concerts to just talking to them after school"; "My teachers have so many positive statements"; and "They make us feel welcome and want us to come in and learn." One staff member shared, "We have assemblies, sometimes we have classroom parties; we give out individual notes of encouragement, we make positive calls home and send positive notes home. We pat kids on the back when they deserve it and when they are down."

When researchers inquired about relationships among staff there were mixed responses. Some believed the building climate was good among staff, while others perceived a divide between staff, and believe that both building and district administrators have created a "cold" relationship among the teachers since "we are a low performing school." Staff members who believe the building climate among staff is good shared the following examples: "Staff members are willing to help each other out here and share strategies with one another in order for them to succeed." Another person claimed, "Administration does a good job of recognizing teacher effort and progress at staff meetings and in weekly communication." One teacher stated:

As with any large family you are going to have your ups and downs with family members, but for the most part we are all fairly close here. Building administration is always communicating with us in various forms...and they have an open door policy. There are also faculty meetings, surveys, and faculty discussions - sometimes these systems are effective, but some feel they are not. Administration is trying to make sure we have the information we need. Sometimes when there is change, people struggle with it, and other times there is just personality conflicts and this is where we have to be professional and not personal.

For those staff members who hinted that building administration have hindered building morale they pointed to the lack of openness staff has with administration due to the amount of transition which has taken place. "Staff to staff the climate has changed since the new principal," claimed one person. "The climate is poor and there is no trust among staff. There are perceived favorites with staff." Another staff member shared a similar sentiment; "Some things that have happened are unfair as far as forced transfers and pressure. Some people are scared of speaking up against administration because you get forced transferred or more pressure gets put on you and it becomes a more miserable place to work."

Some staff members also shared with researchers their belief that district office administration has played a role in low teacher morale at WMS. As stated previously teachers at WMS do not see district administration in the building very often. Staff members went on to share their belief that the district office focused on them as the example of an underperforming school instead of focusing on the changes and work which they are doing. "This is the most workingest school I have ever seen between building administration, teachers, and classified," explained one staff member. "We tend to put in more energy than other schools due to our population and their individual and family needs. I think this really gets to us that district office does not realize the amount of work we are doing to create a systemic change for the future...we are never applauded or recognized for our work from them."

Survey data indicates that 55% of students agree they can talk with an adult in the school if something is bothering them, and 43% agree they can trust their teachers. Staff surveys indicate 56% of staff agree that students believe the adults in this building genuinely care about them.

Personalized learning for all students. Washington Middle School has developed a schedule which personalizes the academic needs of students by placing them in intervention classes based on data. The system used for intervention is personalized to help the student meet their individual needs and to accelerate them toward meeting standard, and transitioning

out of intervention. As mentioned previously, students who have not passed the MSP have SLP's but according to staff members these plans are "a hoop jump" for staff more than an actual tool. WMS staff members report that they continue to work on improving communication with parents via the WMS-PTA, which has twenty active members. One parent stated, "This group is gaining more confidence in their role and how they can be a part of their students education and interaction with staff. A staff member shared a similar comment, "There are lots of teachers and staff working really hard to try to make the parents comfortable and welcome at school. Staff goes above and beyond trying to cater to the parents."

Staff members are also active in helping students transition from elementary school to middle school and from middle school to high school. For transition from middle school to high school, there are a series of steps dictated by the district office, which involves classroom presentations to students about high school. Then high school counselors and administration come from their respective high school and do an assembly presentation for the 8th grade students. After this, counselors help students register for high school classes for the next year, and discuss college and work preparedness. When asked how parents were involved in the process, staff members responded they are invited to the assemblies and are notified of what is going on, but are not involved in the scheduling process and are not given opportunities for feedback.

For transition from elementary school to middle school, the district office requires a series of steps, which include visits by administration and counselors to all 13 elementary schools and a one hour presentation on WMS. The presentation to elementary students includes expectations, classes offered, and opportunities to ask questions. Students are then assisted with filling out the middle school application form, which is then turned into the elementary counselor. Staff members at WMS were unaware of what the elementary schools did to involve parents in this process.

High Level of Family and Community Involvement

There is a sense that all have a responsibility to educate students, not just the teachers and staff in schools. Families, as well as businesses, social service agencies, and community colleges/universities all play a vital role in this effort.

Indicators	Rubric Score 2010	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
High Levels of Family and Community Involvement				
Family Communication	3	2	2	2
Family and Community Partnerships	2	2	2	2

Family communication. Washington staff members continue to make efforts to communicate and involve families through phone calls, e-mails, letters and flyers sent home, family/parent nights, newsletters to the community once a month, posting events to the website, and updating the reader board. Even though WMS is using these methods of communication, parent involvement is still low, but some believed they could see improvement. As mentioned earlier, parents believe a WMS Facebook account would be very beneficial to getting parents notified as well as hosting some events off school grounds. One parent explained the reason for lack of parent involvement as:

Many parents use their job as an excuse to not get involved with the school but realistically the main reason is they are embarrassed because they feel like they are the only parents in that situation with their students with low grades or discipline issues and this embarrasses them. If we could just get them and see they are not the only one with a student struggling that will help get rid of that embarrassment.

Staff members reported that there are some parent volunteers who come in and help in the office and classrooms. One teacher explained, "My parent volunteer helps kids in small groups. I work with strengths of parent and kids to make a good fit. I have noticed that student behavior is better with volunteers in room."

According to family survey data, 87% agree they feel welcome when they visit WMS, 79% agree that the school offers many opportunities for family members to volunteer or help, and 92% agree staff keep them informed about activities and events happening at WMS. Staff surveys indicate 60% agree they communicate student progress effectively to parents and 83% agree the school provides information to families about how to help students succeed in school. Fifty-seven percent of students agree the school provides information about how their family can help them learn at home.

Family and community partnerships. Family partnerships at Washington Middle School have increased over the past year, with increased participation in the WMS-PTA, which has consistently had about 20 participants at each meeting this year. While these efforts and growth are noticeable, staff members and parents who participated in focus groups, shared that a majority of parents are not involved in their children's education and their main emphasis has

been looking at ways to get more parents involved, and fundraising so the school can offer incentives.

PTA members stated that they have little involvement in decisions made at Washington Middle School but attribute this to a lack of participation from the group in the past. One parent explained, "We are getting more comfortable in bringing up questions as we are learning how we can be involved. I am sure as we grow more confident in our roles this will change." The main participants besides parents have been school counselors and administrators. A parent shared, "We have had a math teacher come in and talk to us about the new math program and how the program shows the teachers what the students need help in and how it allows the student to work on these areas. We would like to see more teachers come and talk about their programs."

Washington Middle School has also opened its door to multiple community organizations who assist student and provide activities. "We do have plenty of use by community groups of the school, AAU organizations, and lots of parent nights," shared one person. "For parent nights we have a variety of community organizations here to assist families and provide translation services for them as well."

According to family surveys, 84% of families agree WMS has connected them with community resources and 85% agree the school works with community organizations to support their child. Thirty-eight percent of staff members agree parents and community members are collaborated with on important decisions.

Summary and Recommendations

The Yakima School District and WMS chose to implement the *Transformation Model*. Over the course of the grant several significant changes occurred, namely, a new principal, a dress code, more targeted academic interventions, a longer school day, and a longer school year.

Washington Middle School staff members demonstrate a passion for and commitment to their students' academic success. There is evidence of attention to each of the *Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools*. The indicators are split between the "Initial, Beginning, and Developing" stage and the "Leads to Effective Implementation" stage.

The initial assessment identified the most critical areas to move forward with school improvement efforts. Below is an update on how the school has addressed these areas in the current school year:

- **Access support in developing a new competency model.** Past reports have mentioned the training of staff with Teachscape; however the district is going in a new direction with a new program: Scholastic Partners. There is little evidence to suggest that Teachscape was implemented fully and change in instructional practice was not observable to researchers. We recommend that district and building administration develop systems of sharing data on teaching practices within the building as a whole.
- **Identify essential standards, curriculum alignment, and pacing.** Staff members shared that there has been an intentional focus on the CCSS this year to begin implementation at the beginning of next school year. Because of this transition, the primary development with standards has been horizontal. As shared by teachers, there has been little development between grade levels and between transition grades from elementary to middle school and from middle school to high school. We recommend providing opportunities for staff to have these conversations so there are known expectations from one grade level to the next.
- **Provide ongoing professional development and coaching for instructional leaders and classroom teachers in effective classroom practices.** At the time of the initial assessment, researchers acknowledged district efforts toward in-service professional development, but maintained these efforts had not focused on best instructional practice. WMS has implemented Daggett's Model of Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships with a goal of 90% of lessons in quadrant B. The district has also set the expectations for teachers to incorporate five essential components for every lesson. While these goals have been set by district office and building administration, it is unclear to researchers to what extent staff members have received training around implementing them in class, as focus group participants shared professional development opportunities this year have focused on Read 180, Mathia, and CCSS.
- **Provide training for classroom walk-through process and data collection.** Past reports indicate that administrators and staff members were implementing the Teachscape walk-through tool. Based on focus group interviews there has been minimal consistency with this and there has not been enough of a focus on the indicators of effective teaching and minimal data presented. Staff members shared with researchers

that the district is moving to a new program for this, in which leadership team members are being trained, and then will train all teachers in fall 2013.

- **Use of student data (formative, interim, and summative) to inform and differentiate instruction to meet academic needs of individual students.** WMS is using student data to drive schedules and interventions needed based upon MBA and RCBM assessments. While staff members have been given data sheets to determine where students are academically in reading and math compared to standard, WMS staff has had no formal training on how to use Data Director to its full capacity (i.e. creating assessments specifically targeted to student needs). It is recommended that staff members receive more training and support in the use of data to inform instruction, and be given the opportunity to be trained in the full functionality of Data Director.
- **Establish parent and community partnerships.** Parent partnerships have increased over the course of the grant with 20 consistent participants on the PTA. However, most staff members and parents agree that this is still a minority of people that should be involved. It was unclear to researchers the role of PTA in school decisions and how parent leaders are chosen. It may be beneficial for school leaders to clearly identify roles of the PTA and develop a more defined process for recruiting parents to serve on committees and in advisory roles.
- **Celebrate staff successes and create climate-building activities for staff members.** Staff members reported a lack of recognition from the district office and administration about the positive changes which have occurred. Both district and building administration need to recognize these efforts individually, as a department, and a building. By recognizing efforts, achievements, and successes no matter how small or big will help increase staff bonds and encourage staff members to incorporate new philosophies as well as trying ideas outside of their comfort zone. We recommend for district and building leadership as well as staff members to build a supportive foundation and create additional opportunities to strengthen staff relationships among staff members (certified and classified). While accountability must be maintained, it would behoove school and district leaders to consider more formal ways of recognizing staff accomplishments (as done with students) and celebrating their life and career events not only among staff but with students, parents, community members, and the rest of the district.

Appendix A – District Survey

Scoring of the conditions under each model as **“In Place”** or **“Able to Put in Place”** is based on:

- (1) The condition for the model does not currently exist and essential pieces for implementing the condition do not exist (e.g., policies, procedures, collective bargaining language, and programs or processes are not in place). This scoring level does not mean that the condition cannot be implemented; but rather that implementation will be more demanding, require more extensive engagement of all parties, and require greater external support and assistance.
- (2) Essential pieces to implement the condition exist (e.g., no significant barriers are contained in the current collective bargaining agreement; existing programs lend themselves to adaptation). The condition can be implemented at an acceptable level with some support and assistance.
- (3) The condition is currently in place at an acceptable level.
- (4) The condition is currently in place at a high level and could be considered as an exemplar.

The ratings in the table below come from an analysis of district personnel ratings, district interviews, and data collected by The BERC Group.

X" Required "O" Permissible

Actions	Rubric 2010	Rubric 2011	Rubric 2012	Rubric 2013	Comment
Teachers and Leaders					
Replace the principal.	2	4	4	4	Principals at AES and WMS are in their third year.
Use locally adopted competencies to measure effectiveness of staff who can work in a turnaround environment; use to screen existing and select new staff.	2	2	3	3	The district would need to gain more flexible provisions in seeking and selecting external candidates over seniority based selection of internal candidates.
Screen all existing staff, rehiring no more than 50% of the school staff.	1	2	3	3	
Implement such strategies as financial incentives and career ladders for recruiting, placing, and retaining effective teachers.	2	2	2	2	The district enjoys a relatively effective recruiting position but is open and receptive to new recruiting strategies and assistance in creating a new recruiting model. Generally, the district has the quality of staff needed within the district at large, although it is restricted in its ability to direct movement of the staff. Principals attended a job fair in Tacoma to interview potential candidates.
Implement rigorous, transparent, and equitable evaluation systems for teachers and principals which are developed with staff and use student growth as a significant factor.	2	3	4	4	The district and union continue to collaborate on the implementation of the new competency-based evaluation model. Merit schools have already given input, based on their participation in a small-scale pilot.

Teachers and Leaders (Cont.)	Rubric 2010	Rubric 2011	Rubric 2012	Rubric 2013	Comment
Identify and reward school leaders who have increased student achievement and graduation rates. Identify and reward school leaders who have increased student achievement and graduation rates; Identify and remove school leaders and teachers who, after ample opportunities to improve professional practice have not done so.	2	2	2	2	There are no inhibitors in the CBA to effective accountability other than the need for a better model. The district is experiencing success in addressing performance issues and can build upon that success through additional administrator training and development in performance management.
Provide additional incentives to attract and retain staff with skills necessary to meet the needs of the students (e.g., bonus to a cohort of high-performing teachers placed in a low-achieving school.	N/A		1	1	To be determined by the district
Ensure school is not required to accept a teacher without mutual consent of the teacher and principal regardless of teacher's seniority.	2	3	4	4	

Instructional and Support Strategies	Rubric 2010	Rubric 2011	Rubric 2012	Rubric 2013	Comment
Use data to select and implement an instructional program that is research-based and vertically aligned to each grade and state standards.	2	3	4	4	
Provide staff ongoing, high quality, job-embedded professional development aligned with the school's comprehensive instructional program and designed with school staff.	2	3	4	4	Each MERIT school continues to receive professional development opportunities targeted to their plans. The district designated a .5 FTE Math professional development specialist to each of the MERIT buildings.
Ensure continuous use of data (e.g., formative, interim, and summative assignments) to inform and differentiate instruction to meet the academic needs of individual students.	3	2	4	4	
Institute a system for measuring changes in instructional practices resulting from professional development.	1	2	3	3	
Conduct periodic reviews to ensure the curriculum is implemented with fidelity, having intended impact on student achievement, and modified if ineffective.	1	3	3	3	Current collective bargaining agreement language grants the teachers substantial academic freedom and places the burden on the district to enforce a directed curriculum and instructional model. Clarifying language that board approved curriculum and instructional practice must be used and adhered to should be a priority for subsequent contract negotiations.
Implement a school-wide response to intervention model.	2	2	2	3	The schools have intervention processes using RTI, implemented to varying degrees.
Provide additional supports and professional development to teachers to support students with disabilities and limited English proficient students.	2	2	3	3	The district offers training in best practices for limited English proficient students. Some MERIT schools have placed an intentional emphasis on developing vocabulary across the curriculum to support these students.

Instructional and Support Strategies (cont.)	Rubric 2010	Rubric 2011	Rubric 2012	Rubric 2013	Comment
Use and integrate technology-based supports and interventions as part of the instructional program.	N/A	3	2	2	The district has provided MERIT schools with additional computer labs, computing units, and support. The district has a .5 FTE Instructional Technology Facilitator assigned to each MERIT school.
Secondary Schools: Increase graduation rates through strategies such as credit recovery programs, smaller learning communities, etc.	N/A	3	3	3	
Secondary Schools: Increase rigor in coursework, offer opportunities for advanced courses, and provide supports designed to ensure low-achieving students can take advantage of these programs and coursework.	N/A	2	3	3	
Secondary Schools: Improve student transition from middle to high school.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Secondary Schools: Establish early warning systems.	N/A	N/A	3	3	

Learning Time and Support	Rubric 2010	Rubric 2011	Rubric 2012	Rubric 2013	Comment
Establish schedules and strategies that provide increased learning time. Increased learning time includes longer school day, week, or year to increase total number of school hours.	2	4	4	4	Currently in place.
Provide appropriate social-emotional and community-oriented services and support for students.	4	3	4	4	MERIT schools have counseling services, some with mental health professionals, to support social-emotional growth.
Provide ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement.	2	2	4	4	MERIT schools vary widely in this area, and most are making efforts to make the school a more welcoming place.
Extend or restructure the school day to add time for such strategies as advisories to build relationships.	N/A	2	4	4	
Implement approaches to improve school climate and discipline.	2	3	4	4	The district's implemented dress code and additional security officers address this issue. At least one school implements PBIS as a discipline model.
Expand program to offer pre-kindergarten or full day kindergarten.	N/A	4	4	4	

Governance	Rubric 2010	Rubric 2011	Rubric 2012	Rubric 2013	Comment
Adopt a new governance structure to address turnaround schools; district may hire a chief turnaround officer to report directly to the superintendent.	2	3	3	3	District has assigned district advocates to represent each MERIT school in district meetings.
Grant sufficient operational flexibility (e.g., staffing, calendar, budget) to implement fully a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student achievement and increase high school graduation rates.	2	3	4	4	
Ensure school receives intensive ongoing support from district, state, or external partners.	3	3	4	4	
Allow the school to be run under a new governance agreement, such as a turnaround division within the district or state.	N/A	3	N/A	N/A	
Implement a per-pupil school based budget formula that is weighted based on student needs.	N/A	4	2	2	

Appendix B – Staff Survey

Demographics

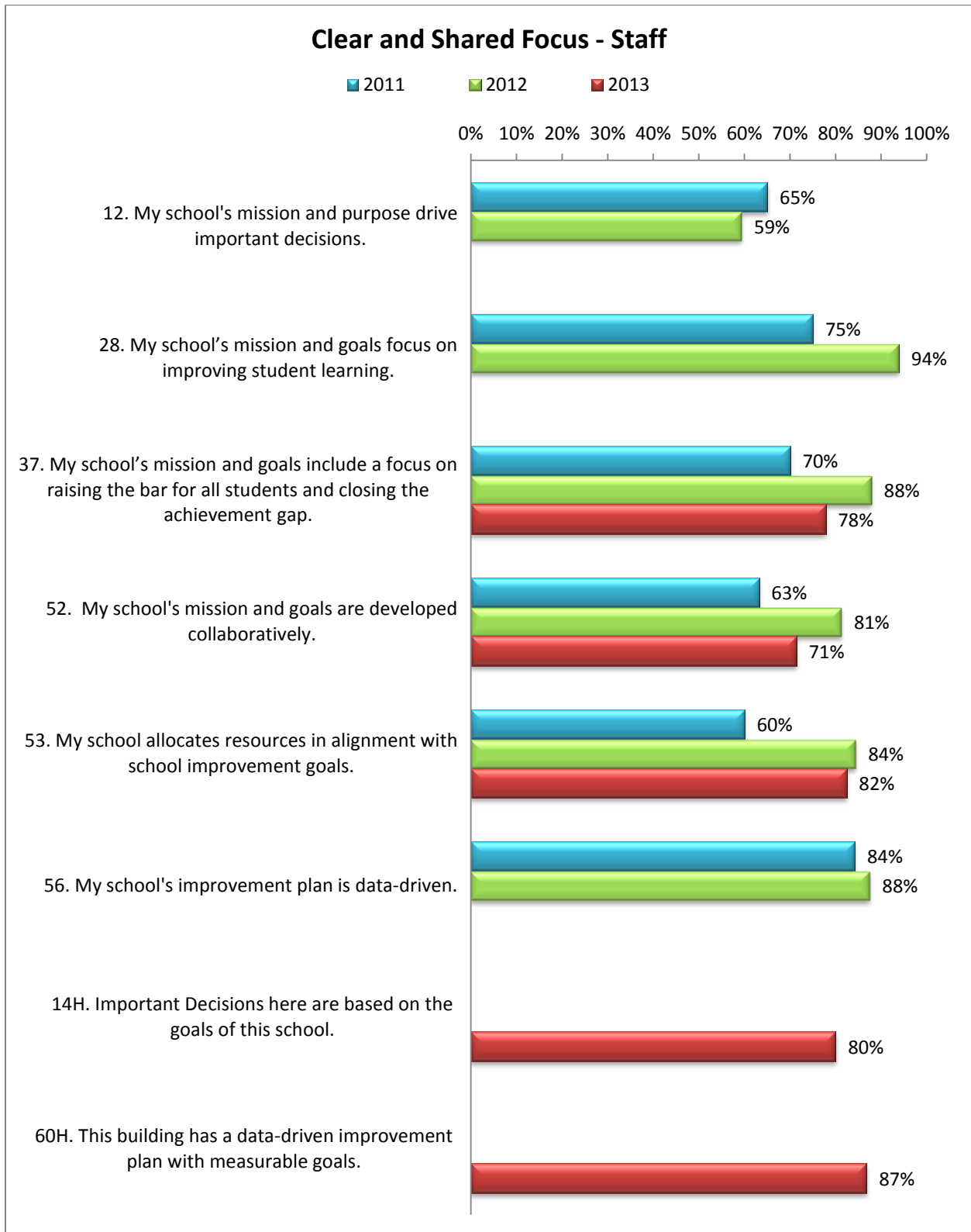
	2011	2012
<i>Gender</i>		
<i>Male</i>	41.7%(n=10)	28.9%(n=11)
<i>Female</i>	58.3%(n=14)	71.1%(n=27)
<i>Race</i>		
<i>American Indian/Alaskan Native</i>	4.2%(n=1)	
<i>Asian</i>		2.6%(n=1)
<i>Black African American</i>		2.6%(n=1)
<i>White</i>	62.5%(n=15)	53.8%(n=21)
<i>Hispanic/Latino/a</i>	20.8%(n=5)	28.2%(n=11)
<i>Pacific Islander</i>		
<i>Declined to identify</i>	12.5%(n=3)	12.8%(n=5)
<i>Staff Role</i>		
<i>Certificated Staff</i>	91.7%(n=22)	76.9%(n=30)
<i>Classified Staff</i>		20.5%(n=8)
<i>Administrator</i>	8.3%(n=2)	2.6%(n=1)
<i>Years Teaching at this School</i>		
<i>1st year</i>	25%(n=6)	14.7%(n=5)
<i>2nd or 3rd year</i>		26.5%(n=9)
<i>4th or 5th year</i>	12.5%(n=3)	11.8%(n=4)
<i>6th-9th year</i>	12.5%(n=3)	14.7%(n=5)
<i>10th year or more</i>	50%(n=12)	32.4%(n=11)
<i>Total years Teaching</i>		
<i>1st year</i>	12.5%(n=3)	8.8%(n=3)
<i>2nd or 3rd year</i>		17.6%(n=6)
<i>4th or 5th year</i>	4.2%(n=1)	8.8%(n=3)
<i>6th-9th year</i>	12.5%(n=3)	14.7%(n=5)
<i>10th year or more</i>	70.8%(n=17)	50%(n=17)
<i>National Board Certified</i>		
<i>Yes</i>	8.7%(n=2)	8.3%(n=3)
<i>No</i>	91.3%(n=21)	91.7%(n=33)

Staff Survey Demographics cont'd

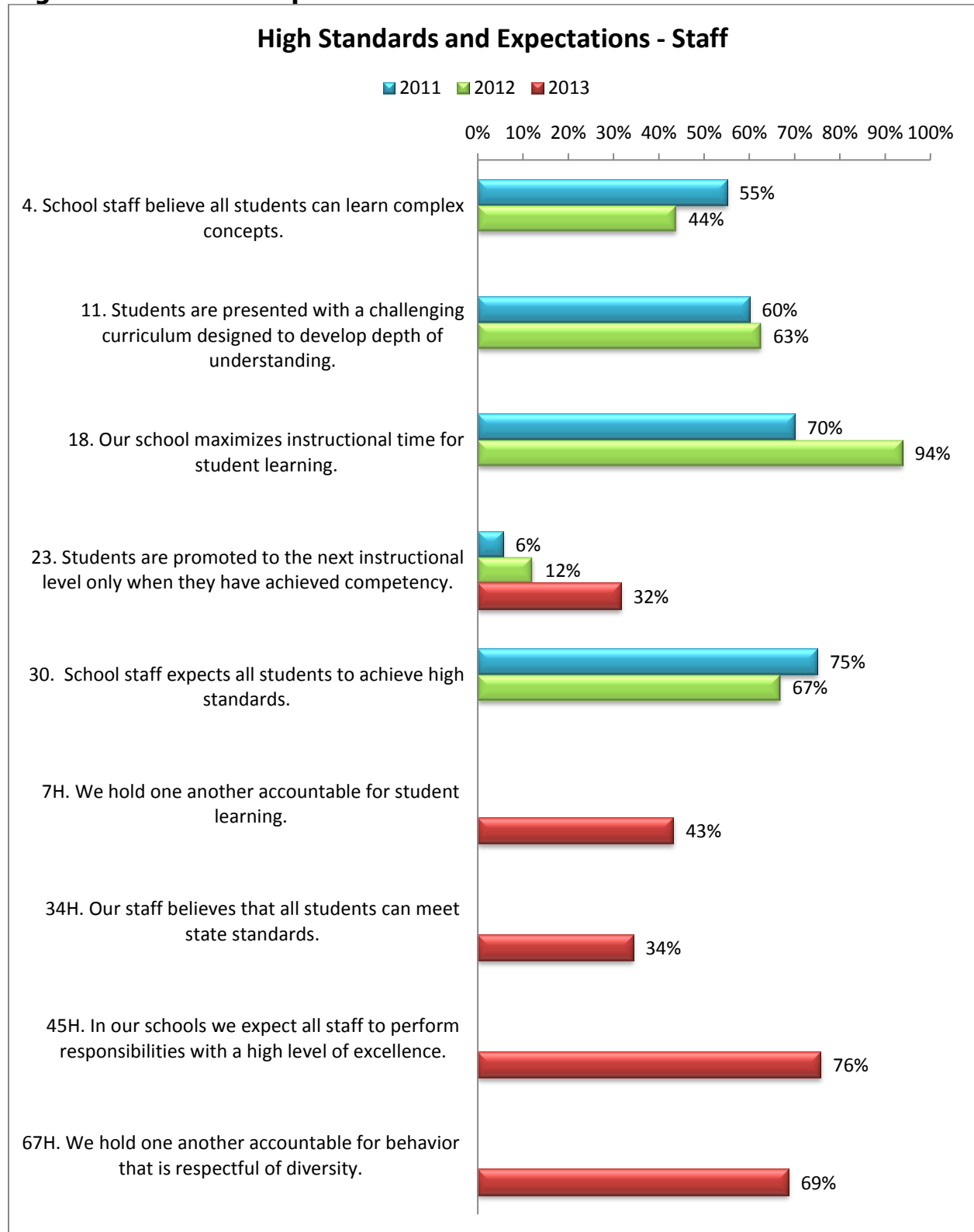
2013

<i>Gender</i>	
<i>Male</i>	35.9% (n=14)
<i>Female</i>	59% (n=23)
<i>Missing</i>	5.1% (n=2)
<i>Subject Area</i>	
<i>Missing</i>	5.1% (n=2)
<i>Other</i>	33.3% (n=13)
<i>Electives</i>	2.6% (n=1)
<i>LA/Social Studies</i>	28.2% (n=11)
<i>Math/Science</i>	25.6% (n=10)
<i>Total number of years teaching</i>	
<i>Missing</i>	2.6% (n=1)
<i>More than 11</i>	59% (n=23)
<i>8-11 years</i>	12.8% (n=5)
<i>4-7 years</i>	10.3% (n=4)
<i>1-3 years</i>	7.7% (n=3)
<i>Less than a year</i>	7.7% (n=3)
<i>Years Teaching at this School</i>	
<i>Missing</i>	
<i>More than 11</i>	38.5% (n=15)
<i>8-11 years</i>	10.3% (n=4)
<i>4-7 years</i>	12.8% (n=5)
<i>1-3 years</i>	23.1% (n=9)
<i>Less than a year</i>	15.4% (n=6)
<i>Position</i>	
<i>Administrator</i>	5.1% (n=2)
<i>Paraprofessional or Instructional Aid</i>	7.7% (n=3)
<i>Classified Support Staff</i>	17.9% (n=7)
<i>Certificated Support Staff</i>	2.6% (n=1)
<i>Certificated Staff</i>	61.5% (n=24)
<i>Missing</i>	5.1% (n=2)

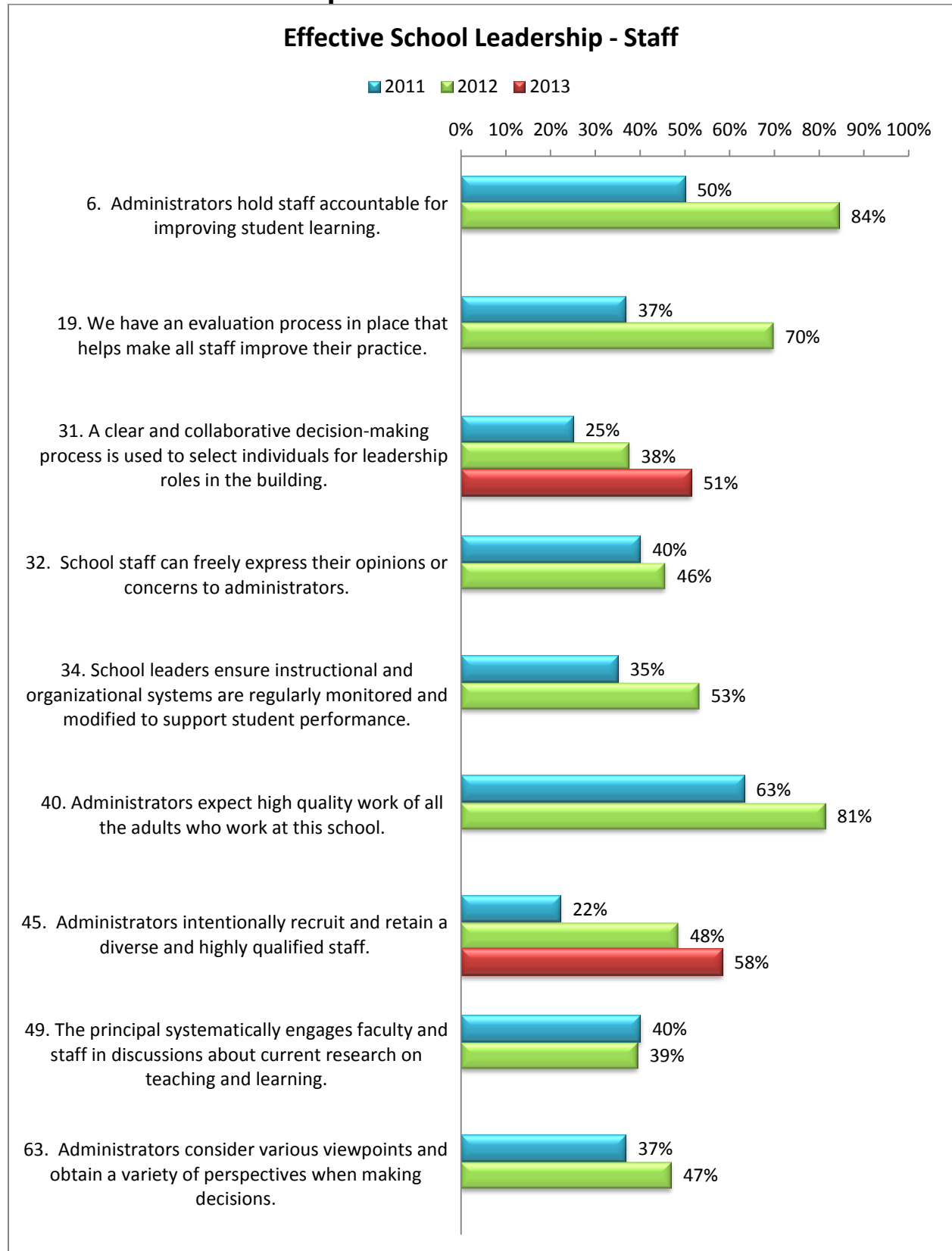
Clear and Shared Focus



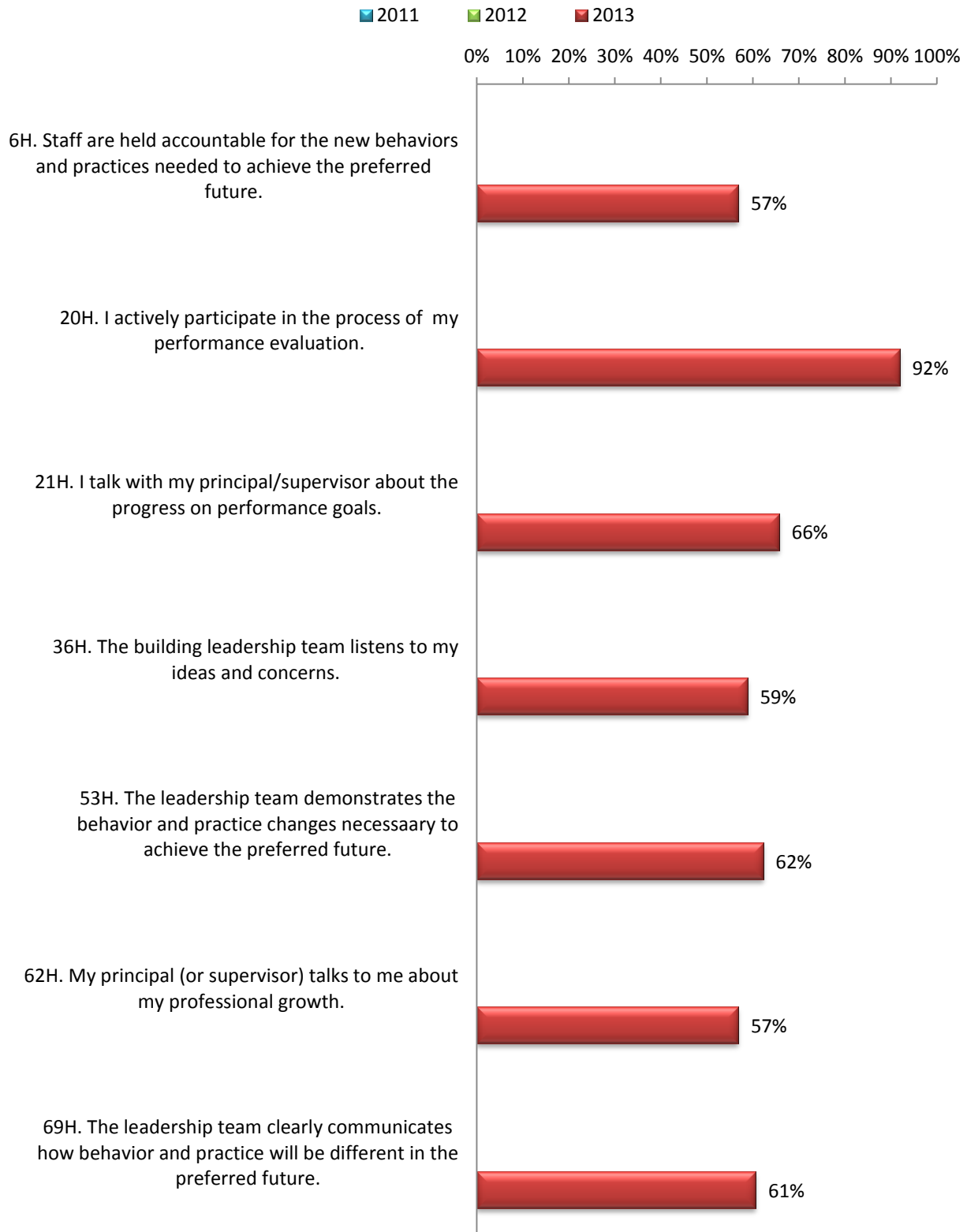
High Standards and Expectations



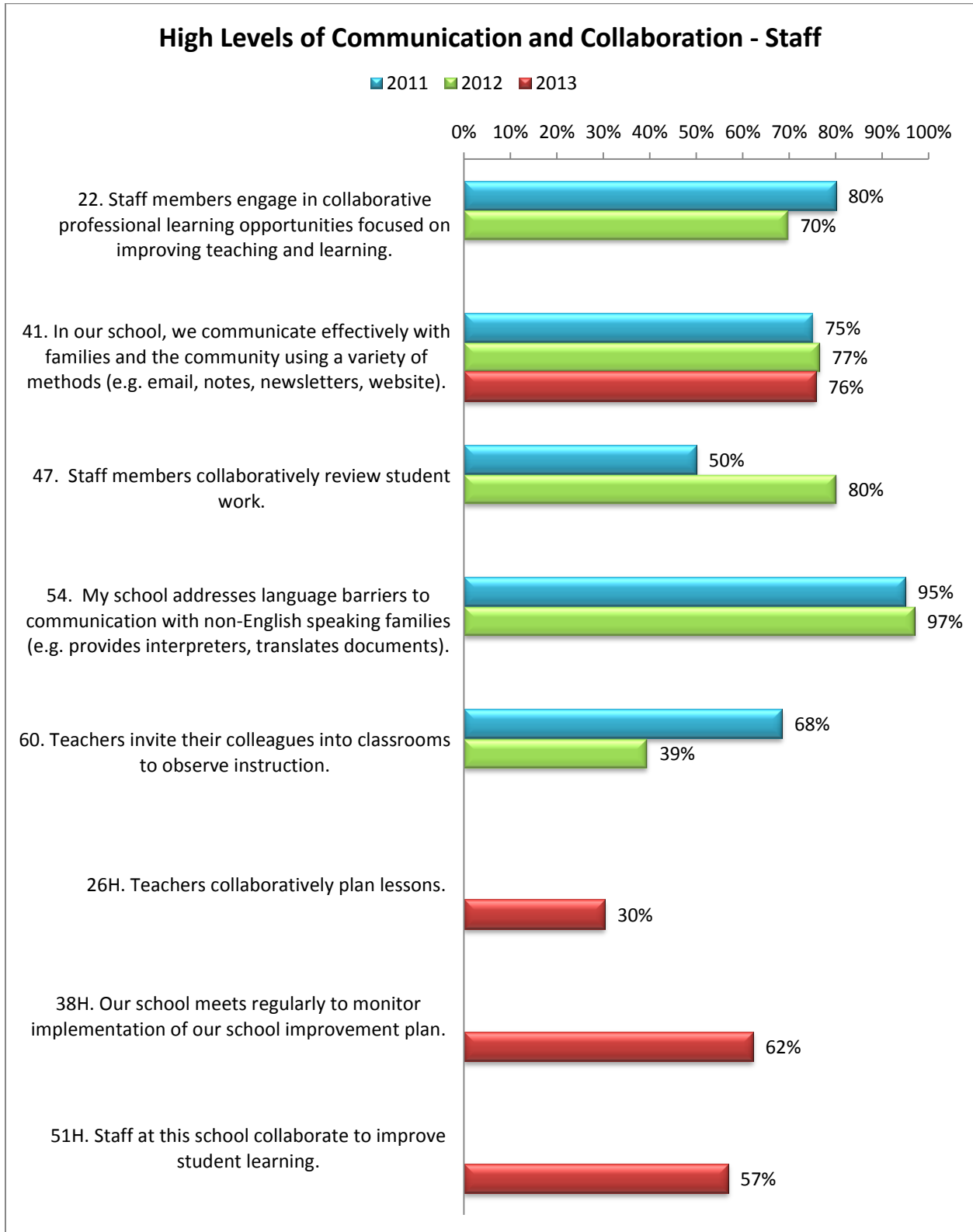
Effective School Leadership



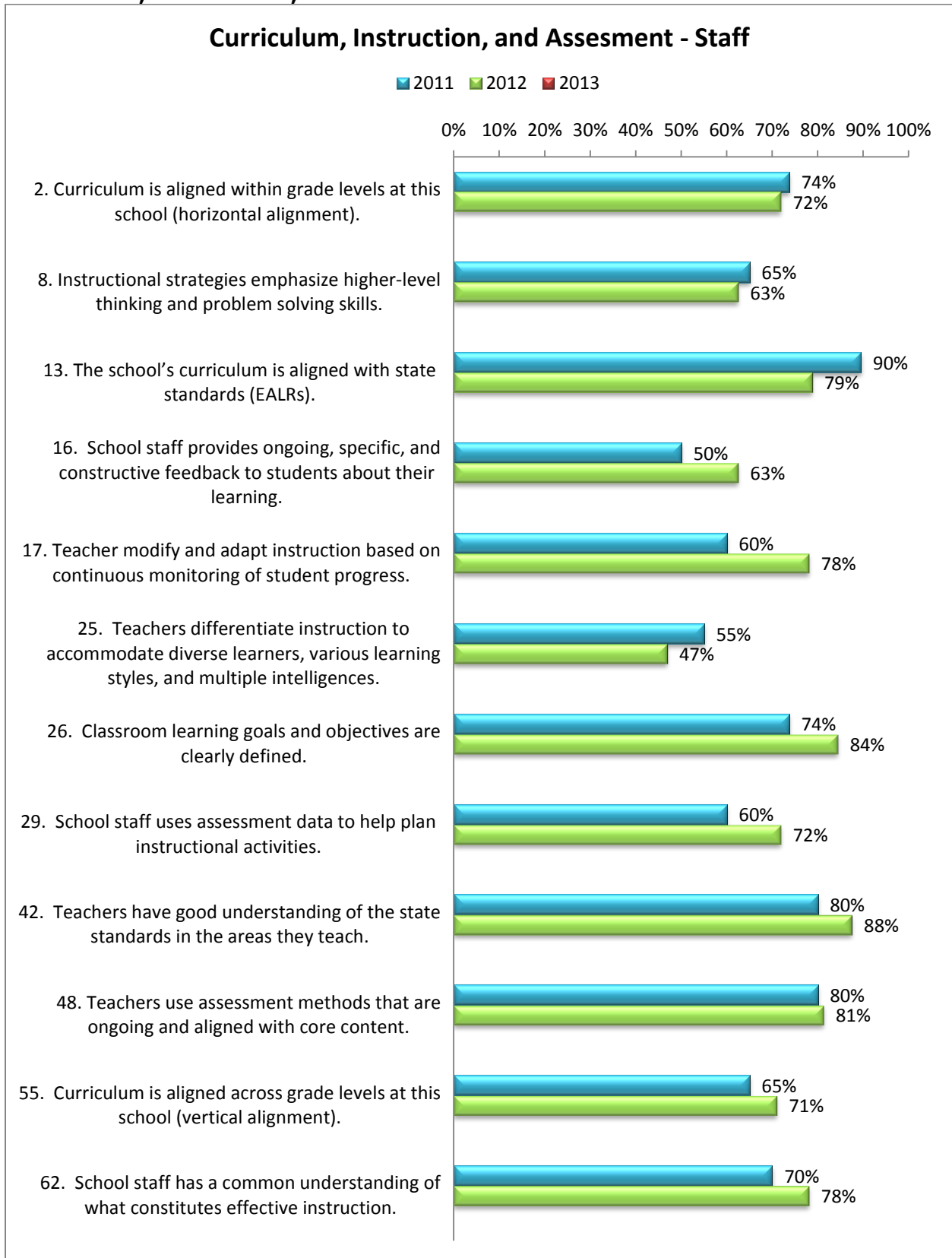
Effective School Leadership - Staff



High Levels of Communication and Collaboration



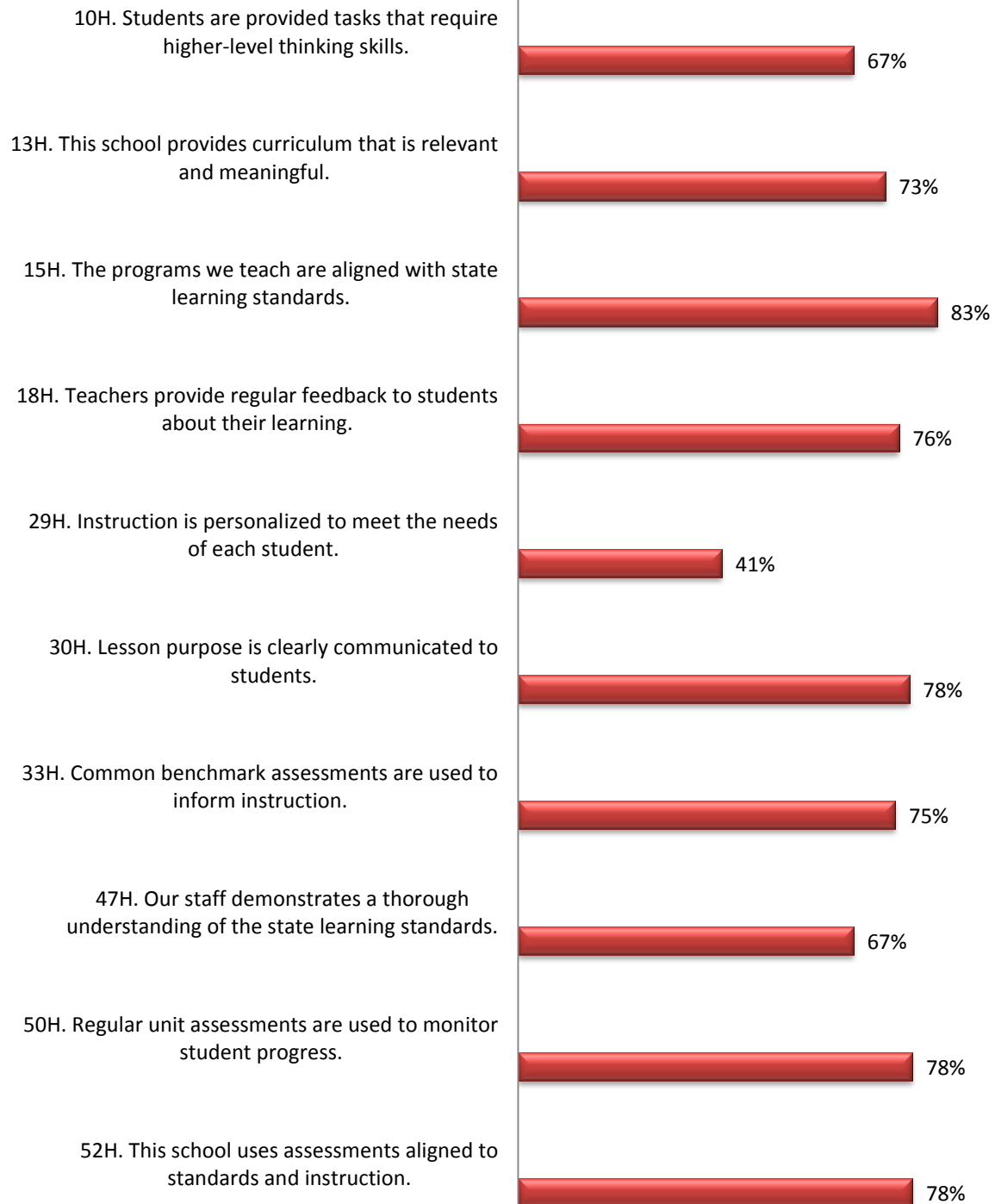
Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment



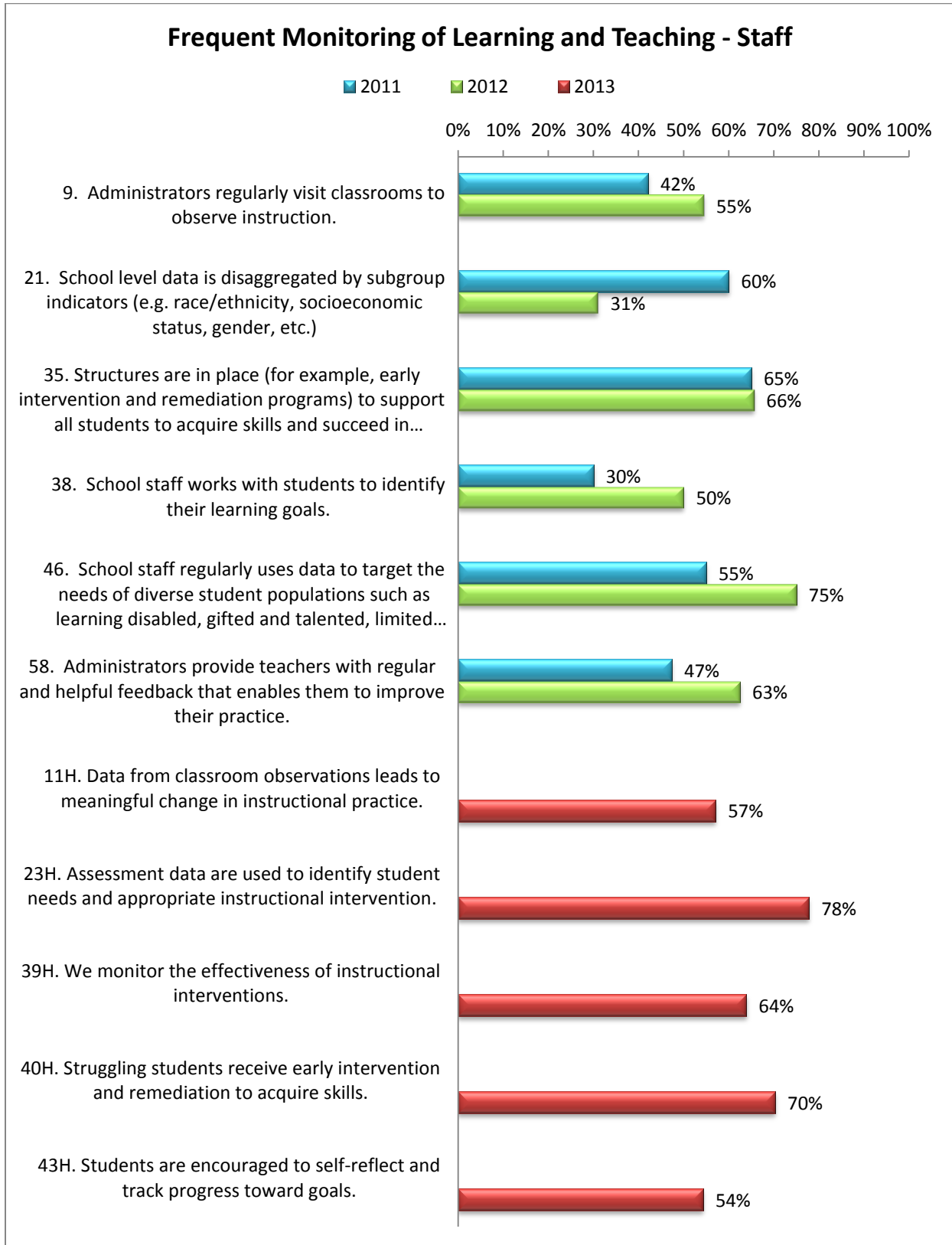
Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment - Staff

■ 2011 ■ 2012 ■ 2013

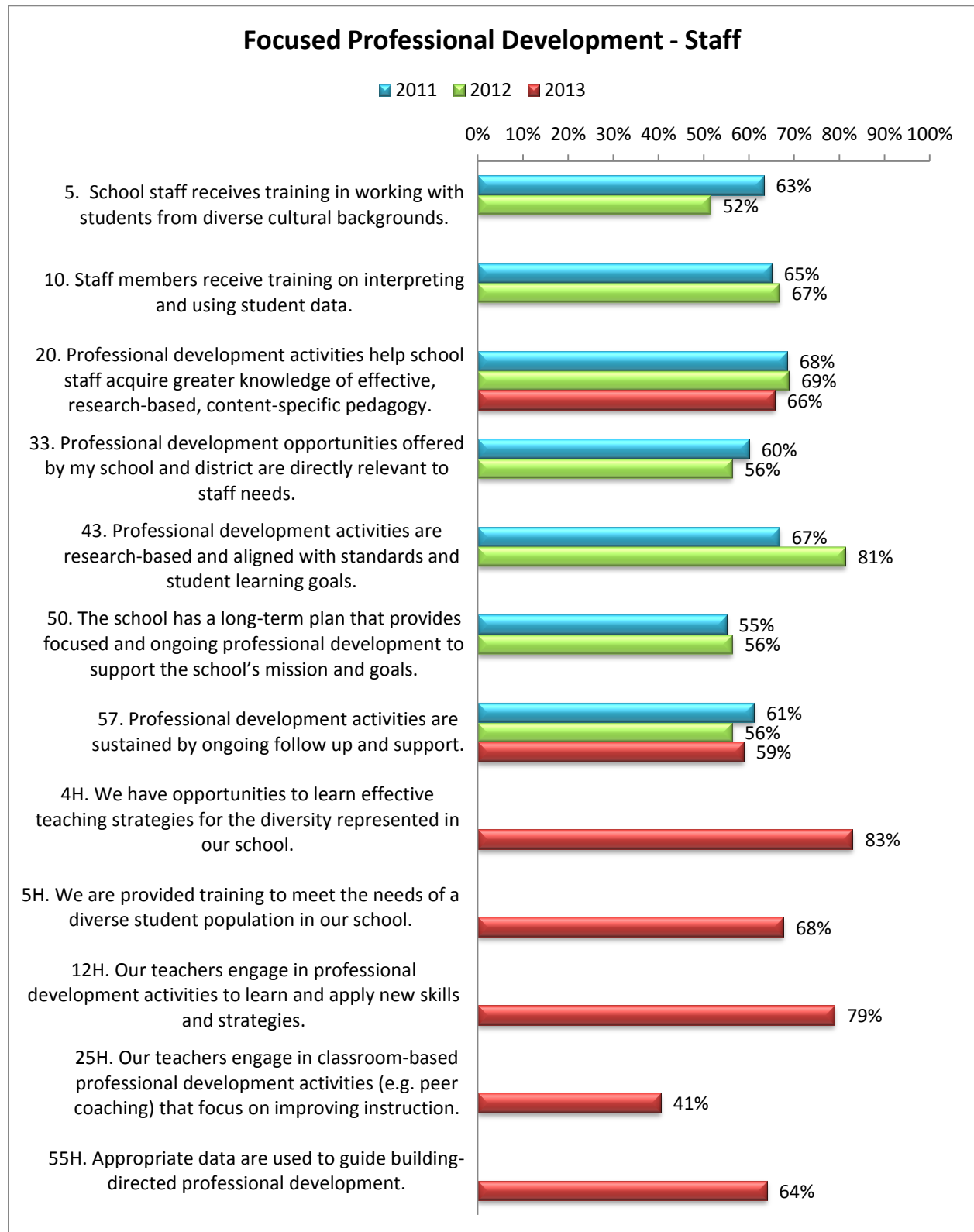
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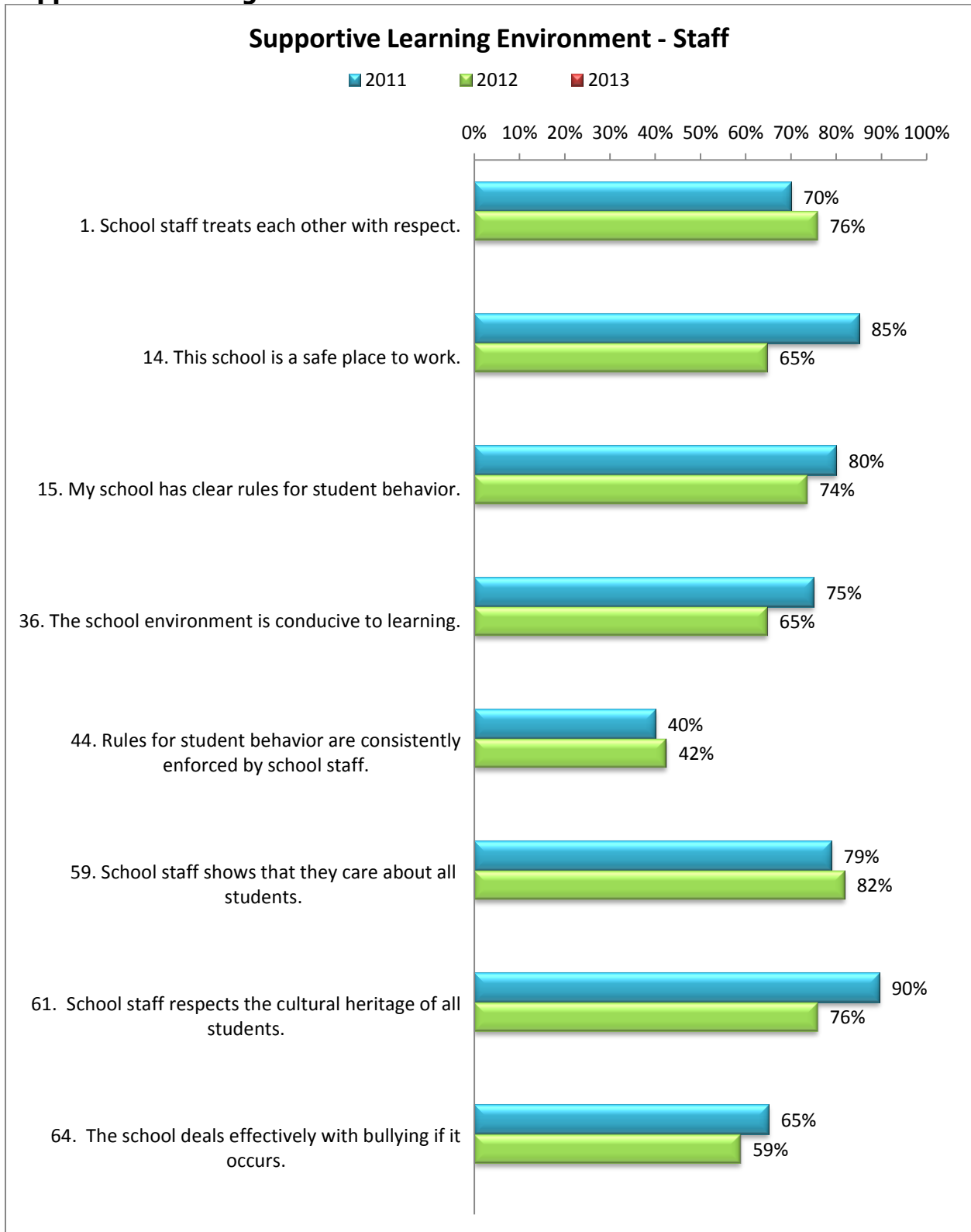
Frequent Monitoring of Learning and Teaching



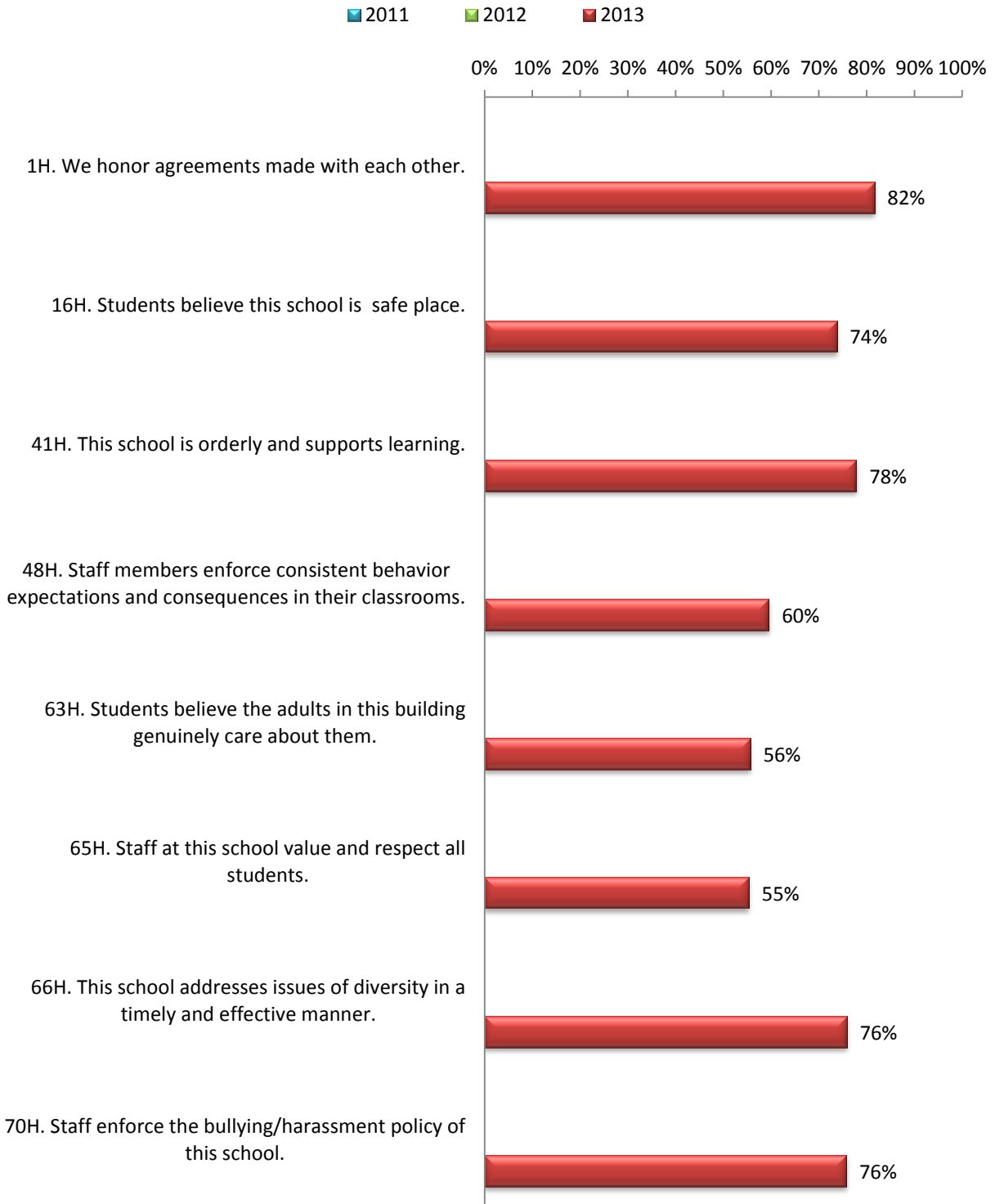
Focused Professional Development



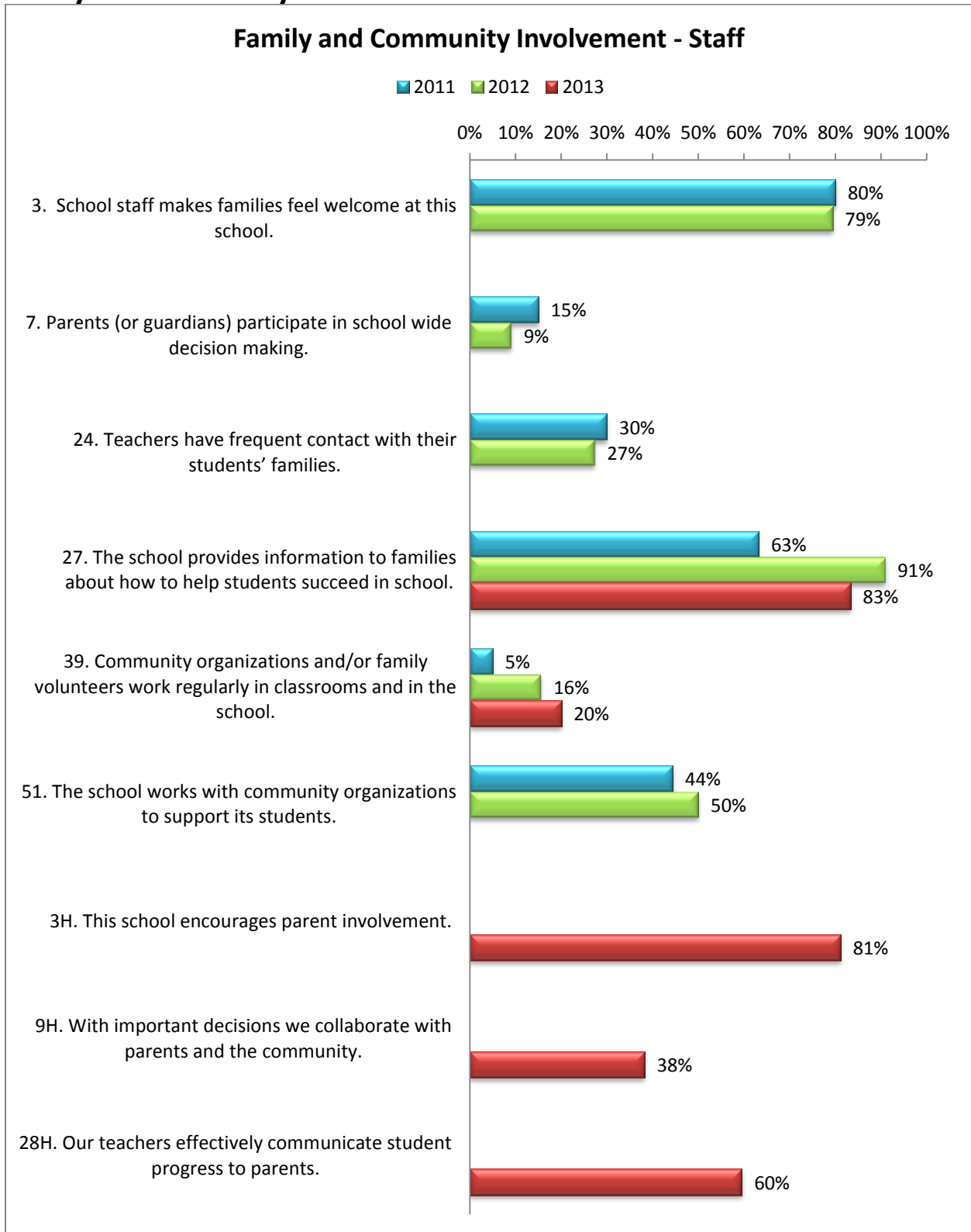
Supportive Learning Environment



Supportive Learning Environment - Staff



Family and Community Involvement

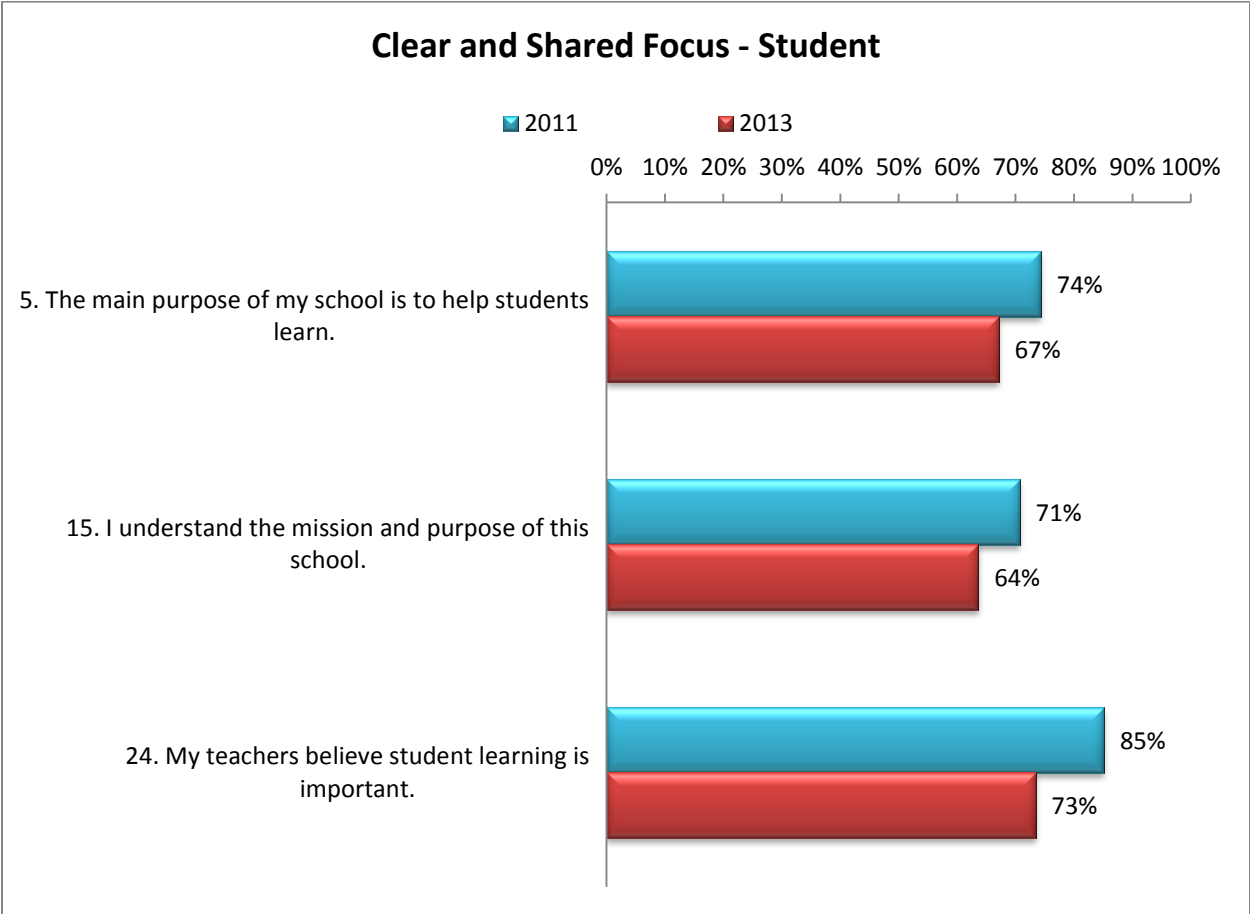


Appendix C – Student Survey

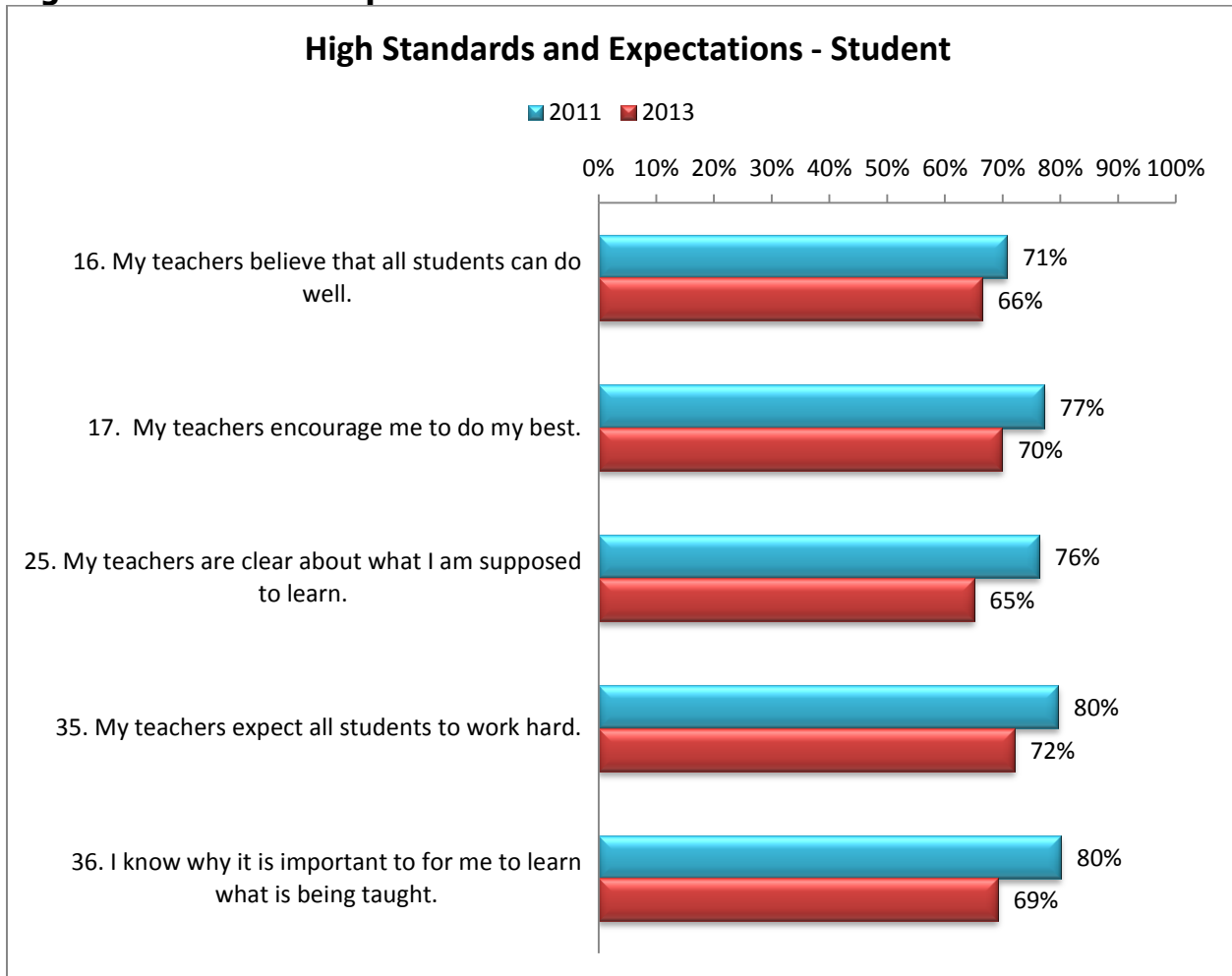
Demographics

	2011	2012	2013
<i>Gender</i>			
<i>Male</i>	45.6%(n=62)		48.5% (n=238)
<i>Female</i>	54.4%(n=74)		51.5% (n=253)
<i>Race</i>			
<i>American Indian/Alaska Native</i>	2.7%(n=4)		1.4% (n=7)
<i>Asian</i>	0.7%(n=1)		.6% (n=3)
<i>Black/African American</i>	1.4%(n=2)		2.8% (n=14)
<i>Hispanic/Latino(a)</i>	85%(n=125)		84.2% (n=426)
<i>White</i>	7.5%(n=11)		4.9% (n=25)
<i>Pacific Islander</i>			
<i>Declined</i>	2.7%(n=4)		6.1% (n=31)

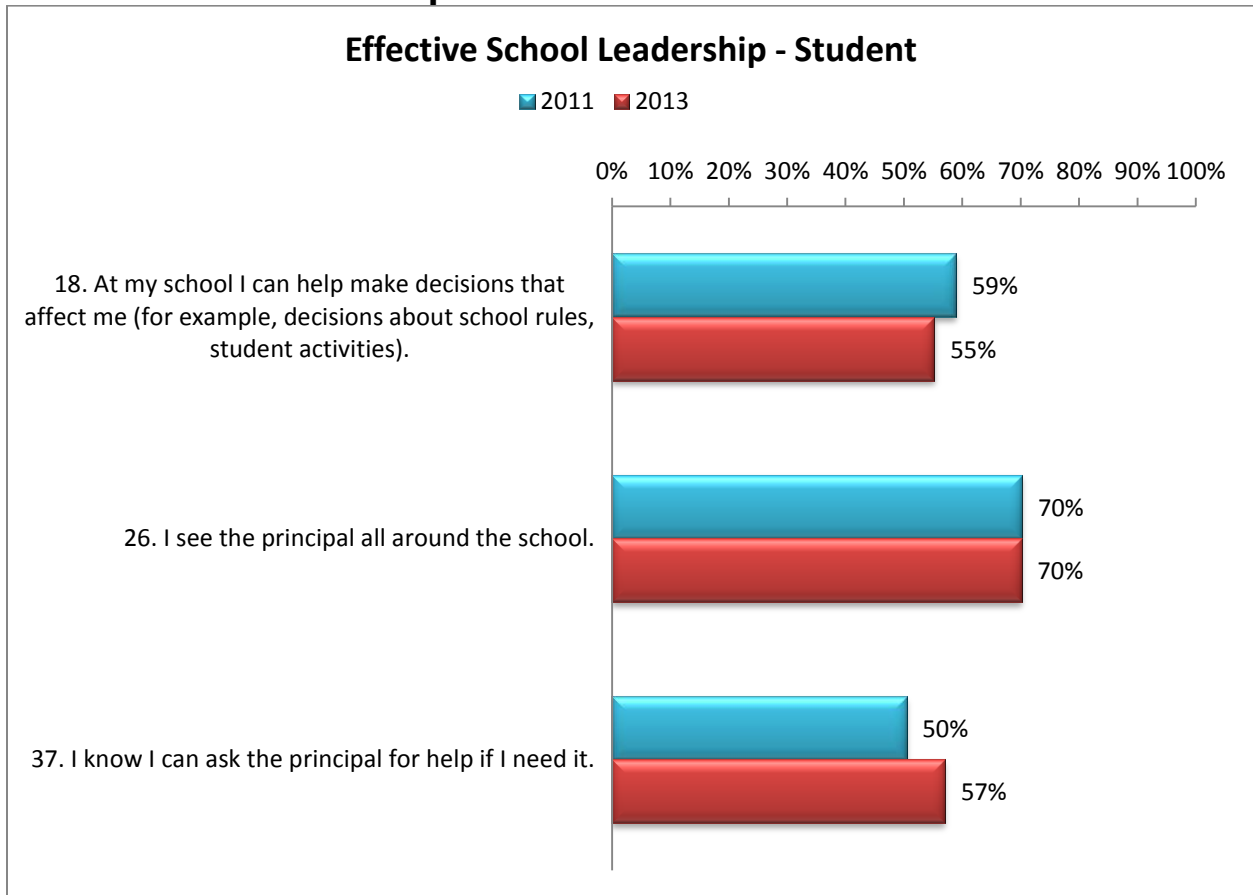
Clear and Shared Focus



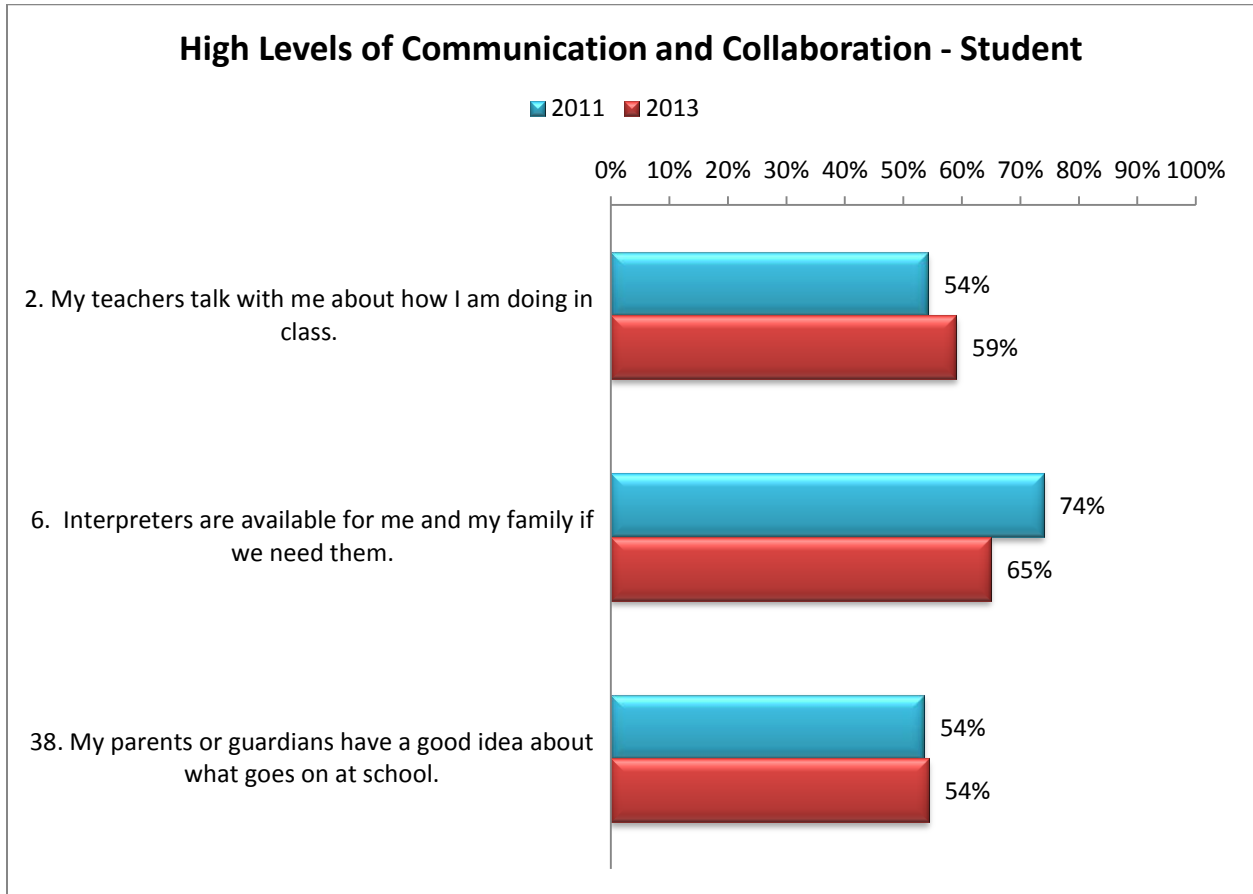
High Standards and Expectations



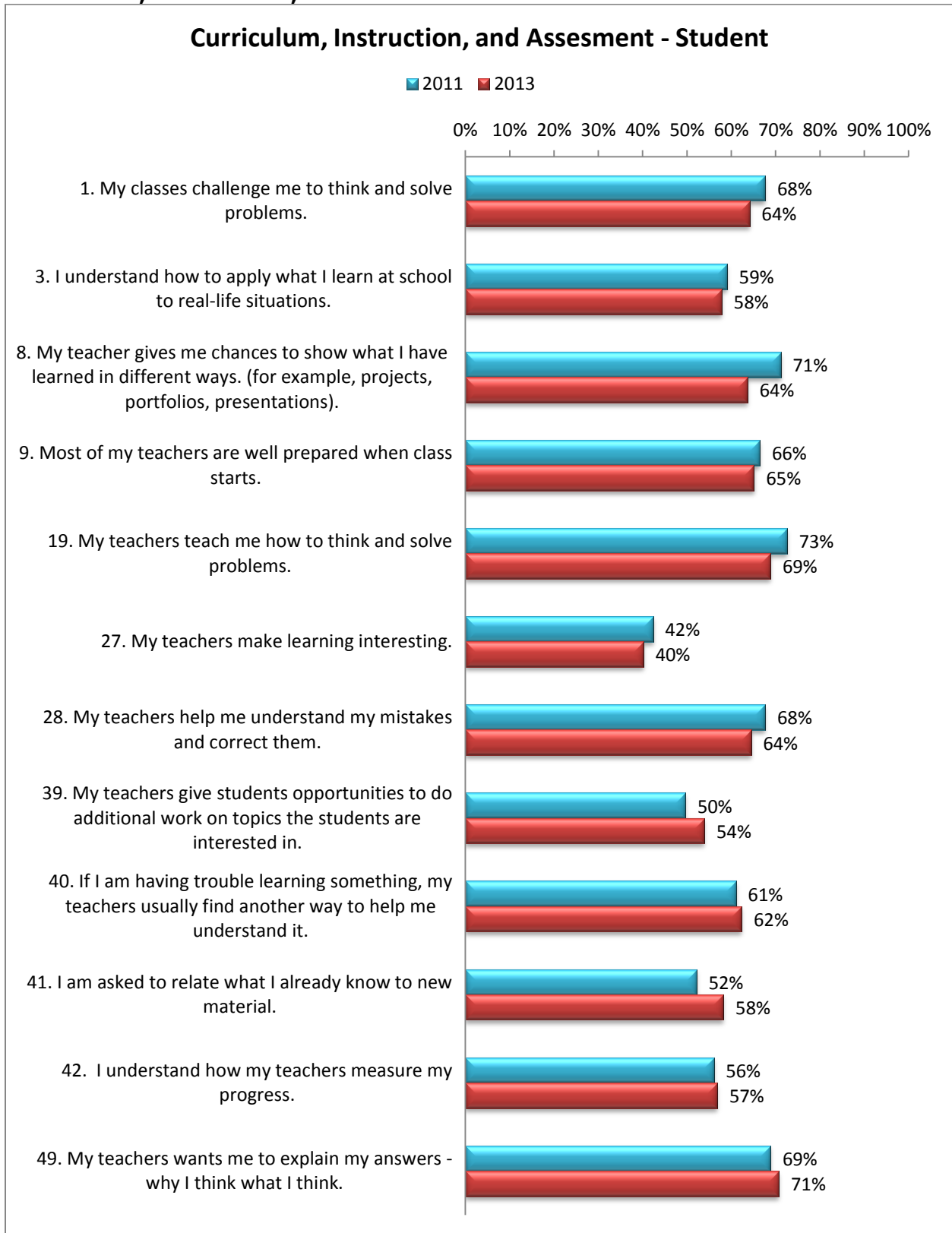
Effective School Leadership



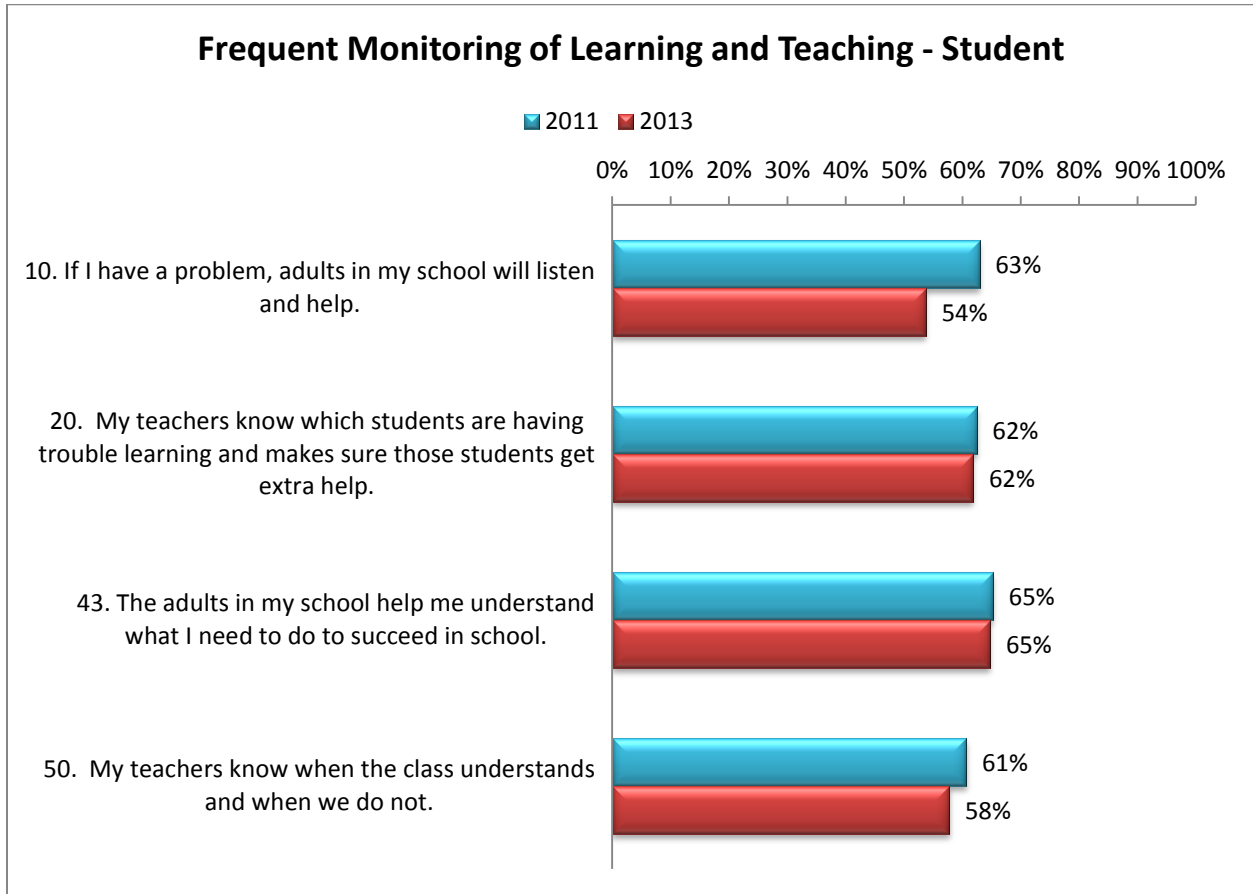
High Levels of Communication and Collaboration



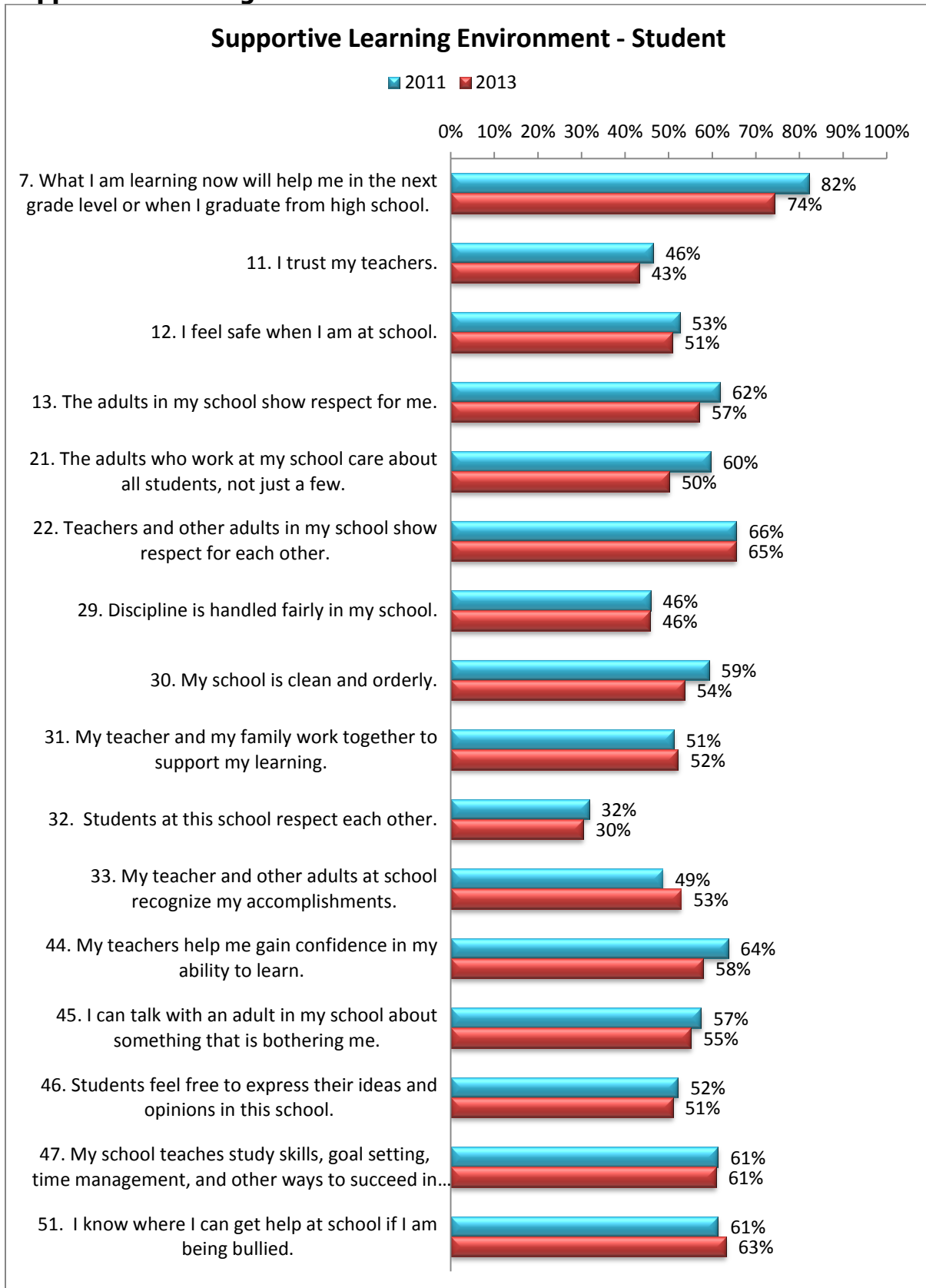
Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment



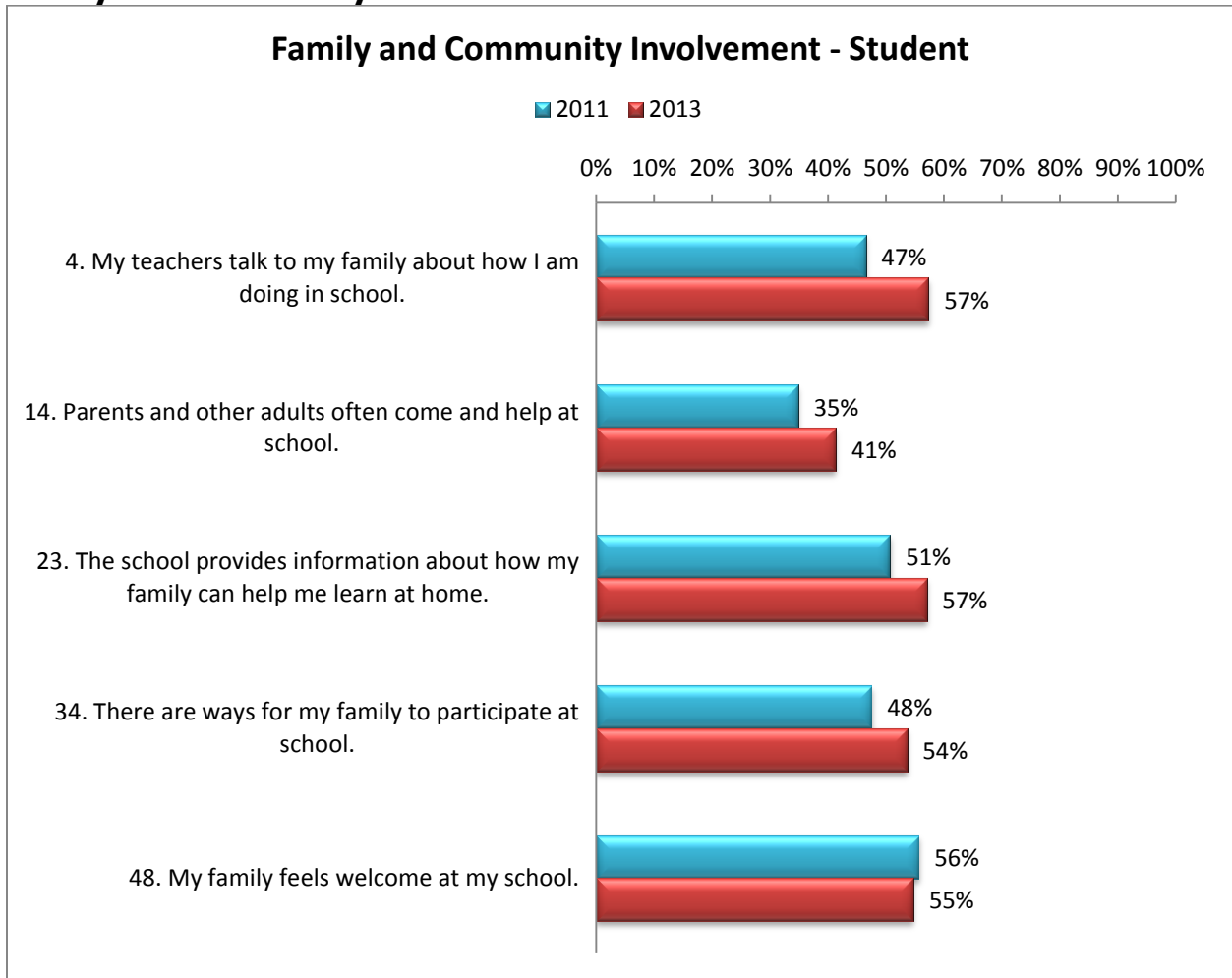
Frequent Monitoring of Learning and Teaching



Supportive Learning Environment



Family and Community Involvement

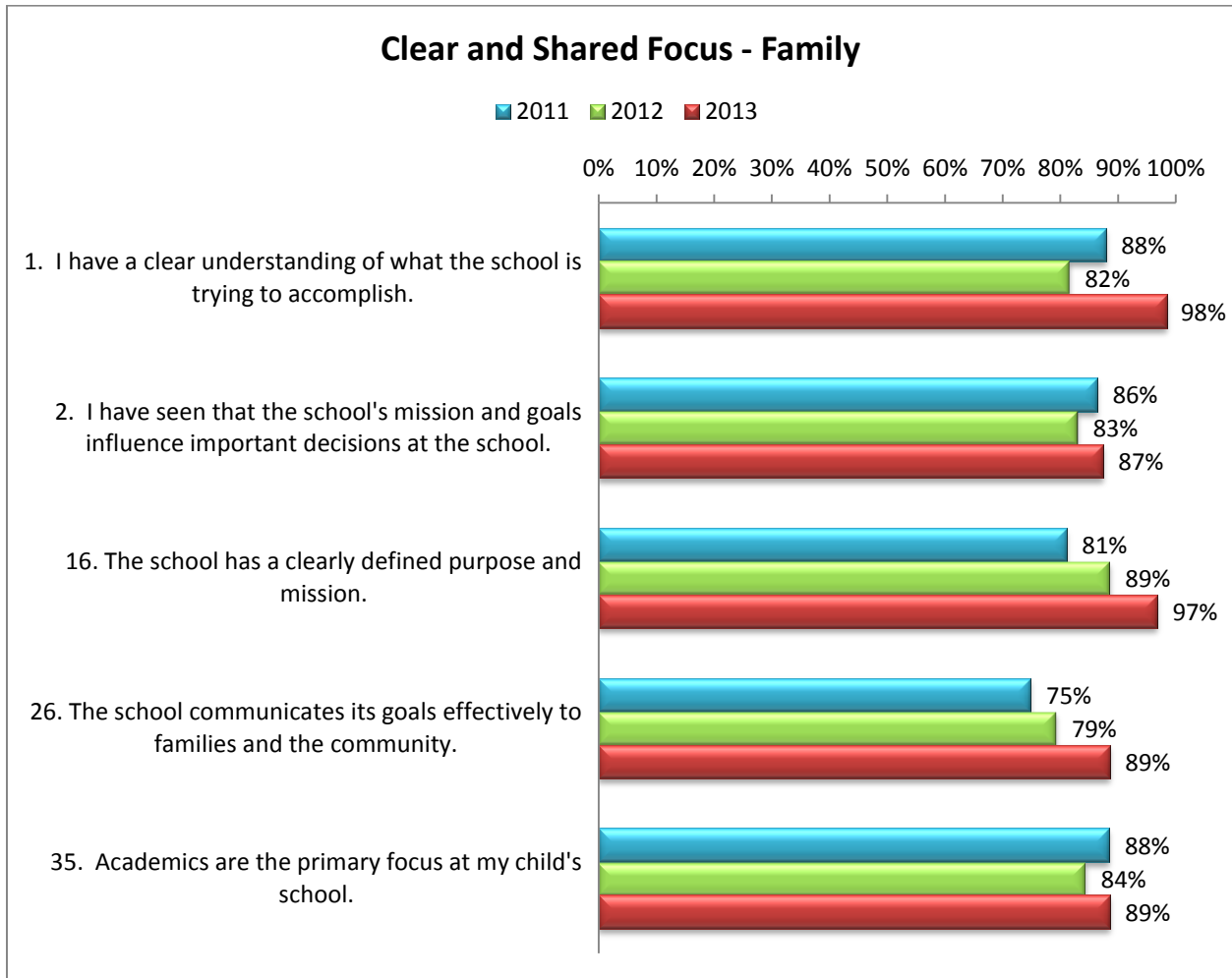


Appendix D – Family Survey

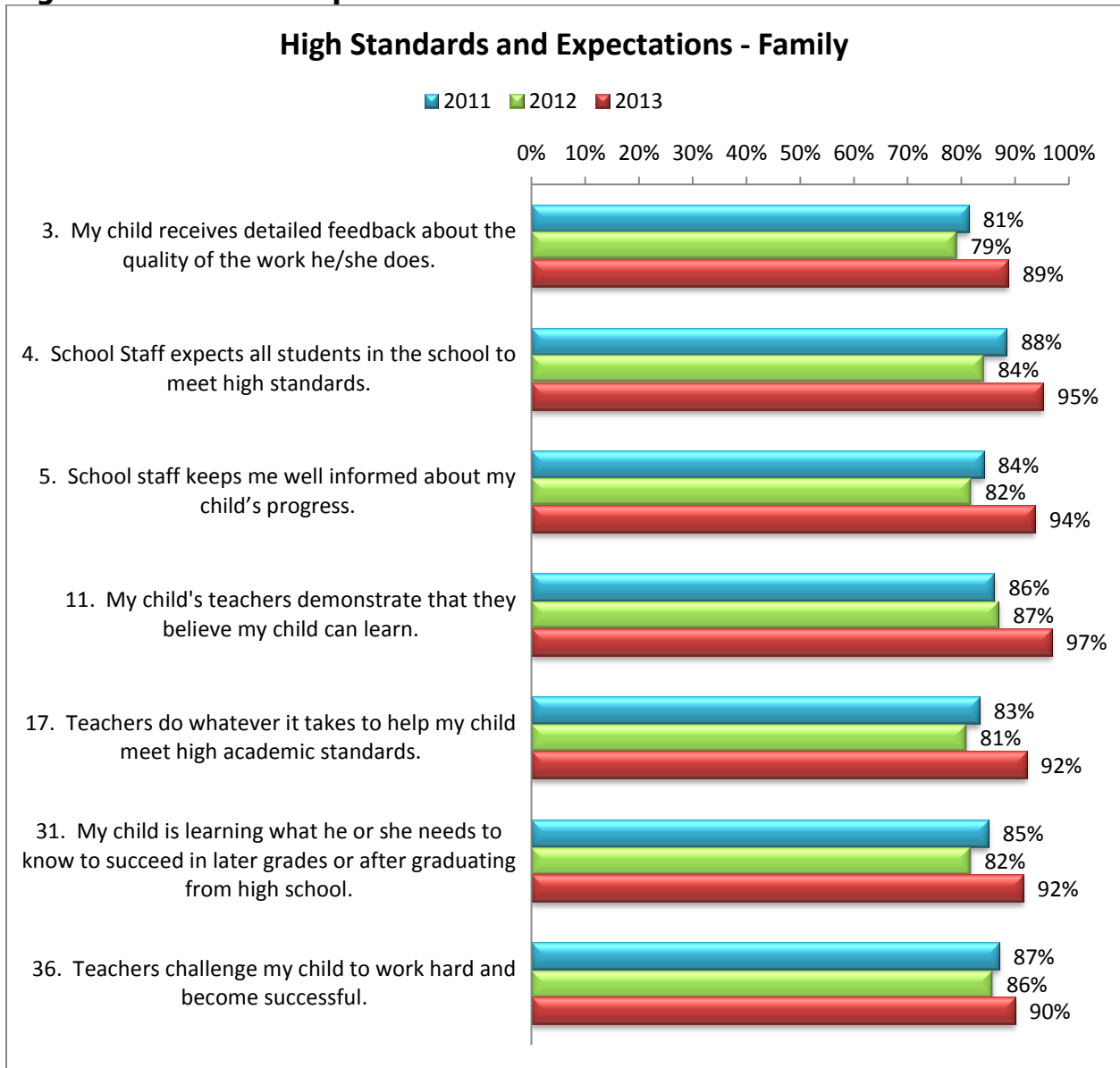
Demographics

	2011	2012	2013
<i>Race</i>			
<i>American Indian/ Alaska Native</i>			
<i>Asian</i>			1.5% (n=1)
<i>Black/African American</i>		1.2%(n=1)	
<i>White</i>	6.7%(n=10)	4.7%(n=4)	4.5% (n=3)
<i>Hispanic/Latino/a</i>	93.3%(n=140)	93%(n=80)	93.9% (n=62)
<i>Pacific Islander</i>			
<i>Decline to Identify</i>		1.2%(n=1)	
<i>Relationship to Student</i>			
<i>Mother</i>	81%(n=124)	77.5%(n=69)	93.9% (n=62)
<i>Father</i>	12.4%(n=19)	16.9%(n=15)	4.5% (n=3)
<i>Grandparent</i>	0.7%(n=1)	1.1%(n=1)	
<i>Foster/adoptive parent or Guardian</i>	0.7%(n=1)	1.1%(n=1)	
<i>Sibling</i>	3.3%(n=5)	2.2%(n=2)	
<i>Legal guardian or Designee</i>	0.7%(n=1)	1.1%(n=1)	
<i>Extended family member</i>	0.7%(n=1)		1.5% (n=1)
<i>Other caregiver</i>	0.7%(n=1)		
<i>Free or Reduced Lunch?</i>			
<i>Yes</i>	98.6%(n=141)	92.9%(n=78)	90.8% (n=59)
<i>No</i>	1.4%(n=2)	7.1%(n=6)	9.2% (n=6)
<i>English is the Primary Language</i>			
<i>Yes</i>	25%(n=36)	25.6%(n=21)	25.8% (n=16)
<i>No</i>	75%(n=108)	74.4%(n=61)	74.2% (n=46)
<i>School Provides Interpreter Services when Needed</i>			
<i>Yes</i>	77.8%(n=112)	76.8%(n=63)	
<i>No</i>	9%(n=13)	11%(n=9)	
<i>Not Applicable</i>	13.2%(n=19)	12.2%(n=10)	
<i>The school provides information in my own language</i>			
<i>Yes</i>	85%(n=113)	94.4%(n=17)	
<i>No</i>	15%(n=20)	5.6%(n=1)	
<i>Not Applicable</i>			

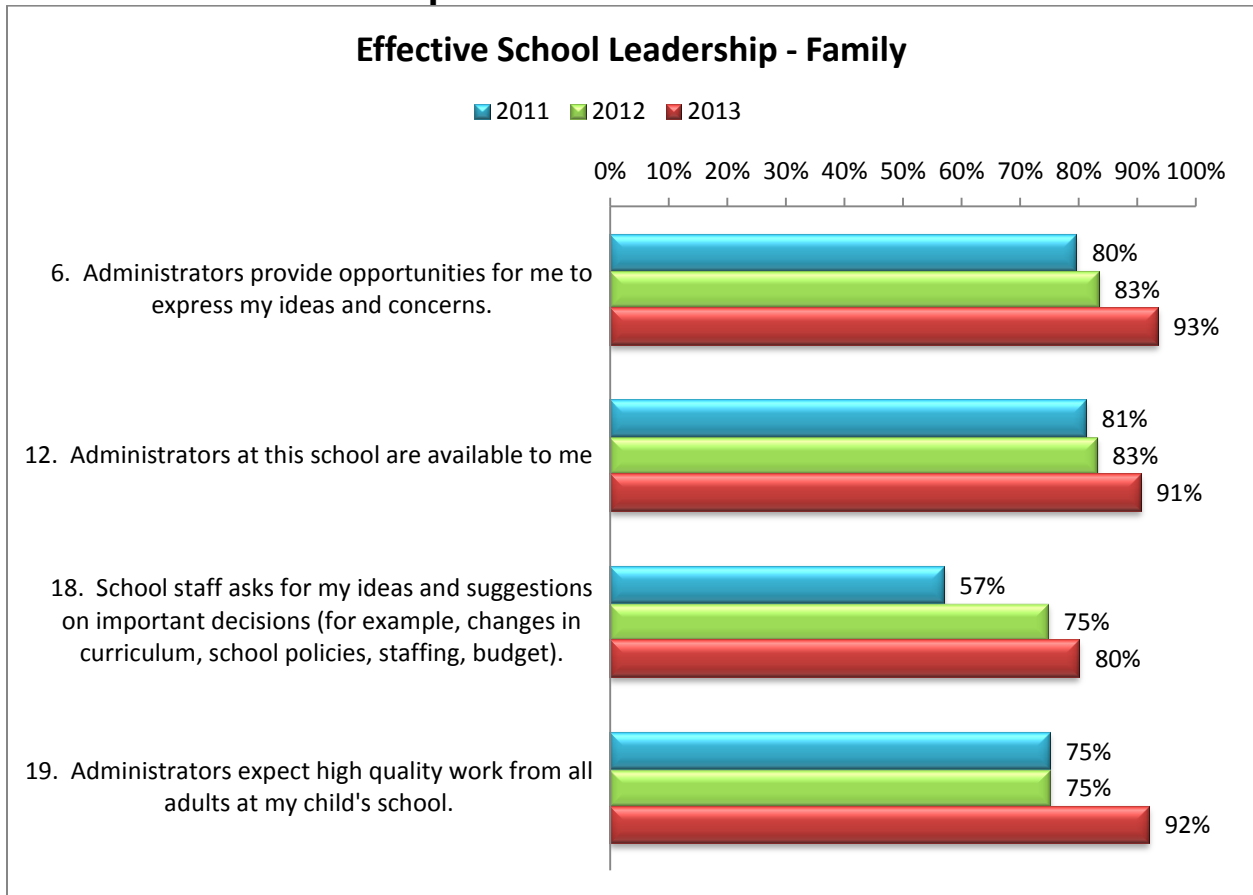
Clear and Shared Focus



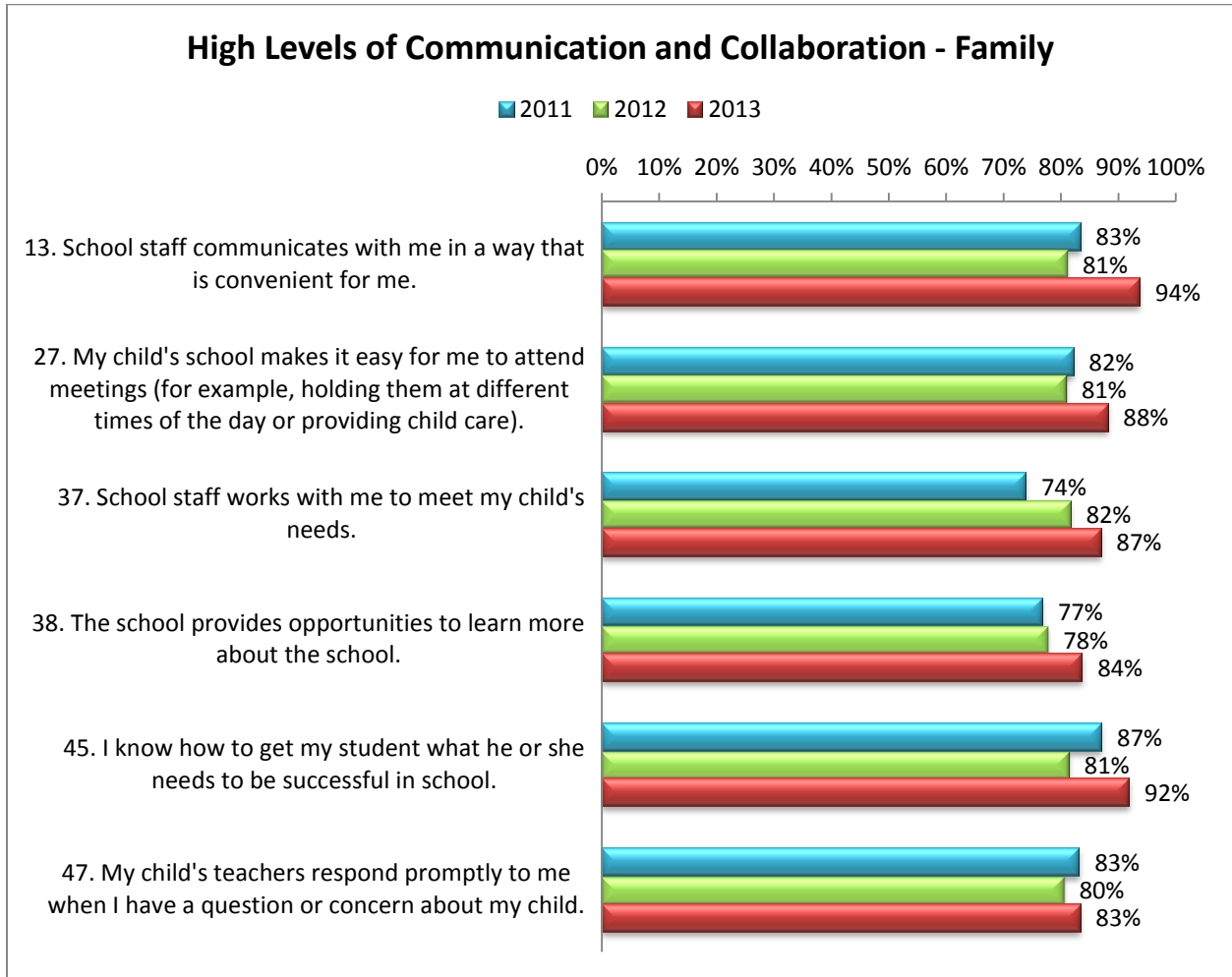
High Standards and Expectations



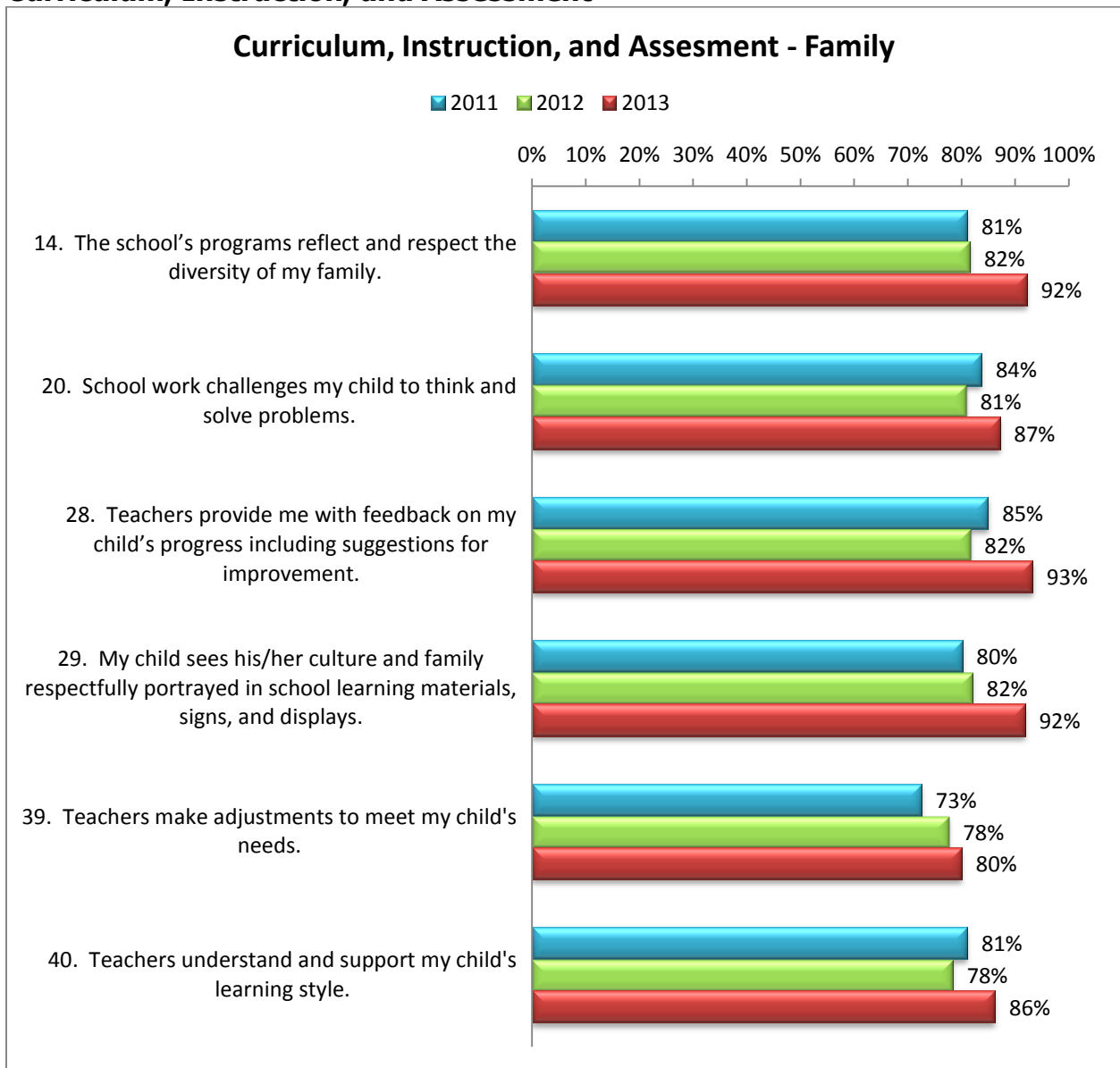
Effective School Leadership



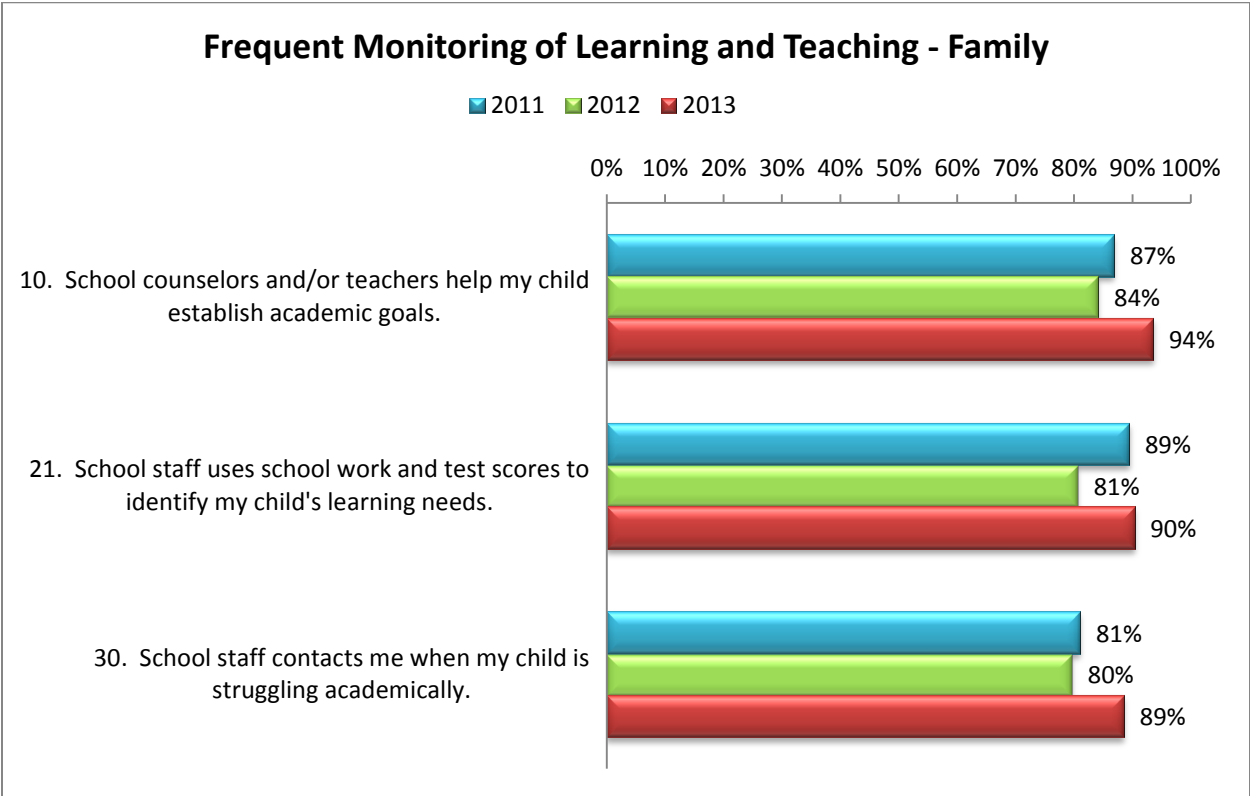
High Levels of Communication and Collaboration



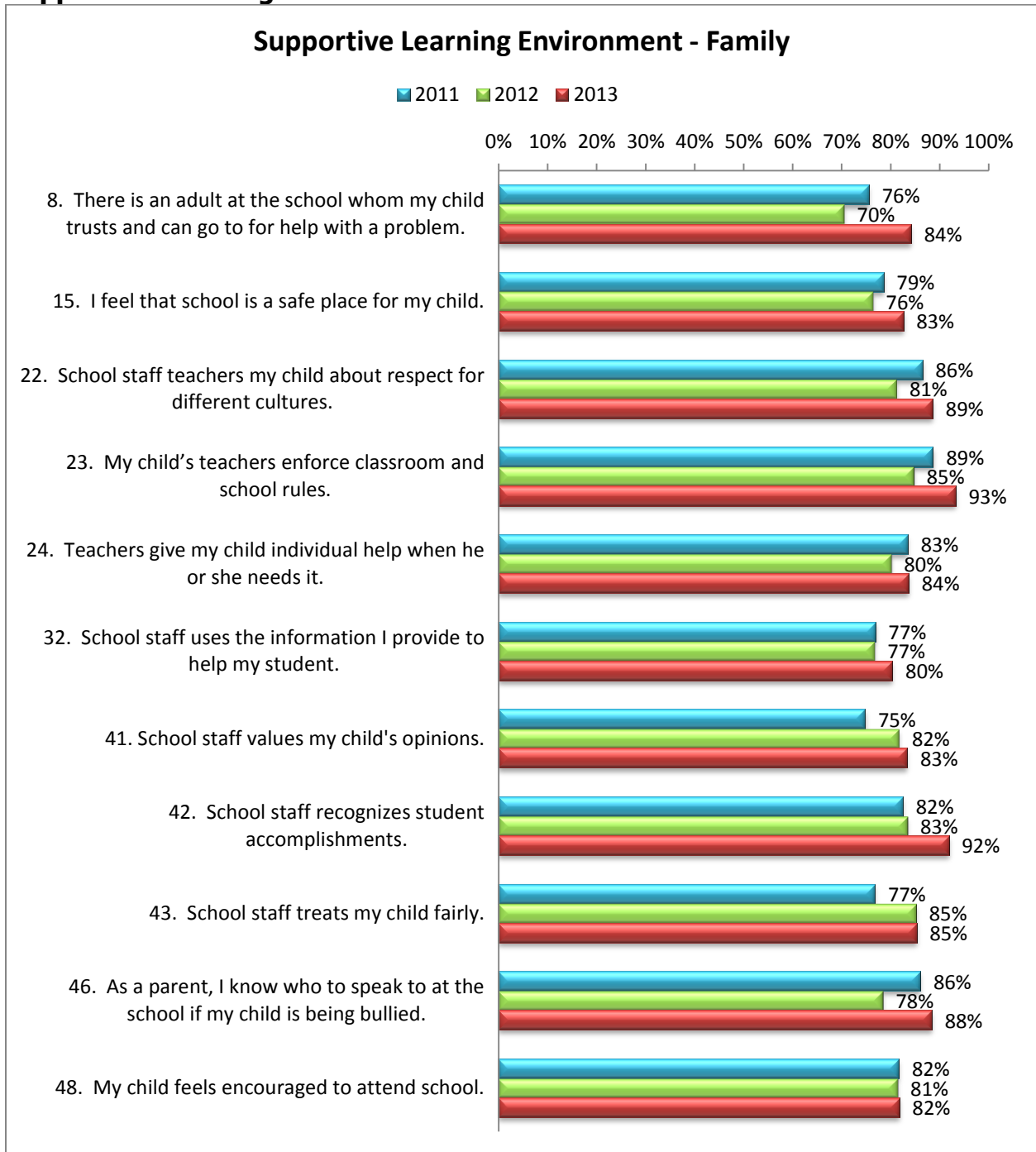
Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment



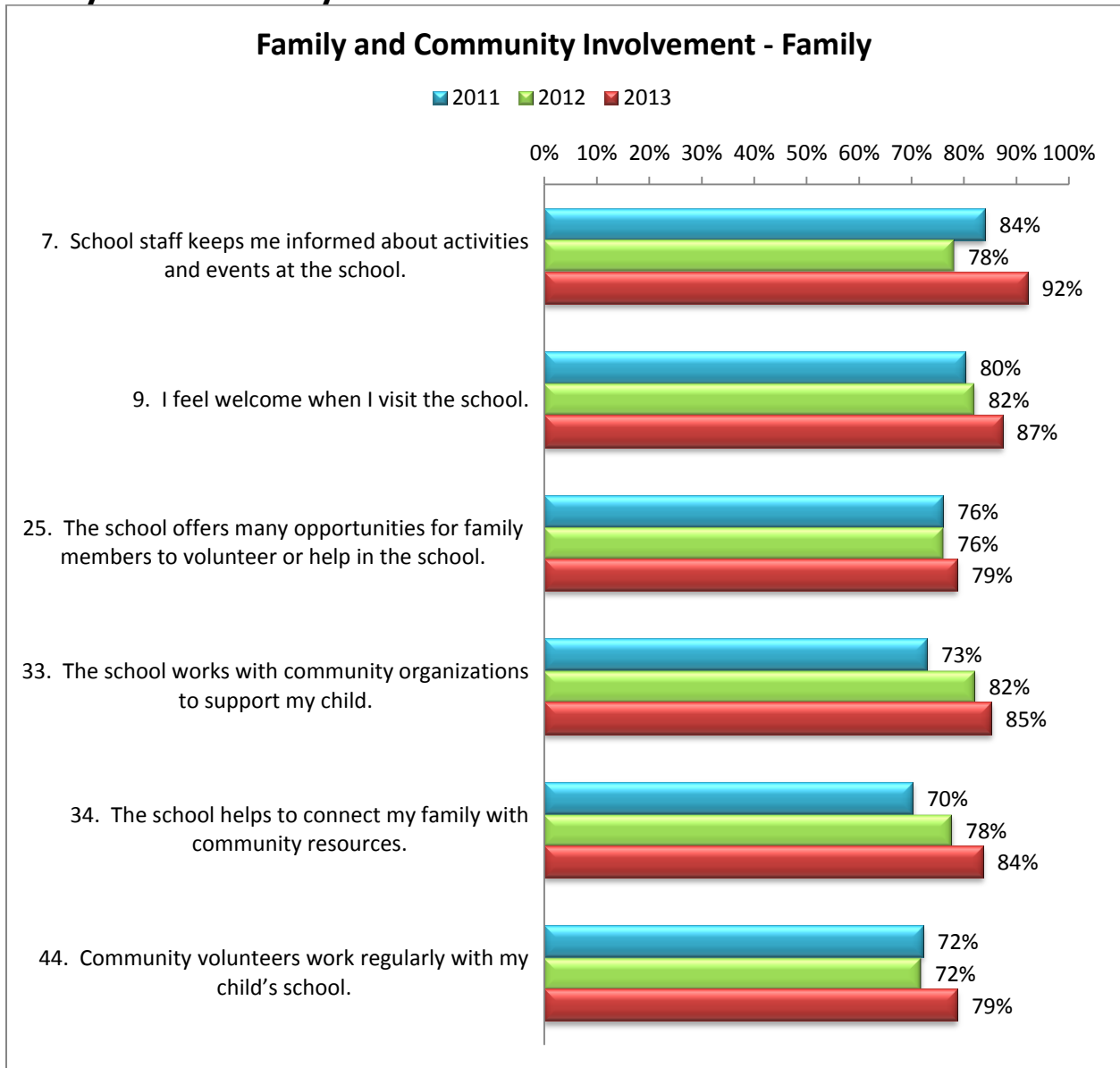
Frequent Monitoring of Learning and Teaching



Supportive Learning Environment



Family and Community Involvement





DRAFT
Required Action
District Academic
Performance
Audit:

Wellpinit
Elementary
School and
Wellpinit School
District

March 2014

Acknowledgements

This report was prepared for the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction under contract to Educational Service District 113 and other Educational Consultants.

Individuals participating in the Academic Performance Audit include:

- **Dr. Dana Anderson, Superintendent, Educational Service District 113**
- **Dr. Andrew Eyres, Assistant Superintendent, Educational Service District 113**
- **Rich Staley, Assistant Superintendent, Educational Service District 113**
- **Dr. Ann Renker, Educational Consultant, Office of Student and School Success**



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I. Introduction

In spring 2010, Wellpinit Elementary School (WES) in the Wellpinit School District (MSD) was awarded a [School Improvement Grant](#) (SIG) for three years (2010 through 2013) to fully and effectively implement a federally approved intervention model. The district selected the [Transformation model](#). Among other things, this required the school and district to replace the principal and address five areas critical to transforming persistently low-achieving schools: developing teacher and principal leader effectiveness, implementing instructional reform strategies, extending learning time, creating community connections, and providing operating flexibility and sustained support.

Wellpinit School District was identified for required action status because of Wellpinit Elementary School's inconsistent and persistent lack of progress for the "all students" group and subgroups on state assessments in Reading and Mathematics the last three years.

The purposes of this report are (a) to identify potential reasons for Wellpinit Elementary School's low performance and lack of progress and (b) to recommend next steps for the Wellpinit School District and Wellpinit Elementary School leaders and staff in building educator and system capacity to substantially improve student outcomes. Findings in this report are intended to assist district and school leaders in identifying an approved federal or state school improvement model appropriate for the school. Recommendations in the report will inform the district's Required Action District (RAD) application and the school and district Student and School Success Action Plan.

Sources of Data: This report is based on information gathered from the following sources:

- 1) Review of extant district- and school-level data (e.g., Student and School Success Action Plan; 2012-13 End-of-Year Report; staff, student, parent surveys; Assessment of Progress Report)
- 2) Superintendent and district leader analysis of current practices and policies impacting the ability of district and school leadership and staff to effectively implement an intervention
- 3) Classroom visits focusing on instructional practices within the school
- 4) Qualitative interviews and focus groups focusing on the alignment of district and school structures and practices with Turnaround Principles described in federal guidance
- 5) Demographic and achievement data
- 6) Additional documents provided by the school and district during the on-site visit (e.g., daily schedule, student/teacher schedule)

Evaluators obtained information during an interview with the district leadership on March 4, 2014 and on-site visit on March 31, 2014. Approximately 40 people, including district and building administrators, staff members, and external service providers participated in interviews and focus groups. In addition, evaluators visited 10 classrooms to determine the extent that classroom practices align with research-based instructional practices. Finally, evaluators reviewed data previously gathered about the school and district, including improvement plans, student achievement data, and additional school documents.

Organization of Report: Section II of this report describes requirements for Required Action Districts (RADs). The next section (Section III) summarizes findings and recommendations aligned with Turnaround Principles for both the district and school. Section IV provides an overview of the district

and school. This is followed by detailed explanations of the three recommendations, including the evidence supporting the Academic Performance audit team’s conclusions; strengths and concerns; and requirements of the school and district and recommendations Office of Student and School Success (Section V). This report concludes with summary and next steps (Section VI) and questions for local improvement teams to consider during their planning processes (Section VII).

Appendices in this report include the following:

- Appendix A: Required Action District Frequently Asked Questions
- Appendix B: School Data Dashboard
- Appendix C: Assessment of Progress Report

These and other data sources including four focus groups, classroom observations and onsite survey results comprise the evidence reviewed by the external Academic Performance audit team.

II. Required Action Districts

Beginning December 1, 2013 and each December thereafter, the Superintendent of Public Instruction is required by state legislation ([E2SSB 5329](#)) to annually identify challenged schools in need of improvement and a subset of such schools that are the persistently lowest-achieving schools in the state. The criteria for determining persistently lowest achieving schools are determined by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and must include the school’s lack of progress over a number of years for both its “all students” group and subgroups. As required by state legislation (E2SSB 5329 and E2SSB 6696), the State Board of Education (SBE) can designate districts with at least one school determined to be persistently lowest achieving as Required Action Districts (RADs).

A summary of requirements for RADs follows. Specific requirements are described in OSPI’s *Required Action Districts: Level One Plan Guidance* available at:

<http://www.k12.wa.us/StudentAndSchoolSuccess/RequiredActionDistricts.aspx>

- **Academic Performance Audit:** Each RAD receives an academic performance audit by an external review team. The audit team consists of persons with expertise in comprehensive school and district reform; the team identifies the potential reasons for the school’s low performance and lack of progress. (RCW 28A.657.040)
- **Community Collaboration and Public Hearing:** In order to ensure successful collaboration, the required action plan must be developed with administrators, teachers and other staff, parents, unions representing any employees within the district, students, and other representatives of the local community. The school board must conduct a public hearing to allow for comment on the proposed required action plan. (RCW 28A.657.050).
- **Implementation of an Approved School Improvement Model:** The district must select and implement an approved school improvement model for the receipt of federal or state funds for school improvement. The model must address concerns raised in the academic performance audit and be intended to improve school performance to allow the district to exit Required Action District status within three years of implementation of the plan. Approved *federal* school improvement models include **Closure, Restart, Transformation, and Turnaround**. The approved *state* school improvement model is the **Synergy Model**.
- **Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) Assistance and Review:** The OSPI can provide assistance in developing a plan if requested. The district will submit the plan first to

OSPI to review and approve that the plan is consistent with federal and state guidelines, as applicable. (RCW 28A.657.060)

- **State Board of Education Approval:** Following OSPI's review of the plan, each district will submit its plan to the SBE for final approval. (RCW 28A.657.060)
- **Implementation of RAD Plan for 3 Years:** After approval of the RAD plan, the district is required to implement the plan for 3 years. The school improvement model must be fully implemented, along with other requirements of the plan. OSPI will provide technical assistance and federal or state funds for implementation of the plan. The district will report regularly to OSPI on the progress it is making in meeting student achievement goals based on the state's assessments, identifying strategies and assets used to solve audit findings and establishing evidence of meeting plan implementation benchmarks in the plan. (RCW 28A.657.090)
- **Semi-annual Reports to the State Board of Education:** During each year of the implementation of the plan, OSPI will report to the SBE semiannually on the progress made by all RADs. (RCW 28A.657.100)
- **Evaluation of Progress:** The OSPI will evaluate progress of each RAD and must recommend to the SBE that a school district be released from the designation after the district implements the plan for 3 years, has made progress using criteria under RCW 28A.657.020 including progress in closing the educational opportunity gap and no longer has a school identified as persistently lowest achieving.

Intervention Models: Required Action Districts receive funds targeted to make lasting gains in student achievement and to implement required elements of the selected school improvement model. The model must address concerns raised in the academic performance audit and be intended to improve school performance to allow the district to exit Required Action District status within three years of implementation of the plan. Models are briefly described below.

- **Closure Model** (federal model): District closes school and enrolls students who attended the school in other higher achieving schools in the district.
- **Restart Model** (federal model): District converts the school or closes and reopens it under management of an educational management organization (EMO) or charter organization.
- **Transformation Model** (federal model): District replaces principal and addresses five areas critical to transforming persistently low-achieving schools: developing teacher and principal leader effectiveness, implementing instructional reform strategies, extending learning time, creating community connections, and providing operating flexibility and sustained support.
- **Turnaround Model** (federal model): District replaces principal and rehires no more than 50% of the school's staff, adopts a new governance structure, and implements a research-based instructional program aligned to state standards.
- **Synergy Model** (state model): District fully and effectively implements Turnaround Principles described in federal guidance (e.g., ensures principal has capacity to lead turnaround effort and teachers are effective and able to improve instruction; provides operational flexibility for principal to support school turnaround plans in key areas; ensures school significantly extends learning time for students and for teacher collaboration; ensures school improvement initiatives include rigorous, research-based instructional programs, practices, and models; and provides school with technology, training, and support for using data to inform instruction and continuous improvement).

Selection of any of these models may require modification or addition of Board policy and procedures and/or collective bargaining agreements.

III. Executive Summary and Recommendations

A thorough review of extant and collected data by the Academic Performance audit team led to the identification of a number of concerns; an analysis of these concerns resulted in the formulation of three recommendations. Legislation enacted in 2012 by the Washington State Legislature (E2SSB 5329) requires the district and school to explicitly address the concerns and recommendations when selecting the intervention model and completing the Required Action Plan and Revised (Initial) Student and School Success Action Plan (submitted to the State Board of Education in June 2014) and Student and School Success Action Plan (submitted to the Office of Student and School Success in October 2014). The action plans for Wellpinit School District and Wellpinit Elementary School will need to address:

- **Recommendation 1: Attract and retain a principal who will ensure s/he and the leadership team demonstrate the capacity to (a) maintain a strong focus on instructional improvement and student learning outcomes; (b) regularly monitor and continuously improve the core instructional program; and (c) use data to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum and instructional strategies.**
- **Recommendation 2: Expand staff capacity to deliver effective instruction and instructional intervention through engagement in sustained professional development aligned to identified needs based on student and staff performance; and develop staff capacity to deliver culturally relevant, standards-based instruction and curriculum and use data in making instructional decisions.**
- **Recommendation 3: Engage partners within the community and families to ensure the learning environment is safe, orderly, and honors the cultures of students represented in the school.**

Turnaround Principles and Indicators identified across these three recommendations are tightly coupled, that is, they are intended to support district and school leadership teams to collaborate and build coherence at each stage of the action-planning process. This tight coupling also enables teams to scaffold their S.M.A.R.T. Goals and Tasks as they create the Required Action Plan and Student and School Success Action Plans.

The Academic Performance audit team believes the school can address these recommendations for several reasons. First, interviewees indicated the school staff members consistently referenced their positive relationships with students. Building leaders and staff also shared improved levels of collaboration. The audit team also learned district-wide structures are emerging within a shared problem of practice. Finally, while a relatively small student population does not generate significant district infrastructure, the nature of the small school system provides an opportunity for rapid development of program alignment and dramatic change. Supported by focused external partners, the audit team is convinced Wellpinit can respond to these recommendations and achieve their goals.

Together, these strengths will serve the school and district well as they address the three recommendations described in this Academic Performance Audit Report.

IV. District and School Overview

The Wellpinit School District serves an unincorporated community in Stevens County, Washington. The population of the community as of the 2000 census was 930. The community is located on the Spokane Indian Reservation. The Spokane Tribal headquarters are located in Wellpinit (Source: Wikipedia). The district serves a diverse population of 530 students in kindergarten through grade 12. The district has one elementary (grades K-5), and one middle/high school (grades 6-12). The Wellpinit Elementary School serves 162 students. Of these students, nearly 79% percent identify themselves as American Indian, and about 87% qualify for free or reduced price meals (Source: OSPI Report Card).

The school's teaching staff of 15 average 11 years of experience; teachers report a strong sense of personal connection with their students. Unlike many of the schools visited by the Academic Performance audit team, there has been relatively little turnover among staff over the past three years. One notable exception is transitions in principal leadership. The current principal has officially resigned her position, and with the selection of a new principal, the school will have had three principals in four years. All staff interviewed by the audit team, the principal, superintendent, and all external providers of support expressed a strong desire to recruit and retain an experienced principal who has demonstrated excellence in leading the transformation of a school. While there may be a number of needs within the Wellpinit school system, the primary need is to ensure strong principal leadership is retained over a period of time at the school. However, the principal cannot be exclusively responsible for leading improvement efforts in the school. Active involvement of the superintendent in planning events, engaging in dialogue about instructional practice and engaging in shared accountability for school success will signal dramatic and urgent shifts in practice.

Students indicated they feel staff care for them, and the staff report the school has a small community feel. Leaders and staff describe the school as a family-like setting, where staff desire to learn and grow, and wish to work collaboratively for the betterment of students. The elementary teaching staff has opportunities for collaboration, common planning time, and numerous internal and external supports. While community liaisons were referenced frequently, and the school district is on the Spokane Indian Reservation, there was little evidence of Tribal partnerships within the school. There were references to events and specific activities with Tribal connection; however, the absence of Tribal partners in district and external partners' focus groups was a concern of the audit team.

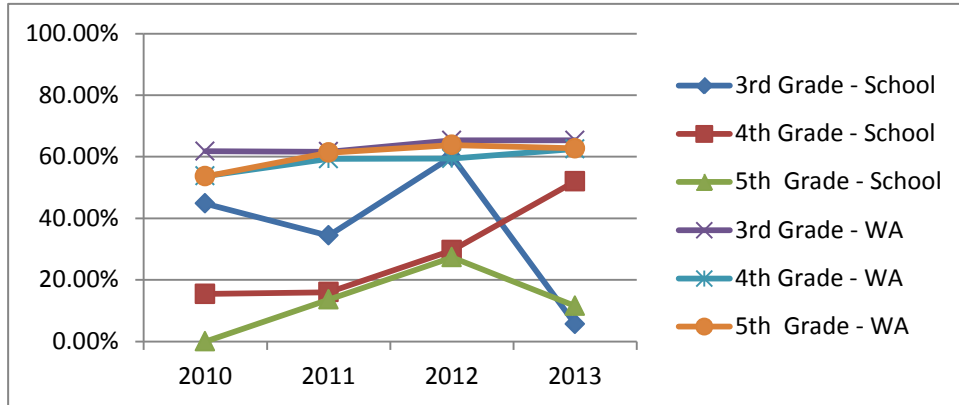
While the roles of district and school leadership are often referenced in the Academic Performance Audit Reports, this distinction is less meaningful in Wellpinit. The district office is separated from the elementary school by a playground. That district leadership has a critical role to play in the future success of Wellpinit Elementary is a given, and the assumption of the audit team is that 'the district' is deeply connected to the work of the school as an active member of both district-wide and school-wide planning efforts. In small school systems like Wellpinit, leadership is distributed by necessity, as everyone fills many roles. This report, therefore, does not separate recommendations for district leadership from school leadership, rather, ongoing engagement of district, school, and teacher leaders is assumed and essential for the success of efforts to build educator capacity to significantly improve student learning.

Additional background information about Wellpinit Elementary School is provided in charts and tables on the next several pages.

Wellpinit Elementary School Summary – Wellpinit School District

<p>Student Demographics</p> <p>Source: OSPI State Report Card</p>	<p>Table 1. The table below provides a profile of students who attended the school in the 2012-13 school year.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr style="background-color: #4F7942; color: white;"> <th colspan="3">Enrollment</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>October 2012 Student Count</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">161</td> </tr> <tr> <td>May 2013 Student Count</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">163</td> </tr> <tr style="background-color: #4F7942; color: white;"> <th colspan="3">Gender (October 2012)</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Male</td> <td style="text-align: right;">91</td> <td style="text-align: right;">56.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Female</td> <td style="text-align: right;">70</td> <td style="text-align: right;">43.5%</td> </tr> <tr style="background-color: #4F7942; color: white;"> <th colspan="3">Race/Ethnicity (October 2012)</th> </tr> <tr> <td>American Indian/Alaskan Native</td> <td style="text-align: right;">127</td> <td style="text-align: right;">78.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hispanic / Latino of any race(s)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">15</td> <td style="text-align: right;">9.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>White</td> <td style="text-align: right;">3</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Two or More Races</td> <td style="text-align: right;">15</td> <td style="text-align: right;">9.3%</td> </tr> <tr style="background-color: #4F7942; color: white;"> <th colspan="3">Special Programs</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Free or Reduced-Price Meals (May 2013)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">141</td> <td style="text-align: right;">86.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Special Education (May 2013)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">26</td> <td style="text-align: right;">16.0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Enrollment			October 2012 Student Count		161	May 2013 Student Count		163	Gender (October 2012)			Male	91	56.5%	Female	70	43.5%	Race/Ethnicity (October 2012)			American Indian/Alaskan Native	127	78.9%	Hispanic / Latino of any race(s)	15	9.3%	White	3	1.9%	Two or More Races	15	9.3%	Special Programs			Free or Reduced-Price Meals (May 2013)	141	86.5%	Special Education (May 2013)	26	16.0%																																			
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Figure 2. Achievement Data on State Assessments in Math from Baseline (2010) to 2013



Student Achievement- Whole School

Source: OSPI State Report Card

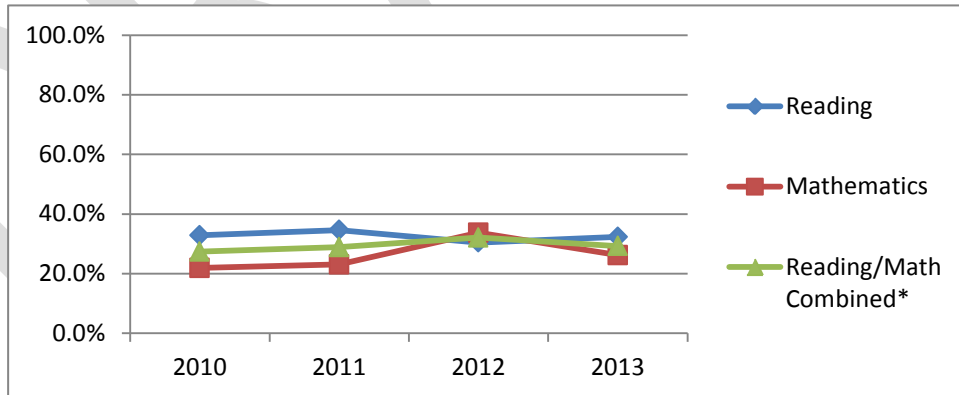
Note: Cells shaded in green represent increases over time; cells shaded in red represent decreases over time. Cells with no shading represent minimal change over time (less than 2%).

Percents are rounded to the nearest tenth.

Table 3. Whole School Achievement Data on State Assessments from Baseline (2010) to 2013

Wellpinit	2010	2011	2012	2013	Change Baseline to 2013
Reading	32.8%	34.6%	30.4%	32.3%	-0.5%
Mathematics	21.9%	23.1%	33.7%	26.2%	4.3%
Reading/Math Combined*	27.3%	28.8%	32.1%	29.3%	1.9%

Figure 3. Whole School Achievement Data on State Assessments from Baseline (2010) to 2013



*Reading/Math Combined: Weighted average of student performance on state assessments in Reading and Math; only continuously enrolled students are included in the weighted average.

Student Achievement-Subgroup Data

Source: OSPI State Report Card

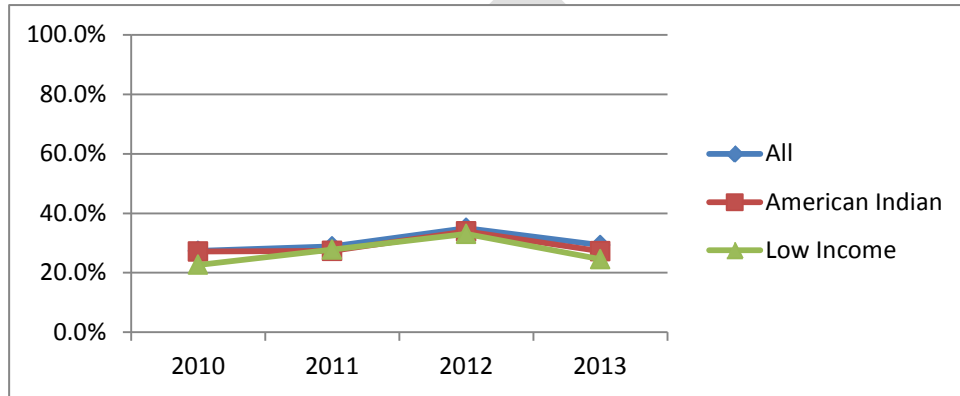
Note: Cells shaded in green represent increases over time; cells shaded in red represent decreases over time. Cells with no shading represent little change over time (less than 2%).

Percents are rounded to the nearest tenth.

Table 4. Subgroup Achievement Data on State Assessments from Baseline (2010) to 2013 – Reading/Math Combined

Wellpinit	2010	2011	2012	2013	Change Baseline to 2013
All	27.3%	28.8%	35.0%	29.3%	1.9%
American Indian	27.1%	27.3%	33.9%	27.3%	0.1%
Low Income	22.6%	27.8%	33.1%	24.6%	1.9%

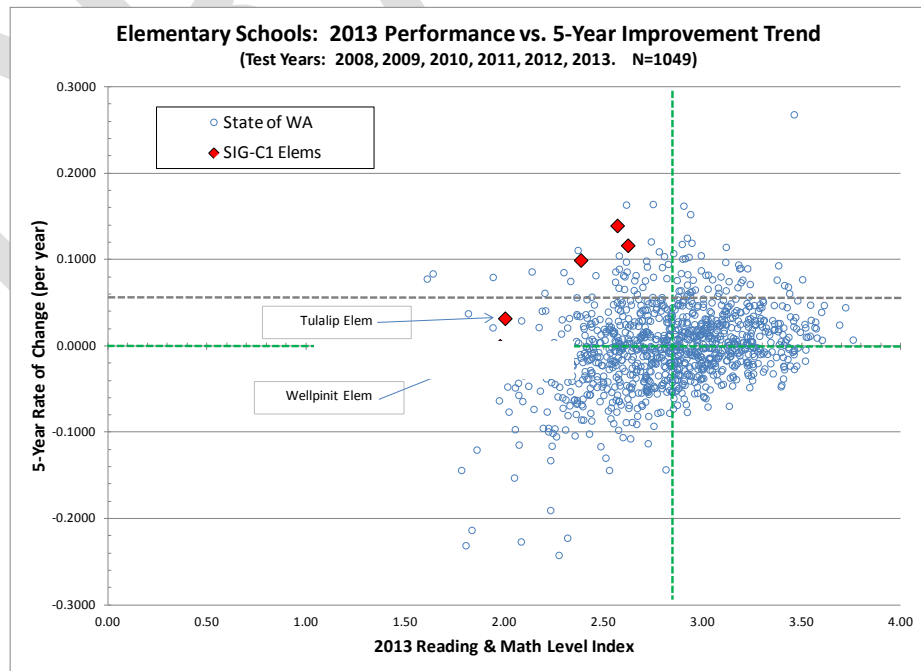
Figure 4. Subgroup Achievement Data on State Assessments from Baseline (2010) to 2013 – Reading/Math Combined



Student Achievement-Whole School

Source: Center for Educational Effectiveness and OSPI State Report Card

Figure 5. Five-Year Improvement Trend from 2009 to 2013



V. Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Attract and retain a principal who will ensure he/she and the leadership team demonstrate the capacity to (a) maintain a strong focus on instructional improvement and student learning outcomes; (b) regularly monitor and continuously improve the core instructional program; and (c) use data to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum and instructional strategies.

The findings informing this recommendation are segmented into the following areas, each of which aligns with Turnaround Principles:

- **1.A – Maintain a strong focus on instructional improvement and student learning outcomes** (Turnaround Principle 1: Provide strong leadership)
- **1.B – Regularly monitor and continuously improve the core instructional program** (Turnaround Principle 4: Strengthen the school’s instructional program based on student needs and ensure that the instructional program is research based, rigorous, and aligned with State academic content standards)
- **1.C – Use data to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum and instructional strategies** (Turnaround Principle 5: Use data to inform instruction and for continuous improvement, including providing time for collaboration on the use of data)

Each segment includes a brief description of current practice, concerns identified in data, and strengths upon which to build. A list of specific Turnaround Principles and Indicators that must be addressed by the school/district and recommendations for the Office of Student and School Success concludes the section.

The Academic Performance audit team begins this narrative with our finding that, based on a close review of extant data, focus group interviews, and school and classroom visits, effective instructional leadership is the heart of Wellpinit’s problems of practice. As one focus group member observed, “The school needs someone to lead the school with many years of experience. Someone who has led school turnaround in their background would be desirable.” While Academic Performance Audit Reports usually do not identify one informant, our team wishes to commend the outgoing principal in her candor and willingness to share her strengths and challenges. She stated, “I feel I was a good first year principal, but what this school needs is someone with more experience.” This level of transparency was evident throughout the interview, and the principal’s frank, open nature was a subject of commendation by more than one audit team member.

1.A – Maintain a strong focus on instructional improvement and student learning outcomes

There were many leadership initiatives reported by district, school and teacher leaders. For example, the district leadership team has engaged in developing a common “Problem of Practice” (PoP) through their participation with the Washington State Leadership Academy (WSLA). The principal included versions of the PoP in most correspondence to staff and parents/community. The school has placed a Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA) to assist with changes in instructional practice. This individual provides in-house to curriculum alignment and instructional support. The TOSA also works with staff to develop lessons, implement instructional strategies, and analyze formative assessments and supports differentiation of instruction.

The principal has implemented goal-setting worksheets with teachers and has provided guidance on development of intervention plans for students. As the principal shared, "I think teachers know I care about them. I want to leave the school in better shape than I found it." When teachers were asked if they could fix one thing, one teacher commented, "I would build a strong RTI framework, which would bring in a focus on strengthening the core instructional program."

The BEREC review of leadership found that the new principal has set ambitious goals for the school, and works to implement many structural supports. However, there was a steep learning curve for both the staff and the principal. Staff indicated the principal's changes were "really positive; she throws herself into everything." Other staff shared they feared the principal was "overwhelmed," and she would likely become an effective leader once she had "her feet underneath her." The principal agreed, when she stated her best path of career growth would be to find an assistant principal's job, where she would have the opportunity for mentorship and support.

The Wellpinit Elementary staff indicated they would be receptive to strong school leadership. As one teacher shared, "We are concerned about the 'revolving door' of school leadership, and the influence this has on student learning." Another staff member declared, "Many of our students have attachment issues, abandonment issues; it is critical that we find someone who will commit to the students and our community." The single largest concern shared among all those interviewed by the audit team was to ensure the district actively recruits, inducts, and retains a strong instructional leader at the school level.

The district should consider partnerships with the principal's association (Association of Washington School Principals), departments of educational leadership in regional universities, the Educational Service District (ESD) and Tribal government when seeking their next principal. Through these partnerships district leaders may increase their clarity regarding the characteristics needed of their next principal. Further, the networks represented by these groups may help identify leaders with the characteristics needed for success.

Concerns: The frequent turnover of building leadership has already been stated, and a clear need exists to place an experienced principal in the school. Additionally, school staffs have a need to develop ownership of their shared leadership within formal leadership structures. As the principal stated, "We have many of the first-order changes in place such as early releases, leadership team, and PLCs, but we have not identified the second-order changes we are seeking." In a school system the size of Wellpinit, there is a strong need for role clarity. Every leader (formal and informal) has, as one district team member observed, "Tons of roles and limited time to do a ton of activities." The newly placed principal and superintendent will need to partner closely to develop common practices and expectations across the school system for communication, decision-making, and support of instructional improvement.

Emerging from multiple focus groups was the "disconnect between district leadership and school leadership." One participant mentioned the district "needs to give us a clear picture of the budget and resources provided to the school. We need a clear picture of what we can and can't decide." A lack of follow-through on meeting schedules and commitments to work collaboratively at the district level was cited by more than one focus group. As one external consultant noted, "There is a general lack of systems and protocols. Local leaders are constantly recreating processes, or responding to each crisis as it emerges, rather than creating clearly understood systems." The audit team felt there is a reactionary approach by district leadership currently, and encourages the development of meeting calendars, protocols for decision-making, and communication. The superintendent is also encouraged to engage

deeply in the school's improvement process and to meet regularly with the new principal to inform and be informed by the school's plans. The superintendent is a critical player in the future success of the school. The superintendents' presence in school planning processes, continual engagement with the principal as a fellow team-leader and active participation in walkthrough events would signal renewed urgency and accountability for change.

Coaching comments in the School's Student and School Success Action Plan indicate there is currently no specifically dedicated school leadership team. While all staff are involved in some aspects of the school's improvement initiatives, it is unclear who 'holds the entire picture' of the school improvement plan.

Strengths upon which to build: The district has a number of committed external supporters of its change processes and has an emerging district leadership team structure. The school has a practice of engaging staff in leadership and planning activities, but appears to have inconsistently used this team over the past year. Building shared ownership among these teams and clarifying their roles in supporting formal leadership could result in more clarity within the system and improve fidelity of selected initiatives.

The relatively long tenure of staff and the continuity of district leadership are also strengths upon which to build. Staff has received extensive training and support on a number of research-based approaches to improving student outcomes. Among many initiatives mentioned during the on-site visit, the audit team feels capacity exists in the following areas:

- Training on GLAD/ELL strategies
- Use of weekly assessments and progress monitoring strategies (including DIBELS, MAP, RBA, MBA).
- WaKIDS assessment strategies
- AVID
- Common Core Overviews
- Realignment of the master schedule to support collaborative planning time
- Training on the adopted instructional framework (Danielson)
- Use of classroom walkthrough tools to gather instructional strategy data
- Teacher collaboration regarding student assessment data in professional learning communities (PLCs)

These strengths can inform the work of leadership and staff as they develop S.M.A.R.T. Goals and tasks associated with this recommendation.

1.B – Regularly monitor and continuously improve the core instructional program

The Academic Performance audit team found evidence of regular monitoring of instructional practice. The building principal and district leaders reported use of a Classroom Walkthrough (CWT) protocol. Recently the district has provided access to the Teachscape® CWT data collection tool and has begun to use it as part of its monitoring of instructional practices. The principal, TOSA, and two teachers were trained on the use of Teachscape® and plan to train other staff in the tool and process later this spring. Interviewed staff members shared they would like to participate in the CWT process and feel it would build transparency in their practices and improve collaboration and alignment of expectations among staff. Teachers have access to the supports of external instructional coaches, and content specialists from the ESD and OSPI, as well as regular support from their school's TOSA.

District and teacher focus group members commented on the effectiveness of coaching and in-classroom support provided to teachers. One teacher shared, “It is much better this year having a TOSA as a support. We have a relationship with her, and she is there when we need her.” Teachers feel they have grown tremendously during the past three years of learning and coaching. Most agreed the greatest benefit to them has been the TOSA who “will collaborate, model, and work with staff on topics we feel we need.”

WES staff reports they frequently collaborate on the development of lessons. Teachers also shared they identified shared instructional strategies from GLAD to implement in their classrooms. These strategies were selected to improve academic outcomes, but also to attend to social/emotional skills among students. During the audit team’s visit, classroom observers noted learning targets were posted in all classrooms. Other instructional strategies identified for commendation include:

- Universal use of Compass Math Interventions
- Use of common graphic organizers (GLAD strategy)
- Teaching of pre-fix strategies to define words
- Elbow partner sharing
- Student work clearly displayed throughout the building (hallways and classrooms)
- Consistent emphasis on vocabulary instruction/development
- Use of Washington English Language Proficiency Assessment (WELPA) as a tool to determine English language proficiency (70% qualify as English Language Learners)

Concerns: While many supports have been accessed, and staff reports considerable growth, the BERC Assessment of Progress Report indicates classroom lessons aligned to *Powerful Teaching and Learning* have decreased over the past year. While BERC’s data collection is only a single snapshot, the BERC evidence suggests students infrequently work collaboratively to solve problems. Student development of their thinking, or reflecting on their learning, was observed in 9% of classrooms.

The audit team confirms these observations. During classroom visits, questioning was commonly at the recall level, and students frequently responded with one-word responses. Teachers were often observed to answer for students, and ‘let them off the hook’ when students could not provide an immediate response. Use of graphic organizers was common in classrooms; however, in the majority of observations, the teacher constructed them while students sat passively. The use of para-educators to support instruction appeared generally unstructured, and staff and para-educators did not appear to have developed clear plans of support to differentiated student groups. Finally, the schedule of student supports produced a significant ‘churn of students in and out of the classroom,’ which disrupted the flow of instruction.

While use of the CWT protocol is only emerging, many teachers expressed frustration that they did not receive feedback on what was observed, and/or did not have opportunity to review the collected data. Of greater concern to the audit team was the use of Marzano’s instructional design framework as part of the CWT/Teachscape® process. The team feels this approach will cause confusion among teachers as they will also receive training on the Danielson Framework for Teaching as part of the district’s Teacher and Principal Evaluation Process (TPEP). The justification provided by the district leaders was that they wished to decouple CWT from evaluation. While the team felt the aim was appropriate, the strategy of use of two instructional models should be reconsidered. Finally, the schedule for CWT reported in the school’s Student and School Action Plan is ambitious, and it is unclear how closely the plan was followed. The audit team would like to see scheduled CWT visits by school and district teams, including

the principal and superintendent. These events should be initially facilitated by external supporters to monitor and evaluate their effectiveness.

Strengths upon which to build: As mentioned previously, there is much strength to build upon at WES. Teachers have served in the school for multiple years, the staff has shared learning experiences through the SIG process, and initial understanding of shared instructional approaches is in evidence. Many external support providers expressed commitment to sustaining improvement efforts within the school and are willing to support identified instructional improvement efforts.

1.C – Use data to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum and instructional strategies

Teachers expressed confidence in their use and management of data. PLC teams use sophisticated binders to manage student assessment results and provide them to any staff interested in reviewing student outcomes. The school's action plan indicates teachers complete weekly assessments, conduct progress monitoring, and use benchmark assessments regularly. The end-of-year report (2013) on the implementation of the school's action plan indicates professional development on the use of assessment measures and analysis of resulting data received heavy emphasis.

State-level supports were provided on the development of Reading and Mathematics Benchmark Assessments (RBA and MBA). Guided assistance on the analysis of data was provided after each administration of the RBA/MBA. The district used Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) for two years, with limited training provided to staff. During the 2013 academic year, staff received training by NWEA staff after each MAP administration. The emphasis within these training events was on the interpretation of assessment results and application to instructional planning.

Concerns: The district has purchased/paid license fees for Homeroom®, an online data analytic tool. This tool is intended to help manage the wide array of assessment results produced during the year. It is unclear how well protocols will support consistent data analysis, instructional planning, and progress monitoring. The school has a complex (and perhaps overwhelming) schedule of formal assessments (MAP, DIBELS, MBA/RBA). While staff has received training on the interpretation of specific assessment results, it is unclear that specific training has been provided to support ongoing data team processes. This appears to be especially true of data use at the district level.

The purpose of collected data and the various levels of data analysis (i.e., district, school, classroom, and student) were not clear to the audit team. Staff shared their willingness to engage in data review, and many structures are in place to support data analysis (e.g., early release, PLCs, Homeroom). However, the school and district appear to lack a coherent data use framework which would answer:

- What questions do we have?
- What data sources will help us understand our questions?
- What displays will we analyze?
- What will be done with the results of our analysis?

Finally, the focus groups were observed to discuss academic assessment data collection and analysis practices, not other forms of data collected at the school (i.e., instructional observations, student behavior, and staff perceptions). Emerging within the narrative of district and school leaders was interest in exploring instructional practices data, non-academic “barriers to success” data, and parent/community perceptions data. While the audit team does not wish to cause further ‘drowning in

data,' the team encourages expanding the district and school vision for data use to assist both leaders and staff in answering questions related to inputs as well as outcomes.

Strengths upon which to build: The team noted considerable training and support have been provided to WES staff regarding data use. There is a strong foundation upon which to build, and a developing data informed culture feels immanent. Structures are in place to support teacher collaboration regarding student data. Building on these collaborative structures to engage district staff and para-educators in analysis practices could serve to expand ownership of plans, activities, and outcomes.

As stated in the introduction to the narrative for this recommendation, the team believes leadership is the core 'problem of practice' at WES. Finding and supporting an experienced building principal should be district leader's collective priority. One leader alone cannot ensure student success; however, the absence of a dynamic leader can certainly slow progress.

Requirements for Recommendation #1

In light of concerns raised for this recommendation, Wellpinit Elementary School/District must address the following Turnaround Principles and Indicators when selecting the school improvement model and crafting the Required Action Plan and Revised (Initial) Student and School Success Action Plan (submitted to the State Board of Education in June 2014) and Student and School Success Action Plan (submitted in October 2014):

Wellpinit Elementary School

- Principle 1: Provide strong leadership by ensuring the principal keeps a focus on instructional improvement and student learning outcomes (P1-IE06)
- Principle 1: Continue to develop distributed leader capacity to facilitate a continuous improvement process; guide and manage the review of data, selection of strategies, and implementation of improvement efforts; and monitor the effectiveness of these efforts. (Indicator P1-ID10)
- Principle 1: Continue to spend at least 50% of the time working directly with teachers to improve instruction, including classroom observations. (Indicator P1-IE06)
- Principle 2: Set goals for Professional Development and monitor the extent to which staff has changed practice and impacted student learning. (Indicators P2-IF14 and/or P5-IID06)
- Principle 5: Use a variety of data to assess strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum and instructional strategies. (Indicator P5-IID08)

Wellpinit School District

- Principle 1: Recruit and support an experienced principal and build their capacity to nurture sustained growth within their staff. (Indicator P1-B)
- Principle 3: Allocate resources (e.g., personnel, fiscal, professional development and technical assistance) to support time for teacher collaboration and instructional planning. (Indicator P3-A)
- Principle 5: Provide technology, training, and support for school teams to continue to collect and analyze a variety of data to track changes in educator practice and student learning. (Indicator P5-A)

These Turnaround Principles and Indicators are tightly coupled. Therefore, district and school leadership teams can scaffold the S.M.A.R.T. Goals and Tasks as they revise/create the Required Action Plan submitted to the State Board of Education and the Student and School Success Action Plan submitted to the Office of Student and School Success. The Wise Ways documents on Indistar® describe research-

based practices leadership teams can implement as they craft action plans around school- and district-level Indicators.

Office of Student and School Success: Additional next steps for the Office of Student and School Success to support both Wellpinit Elementary School and Wellpinit School District follow.

- Principle 1: Provide training and support to district leaders who are charged with supporting turnaround principals and developing principal capacity as transformational leaders.
- Principle 2: Convene ongoing meetings among external and internal professional development providers to improve coherence and alignment of supports provided to the school.
- Principles 2 and 5: Provide training and support to build principal and school leadership team capacity to use data to create, implement, monitor, and if needed, revise school improvement plans written in S.M.A.R.T. Goal format; plans should explicitly identify expected changes in educator practice and student learning and evidence that will be used to track progress toward these changes.
- **Recommendation 2: Expand staff capacity to deliver effective instruction and instructional intervention through engagement in sustained professional development aligned to identified needs based on student and staff performance; and develop staff capacity to deliver culturally relevant, standards-based instruction and curriculum and use data in making instructional decisions.**

The findings informing this recommendation are segmented into two areas, each of which aligns with the identified Turnaround Principles:

- **2.A – Provide distributed Leadership** (Turnaround Principle 1: Provide strong leadership)
- **2.B – Professional development** (Turnaround Principle 2: Ensure teacher effectiveness)

Each segment includes a brief description of current practice, concerns identified in data, and strengths upon which to build. A list of specific Turnaround Principles and Indicators that must be addressed by the school and district and recommendations for the Office of Student and School Success concludes the section.

2. A – Distributed Leadership

Effective leadership team structures and shared ownership for district and school improvement initiatives are tightly coupled with the need for effective school leadership at Wellpinit. The outgoing principal shared the staff has developed its own structures for responding to changes in leadership over the past three years. Teachers expressed a strong desire to engage in deeper exploration of their instructional challenges and wish to use their common planning time and early release Fridays more effectively.

External support providers reported the staff has much strength to draw upon, and the staff collectively carries a deep history of the school and community. One external support provider summarized the situation, “It would be very powerful for the staff to have a high functioning leadership team. They need to feel this is ‘not done to them’, but rather is ‘our work’. This is vitally important during this time of transition.” Another external team member shared, “The barrier to moving the staff forward is a lack of ability to engage in deep, meaningful conversations in support of instructional change.”

Developing an engaged district and school leadership team that meets regularly to plan, implement, problem solve, and reflect would mediate many of the concerns expressed during the audit team's visit. Empowering these teams and sustaining their ongoing efforts are roles for district and school leaders.

Concerns:

The BERC report indicates two significant concerns regarding the development of shared leadership. First, there appears to be no formal process for identifying who is selected to participate in leadership activities (including para-educators and parents/community members). Second, leadership teams, when they are formed, struggle to meet consistently. These findings were confirmed during the audit team visit and by staff survey results. For example, only 15% of staff reported there is a clear, collaborative decision-making process used to select individuals for leadership roles. External support providers indicated meetings are occasionally cancelled, producing significant distance between support provision and team follow-up. Other support providers indicate, "The staff is willing and interested in engaging in new work, but there is a struggle in committing to follow-up." Staff focus group members shared, "The staff is a family...Our staff meetings should focus on problem solving and work on the family." Another staff member indicated, "We are starting to lead on our own, to build buy-in and support from within. I would like to see the group get really good at a few things, and then engage in active problem solving."

A leader shared, "There were new commitments for meetings which were not followed. We requested monthly meetings at the district-level which did not occur. We do not have any formal administrative planning process." Primarily due to this history, the leader later shared the result is a strong willingness on the part of staff to engage in distributed leadership. A further example is raised in the BERC report (p. 17), where staff indicate PLCs led by coaches 'fell apart' when the coach was not present. More recently, teacher ownership of the PLC process has resulted in "a structure that is for us, driven by us, so the structure won't go away."

Strengths upon which to build: District, school, and teacher leaders expressed a willingness to "roll their sleeves up and get down to business." The audit team felt there was a general sense of collaboration among instructional staff, and many structures for team-based problem solving were evident. Building upon the existing structures and emerging shared ownership among teachers, the district and school are encouraged to explore new structures of collaboration and shared leadership involving district, school, teacher, and para-educator leaders.

2. B – Professional development

The school has accessed numerous professional development offerings and supports during the SIG process. When considering the possibility of new funding under the RAD grant, teachers expressed concerns that they would return to "tons of training" with lots of days out of the school. Other teachers expressed concern that new coaches would come in who "didn't really take the time to get to know us." Teacher leaders reported coaching or ongoing support feels the most effective. They would like to see expanded support provided in their classrooms with modeling, practice lessons, and ongoing assistance of "more like two-to-three days a week."

Staff reported during the previous grant period there were many external providers of training and support, with limited coordination and follow-up. The external providers agreed and suggest there is a need for coordinated "case management" at the state level designed to increase the coordination of externally provide assistance, and to build more continuity and coherence in the assistance provided.

Similar to the concerns expressed by staff, the external support providers expressed a desire to ensure sustained engagement and relationship-building. As one member of the group stated, “It feels inappropriate to walk away at the end of this year.”

In a survey administered last spring, 77% of staff agreed that teachers engage in classroom-based professional development activities that focus on improving instruction. While considerable professional development is provided, and many staff reports the intent is to improve instruction, only 9% of staff survey respondents indicated professional development activities are sustained by ongoing follow-up and support. As the team designs its improvement plans, it is recommended the team consider the need for sustained, job-embedded professional development as foundational to its support plans. Many of the structures are currently in place (e.g., PLCs, common planning time, TOSA and coaching supports); the need is for consistency in follow-up and ongoing problem solving by an engaged leadership team.

Requirements for Recommendation #2

In light of concerns raised for this recommendation, Wellpinit Elementary School and the Wellpinit School District must address the following Turnaround Principles and Indicators when selecting the school improvement model and crafting the Required Action Plan and Revised (Initial) Student and School Success Action Plan (submitted to the State Board of Education in June 2014) and Student and School Success Action Plan (submitted in October 2014):

Wellpinit Elementary School

- Principle 1: Develop shared/distributed leader capacity to facilitate a continuous improvement process; guide and manage the review of data, selection of strategies, and implementation of improvement efforts; and monitor the effectiveness of these efforts. (Indicator P1-ID10)
- Principle 2 (and/or 5): Set goals for Professional Development and monitor the extent to which staff has changed practice and impacted student learning. (Indicators P2-IF14 and/or P5-IID06)
- Principle 3: Establish a team structure for collaboration with specific duties and time for instructional planning. (Indicators P3-IVD05 and/or P3-IVD06)
- Principle 5: Use a variety of data to assess strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum and instructional strategies. (Indicator P5-IID08)

Wellpinit School District

- Principle 3: Allocate resources (e.g., personnel, fiscal, professional development and technical assistance) to support time for teacher collaboration and instructional planning. (Indicator P3-A)
- Principle 5: Provide technology, training, and support for school leadership to continue to collect and analyze a variety of data to track changes in educator practice and student learning. (Indicator P5-A)

Similar to the requirements for Recommendation 1, the Turnaround Principles and Indicators listed above are tightly coupled. Therefore, district and school leadership team can scaffold the S.M.A.R.T. Goals and Tasks as they revise/create the Required Action Plan submitted to the State Board of Education and the Student and School Success Action Plan submitted to the Office of Student and School Success. The Wise Ways documents on Indistar® describe research-based practices leadership teams can implement as they craft action plans around school- and district-level Indicators.

Office of Student and School Success: Additional next steps for the Office of Student and School Success to support both Wellpinit Elementary School and the Wellpinit School District follow.

- Principle 2: Develop and disseminate research-based guidance to support and evaluate effective professional development strategies
- Principle 2: Coordinate external support providers in ‘case management approach to ensure alignment of supports provided to the district and school with teacher and student needs
- Principle 5: Provide training and support to build principal and school leadership team capacity to use data to create, implement, monitor, and if needed, revise school improvement plans written in S.M.A.R.T. Goal format; plans should explicitly identify expected changes in educator practice and student learning and evidence that will be used to track progress toward these changes.

Recommendation 3: Engage partners within the community and families to ensure the learning environment is safe, orderly and honors the cultures of students represented in the school.

The findings informing this recommendation are segmented into the following areas, each of which aligns with Turnaround Principles:

- **3.A – School and Classroom Environment** (Turnaround Principle 6: Establish a school environment that improves school safety and discipline; address other non-academic factors that impact student achievement, such as students’ social, emotional, and health needs)
- **3.B – Parent/Family and Community Engagement** (Turnaround Principle 7: Provide ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement)

Each segment includes a brief description of current practice, concerns identified in data, and strengths upon which to build. A list of specific Turnaround Principles and Indicators that must be addressed by the school and district and recommendations for the Office of Student and School Success conclude the section.

3. A – School and Classroom Environment

The school building and playground are welcoming and well maintained. The physical environment is generally supportive of learning, and staff reports they have good relationships with students. Staff has worked to create a positive behavior rubric, known as PRIDE. The school’s action plan indicates teachers provide direct instruction on expected behaviors at fixed points during the academic year. Students earn PRIDE cards when exemplifying classroom behaviors expected of them (positive rewards) and PRIDE points when the entire class demonstrates expected behaviors. Individual awards are provided on a lottery basis each Friday, and a PRIDE trophy, the *Golden Eagle*, is awarded every 2-4 weeks. The group receiving the *Golden Eagle* is given special privileges.

The school holds a monthly assembly that focuses on specific character traits (Trait of the Month). During these assemblies, students of the month are recognized, along with those having perfect attendance. Teachers use GLAD strategies (a T-Chart) to reinforce student understanding of the Trait of the Month. Students unable to demonstrate expected behaviors and students who need extra time to complete class assignments are assigned to a lunch intervention (held in the library). Classroom observations during the audit team visit indicate classroom routines and student behavior expectations are generally present.

Students interviewed during our visit and classes joining us during lunch were well behaved and demonstrated expected behaviors. The interviewed students’ attitudes and expectations for continued education beyond high school graduation were particularly impressive to the audit team. All students

held the belief they would continue their learning beyond high school, and most cited examples of family members who were currently enrolled in post-secondary education.

Concerns:

The BEREC report indicates student behavior remains an area of concern in the school. Staff continued to express concern that expectations within the agreed upon behavior intervention system (PBIS) is not implemented with fidelity across the school. Staff also indicated behavioral issues interfere with learning, and there is inconsistent follow-through when behaviors “get out of control.” The primary concern expressed by staff was inconsistency in the consequences for behaviors, with some students getting a “slap on the wrist” while others “get no consequence at all.” The principal was identified as very supportive of classroom teachers, with staff indicating approval for how she was willing to “stand her ground” when behavioral intervention was required.

Survey data indicate staff recognizes there is an inconsistent response to student behaviors and a gap in application of agreed upon rewards and consequences. On the spring 2013 survey, 50% of teachers agreed that the school is orderly and supports student learning. Less than half (46%) of staff agreed they enforce consistent behavior expectations and consequences in their classrooms. Survey data over time indicate a decline in staff perceptions that school-wide expectations are consistently reinforced. The school’s action plan indicates none of the planned activities aimed at improving the climate within the school has been implemented. This finding appears to be inconsistent with staff responses during focus groups; however, it is significant to note the plan’s lack of revision.

While the school uses Skyward® to track behavior data, it is unclear how these data are later used. The school’s action plan indicates planned behavioral data analysis activities; however, no such events were cited by interviewed staff. It appears there is no consistent approach to tracking and assessing the outcomes from school/classroom behavior interventions. The review of data and team-based analysis of behavioral outcomes would be a good next step in the school’s improvement processes.

Strengths upon which to build: Two strengths the staff brings to this context are a generally long working history in the community and strong relationships with students. The school has employed specialists to support teachers in their instructional improvement efforts (TOSA). Teachers indicate they are appreciative of the ongoing support provided by this individual. The school’s improvement team should consider providing a behavioral intervention specialist to complement the instructional supports of the TOSA.

3.B – Parent/Family and Community Engagement

The school’s action plan and staff comments indicate there have been significant strides toward including parents/families in the educational process. Programs/activities staff cited include:

- Family Fridays
- Donuts with dads
- Muffins with moms
- Culture week
- Kindergarten graduation
- Efforts of the school counselor and family liaison

The district leadership team reported a number of opportunities for Tribal partnerships, including recognition of exemplary student attendance, behavior, and academic success. The district team

expressed hope that the partnership might help with communication and clarifying student expectations. The external partner team also felt student attendance expectations could be explored and clarified with parents and family members during community culture days.

School leadership team members would like to provide leveled reading materials that could be available to families. They also encouraged use of folders or similar communications tools to share student work and build closer connections between classrooms and families. Team members also felt it would be helpful to expand academic nights, providing opportunities for learning activities with parents and families. They also thought it would be interesting to explore using community meeting spaces for hosting school events.

The school has contracted with social workers to provide outreach and in-home connections to families. A representative from the Tribal Alliance for Needy Families (TANF) collaborates with the school to monitor family assistance, student attendance, and grades. Parents and families are encouraged to attend district-level Educational Advisory Committee (EAC) meetings. However, the consensus of staff was the school-family partnership is not effective or strongly present in Wellpinit.

Concerns:

The audit team felt engagement with Tribal leaders, parent/family partnerships, and purposeful connections to the culture of the community are missed opportunities. As one team member noted, “There wasn’t any Tribal representation or voice in any of the meetings we held today.” This finding is in stark contrast to other schools we visited, where Tribal members were actively engaged in school planning and decision-making. The most recent survey data indicate declines in staff perceptions of parent (or guardian) participation in decision-making (36% agree). Results also indicate only 36% agreed that staff has frequent contact with parents (36%), and 8% agreed community organizations and/or family members volunteer in classrooms and around the school.

While parents are encouraged to volunteer in the school, it is unclear if invitation translates into action. In the BERC report (p. 30), parents report the school did not actively seek them out as partners in student learning. The school’s action plan lists many planned events designed to partner with parents and families; however, it was shared that many of these structures were discontinued. It is unclear why the events were no longer offered, and many staff questioned what happened and why. The audit team suggests the school’s improvement efforts toward increasing community and cultural connections include the following:

- Develop and implement a community needs assessment that includes a component for the Tribal community and a separate component for Tribal government
- Frame an annual calendar of events that includes outreach to the Tribal community
- Include culturally relevant activities each day and each month
- Engage with Tribal leaders to identify partners who will participate in district and school leadership structures

Requirements for Recommendation #3

In light of concerns raised for this recommendation, Wellpinit Elementary School and the Wellpinit School District must address the following Turnaround Principles and Indicators when selecting the school improvement model and crafting the Required Action Plan and Revised (Initial) Student and School Success Action Plan (submitted to the State Board of Education in June 2014) and Student and School Success Action Plan (submitted in October 2014):

Wellpinit Elementary School

- Principle 1 and 2: Continue to provide professional development around culturally responsive leadership and instructional practices (e.g., culturally relevant practices) and monitor the extent to which these practices are implemented and impact student outcomes. (Indicators P2-IF12 and/or P1-IF07)
- Principle 6: Continue to ensure all staff members reinforce agreed-upon classroom rules and procedures with fidelity, positively teach them to their students, and implement the multi-tiered system of support for students struggling with trauma and unsafe behaviors. (Indicator P6-IIIC13, P6-IIIC16, and/or P6-IIIC04)
- Principle 7: Collaborate with parents and community members to build on the cultures of the students in the school and to identify and implement strategies to engage parents/families and community in the school's improvement efforts. (Indicators P7-IVA05 and/or P7-IVA13)

Wellpinit School District

- Principle 2: Provide professional development around culturally responsive leadership and instructional practices and monitor the extent to which these practices are implemented and impact student outcomes. (Indicator P2-C)
- Principle 7: Engage parents and community, including the Spokane Tribe, in the transformation process. (Indicator P7-B)

Similar to the requirements for Recommendations 1 and 2, the Turnaround Principles and Indicators listed above are tightly coupled. Therefore, district and school leadership teams can scaffold the S.M.A.R.T. Goals and Tasks as they revise/create the Required Action Plan submitted to the State Board of Education and the Student and School Success Action Plan submitted to the Office of Student and School Success. The Wise Ways documents on Indistar® describe research-based practices leadership teams can implement as they craft action plans around school- and district-level Indicators.

Office of Student and School Success: Additional next steps for the Office of Student and School Success to support both Wellpinit Elementary School and the Wellpinit School District follow.

- Principles 2, 4, and 6: Disseminate research-based guidance around culturally responsive leadership instructional practices and provide professional development and technical assistance to support district and school leaders and other staff to build their capacity to do so.
- Principle 4 and 6: Provide access to *Since Time Immemorial Curriculum*, culturally relevant supplementary materials, interim assessments and other types of data in addition to state assessments, and to support offered through OSPI's Student Support division.
- Principle 6: Collaborate with the OSPI's Student Support Division to disseminate research-based guidance around effective implementation of schoolwide discipline systems and provide professional development and technical assistance to leadership and staff to build their capacity to do so.
- Principle 7: Disseminate research-based guidance to support schools and districts to engage their parents/families and communities in transformational efforts.

VI. Summary and Next Steps

As stated in the Executive Summary, a thorough review of extant and collected data by the Academic Performance audit team led to the identification of a number of concerns; an analysis of these concerns resulted in the formulation of three recommendations. Legislation enacted in 2012 by the Washington State Legislature (E2SSB 5329) requires the district and school to explicitly address the concerns and

recommendations when selecting the intervention model and completing the Required Action Plan and Revised (Initial) Student and School Success Plan (submitted to the State Board of Education in June 2014) and Student and School Success Action Plan (submitted to the Office of Student and School Success in October 2014). Recommendations include:

- **Recommendation 1: Attract and retain a principal who will ensure he/she and the leadership team demonstrate the capacity to (a) maintain a strong focus on instructional improvement and student learning outcomes; (b) regularly monitor and continuously improve the core instructional program; and (c) use data to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum and instructional strategies.**
- **Recommendation 2: Expand staff capacity to deliver effective instruction and instructional intervention through engagement in sustained professional development aligned to identified needs based on student and staff performance; and develop staff capacity to deliver culturally relevant, standards-based instruction and curriculum and use data in making instructional decisions.**
- **Recommendation 3: Engage partners within the community and families to ensure the learning environment is safe, orderly and honors the cultures of students represented in the school.**

District and school leadership teams should review their current Student and School Success Action Plans, and make necessary revisions to ensure the recommendations contained within this report are adequately addressed. As indicated in the Executive Summary, the Academic Performance audit team believes the *Strengths* articulated in the narrative will serve the school and district well as they address the three recommendations described in this Academic Performance Audit Report.

Further requirements and general timelines for completion of the Required Action Plan are provided below.

RCW 28A.657.050

Required action plans — Development — Publication of guidelines, research, and models — Submission — Contents — Effect on existing collective bargaining agreements. (Effective until June 30, 2019.)

- (1)(a) The local district superintendent and local school board of a school district designated as a required action district must submit a required action plan to the state board of education for approval. Unless otherwise required by subsection (3) of this section, the plan must be submitted under a schedule as required by the state board. A required action plan must be developed in collaboration with administrators, teachers, and other staff, parents, unions representing any employees within the district, students, and other representatives of the local community.
- (b) The superintendent of public instruction shall provide a district with assistance in developing its plan if requested, and shall develop and publish guidelines for the development of required action plans. The superintendent of public instruction, in consultation with the state board of education, shall also publish a list of research and evidence-based school improvement models, consistent with turnaround principles, approved for use in required action plans.
- (c) The local school board must conduct a public hearing to allow for comment on a proposed required action plan. The local school district shall submit the plan first to the office of the superintendent of public instruction to review and approve that the plan is consistent with federal and state guidelines, as applicable. After the office of the superintendent of public instruction has approved that the plan is consistent with federal and state guidelines, the local school district must submit its required action plan to the state board of education for approval.

- (2) A required action plan must include all of the following:
- (a) Implementation of an approved school improvement model required for the receipt of federal or state funds for school improvement for those persistently lowest-achieving schools that the district will be focusing on for required action. The approved school improvement model selected must address the concerns raised in the academic performance audit and be intended to improve student performance to allow a school district to be removed from the list of districts designated as a required action district by the state board of education within three years of implementation of the plan. The required action plan for districts with multiple persistently lowest-achieving schools must include separate plans for each school as well as a plan for how the school district will support the schools collectively;
 - (b) Submission of an application for federal or state funds for school improvement to the superintendent of public instruction;
 - (c) A budget that provides for adequate resources to implement the model selected and any other requirements of the plan;
 - (d) A description of the changes in the district's or school's existing policies, structures, agreements, processes, and practices that are intended to attain significant achievement gains for all students enrolled in the school and how the district intends to address the findings of the academic performance audit; and
 - (e) Identification of the measures that the school district will use in assessing student achievement at a school identified as a persistently lowest-achieving school, which include closing the educational opportunity gap, improving mathematics and reading or English language arts student achievement, and improving graduation rates as defined by the office of the superintendent of public instruction that enable the school to no longer be identified as a persistently lowest-achieving school.
- (3)(a) For any district designated for required action, the parties to any collective bargaining agreement negotiated, renewed, or extended under chapter 41.59 or 41.56 RCW after June 10, 2010, must reopen the agreement, or negotiate an addendum, if needed, to make changes to terms and conditions of employment that are necessary to implement a required action plan. For any district applying to participate in a collaborative schools for innovation and success pilot project under RCW 28A.630.104, the parties to any collective bargaining agreement negotiated, renewed, or extended under chapter 41.59 or 41.56 RCW after June 7, 2012, must reopen the agreement, or negotiate an addendum, if needed, to make changes to terms and conditions of employment that are necessary to implement an innovation and success plan.

Timeline

April - May 23, 2014	<p>District and school create Required Action Plan; plan must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of approved school improvement model • Application for state funds • Budget • Description of how the district intends to address the findings of the academy performance audit • Initial Revisions to Student and School Success Action Plan (i.e., Indicators identified in the Academic Performance Audit must be assessed on Indistar®. Additional S.M.A.R.T. Goals and tasks may be included; they are required to be included in the October 30, 2014 submission.) • Identification of measures that the school and district will use to assess student achievement • Collective bargaining agreements (reopen or negotiate an addendum to support plan) • Parent/guardian notification of RAD status and process for creating plan <p>District and school share Required Action Plan with stakeholder groups, including local board of education, and incorporate feedback into final Required Action Plan submitted to the Office of Student and School Success.</p>
May 23, 2014	District submits revised Student and School Success Action Plan on Indistar®. Office of Student and School Success reviews Required Action Plan and initial revisions to Student and School Success Action Plan.
May 28, 2014	Office of Student and School Success submits Required Action Plan to State Board of Education.
June 6, 2014	District presents Required Action Plan to State Board of Education for approval.
October 30, 2013	District and school submit Student and School Success Action Plans on Indistar®.

VII. Questions for Leadership Teams to Consider

The questions below emerged during the data review on March 4, 2014 and the onsite visit on March 31, 2014. They are intended to support leadership teams as they engage in dialogues around these recommendations. Leadership teams are NOT required to address the questions in their Required Action Plan or Student and School Success Action Plans. Rather, these questions are only intended to inform their collaborative work.

Recommendation 1: Attract and retain a principal who will ensure he/she and the leadership team demonstrate the capacity to (a) maintain a strong focus on instructional improvement and student learning outcomes; (b) regularly monitor and continuously improve the core instructional program; and (c) use data to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum and instructional strategies.

Questions to Consider

The following questions can inform the work of the leadership team as it develops/ revises the Student and School Success Plan:

- *What criteria will inform the selection of the new principal?*
- *How will the new principal be supported in their transition to their new role?*
- *What ongoing supports will be provided to the principal to ensure they have the capacity to lead the school's improvement efforts?*
- *How will leadership responsibilities be distributed among district and school leaders?*
- *How will the superintendent demonstrate shared accountability for the school's success?*

- *What role will the superintendent play in monitoring instruction and supporting the use of data to improve instructional practices?*
- *What does the shared sense of hope look like for all stakeholders?*

Recommendation 2: Expand staff capacity to deliver effective instruction and instructional intervention through engagement in sustained professional development aligned to identified needs based on student and staff performance; and develop staff capacity to deliver culturally relevant, standards-based instruction and curriculum and use data in making instructional decisions.

Questions to consider:

The following questions can inform the work of the leadership team as it develops/ revises the Student and School Success Plan:

- *What structures have been established to plan, implement and monitor professional development provided to staff?*
- *How is common language and understanding emerging related to the various instructional models in place in the school (Danielson, Marzano, GLAD, AVID)?*
- *How do the PLCs use achievement data to identify student learning needs, plan instruction and monitor the impact of instruction/interventions?*
- *How can the superintendent be more consistently engaged in instructional feedback, data analysis and monitoring of improvement initiatives?*

Recommendation 3: Engage partners within the community and families to ensure the learning environment is safe, orderly and honors the cultures of students represented in the school.

Questions to Consider

The following questions can inform the work of the leadership team as it develops/ revises the Student and School Success Plan:

- *What Wrap-around services (including mental health and social/emotional supports) are provided to students?*
- *How are data used to identify needs and areas of focus for school environment? How are data used to determine level of implementation and impact?*
- *What is the role of partners in developing school success plans? (i.e., TANF)*
- *What professional development can be provided to expand visions for engagement with families and community?*
- *How can staff develop transparency in their practices to develop and consistently implement school and classroom practices rules and procedures?*
- *What further refinement is needed in the implementation of the school's PBIS system?*
- *Is there any way to use/adapt traditional systems or ceremonies to reward positive academic and social behaviors?*

VIII. Appendix

Appendix A: Required Action District Frequently Asked Questions

Appendix B: School Data Dashboard

Appendix C: Assessment of Progress Report

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Required Action District (RAD), Level One Frequently Asked Questions

1. Which school districts can become a required action district?

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is required to annually recommend to the State Board of Education (SBE) school districts for designation as required action districts. A district with at least one school identified as persistently lowest achieving will be designated as required action district. The SBE may designate a district that received a school improvement grant in 2010 or 2011 as a required action district if after three years of voluntarily implementing a plan the district continues to have a school identified as persistently lowest achieving and meets the criteria for designation established by the superintendent of public instruction. See **RCW 28A.657.020** and **RCW 28A.657.030** for additional information.

2. How does a school district superintendent request reconsideration?

A school district superintendent may request reconsideration of the superintendent of public instruction's recommendation. The reconsideration shall be limited to a determination of whether the school district met the criteria for being recommended as a required action district. A request for reconsideration must be in writing and received by superintendent of public instruction within ten days of receipt of the letter notifying the school district of the superintendent's recommendation. See **RCW 28A.657.030** for additional information.

3. What are the requirements for required action districts?

a) **External Review (Academic Performance Audit):** OSPI will provide an external review team to conduct an academic performance audit of the district and each persistently lowest achieving school. The audit will identify potential reasons for the school's low performance and lack of progress. The review team will consist of persons who have expertise in comprehensive school and district reform. The team may not include staff from the agency, the school district that is the subject of the audit, or members or staff of the SBE. The audit is based on criteria developed by OSPI and **must include** but not be limited to an examination of the following:

- Student demographics
- Mobility patterns
- School feeder patterns
- The performance of different student groups on assessments
- Effective school leadership
- Strategic allocation of resources
- Clear and shared focus on student learning
- High standards and expectations for all students
- High level of collaboration and communication
- Aligned curriculum, instruction, and assessment to state standards
- Frequency of monitoring of learning and teaching
- Focused professional development
- Supportive learning environment
- High level of family and community involvement
- Alternative secondary schools best practices and
- Any unique circumstances or characteristics of the school or district.

Audit findings must be made available to the local school district, its staff, the community, and the SBE. See **RCW 28A.657.040** for additional information.

b) **School Improvement Model:** The district must select and implement a federal- or state-approved school improvement model. Federal models include Closure, Restart, Transformation, and Turnaround. The district may adopt Washington State's Synergy Model that was developed by the Office of Student and

School Success. The selected model must address the concerns raised in the academic performance audit and be designed to increase educator capacity and substantially improve student achievement.

- c) **Required Action Plan:** The local district superintendent and local school board of a school district designated as a required action district must submit a required action plan to the SBE for approval. The SBE will establish submission dates for required action plans. A required action plan must be developed in collaboration with administrators, teachers, and other staff; parents; unions representing any employees within the district; students; and other representatives of the local community. The school board must conduct a public hearing to allow for comment on a proposed required action plan. See **RCW 28A.657.040** and **RCW 28A.657.050** for additional information.
- d) **Online action-planning platform (Indistar[®]):** Districts and schools must use OSPI's approved online action-planning platform (Indistar[®]) to create, implement, monitor, and revise their required action plans. Staff in OSPI's Office of Student and School Success will provide support to district and school teams to use Indistar[®] as the platform for their action planning.
- e) **Parent notification:** A district designated as a required action district must notify all parents of students attending a school identified as a persistently lowest achieving school in the district of the SBE's designation of the district as a required action district and the process for complying with the required action district requirements. See **RCW 28A.657.040** through **28A.657.100**.
- f) **Collective Bargaining Agreement:** The parties to any collective bargaining agreement negotiated, renewed, or extended under chapter 41.59 or 41.56 RCW after June 10, 2010 by a required action district must reopen the agreement, or negotiate an addendum, if needed, to make changes to terms and conditions of employment that are necessary to implement a required action plan. If the school district and the employee organizations are unable to agree on the terms of an addendum or modification to an existing collective bargaining agreement, the parties, including all labor organizations affected under the required action plan, must request the public employment relations commission to, and the commission shall, appoint an employee of the commission to act as a mediator to assist in the resolution of a dispute between the school district and the employee organizations. See **RCW 28A.657.040** for specific guidance for mediation of an addendum or modification of an existing collective bargaining agreement and other information.
- g) **Professional development and technical assistance (PD/TA):** School and district teams will engage in required PD/TA to build leadership and instructional capacity to effectively implement their action plan.

4. What elements must be included in the Required Action Plan?

- a) **The plan must include the following.**
 - i. **Selection and implementation of an approved school improvement model.** The approved school improvement model selected must address the concerns raised in the academic performance audit and be intended to improve student performance to allow a school district to be removed from the list of districts designated as a required action district by the SBE within three years of implementation of the plan. The required action plan for districts with multiple persistently lowest achieving schools must include **separate plans** for each school as well as a plan for how the school district will support the schools collectively.
 - ii. **Funding:** The district must submit an application to OSPI for federal or state funds for school improvement.
 - iii. **Budget:** The plan must include a budget that provides for adequate resources to implement the selected model and any other requirements of the plan.

- iv. **Changes to existing policies, practices, etc.:** The plan must include descriptions of changes in the district's or school's existing policies, structures, agreements, processes, and practices that are intended to attain significant achievement gains for all students enrolled in the school.
- v. **Academic Performance Audit:** The district must also describe how it intends to address the findings of the academic performance audit.
- vi. **Data measures:** The plan must identify the measures that the school district will use in assessing the school's student achievement. Measures will include those related to closing the educational opportunity gap, improving mathematics and reading or English language arts student achievement, and improving graduation rates as defined by OSPI; these measures will also be used to determine the school's status as a persistently lowest achieving school.

- b) **Assistance with the required action plan:** OSPI will provide guidelines for the development of required action plans, as well as a list of research and evidence-based school improvement models to be implemented in the plan. If requested, OSPI will provide a school district with assistance in developing its plan. The local school board will first submit the plan to OSPI to review and approve that the plan is consistent with federal and state guidelines, as applicable. After OSPI approves the plan is consistent with federal and state guidelines, the local school district must submit its required action plan to the SBE for approval. See **RCW 28A.657.040** for additional information.
- c) **Review of the required action plan:** The required action plan developed by a district's school board and superintendent must be submitted to the SBE for approval. The SBE shall approve a plan proposed by a school district only if the plan meets the requirements in RCW 28A.657.050 and provides sufficient remedies to address the findings in the academic performance audit to improve student achievement. Any addendum or modification to an existing collective bargaining agreement, negotiated under RCW 28A.657.050 or by agreement of the district and the exclusive bargaining unit, related to student achievement or school improvement shall not go into effect until approval of a required action plan by the SBE. *Note.* The SBE must accept for inclusion in any required action plan the final decision by the superior court on any issue certified by the executive director of the public employment relations commission under the process in RCW 28A.657.050. See **RCW 28A.657.060** for additional information.
- d) **Timeline for implementing the action plan:** If federal or state funds for this purpose are available, a required action plan must be implemented in the immediate school year following the district's designation as a required action district. See **RCW 28A.657.060** for additional information.
- e) **Technical Assistance and Progress Monitoring:** OSPI must provide the required action district with technical assistance and federal or state funds for school improvement, if available, to implement an approved plan. The district must submit a report to OSPI that provides the progress the district is making in meeting the student achievement goals based on the state's assessments, identifying strategies and assets used to solve audit findings, and establishing evidence of meeting plan implementation benchmarks as set forth in the required action plan. OSPI will report to the SBE twice a year on the progress of a required action district in implementing the required action plan. See **RCW 28A.657.090** for additional information.

5. How can a required action district be released from the designation?

OSPI must recommend to the SBE that a school district be released from the designation as a required action district after the district implements a required action plan for a period of three years; has made progress as defined by the superintendent of public instruction using the criteria adopted under RCW 28A.657.020 including progress in closing the educational opportunity gap; and no longer has a school within the district identified as persistently lowest achieving. The SBE shall release a school district from the designation as a required action district upon confirmation that the district has met the requirements for a release.

If the SBE determines that the required action district has not met the requirements for release after at least three years of implementing a required action plan, the board may recommend that the district remain in required action and submit a new or revised plan under the process in RCW 28A.657.050, or the SBE may direct that the school district be assigned to level two of the required action process as provided in RCW 28A.657.105. If the required action district received a federal school improvement grant for the same persistently lowest achieving school in 2010 or 2011, the SBE may direct that the school district be assigned to level two of the required action process after one year of implementing a required action plan under this chapter if the district is not making progress. Before making a determination of whether to recommend that a school district that is not making progress remain in required action or be assigned to level two of the required action process, the SBE must submit its findings to the education accountability system oversight committee under RCW 28A.657.130 and provide an opportunity for the oversight committee to review and comment. See **RCW 28A.657.100** for additional information.

Additional information regarding the required action plan follows.

6. What if the SBE rejects the required action plan?

If the SBE does not approve a proposed plan, it must notify the local school board and local district's superintendent in writing with an explicit rationale for why the plan was not approved. With the assistance of OSPI, the superintendent and school board of the required action district shall either: (1) submit a new plan to the SBE for approval within forty days of notification that its plan was rejected, or (2) submit a request to the required action plan review panel established under RCW 28A.657.070 for reconsideration of the SBE's rejection within ten days of the notification that the plan was rejected. See **RCW 28A.657.040** for information.

7. What is the required action plan review panel?

A required action plan review panel is composed of five individuals with expertise in school improvement, school and school district restructuring, or parent and community involvement in schools. Two of the panel members shall be appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives; two shall be appointed by the president of the Senate; and one shall be appointed by the governor. The panel is to provide an objective, external review of a request from a school district for reconsideration of the SBE's rejection of the district's required action plan or reconsideration of a level two required action plan developed only by the superintendent of public instruction as provided under RCW 28A.657.105. The review and reconsideration by the panel shall be based on whether the SBE or the superintendent of public instruction gave appropriate consideration to the unique circumstances and characteristics identified in the academic performance audit or level two needs assessment and review of the local school district. See **RCW 28A.657.070** for additional information.

9. What happens if the school district does not submit the required action plan in time?

The SBE may direct the superintendent of public instruction to require a school district that has not submitted a final required action plan for approval, or has submitted but not received SBE approval of a required action plan by the beginning of the school year in which the plan is intended to be implemented, to redirect the district's Title I funds based on the academic performance audit findings. See **RCW 28A.657.080** for information.

2013 School Data Dashboard

Site:	Wellpinit Elem
District:	Wellpinit

READING (MSP / HSPE)

STATUS (Percent Meeting Standard)

	Reading 2013	Reading 2012	Change	Change in Percent	For 2013, Above or Below Your District?
Grade 3	16.7%	32.0%	↓	-15.3%	Equal ●
Grade 4	64.0%	25.0%	↑	39.0%	Equal ●
Grade 5	19.2%	40.9%	↓	-21.7%	Equal ●

IMPROVEMENT per Year (change in percentage points per year over 5 years)

School Trend vs. District	School	District
Grade 3	● -6.7%	-6.7%
Grade 4	● 1.8%	1.8%
Grade 5	● -0.8%	-0.8%

MATHEMATICS (MSP / EOC)

STATUS (Percent Meeting Standard)

	Math 2013	Math 2012	Change	Change in Percent	For 2013, Above or Below Your District?
Grade 3	5.6%	60.0%	↓	-54.4%	Equal ●
Grade 4	52.0%	29.6%	↑	22.4%	Equal ●
Grade 5	11.5%	27.3%	↓	-15.8%	Equal ●

IMPROVEMENT per Year (change in percentage points per year over 5 years)

School Trend vs. District	School	District
Grade 3	● -6.5%	-6.5%
Grade 4	● 11.8%	11.8%
Grade 5	● 2.4%	2.4%

WRITING

STATUS (Percent Meeting Standard)

	Writing 2013	Writing 2012	Change	Change in Percent	For 2013, Above or Below Your District?
Grade 4	60.0%	25.0%	↑	35.0%	Equal ●

IMPROVEMENT per Year (change in percentage points per year over 5 years)

School Trend vs. District	School	District
Grade 4	● 2.3%	2.3%

SCIENCE (MSP / EOC)

STATUS (Percent Meeting Standard)

	Science 2013	Science 2012	Change	Change in Percent	For 2013, Above or Below Your District?
Grade 5	7.7%	9.1%	→	-1.4%	Equal ●

IMPROVEMENT per Year (change in percentage points per year over 5 years)

School Trend vs. District	School	District
Grade 5	● 2.5%	2.5%

*Interpretation Tips: **STATUS** is a simple comparison between 2013 and 2012 results. **Above or Below the District** compares the school's 2013 results to the district's to determine whether they are above or below (equal means +/- 2%). **IMPROVEMENT** is a 5-year trend in percentage points per year. Larger positive values are better – implying greater improvement each year. Negative values indicate a declining trend in the percent of students meeting standard.*

2013 School Data Dashboard

Site:	Wellpinit Elem
District:	Wellpinit

READING: Impact of Programs for Level-1 Students

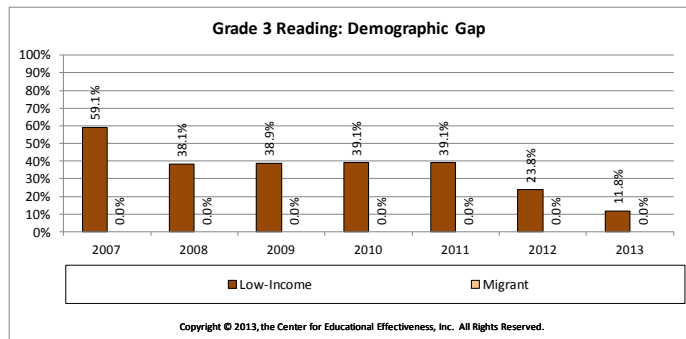
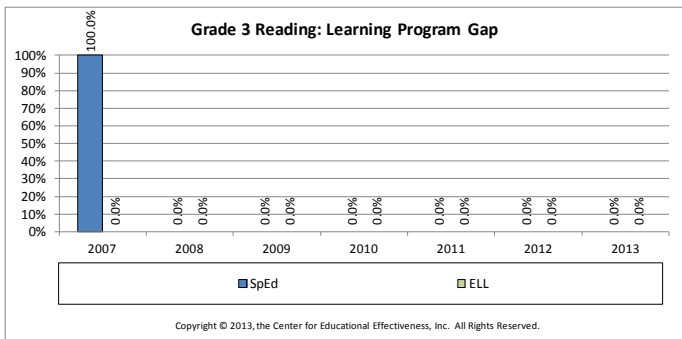
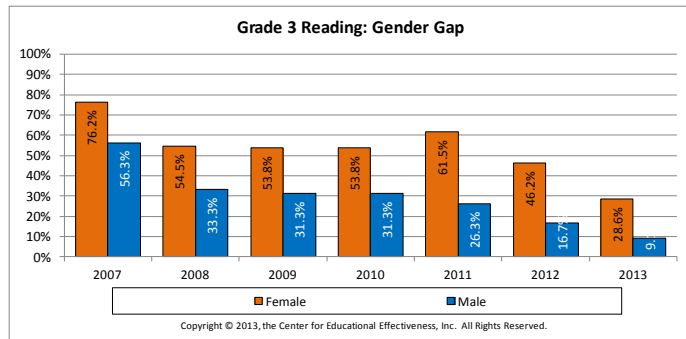
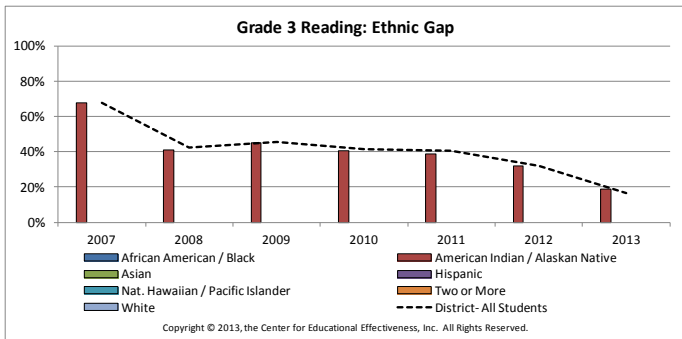
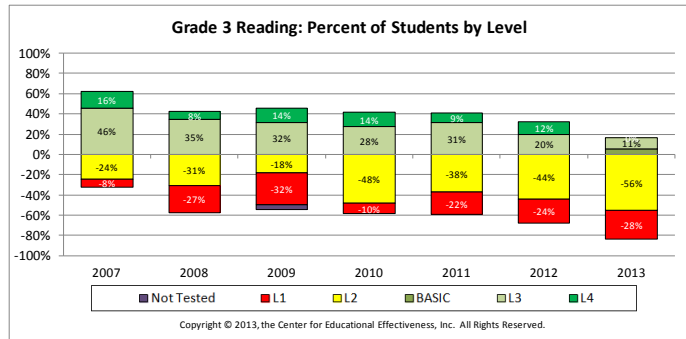
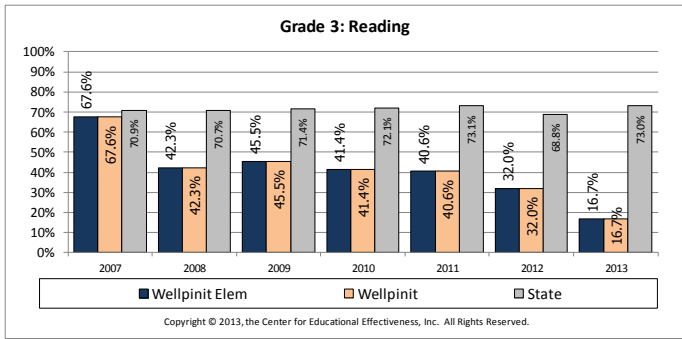
STATUS (Percent at Level-1)						5-Yr Trend: Is percent at Level-1 declining (percentage points / year)?				
	2013 % at Level-1	2012 % at Level-1	Change (we want values < 0%)		Is Level-1 larger than the District?		School Trend vs. District		School	District
Grade 3	27.8%	24.0%		3.8%	Equal		Grade 3		0.6%	0.6%
Grade 4	12.0%	32.1%		-20.1%	Equal		Grade 4		-1.6%	-1.6%
Grade 5	26.9%	27.3%		-0.4%	Equal		Grade 5		-2.0%	-2.0%

MATH: Impact of Programs for Level-1 Students

STATUS (Percent at Level-1)						5-Yr Trend: Is percent at Level-1 declining (percentage points / year)?				
	2013 % at Level-1	2012 % at Level-1	Change (we want values < 0%)		Is Level-1 larger than the District?		School Trend vs. District		School	District
Grade 3	66.7%	24.0%		42.7%	Equal		Grade 3		4.9%	4.9%
Grade 4	28.0%	55.6%		-27.6%	Equal		Grade 4		-12.5%	-12.5%
Grade 5	50.0%	36.4%		13.6%	Equal		Grade 5		-10.8%	-10.8%

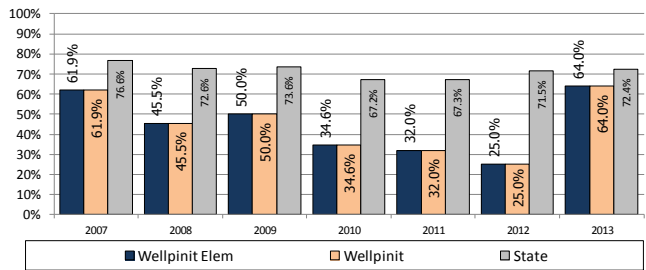
*Interpretation Tips: **STATUS** is a simple measure of the percentage of students at Level-1 (Level-1 is defined as "well below standard" for MSP, HSPE, and EOC). A smaller percentage at Level-1 is better. This is a direct measure of the impact of interventions for struggling students. For **Change**, we want the percentage of students at Level-1 to decline— so negative values are best. The **5-year Trend** looks at whether the school is shrinking the percentage of students at Level-1 over time. The values are percentage points per year. The larger negative values are better-- implying greater decline in the percentage of students at Level-1.*

Reading Grade 3



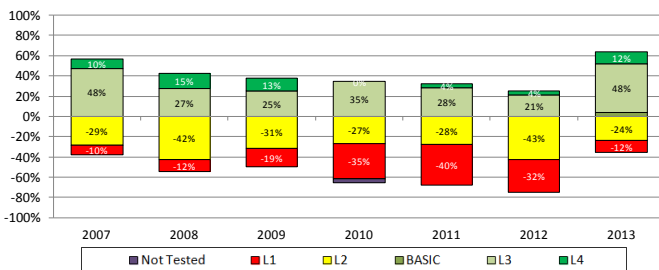
Reading Grade 4

Grade 4: Reading



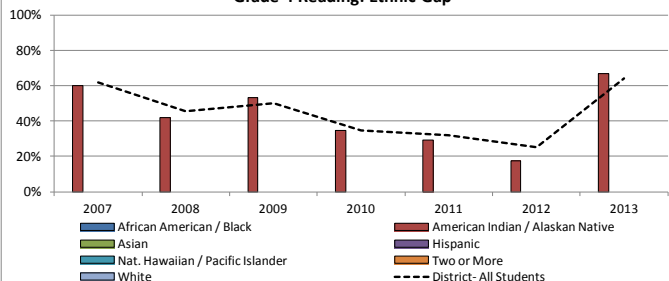
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Grade 4 Reading: Percent of Students by Level



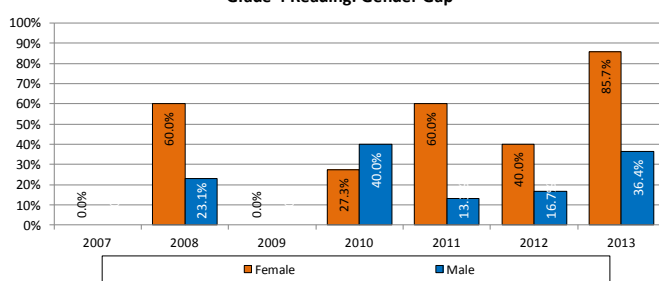
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Grade 4 Reading: Ethnic Gap



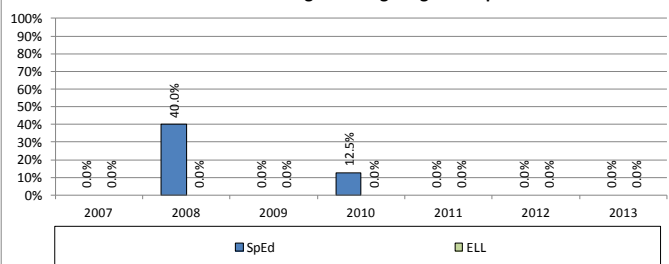
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Grade 4 Reading: Gender Gap



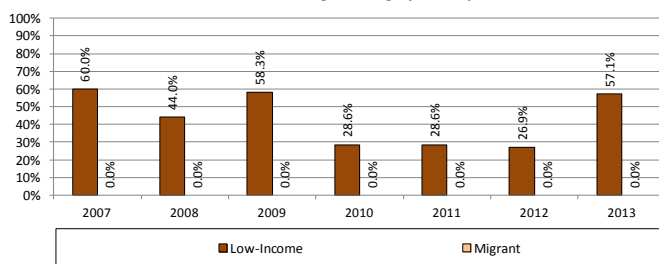
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Grade 4 Reading: Learning Program Gap



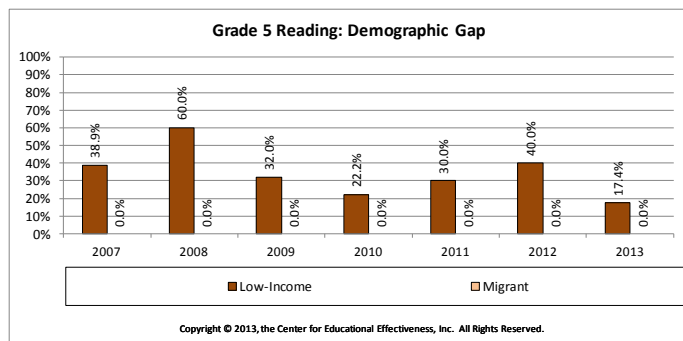
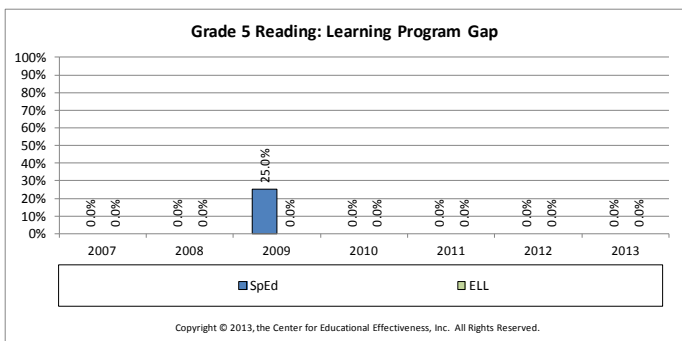
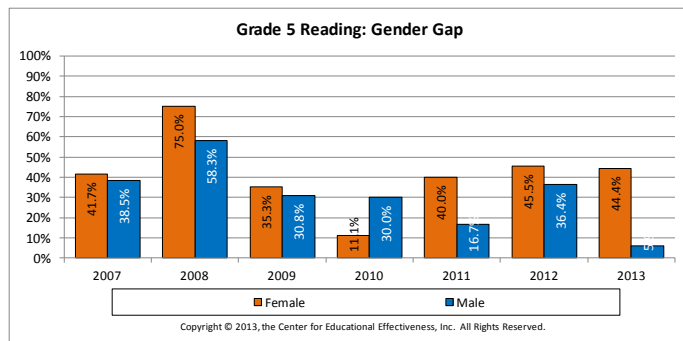
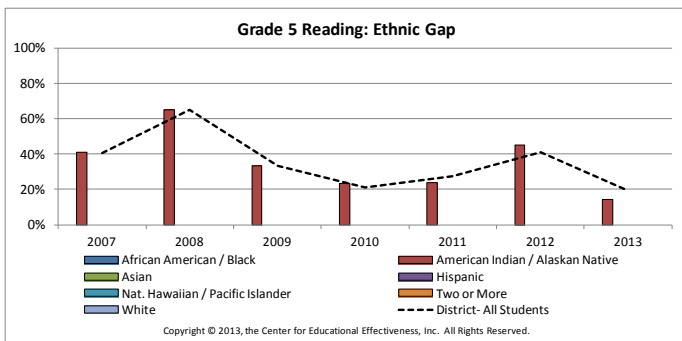
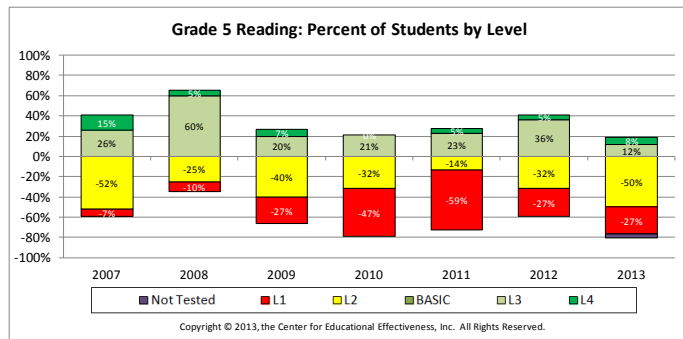
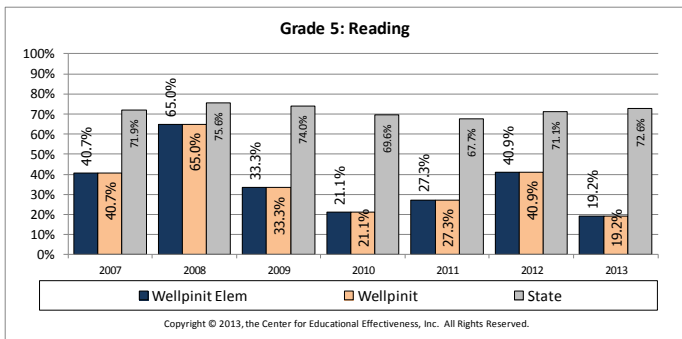
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Grade 4 Reading: Demographic Gap



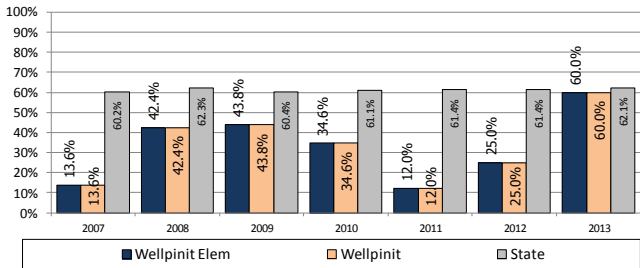
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Reading Grade 5



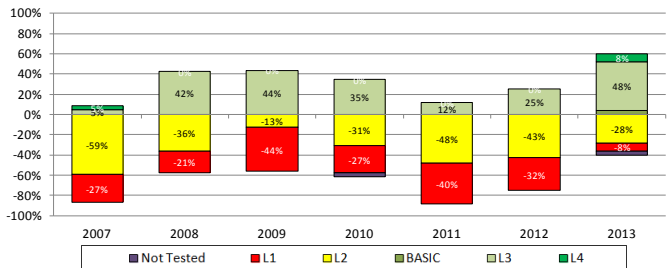
Writing Grade 4

Grade 4: Writing



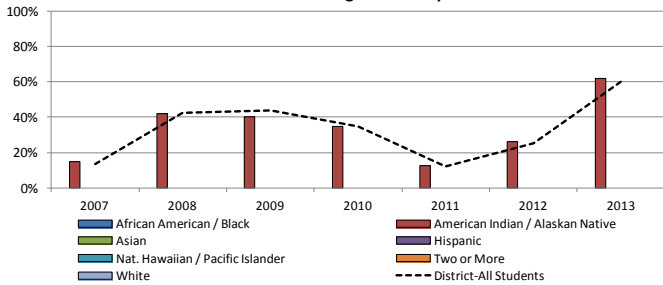
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Grade 4 Writing: Percent of Students by Level



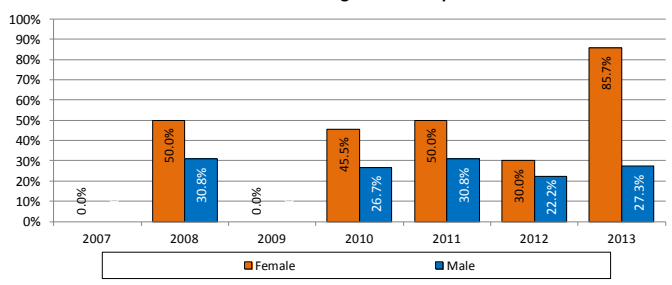
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Grade 4 Writing: Ethnic Gap



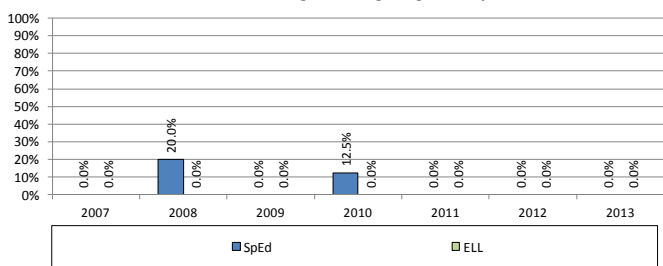
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Grade 4 Writing: Gender Gap



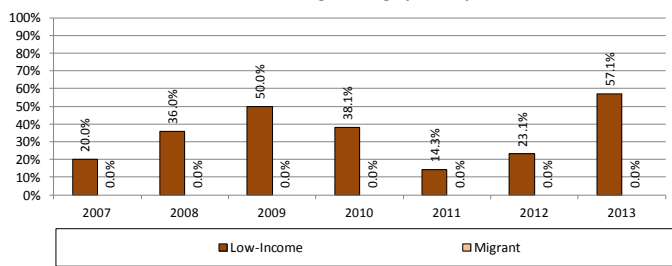
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Grade 4 Writing: Learning Program Gap



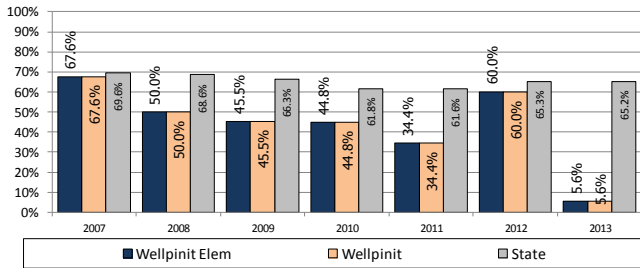
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Grade 4 Writing: Demographic Gap



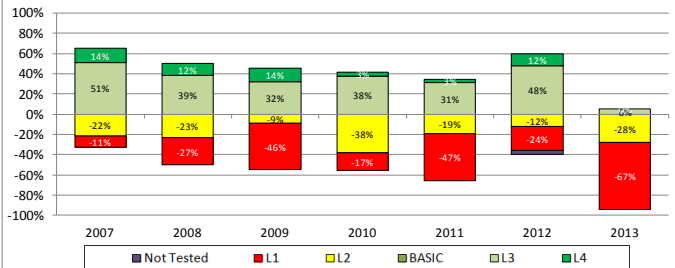
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Grade 3: Math



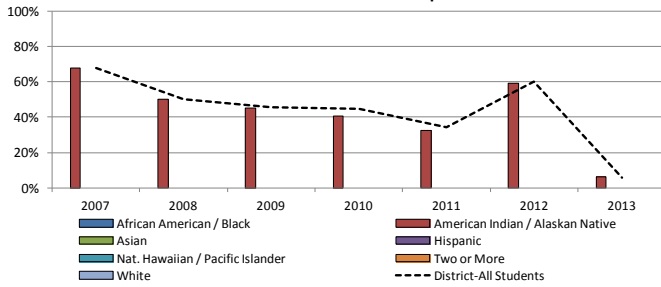
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Grade 3 Math: Percent of Students by Level



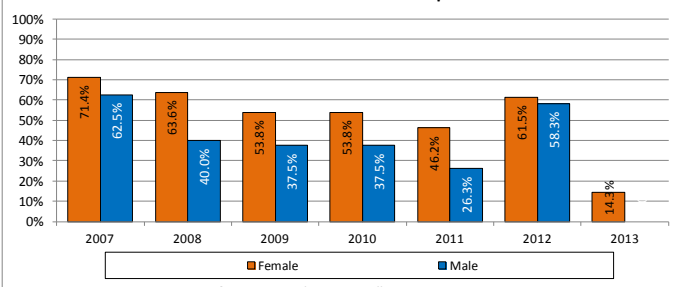
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Grade 3 Math: Ethnic Gap



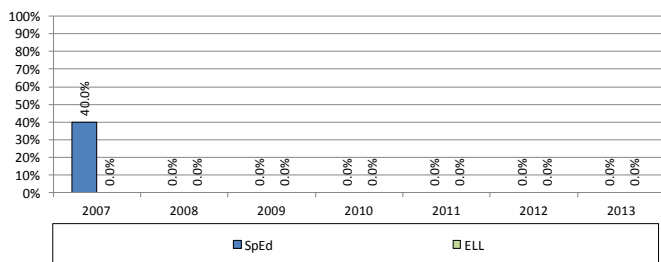
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Grade 3 Math: Gender Gap



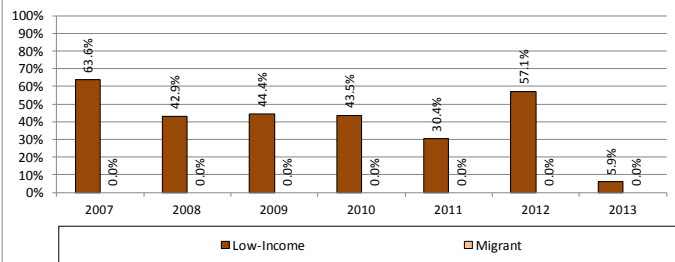
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Grade 3 Math: Learning Program Gap



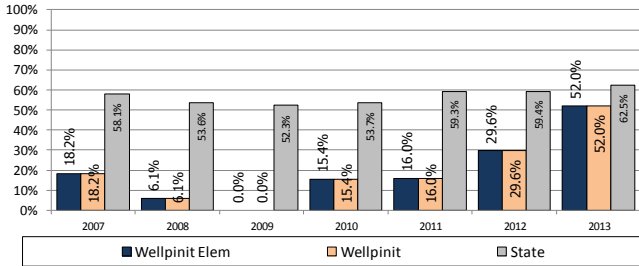
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Grade 3 Math: Demographic Gap



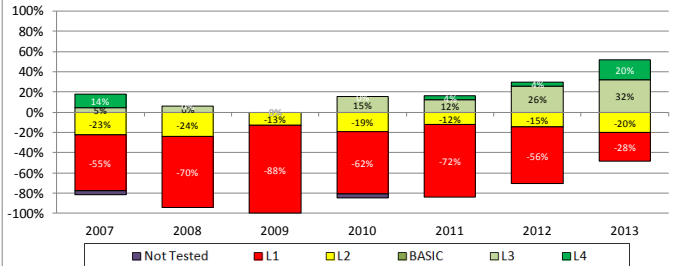
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Grade 4: Math



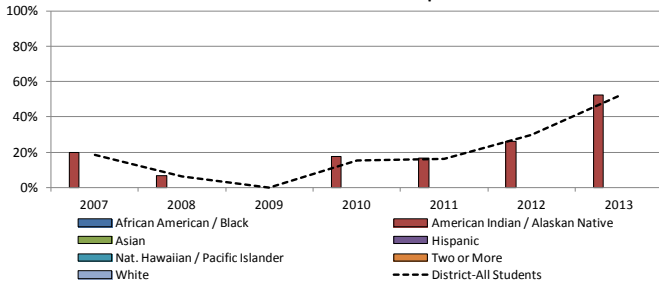
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Grade 4 Math: Percent of Students by Level



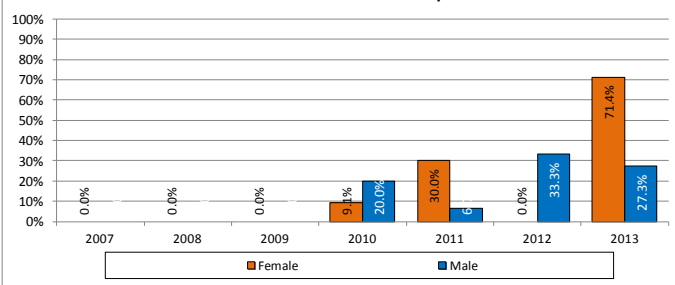
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Grade 4 Math: Ethnic Gap



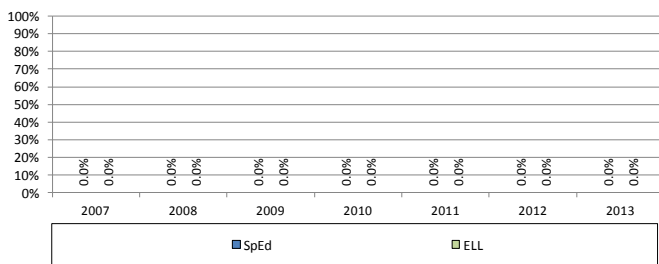
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Grade 4 Math: Gender Gap



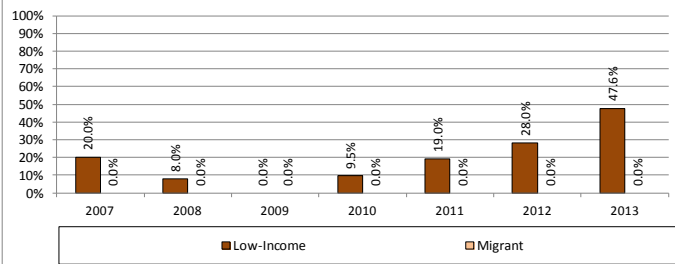
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Grade 4 Math: Learning Program Gap



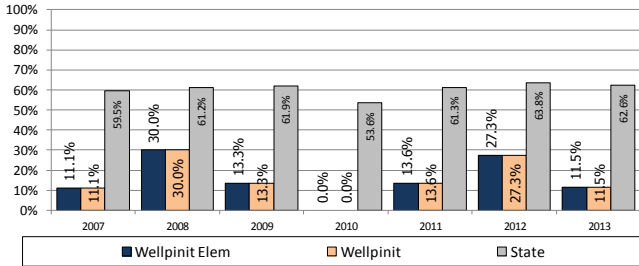
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Grade 4 Math: Demographic Gap



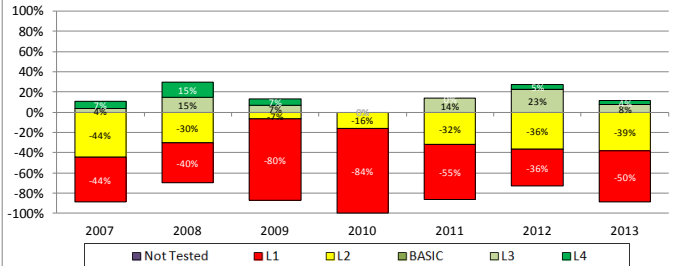
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Grade 5: Math



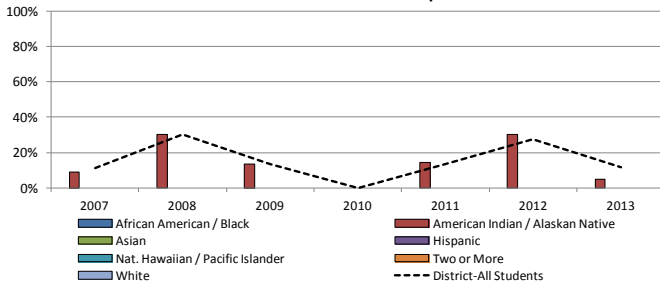
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Grade 5 Math: Percent of Students by Level



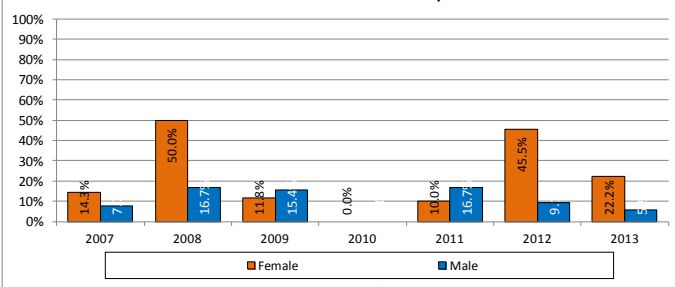
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Grade 5 Math: Ethnic Gap



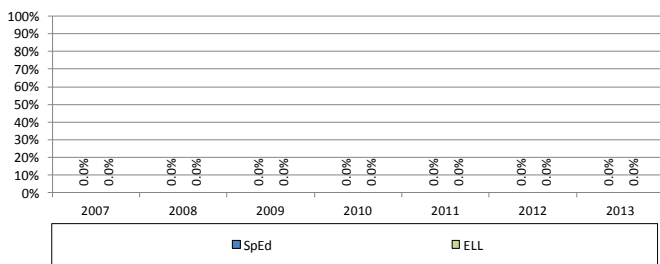
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Grade 5 Math: Gender Gap



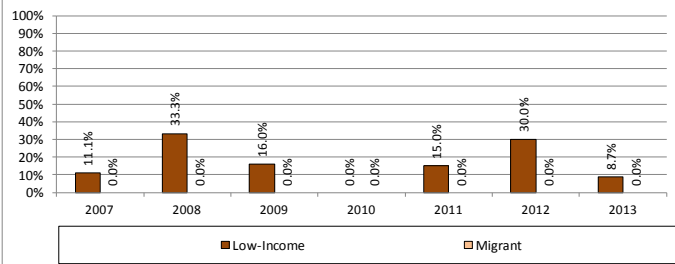
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Grade 5 Math: Learning Program Gap

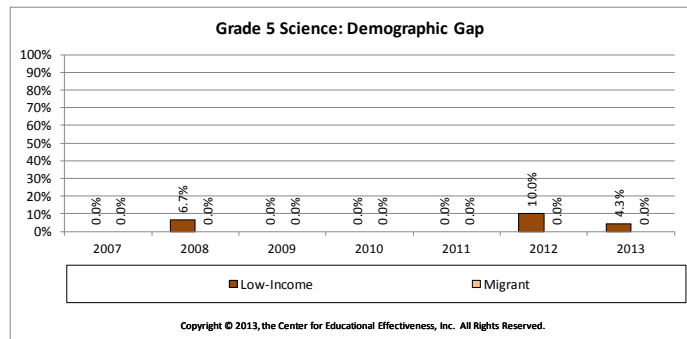
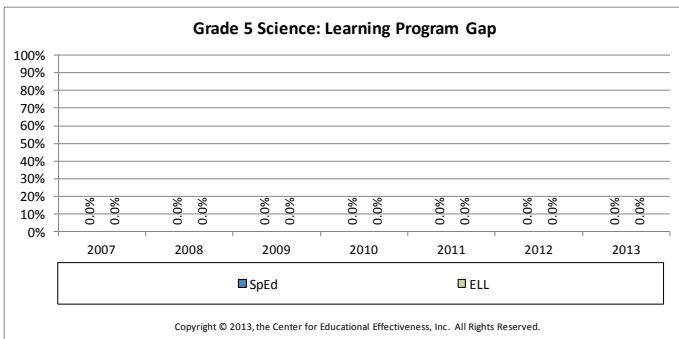
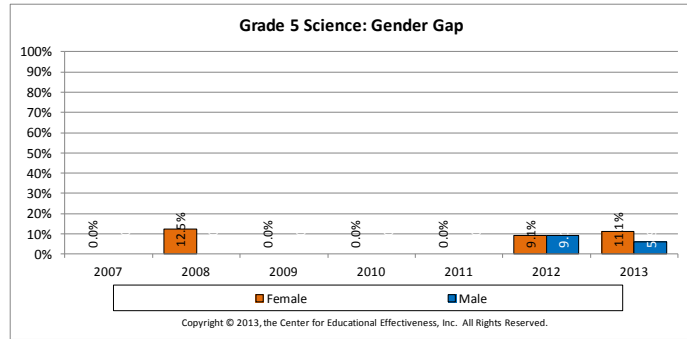
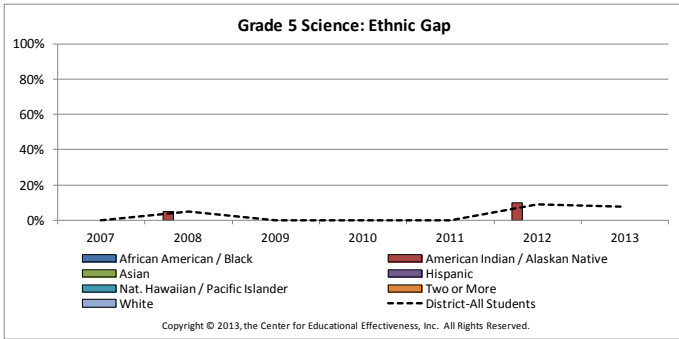
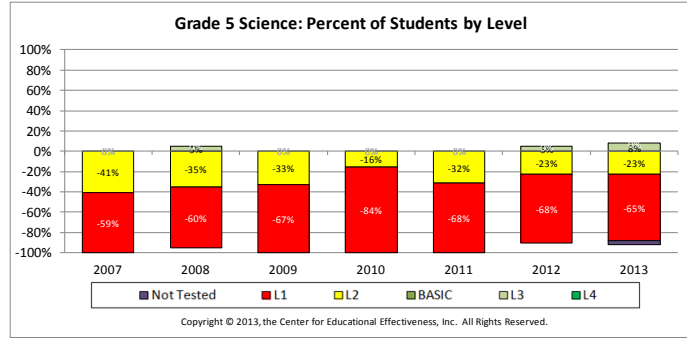
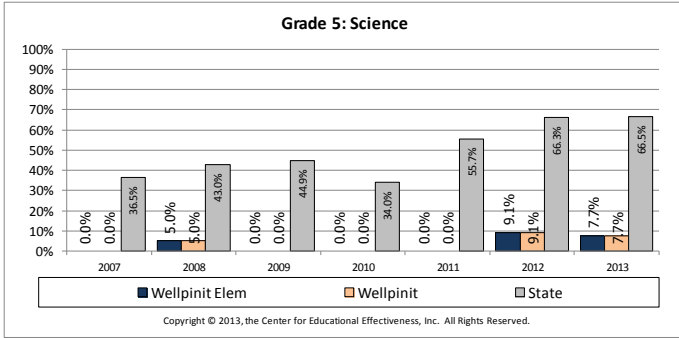


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Grade 5 Math: Demographic Gap



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MERIT - Assessment of Progress

Wellpinit Elementary School

Wellpinit School District

April 16, 2013



School and Classroom Practices Study

Prepared by



BAKER ■ EVALUATION ■ RESEARCH ■ CONSULTING

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Student and School Success Division
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

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Wellpinit Elementary School Assessment of Progress

Introduction

In 2010, the Wellpinit School District (WSD) applied for and received a federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) for one of its schools, Wellpinit Elementary School (WES). As part of the application process, The BERC Group, Inc. conducted a School and Classroom Practices Study (SCPS) at WES. The BERC Group a) reviewed district level practices and policies to identify potential supports and barriers that may impact the district's ability to implement an intervention; b) collected classroom observation data focusing on instructional practices within the school; and c) conducted qualitative interviews and focus groups focusing on the alignment of school structures and practices with OSPI's Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools. . In 2011 and 2012, The BERC Group conducted follow-up visits, highlighting changes the school and district made related to the School Improvement Grant (SIG). For these visits, evaluators repeated the data collection process used for the first report.

In April 2013, BERC Group researchers visited the school again to conduct an Assessment of Progress to highlight changes the school and district made over the course of the grant. The findings in this report are based on information gathered from the following sources:

- 1) a review of changes in district level practices and policies to support an intervention model;
- 2) a classroom observation study focusing on instructional practices within the school;
- 3) qualitative interviews and focus groups focusing on the alignment of school structures and practices with OSPI's *Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools*; and
- 4) surveys of school staff and parents.

Evaluators obtained information during a site visit on April 16, 2013. Approximately 35 people, including district and building administrators, certificated and non-certificated staff members, counselors, parents, and students participated in interviews and focus groups. In addition, evaluators conducted 11 classroom observations to determine the extent to which Powerful Teaching and Learning™ was present in the school. Finally, evaluators accessed additional information about the school and district, including school improvement plans, student achievement data, and additional school documents.

The following section describes the federal intervention model Wellpinit School District and Wellpinit Elementary chose to adopt. This section also includes a comparative overview of the district findings from all School and Classroom Practices Studies, a description of the support provided to the school by the district, and a summary of the changes made at the school level. Subsequent sections of the report offer a detailed review of the school's alignment to the *Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools* based on classroom observations, interviews and focus groups, and survey data. Under each of the *Nine Characteristics* indicators, the report will highlight how the school has addressed issues brought to light in previous studies.

Implementation of the Intervention Model

In an effort to improve education and educational opportunities across the nation, the federal government provided funding for School Improvement Grants to support the lowest performing districts and schools. Schools and districts accepting SIG money chose from among four federally defined intervention models for their lowest performing schools: *Closure*, *Restart*, *Turnaround*, and *Transformation*. The school closure model refers to a district closing a school and enrolling the students who attended the school in other higher-achieving schools in the district. The restart model occurs when a district converts the school or closes and reopens it under management of an educational management organization (EMO). The turnaround model includes replacing the principal and rehiring no more than 50% of the school's staff, adopting a new governance structure, and implementing a research-based instructional program aligned to state standards. Over the last two years, this model has produced significant gains in student achievement and has helped schools prepare for the longer process of transformation into a high performing organization.¹ The transformation model requires replacing the school principal addresses four areas critical to transforming persistently low-achieving schools: developing teacher and principal leader effectiveness, implementing instructional reform strategies, extending learning time and creating community connections, and providing operating flexibility and sustained support.

Wellpinit School District and WES chose to adopt and implement the *Transformation* model. The table in Appendix A of this report describes the specific requirements for the transformation model in more detail and shows a comparison of rankings for each requirement from each of the School and Classroom Practices Studies.

District and School Level Change

The district employs approximately 38 teachers serving just under 600 students at one elementary school, one middle school, one high school, and one alternative high school. Wellpinit Elementary employs about 15 teachers serving approximately 172 students. Seventy three percent of the school's 15 teachers possess masters' degrees, and the average teaching experience is 10 years.²

Three schools in the district have been identified as needing improvement. In 2010, Wellpinit Elementary School received a School Improvement Grant (SIG), and the alternative school, Wellpinit Alliance High School, was identified as a Focus School due to graduation rates in 2012. Wellpinit Middle School was originally identified as an Emerging - Priority school in 2012, and has since been re-designated as a Priority School.

District leadership has focused on applying changes throughout the district rather than focusing solely on the schools identified for improvement. "We took advantage of the SIG and said, 'If we're going to do it at the elementary, let's do it as a whole group,'" said the superintendent. All schools in the district now have a weekly early-release day to allow staff members to meet in professional learning communities (PLCs). The district has also focused on identifying the

¹ Mass Insight (June 2010). *School Turnaround Models*. Boston, MA.: Mass Insight Education and Research Institute.

² Data is from the Washington State Report Card website.

English Language Learners in the student population. Staff members across the district have had training in Guided Language Acquisition Development (GLAD).

Last year, the elementary school piloted the new evaluation system based on the Charlotte Danielson Instructional Framework, through a consortium of similarly-sized rural districts through the local Educational Service District (ESD). Elementary and middle school teachers are now evaluated using the new system. It is still voluntary at the high school.

Throughout the three years the district has been involved in school improvement initiatives, a number of staffing changes have occurred. The district created a new principal position at the elementary school, which had previously shared a principal with the middle school and high school. The first elementary principal was replaced this year with a new principal. The superintendent is committed to sustaining the elementary principal position after SIG funding ends.

This year, conflict has arisen in the district as a result of a group called the Educational Advisory Committee (EAC), which has existed for five years. EAC meetings are open to the public, and are typically attended by parents, community members, the superintendent, and both building principals. Staff members typically do not attend, because the meetings take place during school hours. The superintendent explained, "It's the one spot where we can get 20 people in a room, versus having one show up to an evening meeting." However, although the EAC has had some benefits to the schools, such as the Read Across the Reservation program, it has also led to tension. Multiple staff members expressed concerns that EAC has turned into a forum for community members to discuss individual staff members by name. A school representative said:

It's supposed to be about how to improve community and school relations and involvement. It's not supposed to be about athletics. But it's turning into griping about staff members . . . You get shredded, beat up.

As a union, we are looking into policies and procedures. We should not have staff being beat up in a public forum, especially if the staff members are not there to defend themselves. It does not make us feel very supported, especially when it's very clear in policy and procedure that it's not supposed to be there.

The superintendent acknowledged:

I don't think it [the EAC] has a positive feel. I'd like it to, that's why I hold onto it, because I have hope. But I'd almost rather have principals meet with their own parents, where they can get things done.

The superintendent, both building principals, the union president, and the director of the alternative program are participating the Washington State Leadership Academy. The superintendent explained, "It's a two-year process to help build our leadership capacity." He expressed hopes that the Leadership Academy would help the district, "communicate with [families], getting them to support the schools instead of thinking they need another level of accountability."

Moving forward, the superintendent identified strengths at the middle school and the high school:

That [middle school] staff has always been a united, positive group, very eager. ...They have a good relationship with their principal and that helps as well. They're starting to do some hands-on projects. You can see them take off and get more engaged.

The strength of the high school is they have high-quality people. They don't have a bad one in the bunch. At points in our career, you develop bad habits, and you do it unintentionally. We're good people with some practices we need to change. How do we differentiate instruction? How do we integrate special ed kids in the classrooms? What does it look like when I have one kid reading at a third-grade level and one at a high school level? They're eager for good instructional leadership. They've voiced that. They want their PLCs to be strong.

District leadership also identified some weaknesses in the schools and the district. One issue identified was in sustaining initiatives instead of replacing them with new ones. One person shared, "We need to be stronger, as a superintendent as well as a school board, to say, 'This is our path, we're going to stick to it. We're going to sustain this work.'" Leadership also identified other barriers in moving forward:

Our kids come to us way behind. Seventy-five percent [of the students] are behind when they hit our doors in kindergarten. They're behind in Headstart. If you look at the work our kids are doing in kindergarten, it's pretty alarming. If you look at them draw, it's almost at the level of a two-year-old. There are socio-emotional problems. A high rate of suicide and drug use. Our kids don't come prepared. The parents love them, and we do have some good, stable families. The parents who are behind the kids; they succeed.

School and Classroom Level Findings

Survey Results

Wellpinit Elementary School staff and families also completed a survey designed to measure whether these groups see evidence of the *Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools* in the school. The staff survey includes factors around each of the *Nine Characteristics*, and the family surveys include factors around each of the characteristics, except *Focused Professional Development*. Individual survey items were scored on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral/undecided, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree). Researchers consider a "4" or "5" response on an individual survey item a positive response. Likewise, an overall factor score of 4.0 and above is a positive response. These surveys were not administered in the initial assessment.

A summary of the survey findings appears in Figures 1 and 2. Survey results for staff members were mixed with about half of the factor scores increasing and half decreasing. Overall for

2013, Wellpinit staff members scored the *Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment* (4.0) factor the highest and *Family and Community Involvement* (2.97) factor the lowest. Parents also scored the *Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment* (3.93) factor the highest, but unlike staff, they scored the *Effective Leadership* (3.5) factor the lowest.

Researchers considered survey findings in scoring the rubric, and the results are included in the following discussion of the school’s alignment to the *Nine Characteristics*. Appendices B and C include the frequency distribution for the surveys, organized around the *Nine Characteristics*.

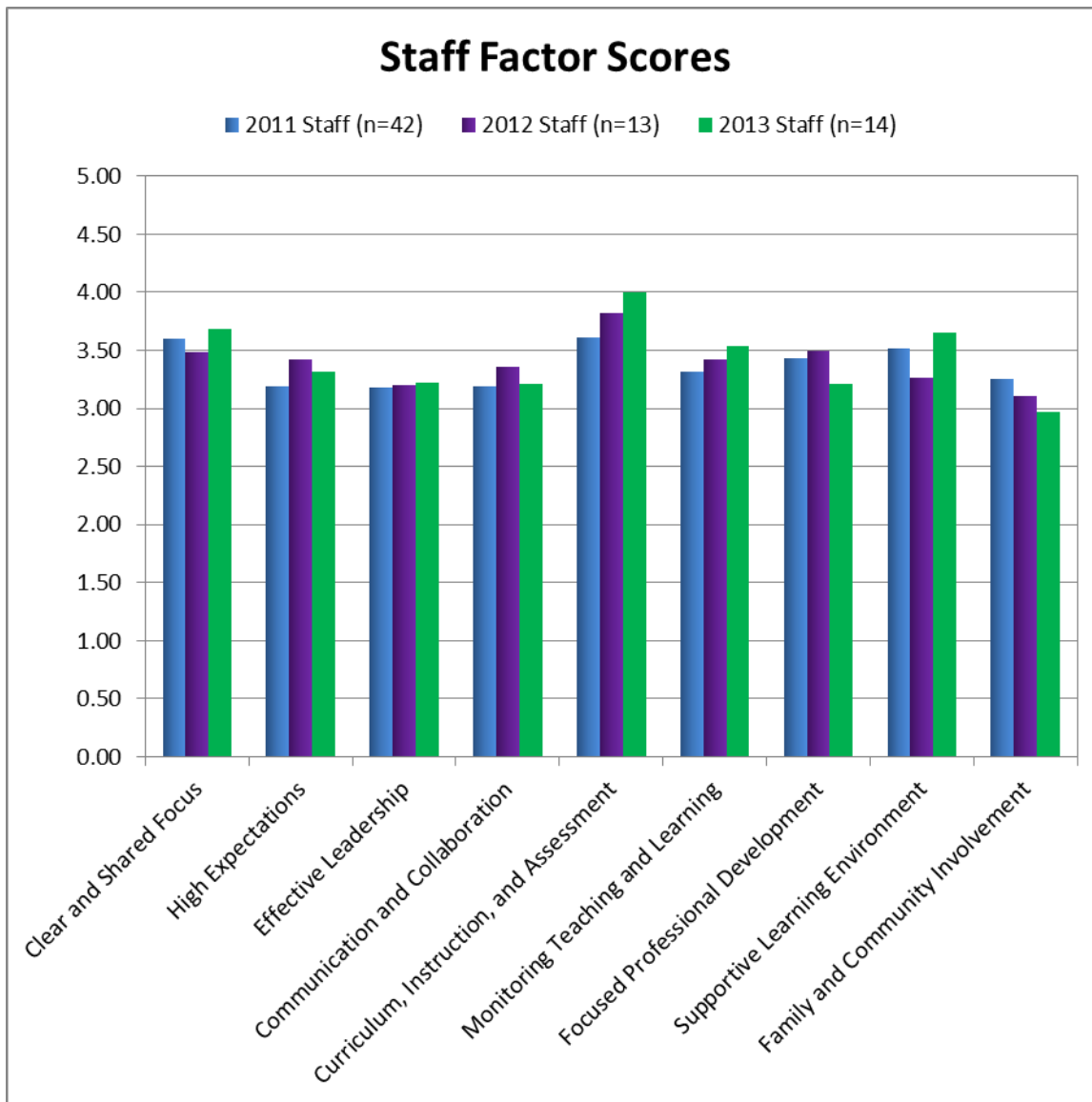


Figure 1. Survey Factor Scores - Staff

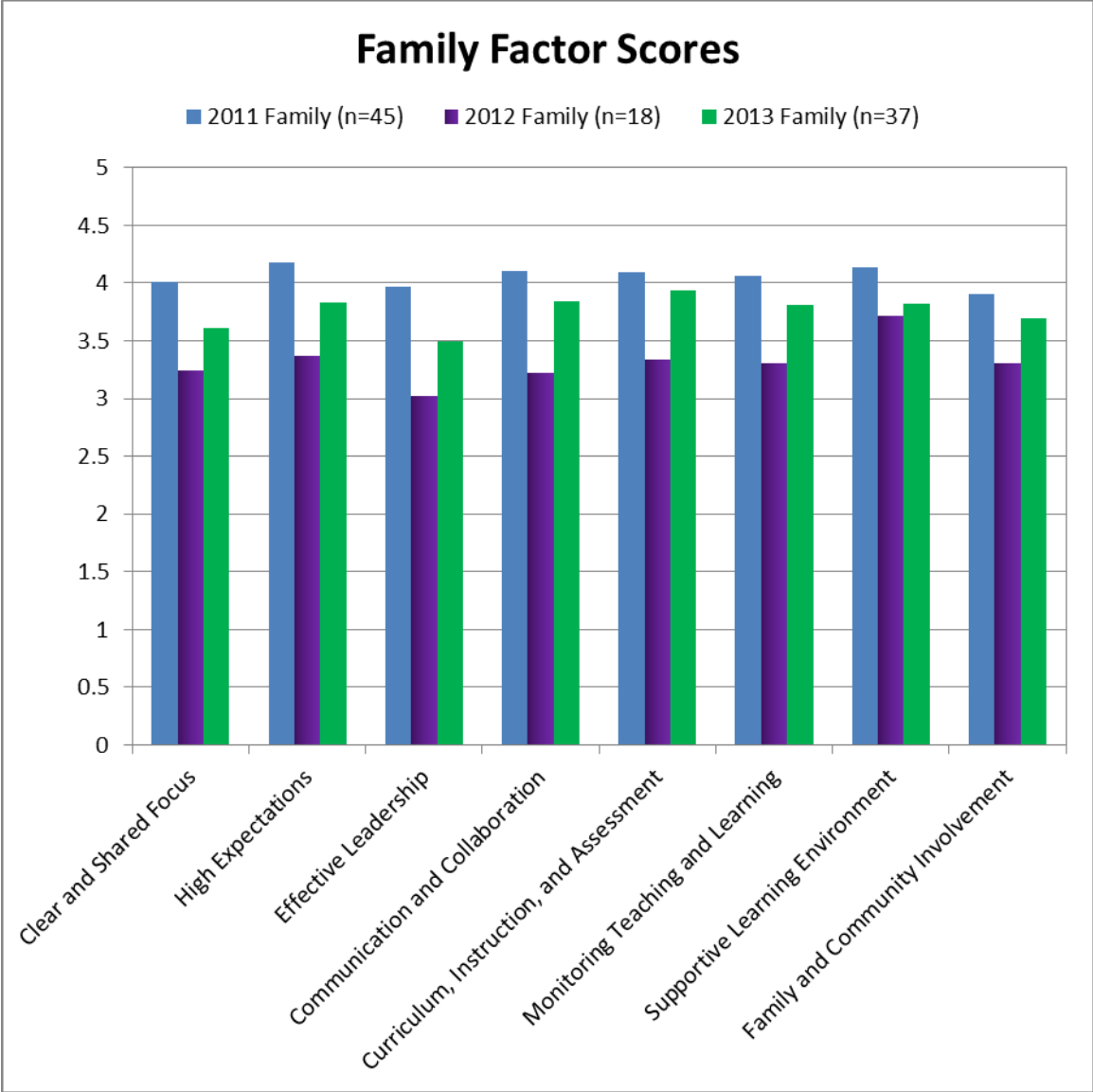


Figure 2. Survey Factor Scores - Family

School and Classroom Practices Study Findings

Using data collected through the School and Classroom Practices Study and survey results from staff and parents, research team members reached consensus on scores for 19 Indicators organized around the *Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools*. Each Indicator was scored using a rubric with a continuum of four levels that describe the degree to which a school is effectively implementing the Indicator. The four levels are:

- 4 – Leads to continuous improvement and institutionalization (meets criteria in column 3 on this indicator plus additional elements)
- 3 – Leads to effective implementation
- 2 – Initial, beginning, developing
- 1 – Minimal, absent, or ineffective

Indicators with a score of a 3 or above represent strengths in the school, and Indicators with a score of 2 or below warrant attention. Table 1 includes rubric scores for all the Indicators, including the results from the School and Classroom Practices Studies conducted in 2010 and the Assessments of Progress from 2011, 2012, and the most current results.

Table 1.
Indicator Scores for the Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools

Indicators	Rubric Score 2010	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
Clear and Shared Focus				
Core Purpose – Student Learning	1	2	3	2
High Standards and Expectations for All Students				
Academic Focus	2	2	3	3
Rigorous Teaching and Learning	2	2	3	3
Effective School Leadership				
Attributes of Effective School Leaders	1	2	2	2
Capacity Building	1	2	2	2
Distributed Leadership	1	1	2	2
High Levels of Collaboration and Communication				
Collaboration	1	2	2	2
Communication	1	2	2	2
Curriculum, Assessments, and Instruction Aligned with State Standards				
Curriculum	2	2	3	3
Instruction	2	2	3	2
Assessment	1	2	3	3
Frequent Monitoring of Teaching and Learning				
Supporting Students in Need	2	3	3	2
Focused Professional Development				
Planning and Implementation	1	1	2	2
Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	2	2	2	3
Supportive Learning Environment				
Safe and Orderly Environment	2	2	2	2
Building Relationships	2	2	3	3
Personalized Learning for All Students	2	2	3	3
High Levels of Family and Community Involvement				
Family Communication	2	1	2	2
Family and Community Partnerships	1	2	2	2

Clear and Shared Focus

Everyone knows where they are going and why. The focus is on achieving a shared vision, and all understand their role in achieving the vision. The focus and vision are developed from common beliefs and values, creating a consistent direction for all involved.

Indicators	Rubric Score 2010	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
Clear and Shared Focus				
Core Purpose – Student Learning	1	2	3	2

Core Purpose – Student Learning. It is evident staff members at Wellpinit Elementary School have experienced a variety of successes and challenges over the grant period. Staff members participated in multiple professional development opportunities, are more intentional in using data, and report they function more collaboratively. The school continues to struggle with achieving consistent parent involvement and with bullying/discipline. Previously, strategies were in place to address some of these issues but are no longer practiced (i.e. Walk to Intervention time, Donuts with Dads, and Muffins with Moms, for example), an issue of concern for some stakeholders. School members are adjusting to another new principal, a factor one person described as “feeling like we are starting all over again.”

According to the recent Comprehensive Plan Report (CPR), staff members participated in a staff development the day before school to create a vision “of our whole child and the role each staff member plays in meeting the needs of each child.” Although researchers did not hear about this activity over the course of focus groups, a commitment banner (“We ARE Wellpinit Elementary . . . Doing something that matters!”) signed by staff members was observable in the school hallway, indicating staff members were somewhat active in the creation of a new vision. The CPR states staff members worked together in April 2013 “to align all we do toward a focus on student achievement,” and states forms have been revised to include the district Problem of Practice (“How will the Wellpinit School District staff work together to ensure ALL student’s achievement is at the core of what we do?”). Leadership spoke positively about the creation of new forms such as a *Professional Learning Community (PLC) Action Planning Worksheet*, a *PLC Team Meeting Feedback Form*, and a *Student Intervention Plan*, saying these forms build a structural foundation based on best practices that will help to guide upcoming work. One person described,

The vision is there, we have great ideas moving forward. We need to find time and energy to move forward to create structure for days and years to come. It’s about having something concrete and visual to work from. The vision is there, we just have to get it on paper so that we can be clear about it, and use it. There has been some great work, and going forward [it will help to have a] visual structure that holds us accountable.

A Leadership Team is working to create plans for next year but report “difficulties with being consistent and not being able to accomplish what we wanted this year,” explaining there “is a lot of talking and goal setting but not a lot of action stuff.” Some building members indicated a change in leadership “in the middle of the grant” made an “understandable” impact on the

vision of the school. While discussing plans for next year's efforts, one building representative described a focus on language, thinking, and making "RTI (Response to Intervention) to be truly, more systemic." Family and community engagement, along with a focus on culture, are other focal points for next year's work. "We've got to get better at engaging community and parents. We need to be creative about how we are engaging them. We need a good structure in place so that teachers are using the same structures to talk to parents, are making decisions with parents around data, and are including their voice in the process. We have to think about cultural aspects about getting parents involved," touted one building representative.

While reflecting on the progress made over the past year and over the duration of the grant, interviewees gave varied responses. "I am proud about our commitment to the kids. The strong commitment to the students comes through when you look at all the hard work done," explained one focus group member. "Previously, we've had no vision for so long. Now, we have a vision, but are still changing leadership. Now, looking back on it, we could have done so much more if we had a little bit more of a linear plan," suggested another staff member. One person reported all staff members are "not on board" with the current vision and mission, indicating a lack of communication has "isolated" building members. Another staff member shared, "The vision is unclear to me right now. I'm not sure what we want to accomplish; it's very foggy. I feel like I'm chasing my tail around." These sentiments are concerning and conflict with last year's findings. A review of staff survey results indicate only 25% (down from 50% in 2012) agree the school's mission and goals are developed collaboratively. It may behoove school leadership to reevaluate their current practices to ensure all stakeholders have input and buy in to school improvement planning efforts.

According to staff survey data, 62% agree the building has a data-driven improvement plan with measureable goals. Seventy-seven percent of staff members agree the school's mission and goals include a focus on raising the bar for all students and closing the achievement gap. Family survey results indicate 69% of participants agree academics are the primary focus at the school.

High Standards and Expectations for All Students

Teachers and staff believe that all students can learn and meet high standards. While recognizing that some students must overcome significant barriers, these obstacles are not seen as insurmountable. All students are offered an ambitious and rigorous course of study.

Indicators	Rubric Score 2010	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
High Standards and Expectations for All Students				
Academic Focus	2	2	3	3
Rigorous Teaching and Learning	2	2	3	3

Academic focus. Teachers report they are knowledgeable about state and local standards and use them to develop lessons and guide assessments. According to the CPR, in June 2012, staff members collaborated with the Math TACSE and a reading coach to revisit the Math and Reading Curriculum Maps to ensure alignment with Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and GLEs (Grade Level Expectations). One staff member discussed the process of aligning lessons to standards last year and reflected on their current alignment efforts, saying,

I spent days and days unpacking [the standards] last year. My pacing guide is my bible. The RBAs (Reading Benchmark Assessment) and the MBAs (Math Benchmark Assessment) have helped me to stay on a schedule. I spend time teaching to what is on the test. We started looking a lot at Common Core. We are changing the pacing guide and looking at vocabulary.

Another person described the need for more assistance with understanding Common Core expectations, sharing,

I think we are ahead of most schools. We were aligned to the state standards, and we now have to go through it all over again. In the pacing guide, we have Washington State standards, now we have Common Core. With current curriculum, we are revising more. We do a lot of talking about it. We don't want to be reacting to it. Teachers don't have a good grasp on what Common Core is. We could do a lot more PD (Professional Development) around it.

Another person concurred with the idea about needing more support around integrating Common Core, explaining, "We are aligned to Common Core but have not taken a deep look at them yet. We are aligned on paper, but do not understand the deeper complexities of Common Core."

Advanced courses are not available to students but teachers report they differentiate instruction and use small, skill level, group instruction to ensure academic expectations and challenges are high for all students. One person shared,

I vary on my rigor based on who I'm teaching. I have some [students] who are learning basic computation skills. I have some high [level] kids and others that are reading at 2nd and 3rd level, with some working on sounds. How do I teach them the same thing? There is rigor in the groupings they have. AVID's Level of Questioning helped with that [differentiating].

On the staff survey, 64% of staff members agreed that all students can meet state standards and 62% agreed that they expect all staff to perform responsibilities with a high level of excellence. It is important to point out the decrease of one survey question in particular, only 8% of staff members (down from 45% in 2012) agree students are promoted to the next level only when they have achieved competency. Fifty percent (same as in 2012) of family survey respondents agree teachers do whatever it takes to help children meet high academic standards.

Rigorous teaching and learning. WES staff members continue to integrate the use of assessment data into their instructional practice. In addition to utilizing a myriad of assessment results to track student progress, to organize small groups, and to lesson plan, teachers report using standards and differentiation strategies to increase the level of rigor for students. Although the Walk to Read and Walk to Math models no longer exist, some teachers continue to use progress monitoring notebooks to organize individual student data. This practice is reportedly helpful when communicating goals and performance expectations to students. One teacher discussed this, saying,

It's a battle to get kids to have intrinsic motivation. I started a folder for kids to track their progress for their own self-goals. They get an award and set new goals. I see success with that [method]. Kids know where they need to be, where they are at. They are setting the plan to reach that goal.

Some educators suggest they "get a lot of denial" from parents about student ability but provide materials to caregivers so they can assist with building skills at home. One focus group participant discussed the need for a change in how the community (including educators) perceives student ability and spoke about the need to raise expectations.

The level of [set] expectations is medium, generally low. There are excuses around behavior and trauma, with people saying, 'I can't send that home because they [students] are not going to do it.' A paradigm shift needs to happen. I think we meet them [students] where they are, based on skills, but we should be meeting them based on our expectation and raise the bar. We're not raising the bar to have them meet higher expectations. The kids are just fun, resilient, loving, and will let us take them on any journey; they are so invested. We are noticing with GLAD (Guided Language Acquisition Design), the more we expect, the more they rise to meet it. Students want that expectation.

Caregivers interviewed discussed how educators challenge their children to do their best work, with one parent sharing,

I am more satisfied this year than last year. My child is in with kids that are learning faster, it's almost like there are three different groups of learners. Some

[students] don't learn as fast. The teacher is good at keeping all kids busy and know they all have different learning levels, [they are] doing a great job at it. I know my child was struggling with work. She got a B when she usually gets A's. I know she had to work.

Other parents described similar experiences, with one voicing a concern that their child's class "is challenging but full of a lot of disruptions," saying the combination of "disciplinary challenges and a hectic class make it so noisy that I'm not sure how [my child] thinks."

Classroom observations using the STAR Classroom Observation Protocol™ yielded the following scores on the five essential components (3s and 4s combined): *Skills* (64%, down from 81% in 2012), *Knowledge* (55%, down from 82% in 2012), *Thinking* (36%, down from 63% in 2012), *Application* (27%, up from 18% in 2012), and *Relationships* (73%, down from 90% in 2012). These results should be interpreted cautiously given the small number of observations at the school, as such; one or two scores moving down can look like a drastic decrease. This data suggests *Relationships* continues to be a strength in WES classrooms. The other scores show there is room for improvement, especially in the areas of *Knowledge*, *Thinking* and *Application*, which involve developing students' conceptual understanding, ability to think independently, and engage authentically in their own learning. According to the rubric, the "dominant expectation" for students is to interpret, analyze, synthesize or evaluate information and for most classroom instruction to include "elements of authentic pedagogy" such as active participation, collaboration, reflection, disciplined inquiry, and construction of knowledge. When looking at the individual indicators, students demonstrated collaborative learning in 36% of classrooms, demonstrated verbally or in writing that they were reflecting on learning in 9% of classrooms, and were constructing knowledge in 55% of classes observed. Eighty-three percent (up from 57% in 2012) of family survey respondents agree teachers challenge their child to work hard and become successful. Seventy-two percent (up from 56% last year) of family survey participants agree school staff expects all students to meet high standards and 90% (up from 67% in 2012) also agree teachers demonstrate they believe students can learn.

Effective School Leadership

Effective instructional and administrative leadership is required to implement change processes. Effective leaders are proactive and seek help that is needed. They also nurture an instructional program and school culture conducive to learning and professional growth. Effective leaders have different styles and roles. Teachers and other staff, including those in the district office, often have a leadership role.

Indicators	Rubric Score 2010	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
Effective School Leadership				
Attributes of Effective School Leaders	1	2	2	2
Capacity Building	1	2	2	2
Distributed Leadership	1	1	2	2

Attributes of effective school leaders. The current principal is in her first year as principal and was hired after the previous principal left the district for personal reasons. While the new principal seems to be ambitious and works to implement structural supports, there is a learning curve for both the staff and the principal. Staff members have undergone a large amount of leadership turnover over the past few years and are adjusting to new leadership expectations and procedures. When asked if they think the principal is an effective leader for change, interviewee responses varied. Some suggested she is “hanging on by the skin of her teeth,” and will be an effective leader once “she gets her feet underneath her.” “I like her,” explained one person, “If we have a question, we have an answer. It may not be what we want, but we get an answer.” “I think that she’s overwhelmed,” suggested another focus group member. “A lot of changes are really positive and she throws herself into everything.” Another person agreed with this latter sentiment, adding,

She goes with the flow. Out here, an out of the ordinary day is our ordinary day. When she showed up, there was a death and an accident and our community deals with those things in a different way [i.e. students may be out of school for a long period of time for a funeral]. The first time, I think it messed with her, but now she is pretty good with going with the flow.

Some people suggested the need for more trust from leadership, with one person summarizing, saying,

We’ve been doing this for a long time and it feels like she won’t let any control go. She needs to trust us. Sometimes it does not feel she trusts us even to do little things. Sometimes it’s a ‘we’ve got this, we’ve been doing it this way for years, it’s not a big deal,’ but it is a big deal.

While some interviewees indicated they felt comfortable providing feedback, saying, “She heard everything I’ve had to say,” others said they receive an “I’m busy, can you come back?” type of response. “I feel a little more appreciated than in previous years,” and “She tries to treat us as

a team," are two positive responses from staff members about their leader. Another interviewee shared,

I think she's made mistakes. I think she's admitted when she makes mistakes though. I think she tries. I think she does care. I think she's okay with people being upset at her. I think that's good for change. Change kind of brings that out of people. I guess we'll see where it takes us.

While describing changes observed in the school over the past year, parent representatives discussed the new principal, with one person saying,

I've been able to be in contact with her and she seems very quick to respond, which is good. If any action needs to be taken, it's not waited on, it happens quickly. I have heard other parents who say the same thing. She addresses an issue swiftly. It's a positive thing.

Survey data shows 42% of staff members agree the building leadership team listens to staff ideas and concerns and 46% agree the leadership team demonstrates the behavior and practices changes necessary to achieve the preferred future. Forty percent agree with the statement, "I talk with my principal about the progress on performance goals."

Capacity building. Last year, teachers referenced increases in the level of formal conversations around student issues and were meeting in small groups on a regular basis to discuss and adopt instructional strategies (Marzano). This year, teachers continue to meet in PLCs but some interviewees suggested they would benefit from more dedicated time to discuss student issues and instructional strategies. One person reported, "I would like more collaboration time that we don't have and to have time with aids. We went to Opportunity [elementary school] and saw their model. They have collaboration time for one hour every morning. We're expected to have the same outcomes, but don't have the same time given to us."

Similar to last year, when asked if there is a common understanding or demonstrated agreement among staff members about what effective teaching and learning is, some staff members felt they could not adequately answer the question and brought up the fact they have not been able to observe their colleagues teach. "We all are doing similar things, but I can't tell what you [colleague] are doing or thinking. This is where peer observation could come in. If we were not doing [similar teaching], test scores would be down the drain," observed one staff member, "We have some kids that are clickers and just get it, we have others that need more help. We work together to promote progress." Similar to previous years, staff members will travel to a neighboring elementary school to observe teacher instruction and strategies used to increase student achievement but peer observations are uncommon within the building.

When asked about the observation process, most staff members seemed to agree language development is a focus during walkthroughs, but identified a need for increased observations and for individualized feedback from school leadership. Some focus group participants suggested walkthroughs are infrequent, poorly timed, and usually (only) evaluative. "[The principal] needs to be in the classrooms more, needs to make it a priority to be there a couple of times a week. If [leadership] popped in every once in awhile, she could offer advice."

Another person agreed, adding, "If she saw us on a day-to-day basis, she would see us on good and bad days and not just during evaluation." Some interviewees indicated feedback was not individualized, but intended for the whole school, and not given early enough in the school year to truly impact classroom instruction. One person shared their experience, saying,

I had no time to figure out what I could do differently or grow. The point is to do observations early and give feedback so that we can change instruction. I think she sees where she needs to improve; next year will get better. I think she is a quick learner, likes to be successful, she wants the school to run successfully.

Staff survey data reveals 73% agree they actively participate in the performance evaluation process but only 18% agree with the statement "My principal talks to me about my professional growth." Forty-six percent of staff members agree they are held accountable for the new behaviors and practices needed to achieve the preferred future.

Similar to findings from previous studies, it is likely staff members would benefit from additional training around cultural issues. Interviewees discussed the importance of not only understanding and embracing the culture of the community in which they work, but the need to integrate culture into educational practices on a regular basis. "We need to work on fully embedding culture into how we teach things, [adding cultural elements] into lessons in a seasonal way that makes sense historically to the tribe. I'm not sure the paradigm shifted yet to fully embed the culture," explained one building representative. One person suggested the desire to "shift away from what historically has been done" during culture week, voicing the idea to integrate "fresh and different things to do," and working to expand activities into weekly and monthly lessons. Survey results show 46% (up from 27% in 2012) agree administrators intentionally recruit and retain a diverse and highly qualified staff.

Distributed leadership. The CPR includes a plan for a collaborative decision-making process involving a leadership team who will include "not only the principal, teachers, and coaches, but also paraeducators and parents." According to focus group reports, a leadership team includes teachers and the principal (only) and struggles to meet on a consistent basis. Reportedly, decisions are "still pretty top down," with some voicing "disappointment" and "frustration" over the lack of joint decision-making opportunities. Although leadership team members collaborated to identify five GLAD strategies to implement school wide, some building representatives suggested they could have accomplished more with a collaborative decision-making model and by meeting on a consistent basis. A 'Decision Rationale' sheet includes questions such as "Is it what is best for Kids?, Does it support the staff?, Does it align to our SIP (School Improvement Plan)?, and Does it align to our District PoP?" may help to guide leadership team decisions, but researchers did not hear how the team actually uses the form in practice. Survey results corroborate focus group findings. Only 15% of responding staff members agree a clear and collaborative decision-making process is used to select individuals for leadership roles in the building.

High Levels of Collaboration and Communication

There is strong teamwork across all grades and with other staff. Everybody is involved and connected to each other, including parents and members of the community to identify problems and work on solutions.

Indicators	Rubric Score 2010	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
High Levels of Collaboration and Communication				
Collaboration	1	2	2	2
Communication	1	2	2	2

Collaboration. Although WES staff members have made great strides in their efforts to collaborate over the duration of the grant, they continue to have limited vertical articulation opportunities and would benefit from increased collaboration time. Teachers meet weekly at both the primary and intermediate levels to review student data, to “go through the curriculum and ask how each other teaches it, looking for what worked best and ideas to steal.” Many interviewees acknowledge the impact collaboration time has made, but report the need for increased time that can be dedicated to teacher partnerships. One person discussed how the current collaboration time cuts into planning time, saying,

We meet once a week for half an hour with our grade team partner. It’s technically a prep time but we choose to meet. Sometimes I’d like to use this time for prep and feel guilty. It would be more effective for teachers to have prep time and common planning time separate...Imagine what we could do if we had [dedicated] planning time!

Additionally, staff members continue to meet in small PLCs on early release Fridays, with some focus group members suggesting the need to “be driven more by us instead by someone else.” This year, early release time has been used for professional development. “We have a lot of instructors come in, and we don’t get that time to ourselves,” shared one building representative, “We did a book study [last year] and it forced us to collaborate. I think we covered stuff we need to touch base with each other about. It helped to spread new ideas.” Building leadership indicated they are working to strengthen and streamline the PLC process and have created documents (mentioned previously) to help with project planning, task assignment, and feedback. One person reflected on their efforts this year, saying,

We are dedicated to make the PLCs really work. The last two years of the grant, they [PLCs] were really coach driven. I’m not sure there was leadership in place that was connecting dots for when coaches were not here. This year, [PLCs] fell apart when coaches were not here. Teachers wanted to keep the [PLC] philosophy going. Bottom line is if we stay true to idea of the PLC, want it, and show commitment to it, they can work. With work through the leadership team to build a structure, we will see PLC movement that is for us, driven by us, so that the structure won’t go away.

According to reports, staff members “have started a little bit” to collaborate vertically. “We’ve talked to the middle school teachers about the ‘must haves’ for middle school, the absolutes that they should come over with. We have not been given real time to do it though,” explained one focus group member. “When we did a yearlong plan and standards alignment, we looked at that [vertical requirements]. I had a better idea of what they [teachers] would expect for next year. It would be nice to meet every now and again. Little conversations would be so helpful,” added an interviewee. Staff members indicate little to no time is reserved for conversations between general education, special education, and paraprofessionals about the students they share and serve. Increased communication among these stakeholders may lead to more intentional and fluid interventions for students. Staff surveys support focus group findings, with 50% of respondents agreeing they collaborate to improve student learning and only 23% agreeing they collaboratively plan lessons.

As previously mentioned, although staff members will visit classrooms at another elementary school, it is not current practice for WES teachers to observe and reflect on each other’s instructional practices. Similar to last year’s recommendation, the current rubric score would be closer to a three with the dedication of consistent and sufficient collaboration time and the introduction of peer classroom observations and feedback opportunities.

Communication. Similar to previous years, WES utilizes several communication methods, such as school and classroom newsletters, an automated phone system for attendance and school events, the use of the district website, progress reports, and P.R.I.D.E. (Perseverance, Respect, Integrity, Determination, and Excellence) cards mailed home for recognizing student successes. Some teachers email with parents but find that phone calling or hard copy communication is more effective, as many homes do not have computer access. In the past, a monthly school-generated newsletter provided information around school happenings, but with the juggling of so many new responsibilities, school leadership claims there has not been time to send out a newsletter this year, but hopes to reestablish this practice next school year. The district provides an online program (Skyward) that allows caregivers to check student grades and missing assignments and this service is newly available to parents of older level students. Parents interviewed mentioned they would like to have more access to their children’s test scores and grades, saying, “I would like to see it [Skyward] for lower levels. I think it’s great. Sometimes there is a lack of communication between teachers and parents, and I have that to fall back on.” Another parent agreed with this sentiment, adding, “If I didn’t ask questions to the teachers, I would not have any contact.”

Similar to conversations at the middle school and high school levels, parent representatives voiced the wish for increased communication from school staff, especially around issues of concern. “There needs to be better communication in emergency situations where parents are panicking. We need to know to ease our minds,” explained one parent. One person recommended expanding communication efforts to include the Tribe, saying, “The Tribe has a tribal wide email system where they can send out information tribal wide. Information can get out to a lot more people this way.” Staff survey data show 62% (down from 82% in 2012) of respondents agree school staff communicates with parents/guardians and the community using a variety of methods. Eighty-one percent (up from 67% in 2012) of family survey respondents agree school staff communicates in a way that is convenient but only 46% (down from 82% last year) agree the school provides opportunities to learn more about the school.

A few years ago, the district underwent a communications audit and continues efforts to better communicate to families. For example, parents are encouraged to attend district information meetings to learn about current efforts and review school and district data. The district also hosts a comprehensive website that provides a variety of information ranging from bus schedules, calendars, and school board minutes, to bullying and discipline resources.

Staff members continue to express frustration about communication between leadership and teaching staff. During focus groups, building representatives mentioned communication "is still last minute," sharing examples of "getting email at 11:00 at night for something the next morning." Others stated many in the building "feel pretty isolated" and claim the lack of all staff meetings has contributed to this feeling. Recently, leadership started hosting weekly fifteen minute all staff meetings that are reportedly, "run really well," and are "really focused," but "don't give us any time to talk about anything we want to."

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessments Aligned with State Standards

The planned and actual curriculums are aligned with the Essential Academic Learning Requirements and Grade level Expectations. Research-based teaching strategies and materials are used. Staff understands the role of classroom and state assessments, what the assessments measure, and how student work is evaluated.

Indicators	Rubric Score 2010	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
Curriculum, Assessments, and Instruction Aligned with State Standards				
Curriculum	2	2	3	3
Instruction	2	2	3	2
Assessment	1	2	3	3

Curriculum. While discussing accomplishments over the past year and over the duration of the grant, multiple focus group members spoke positively about efforts to align math and reading curricula to standards. While some suggest staff members need more time to “understand the deeper complexities” of Common Core State Standards, others indicate they “comfortably” plan lessons that are aligned with the state and local standards. A focus group participant discussed the impact that using the same curriculum across grade levels has made, saying the alignment of the scope and sequence has helped to close gaps and raise test scores, causing educators to “see how well their hard work is paying off.”

Teachers report increased and consistent vertical collaboration time can help with identifying student needs, in aligning lesson plans to standards, and with adjusting instructional practices to better assist students. Staff survey results show 92% of respondents agree with the statement “our staff demonstrates a thorough understanding of the state learning standards” and 100% agree the programs taught are aligned with state learning standards. Teachers suggest they adjust the curriculum to accommodate the learning needs of their students and work to maintain expectations for high academic performance. However, survey findings show that only 50% of staff agree that instruction is personalized to meet the needs of each student.

Instruction. WES Staff members are regularly collaborating to develop lessons that are relevant to the skill level of their students and conducted a book study this year to further refine their instructional strategies. Teachers work to implement five GLAD instructional strategies that cover not only academic skills but promote social/emotional skills and classroom management growth.

According to the STAR Report, 45% (down from 73% in 2012) of classroom lessons aligned with *Powerful Teaching and Learning*, highlighting decreased evidence that the principles of effective learning are incorporated into WES classrooms (see supplemental Classroom Observation Report). The rubric requires for staff members to ‘build on principles of learning’ including elements of constructing knowledge, reflection/self-assessment, and collaboration. On the day of data collection, researchers only observed clear evidence of students working collaboratively to share knowledge, complete projects, and/or critique their work in 36% of

classrooms. Evidence of students developing their thinking strategies or intentionally reflecting on their learning was clearly observable in on 9% of classroom lessons. Survey data show 39% of staff surveyed agree students are provided tasks that require higher-level thinking skills. During focus groups, one building representative discussed the need to address the level of questioning to move from “basically a recall level” to “getting to a higher level of complex thinking and questioning.”

Similar to last year’s findings, staff members differentiate instruction by placing students strategically in groups, assigning higher level books and work, allowing extra time for the completion of assignments, by using manipulatives, and by integrating tools such as number lines, dry erase boards, and headphones into practice. When available, some teachers provide one-on-one time to work with a paraprofessional. STAR data reflects that students experience instructional approaches that are adapted to meet the needs of diverse learners in 64% of classrooms.

This year, teachers are focusing on student language and vocabulary development. Students were tested with the WELPA (Washington English Language Proficiency Assessment) and although they are English speakers, “70% qualify as English Language Learners (ELL) on different levels of the spectrum.” When asked to describe this situation, one building staff member shared,

Generationally, our students learn English from those in their home. Being an isolated community mixed with the translation of Salish to English has made an impact. There are different rhythms, words, verb tenses, and a lower number of vocabulary words used [at home]. One generation learns from the next and this generation is not learning a true English.

As ways to support language development, teachers are newly trained in the GLAD program and implement five agreed upon strategies in classrooms this year.

Assessment. Last year, staff members reported feeling much more comfortable and efficient at using standard-based assessment data to inform instruction, track student progress, and revise student skill level groupings. This momentum continued, with many identifying their use of data as a successful practice. One person proclaimed, “I am proud of the work being done with data. We’ve come a long way at getting savvy about what data says. We look at data after each benchmark and build interventions from that. I am proud of [teacher] attitudes and diving into it.” Teachers use a variety of data ranging from DIBELS, MSP, MAPS, Reading Benchmark Assessments (RBA), and Math Benchmark Assessments (MBA) to assess student growth. Some teachers use binders to organize information and use color-coded charts to identify which students are in the intensive, strategic, and benchmark groups. “I’ve been more intentional in using data,” commented one interviewee, “Data is driving my intervention groups for reading and math.” Although staff members have reportedly made great gains with their use of data, at least one building representative suggested the need for more work in this area, saying, “We need to put data in front of us more often, on a weekly basis. It has not become standardized for our building yet.” While reflecting on the implications of the grant, one person reflected, saying, “Overall through the grant, we are using data more, looking at data more, and have a better understanding of the different assessments.”

Teachers received professional development around the use of assessment data and attribute training to their increased confidence in using data. "At least now we're understanding assessments and being able to understand it in kid-friendly terms," explained one educator, "I think we're all more knowledgeable, overall, it has been good." Staff survey results corroborate these findings. Survey data show that teachers agree regular unit assessments are used to monitor student progress (77%), and 100% agree the school uses assessments aligned to standards and instruction. Ninety-three percent of staff survey participants agree common benchmark assessments are used to inform instruction.

Frequent Monitoring of Learning and Teaching

A steady cycle of different assessments identify students who need help. More support and instructional time are provided, either during the school day or outside normal school hours, to students who need more help. Teaching is adjusted based on frequent monitoring of student progress and needs. Assessment results are used to focus and improve instructional programs.

Indicators	Rubric Score 2010	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
Frequent Monitoring of Teaching and Learning				
Supporting Students in Need	2	3	3	2

Supporting students in need. There have been many changes over the past few years in the ways the school supports students in need. A Response to Intervention Model (RTI) was implemented at the start of the grant but was not supported during the second year of the program. Last year, teachers implemented a home grown, data-driven Walk to Intervention program that is now defunct. Leadership reports efforts to streamline their intervention process and report that they are working with the teachers to create an RTI program that school members can buy into and implement with fidelity. Of their vision for the program, one person stated,

Once we look at what we can do for instruction at each Tier, we can then build a visual for what our RTI framework looks like as a building. When we have a visual, we can be transparent with families. This becomes a catalyst and structure for many pieces. We can use [the document] for individual learning plans and growth goals during conferences for kids. We'll look at benchmark data, take out an individual learning plan and build it with parent and students. It will be data driven, following benchmark data, and will allow us to look at growth with parents. From there we can create a resource library.

A teacher created Intervention Plan document acts as an initial form for the program and includes an "Area of Focus, Instructional Plan, Who Delivers, Timeline, Resources Needed, and Measure of Effectiveness" data chart. This document is accompanied by a grade level specific Reading, Writing, Math, and Social-Emotional document that details examples of interventions for each of the target areas (Area of Focus, Instructional Plan, Resources Needed, and Measure of Effectiveness). These documents are not actively being utilized by all staff members at this point, and are reportedly still "a work in progress."

Although teachers report they use data and create skill leveled small groupings in their individual classrooms, it is questionable if this practice happens building wide. Some interviewees discussed flaws in their current methods, mentioning intervention groups "that are too large," and discussed how a shortage of paraprofessional help creates inconsistencies in program support and "leaves one [intervention] group behind who are expected to sit and be quiet with nothing to do." These issues support the need for program evaluation. Current efforts to create an intervention program are promising. In order to meet level three rubric ratings, it will be crucial for staff members to monitor student progress while refining and implementing a RTI program that is practiced building wide and monitored for effectiveness. In

surveys, 50% of staff respondents agree data from classroom observations leads to meaningful change in instructional practice and 85% agree assessment data are used to identify student needs and appropriate instructional intervention. Fifty percent agree the effectiveness of instructional interventions are monitored.

The community provides other support services to help address student academic, social, and emotional needs. A local youth center hosts an after school program for students but is described as "babysitting," and has "inconsistent" student participation. The school counselor provides individual and group counseling and conducts classroom guidance using the Second Step curriculum. Students who "don't come to school very much" participate in the Good Morning Club and check in with the counselor two times a week. The district purchased the Compass program to support afterschool and intervention efforts. Some staff praised the program, as it allows students to work at their own level, while others suggested the computer-based program is not an ideal after school support since parents do not have the internet capacity to accommodate the program.

Focused Professional Development

A strong emphasis is placed on training staff in areas of most need. Feedback from learning and teaching focused extensive and ongoing professional development. The support is also aligned with the school or district vision and objectives.

Indicators	Rubric Score 2010	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
Focused Professional Development				
Planning and Implementation	1	1	2	2
Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	2	2	2	3

Planning and implementation. While researchers were unable to identify a ‘formal process’ to assess and identify professional development needs, staff members were intentional in planning for professional development opportunities over the duration of the grant. However, reports indicate the need for more work in this area. While some staff members expressed the benefit from training sessions, other educators continued to voice the desire to give input around the type of trainings offered. “I think teacher’s voice in choosing what professional development is offered is something that could be improved,” lamented one staff member, “I think with PLCs, you’re supposed to have choice in what you’re supposed to do and [then] given time to collaborate. In the last three years, we’ve had a lot of information, and now we need time to create and to collaborate on the things we want and we’re interested in.” Others suggested they should have the opportunity to opt out of certain trainings, with at least one person saying they were “forced into training,” and are “now liable for something that I wasn’t asked if I wanted to do and was told I have to do.” Although teachers are newly trained in GLAD strategies, it seems other staff members would also benefit from this training (and other classroom based training) to create a cohesive level of student support. One person detailed their professional development experience saying,

We’ve had no professional development. We can ask for it, but they can’t deal with us being gone at one time; there is no one to cover duties. We used to be kept up to speed with reading and writing curriculum and now we learn it as the kids do. Kids were asked about their portfolios and we had no idea what they were or how to support them.

The highest scoring item shows that 77% of staff members agree teachers engage in classroom-based professional development activities that focus on improving instruction. Fifty percent agree appropriate data are used to guide building directed professional development. However, the lowest scoring item in the professional development section of the survey shows that only 9% (down from 36% in 2012) of staff members agree that professional development activities are sustained by ongoing follow-up support.

Curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Staff members at WES have participated in a myriad of professional development over the course of the grant. Teachers participate in professional development on half-day early release days and, over the past few years, collaborated with consultants from the WIIN Center and the ESD around topics that support student-learning goals including data interpretation, intervention strategies, and reading and

math assessments. Other trainings included a bullying seminar, a book study on Marzano's "Classroom Instruction that Works," curriculum-specific instruction (*Treasures*), and training in the new teacher evaluation model (using Charlotte Danielson's framework). Current trainings support the school's focus on language and vocabulary development, with teachers participating in GLAD training and professional development around language development strategies for the classroom. Some staff members report feeling more comfortable using data to inform instruction. While describing their training experience, one person reflected, "At least now we're understanding assessments and are able to understand them in kid-friendly terms. I think we're all more knowledgeable. Overall, it has been good." Likewise, one building representative praised staff member efforts, saying, "I am proud of the commitment made to professional development. There is a great commitment by staff to push their learning."

Although staff members report confusion and compatibility issues with the assigned district coaches, the school has provided extensive professional development opportunities to staff members. As in previous years, some interviewees voiced the need for additional cultural diversity training to better understand the community of students they serve.

Survey data shows 67% (up from 45% in 2012) of staff members agree professional development activities help school staff acquire greater knowledge of effective, research-based content-specific pedagogy and 50% agree with the statement, "we have opportunities to learn effective teaching strategies for the diversity represented in our school."

Supportive Learning Environment

The school has a safe, civil, healthy, and intellectually stimulating learning environment. Students feel respected and connected with the staff and are engaged in learning. Instruction is personalized and small learning environments increase student contact with teachers.

Indicators	Rubric Score 2010	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
Supportive Learning Environment				
Safe and Orderly Environment	2	2	2	2
Building Relationships	2	2	3	3
Personalized Learning for All Students	2	2	3	3

Safe and orderly environment. Although the physical building appears to provide all students and staff members with a clean and healthy learning environment, many focus group participants voiced concern about playground safety. Although a newer play structure provides an area for students to play on, some people shared examples detailing broken playground equipment. Others were concerned about strangers driving onto the playground area. "The worst part about the job is the playground. It's unsafe," explained one interviewee.

Consistent with earlier findings, student behavior is a continued area of concern in the school. The district provides a Discipline Rubric that details the offense and consequence for each referral, but the rubric is only for students in the 6th-12th grades. To address behavior issues in the building, the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) program was adopted a few years ago and a person has been designated to ride student buses and roam from classroom to classroom to assist with discipline issues. As in previous years, staff members report the PBIS program is not being implemented with fidelity, with teachers using their own disciplinary measures in classrooms. "We need help with discipline; some of our boys are over the top. I don't think there is enough follow through [with disciplinary issues]. There was no follow through last year. This year there is more [follow through], but it's still not enough. The teachers are implementing policies inconsistently." Another focus group member agreed with this idea, and gave insight into how leadership supports behavior issues, adding, "There are inconsistencies in the consequences. Sometimes it's a slap on the wrist, sometimes it's nothing. [The principal] is good at standing her ground. She supports the teachers, does not throw [us] under bus and that is a plus. She will not let parents walk over her." Other staff members discussed concerns about student behavior when substitute teachers are in the building and reported "feeling stuck" due to a limited substitute teacher pool in the area. One person detailed their experience, saying,

The kids don't respect subs at all, there is not one classroom that is good for subs. We don't do Super Sub cards [incentive program] anymore but some teachers still do it, it's confusing. There is no sub training offered by the district. We're trying hard with the staff we have but sometimes you walk into room and the kids are out of control.

Discussions with parent representatives mirrored some of the above listed concerns, with at least one caregiver sharing, "I always had concern with my child's class. It's a challenging class with a lot of disruptions. There are disciplinary challenges and the room is so noisy that I'm not sure how [my child] thinks." Another caregiver agreed, adding, "I've been able to discuss my concerns with the principal and felt she listened. I'm wondering if the classroom will improve or if I should consider transferring. I'm not sure [my child] is getting the most she can get. I'm not sure if [his/her] potential is being tapped." Student focus group members suggested the "Think Time" reflection activity helps students to "calm down."

On the survey, 50% of survey participants agreed with the statement: "This school is orderly and supports learning." Less than half (46%) of staff members agree they enforce consistent behavior expectations and consequences in their classrooms and 69% agree they enforce the bullying/harassment policy of the school.

Building relationships. Staff members seem to recognize the importance of building relationships with students and family members in the community. Teachers report utilizing a variety of strategies including small group discussions, encouraging partner Turn and Talks "so that everyone has the chance to tell their story," holding 'Ask me/Tell me' sessions with students, asking personal questions relating to siblings and family members, and hosting class meetings to foster positive classroom relationships. One teacher described their efforts, saying, "I try to build a community where it's okay to make mistakes. We all make mistakes. I make mistakes and they [students] fix them. We talk about that and agree we are not going to laugh at each other, but will support each other."

Results from STAR Protocol observations reveal a decrease in the *Relationships* Component with scores decreasing from 90% in 2012 to 73% in 2013. Although staff members may want to increase collaborative learning and classroom relationship building opportunities, this decrease in STAR data does not warrant a drop in rubric scoring. In surveys, staff members agreed that student believe school is a safe place (82%), and 100% agree students believe the adults in the building genuinely care about them. Fifty percent agreed school staff members honor agreements made with each other.

Although there appears to be a positive climate between adults and students in the building, staff members may need to reevaluate the current climate among staff members. Some interviewees indicated staff morale "gets better every year," while others reported there is "no trust" between teachers and administrators at the district and building leadership levels. Issues of content seem to revolve around having "no support for staff," to communication barriers, to contract issues and the allocation of grant money to staff members. Reportedly, the amount of incentive pay [from the SIG] teachers were contracted to receive has been reduced, leaving some reportedly feeling "betrayed," and "taken advantage of."

Personalized learning for all students. Teachers report they are "more intentional in using data" to create skill level reading and math intervention groups. Although there are reported flaws in the current arrangement (see above), paraprofessionals provide additional support for small skill level group learning in classrooms. This year, school members also utilize Compass, a computer program aligned with MAP scores geared at providing support based on student skill level. School personnel use incentives to reward students for positive behavior and to encourage regular school attendance. Similar to last year, students can receive personalized

P.R.I.D.E. cards and participate in an assembly to honor students demonstrating elements of the five PRIDE characteristics. As reported by staff and student focus group participants alike, this year's assemblies are greatly improved, exciting, and "awesome!" While there is not an official transition program in place, the 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students continue to participate in the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program and use strategies such as two column notes, agendas, and binders to prepare them for similar strategies associated with AVID at the middle school level.

High Level of Family and Community Involvement

There is a sense that all have a responsibility to educate students, not just the teachers and staff in schools. Families, as well as businesses, social service agencies, and community colleges/universities all play a vital role in this effort.

Indicators	Rubric Score 2010	Rubric Score 2011	Rubric Score 2012	Rubric Score 2013
High Levels of Family and Community Involvement				
Family Communication	2	1	2	2
Family and Community Partnerships	1	2	2	2

Family communication. Family communication. Last year, staff members at WES took measures to increase engagement efforts with families but there seems to be a lack of support for these programs this school year. Programs such as Family Fridays, Donuts with Dads, and Muffins with Moms provided caregivers the chance to visit classrooms, eat lunch or breakfast with their children and reportedly drew high attendance rates. Focus group members were unsure of why these activities have ceased with some sharing they are “bummed” about the decision to stop these events. Family members were invited to attend an anti-bullying presentation and were invited to try the new healthier cafeteria options during a family dinner night. While these activities may have been successful, it seems such events are sporadic and sparse, indicating the need for increased efforts by school members to engage parents on a regular basis.

Parent focus group members acknowledged that many caregivers face barriers that prevent them from volunteering or participating in school events, but suggested that increased and more timely communication by school staff members could aid in parent engagement. “I would like a call from the teachers saying, ‘hey, we’re doing something and could use some help.’ I wish they would extend that offer to me instead of me showing up and having me feel like I’m intruding or distracting the class,” lamented one caregiver. “I would like [staff members] to create a certain time where they welcome parents in; to identify the best time of the day that they might need some extra help,” added another interviewee. A review of the staff survey data shows 62% of staff agrees with the statement, “Our teachers effectively communicate student progress to parents” and 46% (down from 55% in 2012) agree the school provides information to families about how to help students succeed in school. Interestingly enough, 88% of parent survey participants agree they feel welcome when they visit the school and 57% (down from 82% last year) agree the school offers many opportunities for family members to volunteer or help in the school.

Family and community partnerships. School representatives work with some community members to impact student learning, but it is questionable if such efforts are adequate and regular. The school contracts with a district, grant-supported social worker to provide in-home outreach to families and a representative from the Tribal Alliance for Needy Families (TANF) collaborates with the school to monitor family assistance, student attendance, and grades. The Shriners and Child Find organizations conducted screenings for students to test for health

concerns. Parents are welcome to attend district level EAC (Educational Advisory Committee) meetings but staff members and parents alike admit they struggle to establish a school-based parent advisory committee. Staff survey results reveal 57% agree the school encourages parent involvement. Only 8% (down from 18% in 2012) agree community organizations and/or family volunteers work regularly in classrooms and in the school and 31% agree school members collaborate with parents and the community with important decisions.

Summary and Recommendations

The Wellpinit School District and WES chose to implement the *Transformation* model. Over the course of the grant they have: moved into a new building, hired two new principals, developed a new school schedule that better meets the needs of elementary school students and faculty, provided training and some in-class support for adopting a common curriculum, made effective use of student assessment data, utilized the PLC model, and began implementing the Danielson evaluation model for staff. While some of these efforts have been successful, others brought a degree of challenge. Over the past year, prior momentum has seemed to slow down. While some new practices are in a state of development (PLC forms), previous practices such as the Walk to Intervention and parent engagement activities (Donuts for Dad and Muffins with Mom, for instance) are now defunct. Leadership team members report they “have not accomplished as much as they would have liked this year” and staff members indicate the need for a clearer understanding and ownership for the school’s vision and mission. The principal is new this year and seems to have passion for reevaluating current practices such as the RTI and PLC models in order to make them streamlined and consistent. Although relationships between adults and students seem to be solid, it may behoove leadership to work with staff members around developing a trusting and supportive climate for adults in the building. Discipline, and parent and community engagement issues continue to be areas of concern, requiring for school members to reexamine current practices.

The results of this study show some substantial improvement in the alignment of the *Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools* since the initial assessment in 2010. In 2011, three of the rubric scores were in the “Minimal, absent or ineffective” stage while fifteen scores were in the “Initial, beginning, developing” stages and one score was in the “Leads to effective implementation” stage. The scores have shifted. In 2012, there were no scores in the “Minimal, absent, or ineffective” stage, ten scores were in the “Initial, beginning, developing” stage, and nine scores were in the “Leads to effective implementation” stage. Current results show twelve scores in the “Initial, beginning, developing” stage, and seven scores in the “Leads to effective implementation” stage.

The initial assessment identified the most critical areas to move forward with school improvement efforts. Progress toward these critical areas is noted below as well as further recommendations that align with the *Student and School Success Principle Indicators*, which are part of Indistar:

- **Access support in developing a new competency model.** The district chose the Charlotte Danielson model and describes the process as a “work in progress.” In preparation for model implementation, staff members receive training around the components. There are no recommendations for this section.
- **Conduct an action planning process to identify a clear focus on student learning, with specific goals and strategies for school improvement for each grade level and each subject area.** Although current school improvement goals may include strategies to promote student success, it is questionable as to how aware and invested staff members are with current goals. A leadership team has met only a handful of times to create documents for next school year, but their decision-making roles seem to be limited and some voiced “frustration” over the little amount of work the team accomplished this year. Some of these setbacks could be attributed to turnover in

leadership; some setbacks may be a result of limited sharing of responsibility. It may behoove school leaders to reexamine decision-making roles and responsibilities and to determine ways in which all stakeholders participate in school improvement planning. This recommendation aligns with Student and School Success Principle 1: *Strong leadership-Team Structure*, and 5: *Use of data for school improvement and instruction-Assessing student learning frequently with standards-based assessments*.

- **Provide ongoing professional development and coaching for instructional leaders and classroom teachers in effective classroom practices.** School and district educators have participated in a variety of trainings over the course of the grant. Professional development provided by outside consultants last year focused heavily on assessment and data usage. Staff members received professional development such as GLAD training that supported their current focus on language and vocabulary development. Building and district administrators will want to establish ways to sustain training efforts after the depletion of grant money. Please refer to *Principle 2: Staff evaluation and professional development – Professional development (IF04, IF05, IF07)*.
- **Provide training for classroom walk-through process and data collection.** Over the course of the grant, staff members have observed classrooms in another elementary school but have had limited to no experience observing each other. Educators have the chance to grow and reflect when they can observe colleagues in a safe and supportive environment. Some schools utilize coaches to facilitate studio learning walks where teachers plan a common lesson together, observe a peer teach the lesson, followed by a reflective conversation. It may be beneficial for leadership to examine ways for teachers to access to each other’s classrooms for observation and reflective feedback opportunities. Please refer to *Principle 2: Staff evaluation and professional development – Professional development (IF08)*.
- **Use of student data to inform and differentiate instruction to meet academic needs of individual students.** Staff members made great strides over the grant period in how they use data to support students. Focus group members report they utilize multiple data points to track student growth and to create skill level interventions. Although a Walk to Intervention program is no longer practiced, some teachers report they collaborate with paraprofessionals to provide group instruction. There are reported flaws in the current intervention design and it is likely support services would improve with more attention. It is highly recommended for staff members to continue to refine and evaluate their intervention strategies and program to best meet student needs. Please refer to *Principle 5: Use of data for school improvement and instruction – Assessing student learning frequently with standards-based assessments (IID03, IID04, IID08, IID09, IID10, IID11)*.
- **Establish advisories to enhance student-teacher relationships and family communication.** Communication between school and family continues to be a challenge for WES, but, again, researchers did not hear of an advisory program this year. Student-teacher relationships appear strong. Staff members will want to reexamine current and past efforts to engage parents and work to strengthen caregiver support. This recommendation supports Student and School Success Principle 4: *Rigorous, aligned instruction-Expecting and monitoring sound instruction in a variety of modes-Student-Directed small-group and Independent work (IIIA33)*, Principle 6: *Safety, discipline, and social, emotional, and physical health-School and classroom culture*, as well as Principle 7: *Family and community engagement*.

- **Establish an after school tutoring program to provide increased learning time for students in need.** An after school program exists at the local community center, but it remains questionable as to how academically beneficial the program is. It is recommended for school and district leaders to reevaluate the program and explore options such as teaming with community resources to provide a more academically focused program. Elements of Student and School Success Principle 3: *Expanded time for student learning and teacher collaboration*, especially IVD04 support this recommendation.
- **Provide more opportunity for elementary school leaders to make decisions regarding in scheduling and the intervention process.** Last year, staff members created the Walk to Intervention program and, because the program was teacher driven, it seemed to have buy-in. It may behoove building leadership to discuss what ideas staff members have about the current schedule and about intervention strategies.

Appendix A – District Survey

Scoring of the conditions under each model as **“In Place”** or **“Able to Put in Place”** is based on:

- (1) The condition for the model does not currently exist and essential pieces for implementing the condition do not exist (e.g., policies, procedures, collective bargaining language, and programs or processes are not in place). This scoring level does not mean that the condition cannot be implemented; but rather that implementation will be more demanding, require more extensive engagement of all parties, and require greater external support and assistance.
- (2) Essential pieces to implement the condition exist (e.g., no significant barriers are contained in the current collective bargaining agreement; existing programs lend themselves to adaption). The condition can be implemented at an acceptable level with some support and assistance.
- (3) The condition is currently in place at an acceptable level.
- (4) The condition is currently in place at a high level and could be considered as an exemplar.

The ratings in the table below come from an analysis of district personnel ratings combined with data collected by The BERC Group.

X" Required "O" Permissible

Actions	Turn Around	Trans Form	Rubric 2010	Rubric 2011	Rubric 2012	Rubric 2013	Comment
Teachers and Leaders							
Replace the principal.	X	X(O)	3	3	4	4	The district hired an elementary principal. Previously there had been one principal to serve K-12. A new principal was hired for the current (2012-2013) school year.
Use locally adopted competencies to measure effectiveness of staff who can work in a turnaround environment; use to screen existing and select new staff.	X		2	2	2	2	The district has flexible provisions in the collective bargaining agreement for the screening and selection of new staff.
Screen all existing staff, rehiring no more than 50% of the school staff.	X	O	2	2	2	NA	No legal or CBA basis exists to support a "rehiring" model or to force removal of 50% or more of the staff. The district has very limited ability to "exchange" staff due to size and concurrent limited turnover. Roughly 12% of WES's staff was new during the first year of the grant.
Implement such strategies as financial incentives and career ladders for recruiting, placing, and retaining effective teachers.	X	X	1	1	2	3	The district tends to be limited to the immediate area in most recruiting. New approaches would be needed to successfully extend recruitment outside the geographic area. The district is open and receptive to such strategies. However, significant assistance in creating a new, effective, recruiting model will be necessary.
Implement rigorous, transparent, and equitable evaluation systems for teachers and principals which are developed with staff and use	X	X	2	3	3	3	The district and union are negotiating a more complex competency model based on teacher and student performance.

student growth as a significant factor.							
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Teachers and Leaders (Cont.)	Turn Around	Trans Form	Rubric 2010	Rubric 2011	Rubric 2012	Rubric 2013	Comment
Identify and reward school leaders who have increased student achievement and graduation rates. Identify and remove school leaders and teachers who, after ample opportunities to improve professional practice have not done so.	0	X	2	2	3	3	The district is open to administrator training and development in performance management. The district is working in collaboration with the Union Association to determine outcomes.
Provide additional incentives to attract and retain staff with skills necessary to meet the needs of the students (e.g., bonus to a cohort of high-performing teachers placed in a low-achieving school.	0	0	1	1	2	3	The district conducts discussions with the Union Association to determine possible outcomes. A financial award for academic achievement based on student growth in MAPS, DIBELS, and classroom formative assessments in June 2013. According to the district, teachers are developing an assessment portfolio.
Ensure school is not required to accept a teacher without mutual consent of the teacher and principal regardless of teacher's seniority.	0	0	2	2	2	3	The district has reasonable flexibility in the collective bargaining agreement to consider external candidates and to pass over internal candidates.

Instructional and Support Strategies	Turn Around	Trans Form	Rubric 2010	Rubric 2011	Rubric 2012	Rubric 2013	Comment
Use data to select and implement an instructional program that is research-based and vertically aligned to each grade and state standards.	X	X	2	2	3	3	The school utilizes common assessments of student learning and recently adopted new reading and math curriculum that is aligned to standards.
Provide staff ongoing, high quality, job-embedded professional development aligned with the school's comprehensive instructional program and designed with school staff.	X	X	2	2	2	3	The district hired external coaches to help develop new and more effective embedded professional development.
Ensure continuous use of data (e.g., formative, interim, and summative assignments) to inform and differentiate instruction to meet the academic needs of individual students.	X	X	2	3	3	3	Staff uses standard measurement tools for data use and intervention. The district sees a need to further professional development on the use and purpose of formative assessment.
Institute a system for measuring changes in instructional practices resulting from professional development.	0	0	1	1	1	1	A systemic method of evaluating the impact of professional development on classroom instruction does not currently exist and would have to be developed concurrent with introduction of a new competency based evaluation model.
Conduct periodic reviews to ensure the curriculum is implemented with fidelity, having intended impact on student achievement, and modified if ineffective.	0	0	2	2	2	3	The district has clear language requiring teachers to follow board adopted curriculum and instruction.
Implement a school-wide response to intervention model.	0	0	1	2	2	2	There have been changes in the use of the RTI model again this year, resulting in inconsistent practices in the building. Teachers are actively using data to identify, target, and provide skill level interventions for students in classrooms but current practices need to be

							evaluated. An RTI program will need leadership support and strong staff and leadership buy in to be successful.
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Instructional and Support Strategies (cont.)	Turn Around	Trans Form	Rubric 2010	Rubric 2011	Rubric 2012	Rubric 2013	Comment
Provide additional supports and professional development to teachers to support students with disabilities and limited English proficient students.	0	0	2	2	2	2	Without levy authority, the school district is severely limited in its fundraising ability. No additional professional development funds exist.
Use and integrate technology-based supports and interventions as part of the instructional program.	0	0	2	2	2	3	Over the duration of the grant, WES bought a Computers on Wheels laptop system, and the Math Connects curriculum contains a technology component. The computer based Compass Learning program helps staff members to provide skill level in school and after school support.
Secondary Schools: Increase graduation rates through strategies such as credit recovery programs, smaller learning communities, etc.	0	0					NA
Secondary Schools: Increase rigor in coursework, offer opportunities for advanced courses, and provide supports designed to ensure low-achieving students can take advantage of these programs and coursework.	0	0					NA
Secondary Schools: Improve student transition from middle to high school.	0	0					NA

Secondary Schools: Establish early warning systems.	0	0					NA
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Learning Time and Support	Turn Around	Trans Form	Rubric 2010	Rubric 2011	Rubric 2012	Rubric 2013	Comment
Establish schedules and strategies that provide increased learning time. Increased learning time includes longer school day, week, or year to increase total number of school hours.	X	X	2	3	2	2	Collective bargaining agreements negotiated in previous years enable increased learning time, additional time for professional development and collaboration, and time to support and enhance the increased learning time. The district reports having difficulty with after school programming due to bus scheduling issues. They are working with the local Tribal youth program to explore potential options.
Provide appropriate social-emotional and community-oriented services and support for students.	X	0	2	3	3	3	Counseling support exists in the school. The WES social worker provides community-oriented services and social/emotional assistance for students.
Provide ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement.	0	X	2	2	2	2	WES has increased ways to effectively communicate and build partnerships with the community, but outcomes have been mixed. School-community relations are a recognized weakness.
Extend or restructure the school day to add time for such strategies as advisories to build relationships.	0	0	1	1	1	2	The school restructured the school day somewhat during the first year of the grant, but researchers did not hear of time being added for strategies that build relationships. This year, release time was restructured from Thursday morning to Friday afternoon. Reportedly, this increases instructional time by 80 hours a year.
Implement approaches to improve school climate and discipline.	0	0	3	2	2	2	The board approved a new rubric for behavior management. A discipline policy exists, but is inconsistently applied.
Expand program to offer pre-kindergarten or full day kindergarten.	0	0			4	4	Full day Kindergarten is in place.

Governance	Turn Around	Trans Form	Rubric 2010	Rubric 2011	Rubric 2012	Rubric 2013	Comment
Adopt a new governance structure to address turnaround schools; district may hire a chief turnaround officer to report directly to the superintendent.	X	O	2	2	2	2	There is a willingness to implement a new governance structure. An instructional expert facilitates the transformation process, but researchers were unable to speak to this person on the day of data collection.
Grant sufficient operational flexibility (e.g., staffing, calendar, budget) to implement fully a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student achievement and increase high school graduation rates.	X Principa I	X School	2	2	2	2	District representatives report they are beginning to see evidence of staff members who are willing to "be more creative and innovative in their approach to offer learning opportunities to students."
Ensure school receives intensive ongoing support from district, state, or external partners.	O	X	3	3	3	3	The superintendent and elementary principal are the main source of support for schools and are willing and able to fulfill that role. The school has collaborated with the local Tribe to receive support and provide services to families.
Allow the school to be run under a new governance agreement, such as a turnaround division within the district or state.	O	O			3	3	A leadership team has been implemented as part of the <i>Transformation</i> model. Additional staff development is needed to identify the roles and responsibilities of the leadership representation.
Implement a per-pupil school based budget formula that is weighted based on student needs.	O	O					To be determined by the district. District personnel report they have considered this as an option but, given the current small class size, do not see the significance of the option.

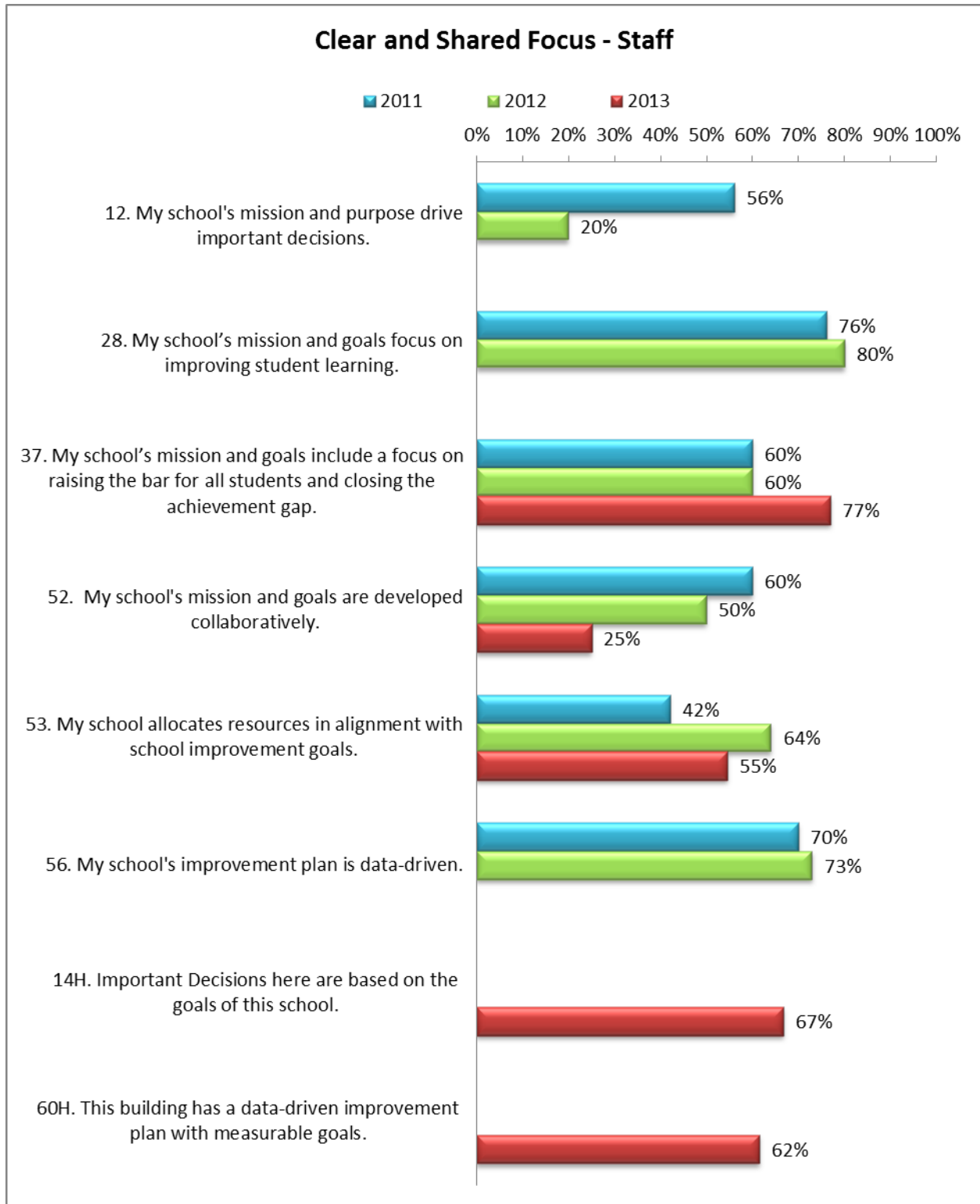
Appendix B - Staff Survey

Demographics

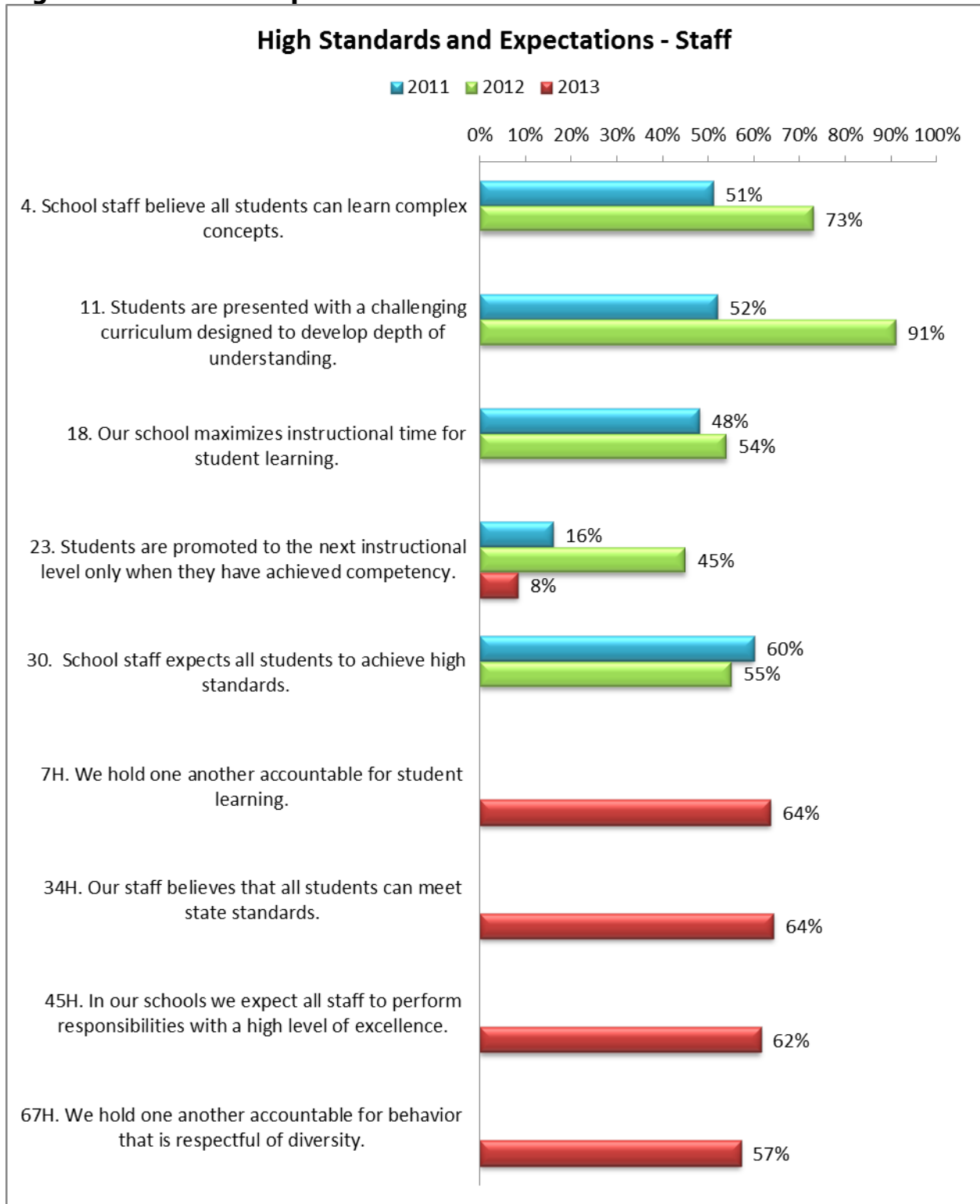
	2011	2012
<i>Gender</i>		
<i>Male</i>	22.9%(n=8)	18.2%(n=2)
<i>Female</i>	77.1%(n=27)	81.8%(n=9)
<i>Race</i>		
<i>American Indian/Alaskan Native</i>	16.7%(n=6)	7.7%(n=1)
<i>Asian</i>	2.8% (n=1)	
<i>White</i>	61.1%(n=22)	69.2%(n=8)
<i>Declined to identify</i>	19.4% (n=7)	30.8% (n=4)
<i>Staff Role</i>		
<i>Certificated Staff</i>	57.9% (n=22)	53.8%(n=7)
<i>Classified Staff</i>	36.8% (n=14)	30.8%(n=4)
<i>Administrator</i>	5.3%(n=2)	15.4% (n=2)
<i>Years Teaching at this School</i>		
<i>1st year</i>	9.4%(n=3)	
<i>2nd or 3rd year</i>	9.4%(n=3)	12.5%(n=1)
<i>4th or 5th year</i>	12.5%(n=4)	
<i>6th-9th year</i>	25%(n=8)	
<i>10th year or more</i>	43.8%(n=14)	87.5%(n=7)
<i>Total years Teaching</i>		
<i>1st year</i>	6.3%(n=2)	
<i>2nd or 3rd year</i>	6.3%(n=2)	11.1%(n=1)
<i>4th or 5th year</i>	9.4%(n=3)	
<i>6th-9th year</i>	15.6%(n=5)	
<i>10th year or more</i>	62.5%(n=20)	88.9%(n=8)
<i>National Board Certified</i>		
<i>Yes</i>	2.9%(n=1)	10%(n=1)
<i>No</i>	97.1%(n=34)	90%(n=9)

<i>Gender</i>	
<i>Male</i>	7.1% (n=1)
<i>Female</i>	85.7% (n=12)
<i>Subject Area</i>	
<i>Missing</i>	7.1% (n=1)
<i>Other</i>	42.9% (n=6)
<i>Electives</i>	7.1% (n=1)
<i>LA/Social Studies</i>	
<i>Math/Science</i>	
<i>Generalist</i>	42.9% (n=6)
<i>Total number of years teaching</i>	
<i>More than 11</i>	78.6% (n=11)
<i>8-11 years</i>	
<i>4-7 years</i>	7.1% (n=1)
<i>1-3 years</i>	7.1% (n=1)
<i>Missing</i>	7.1% (n=1)
<i>Years Teaching at this School</i>	
<i>More than 11</i>	50.0%(n=7)
<i>8-11 years</i>	21.4% (n=3)
<i>4-7 years</i>	
<i>1-3 years</i>	7.1% (n=1)
<i>Less than a year</i>	7.1% (n=1)
<i>Missing</i>	14.3% (n=2)
<i>Position</i>	
<i>Administrator</i>	
<i>Paraprofessional or Instructional Aid</i>	7.1% (n=1)
<i>Classified Support Staff</i>	7.1% (n=1)
<i>Certificated Support Staff</i>	
<i>Certificated Staff</i>	57.1% (n=8)
<i>Missing</i>	21.4% (n=3)

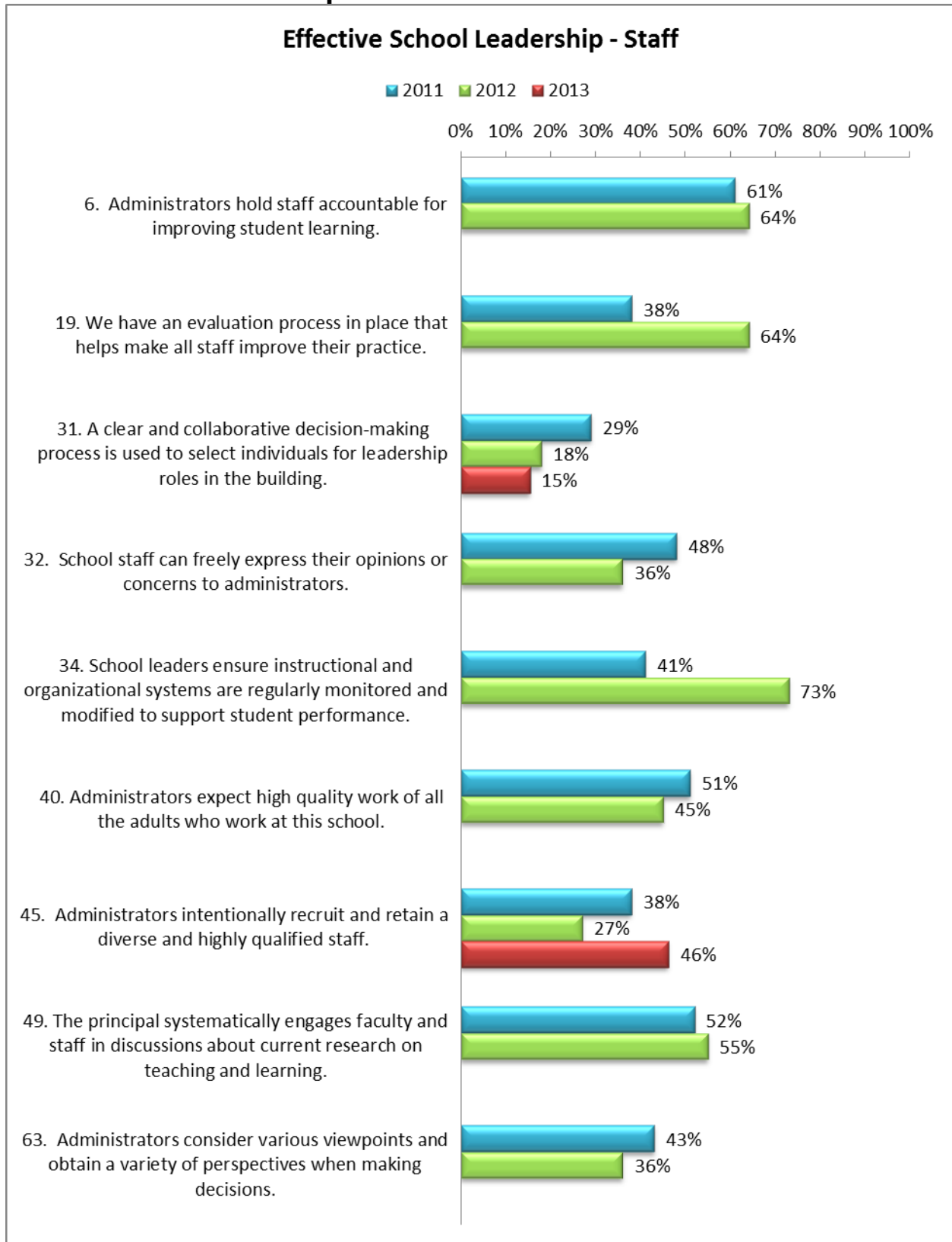
Clear and Shared Focus



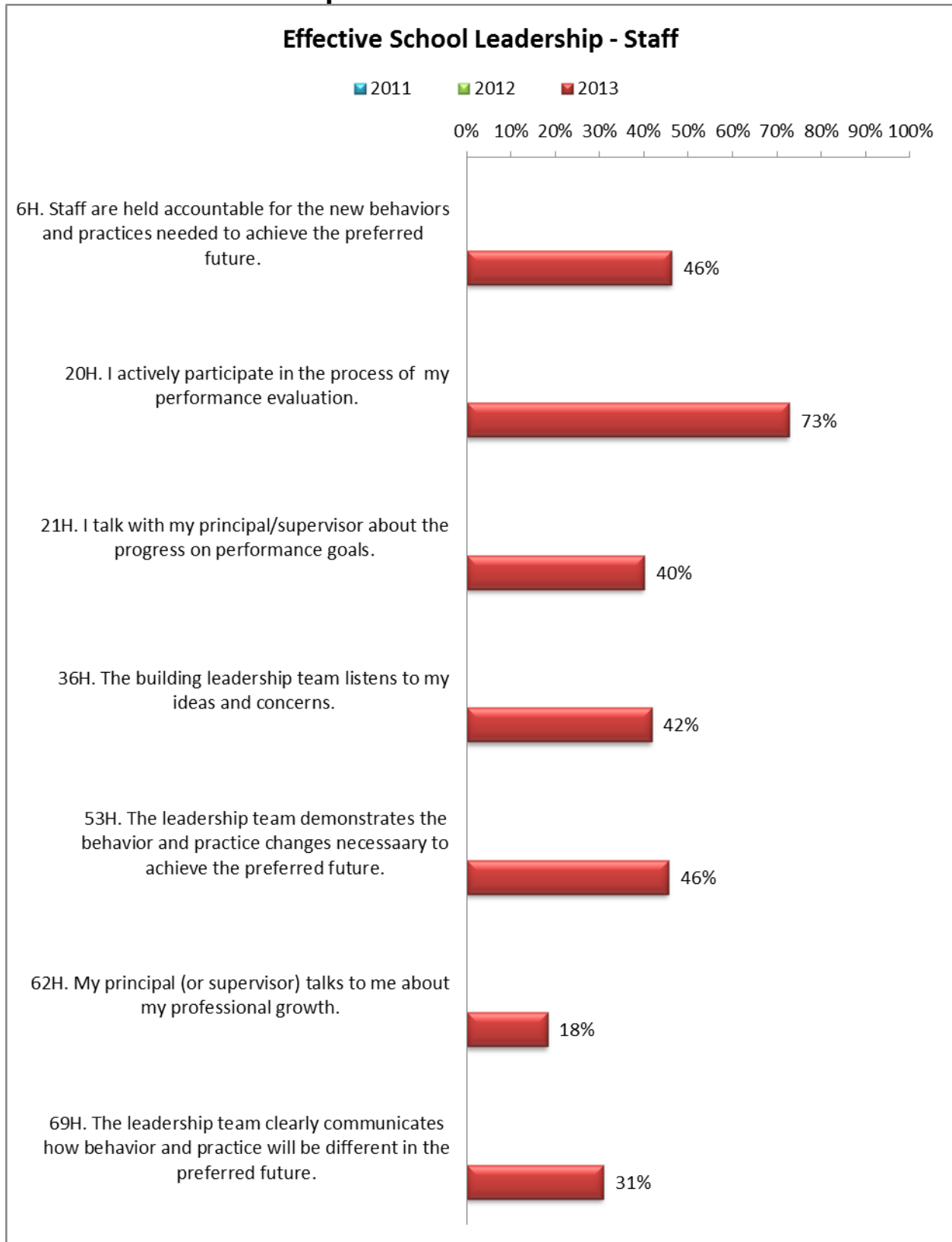
High Standards and Expectations



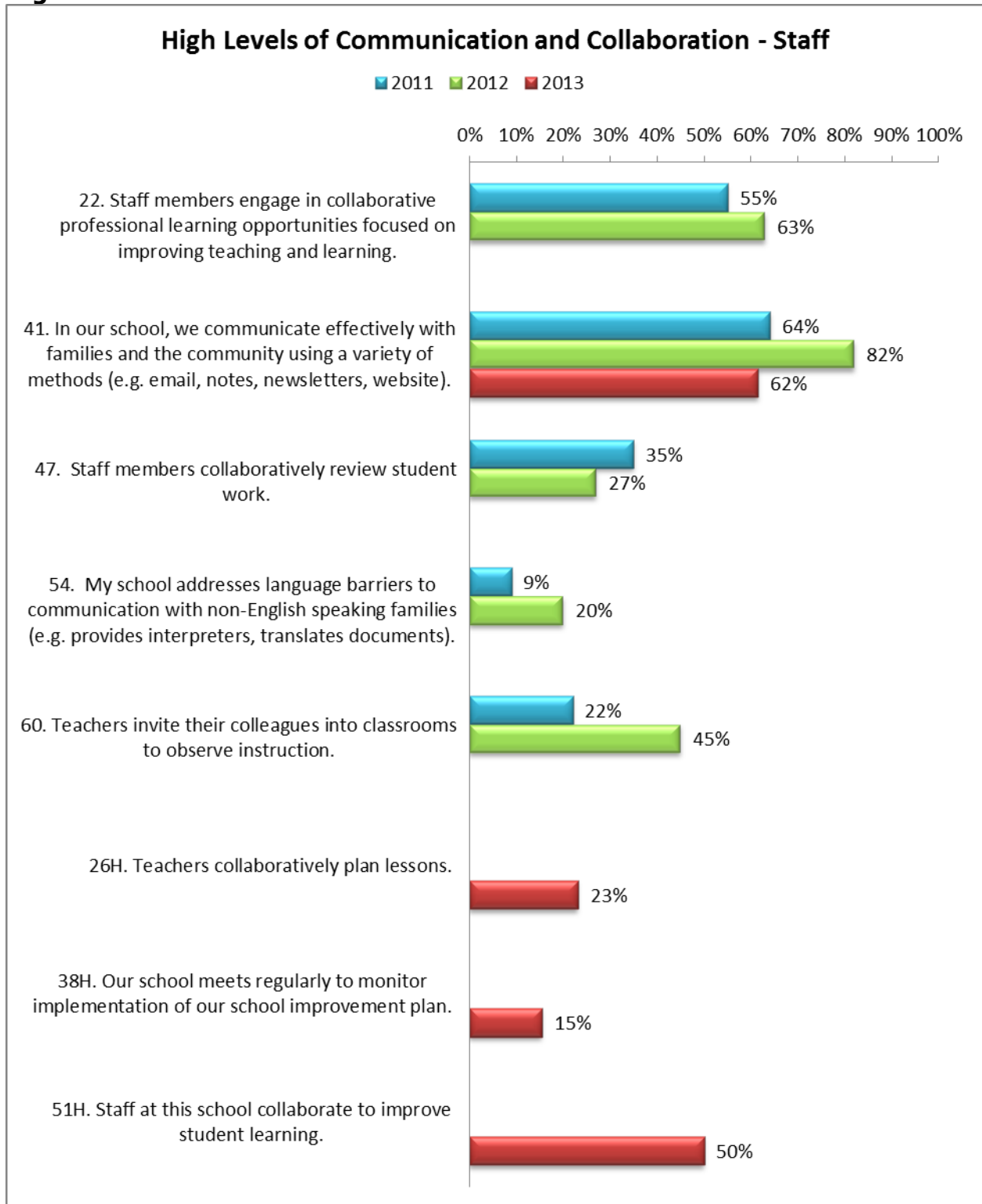
Effective School Leadership



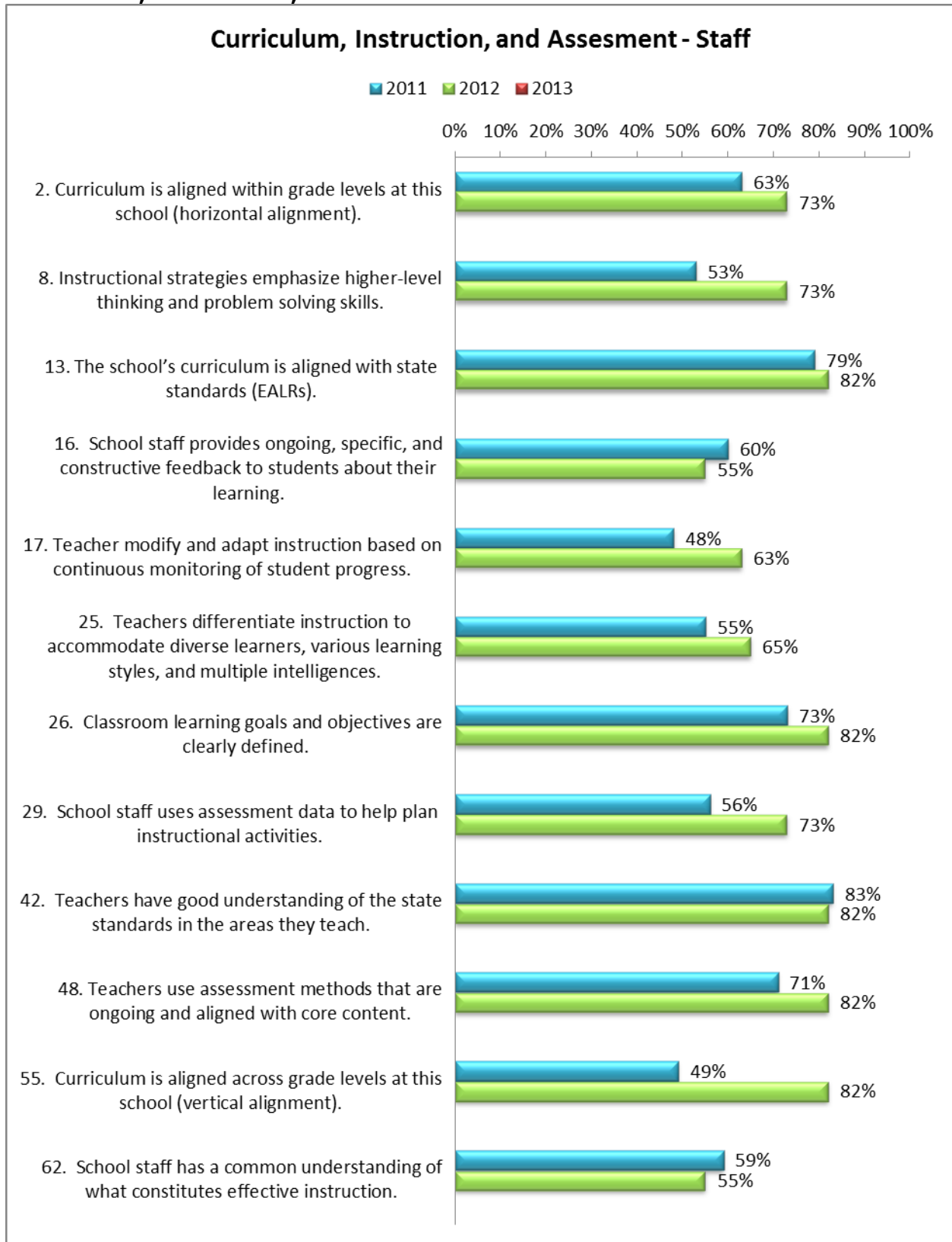
Effective School Leadership Continued



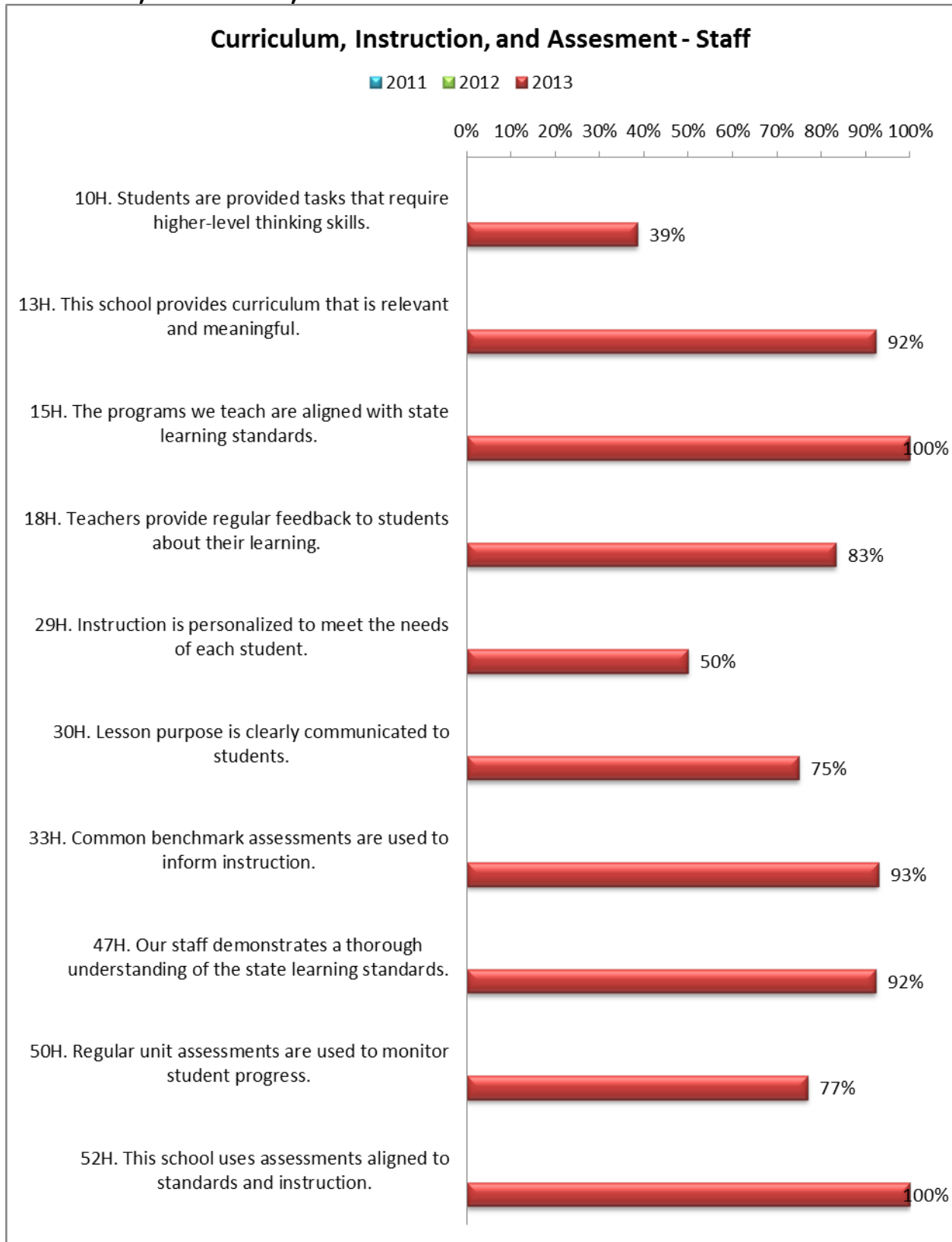
High Levels of Communication and Collaboration



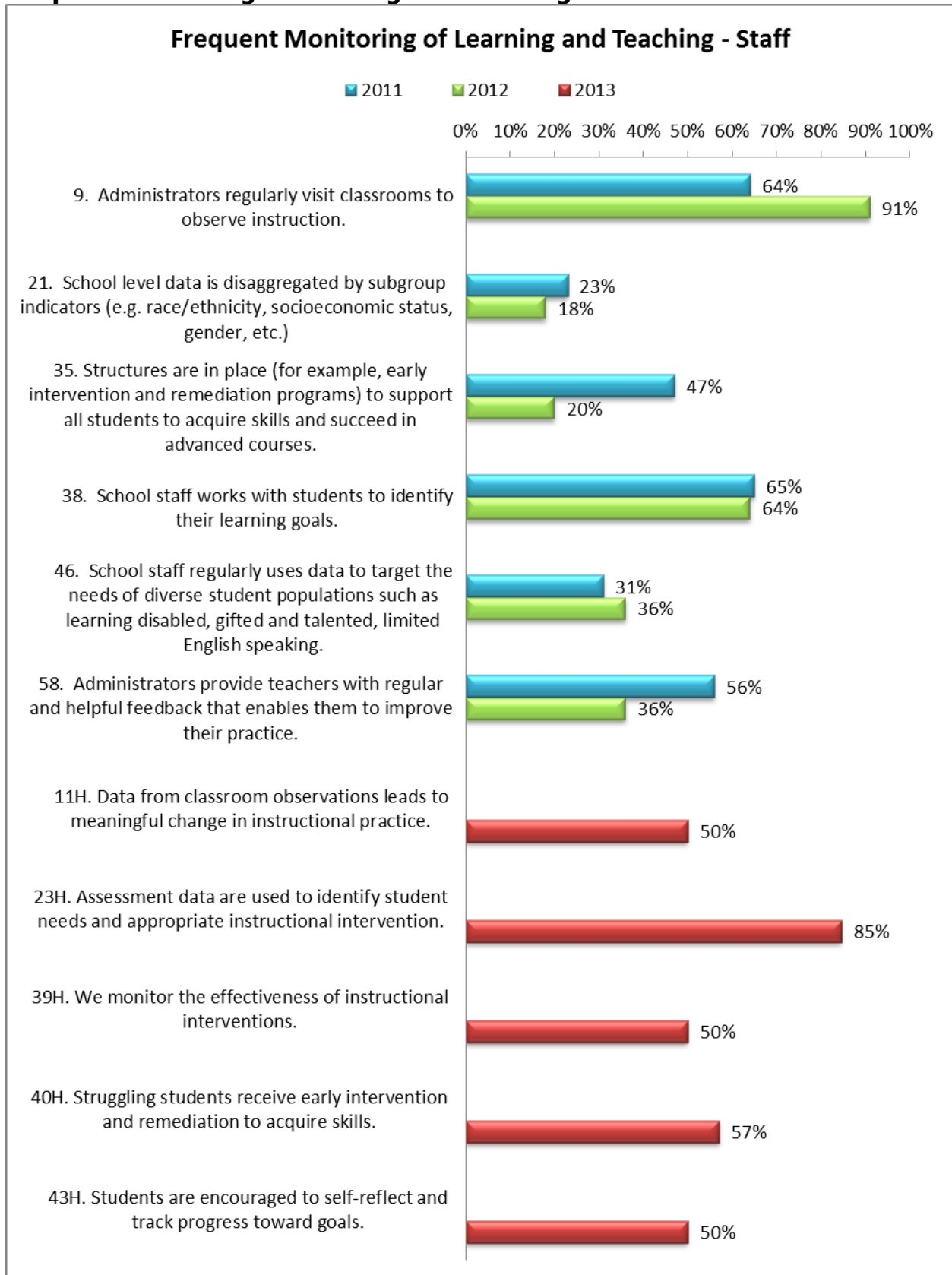
Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment



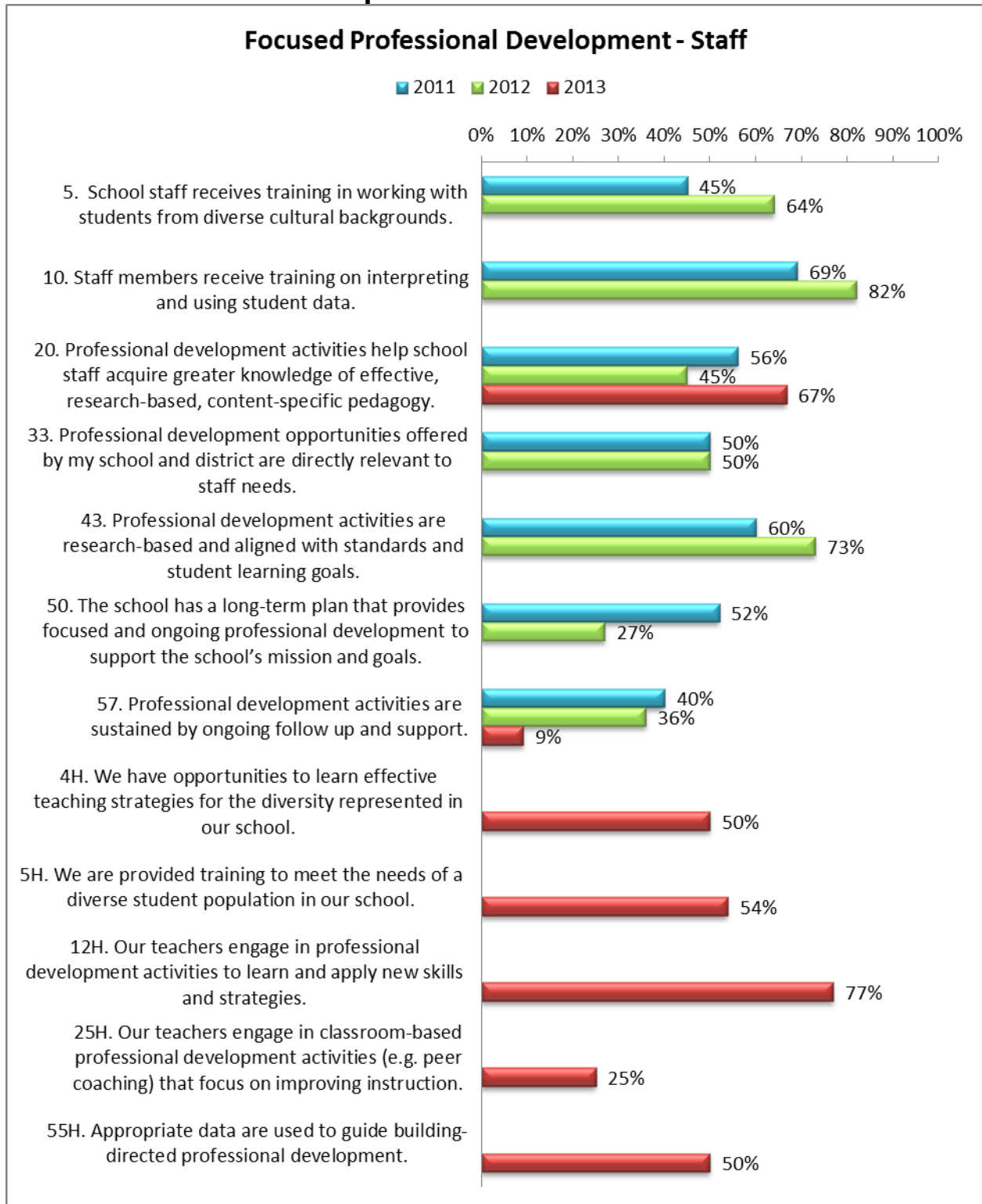
Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Continued



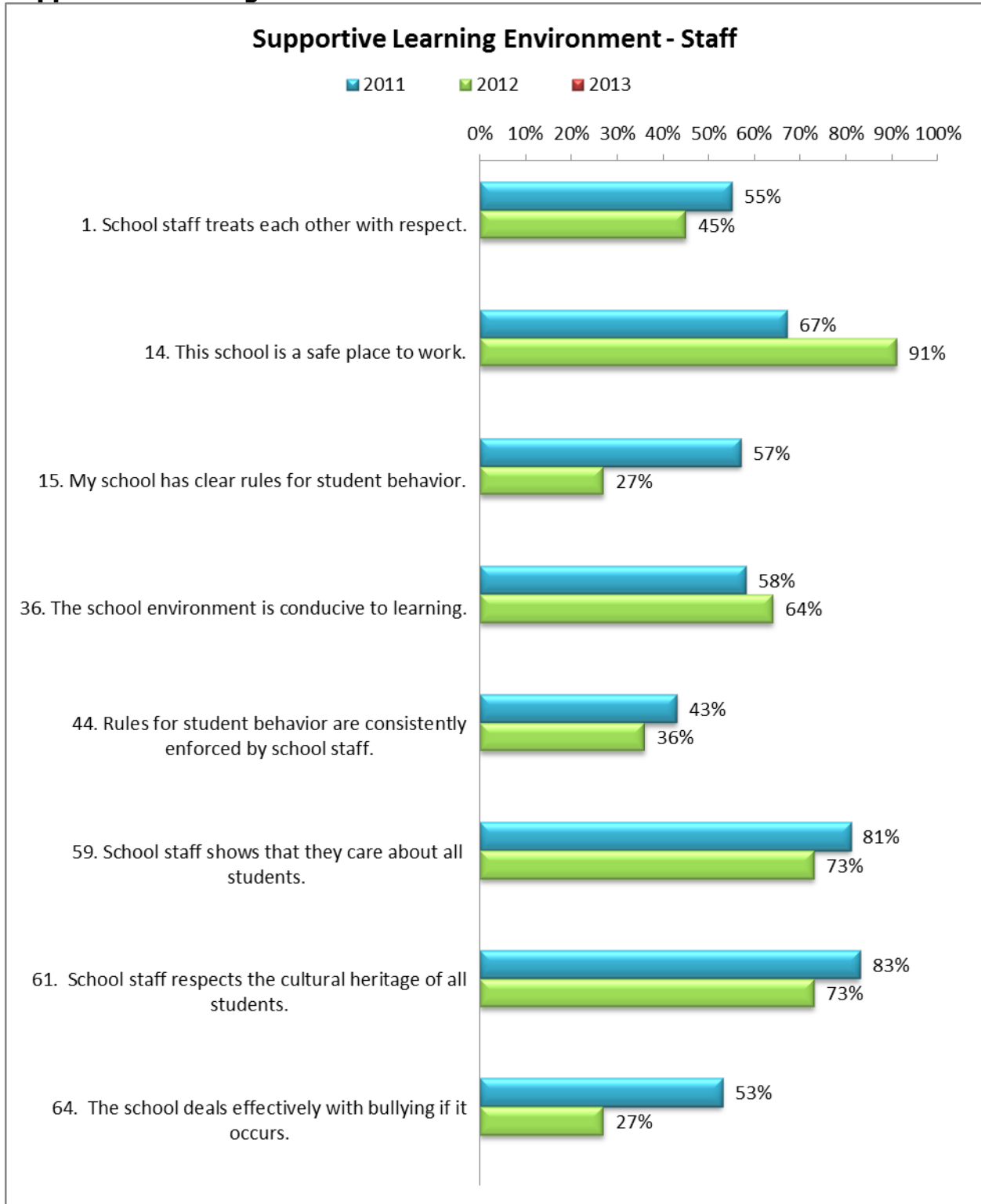
Frequent Monitoring of Learning and Teaching



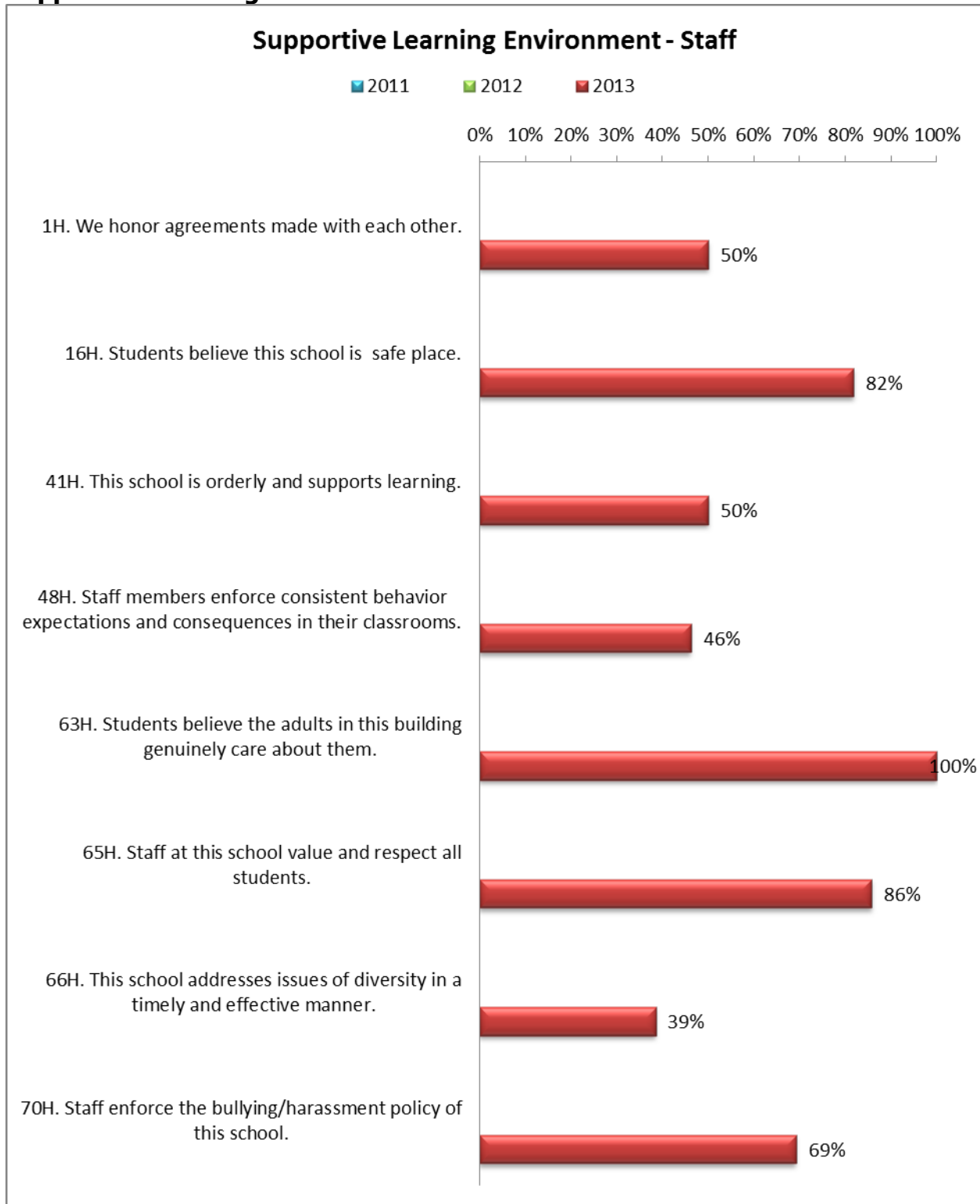
Focused Professional Development



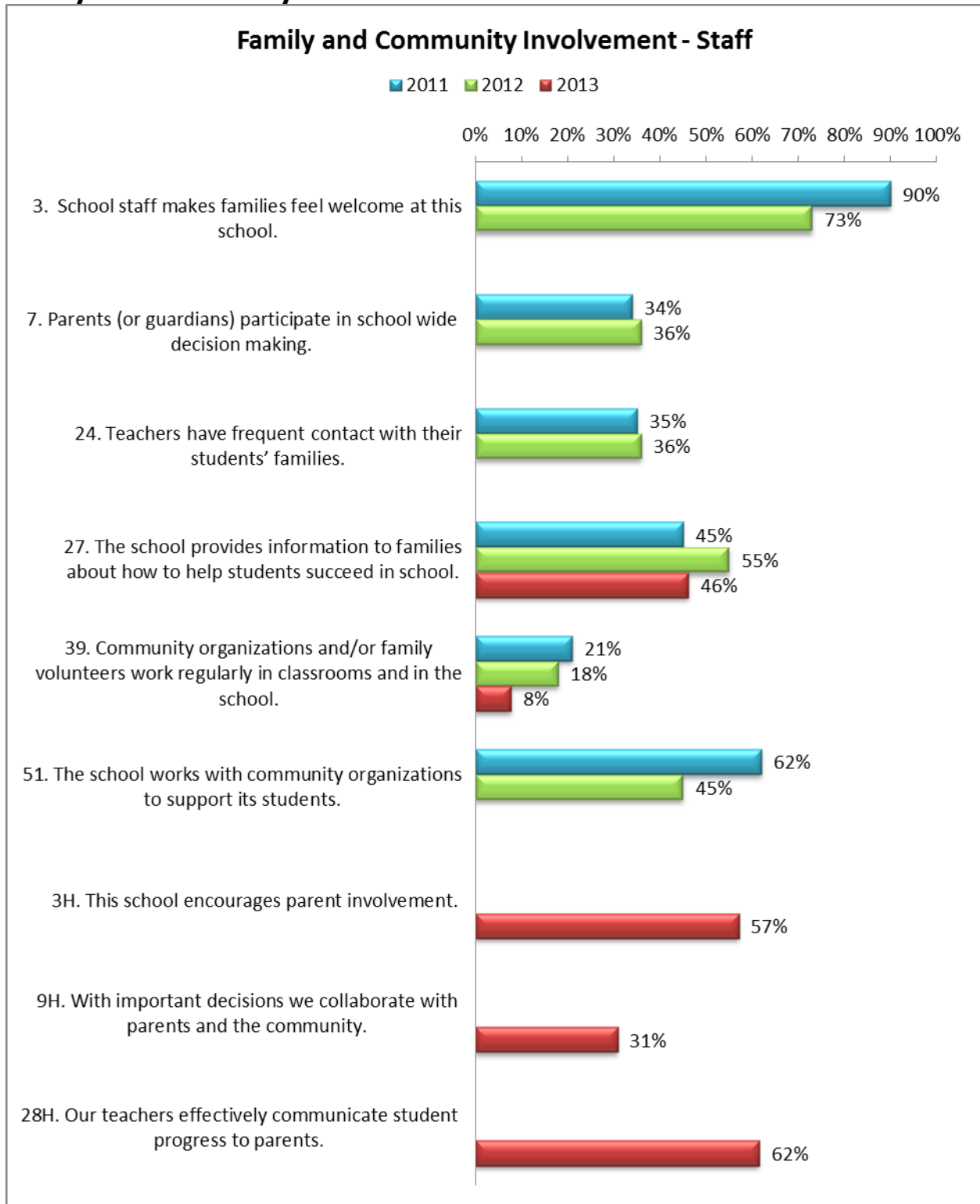
Supportive Learning Environment



Supportive Learning Environment Continued



Family and Community Involvement

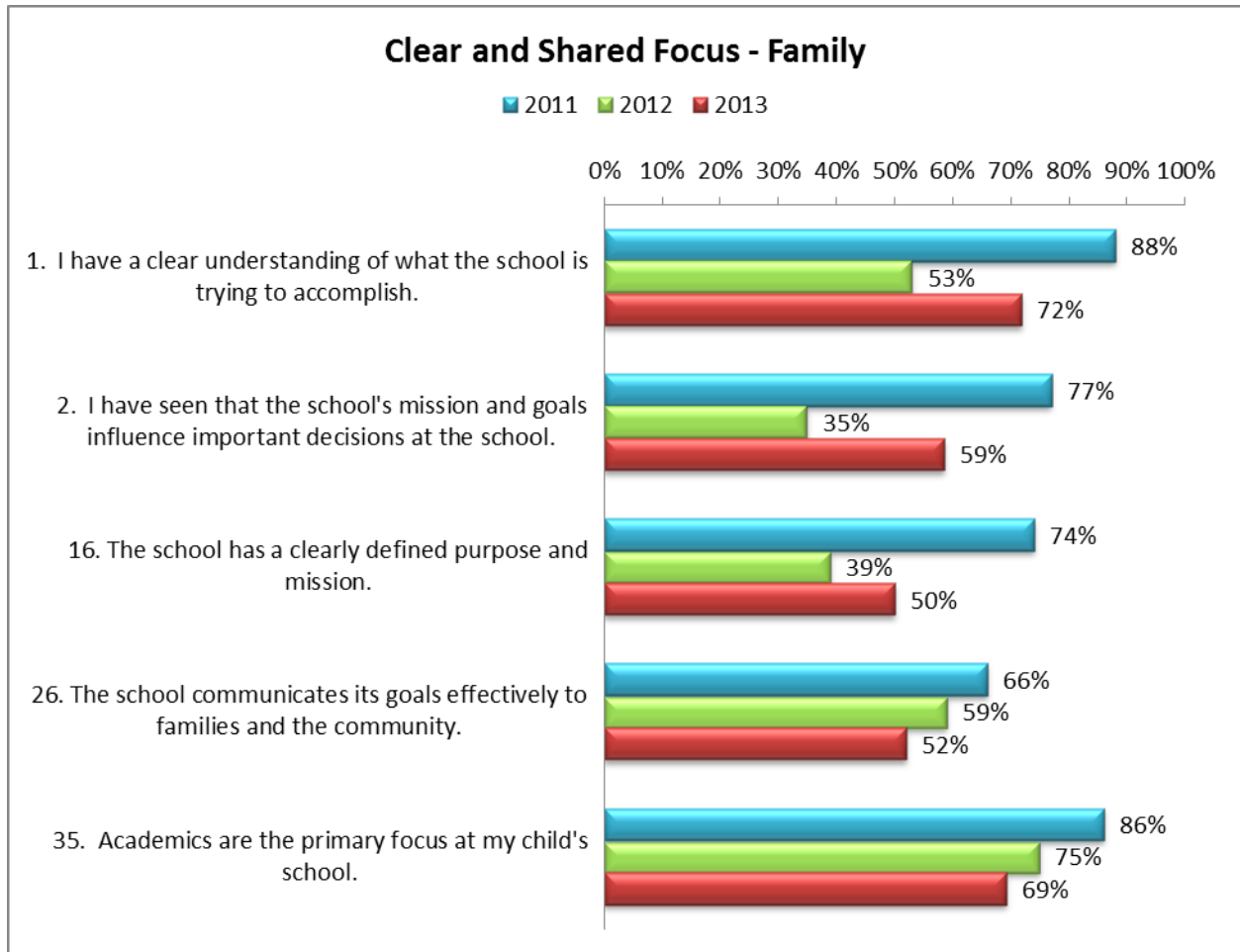


Appendix C- Family Survey

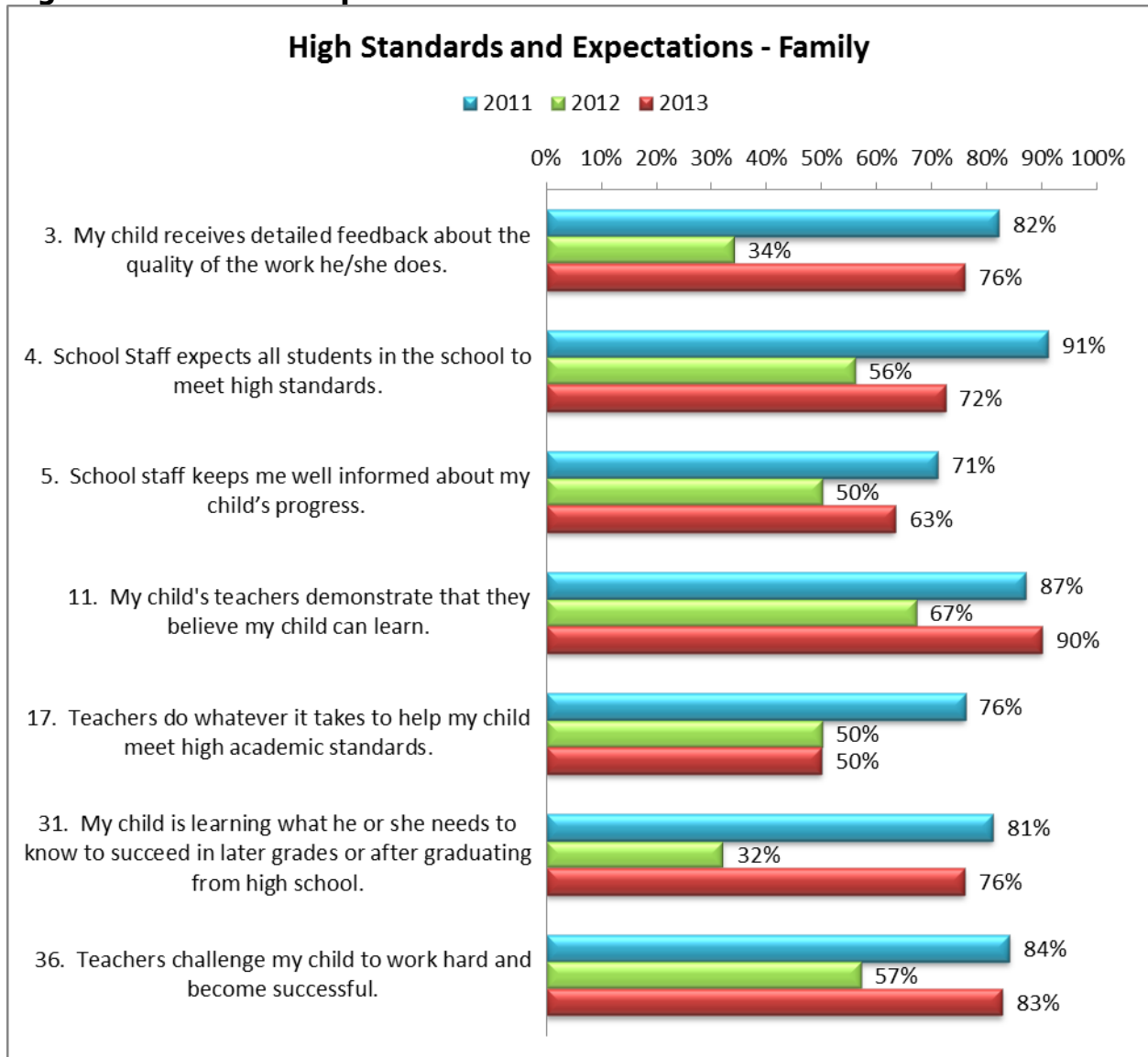
Demographics

	2011	2012	2013
<i>Race</i>			
<i>American Indian/ Alaska Native</i>	98% (n=41)	88.9% (n=16)	90.3% (n=28)
<i>Asian</i>	2% (n=1)	0%	
<i>White</i>	0%	5.6% (n=1)	6.5% (n=2)
<i>Decline to Identify</i>	0%	5.6%(n=1)	3.2% (n=1)
<i>Relationship to Student</i>			
<i>Mother</i>	88.4%(n=38)	50%(n=9)	50% (n=15)
<i>Father</i>	0%(n=0)	11.1%(n=2)	13.3% (n=4)
<i>Grandparent</i>	0%(n=0)	27.8%(n=5)	33.3% (n=10)
<i>Foster/adoptive parent or Guardian</i>	7%(n=3)	5.6%(n=1)	3.3% (n=1)
<i>Legal guardian or Designee</i>	4.7%(n=2)	5.6%(n=1)	
<i>Free or Reduced Lunch?</i>			
<i>Yes</i>	97.6%(n=41)	88.2%(n=15)	93.1% (n=27)
<i>No</i>	2.4%(n=1)	11.8%(n=2)	6.9% (n=2)
<i>English is the Primary Language</i>			
<i>Yes</i>	100% (n=45)	94.1% (n=16)	96.7% (n=29)
<i>No</i>	0%(n=0)	5.9% (n=1)	3.3% (n=1)
<i>School Provides Interpreter Services when Needed</i>			
<i>Yes</i>	0% (n=0)	6.7%(n=1)	
<i>No</i>	13.6% (n=6)	0%(n=0)	
<i>Not Applicable</i>	86.4%(n=38)	93.3%(n=14)	
<i>The school provides information in my own language</i>			
<i>Yes</i>	79.5%(n=31)	91.7%(n=11)	
<i>No</i>	20.5%(n=8)	8.3%(n=1)	

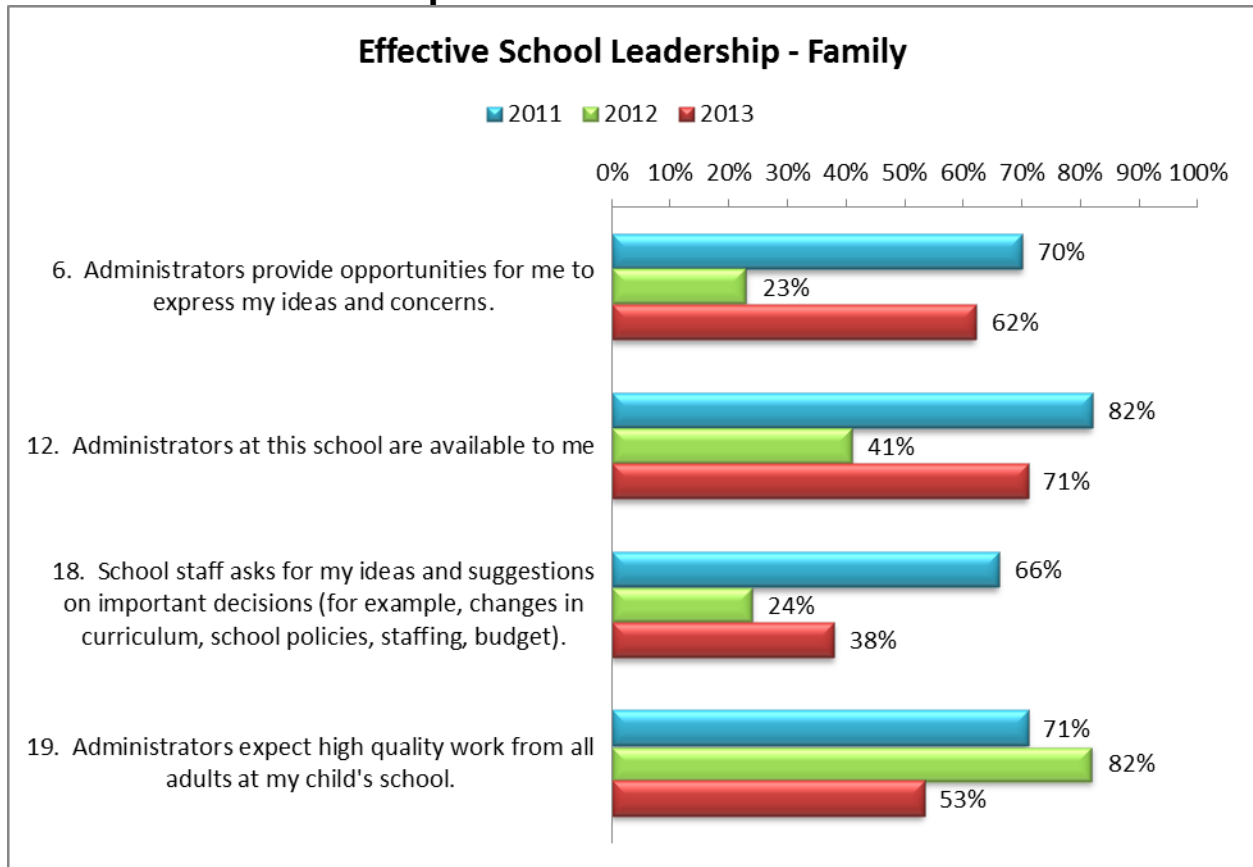
Clear and Shared Focus



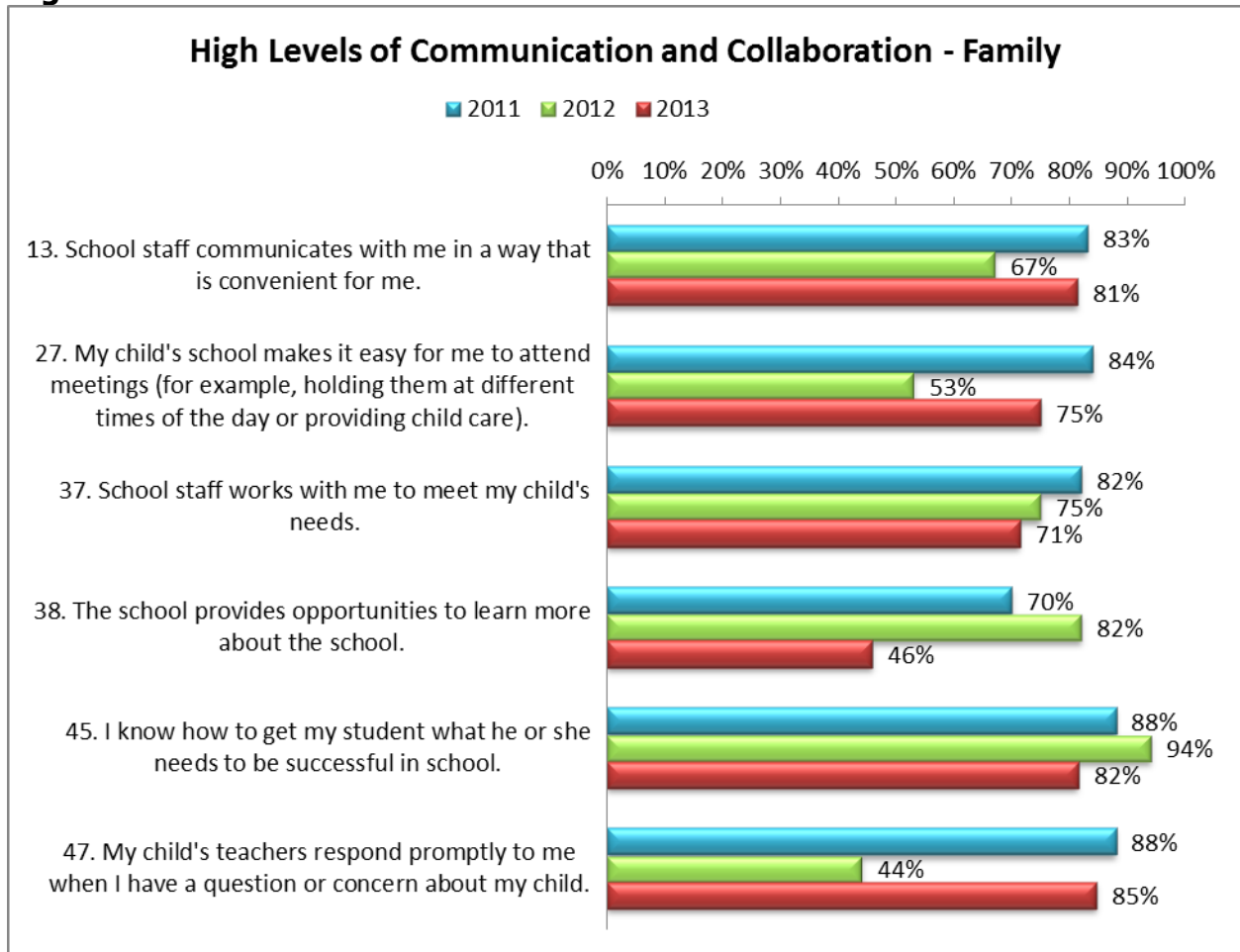
High Standards and Expectations



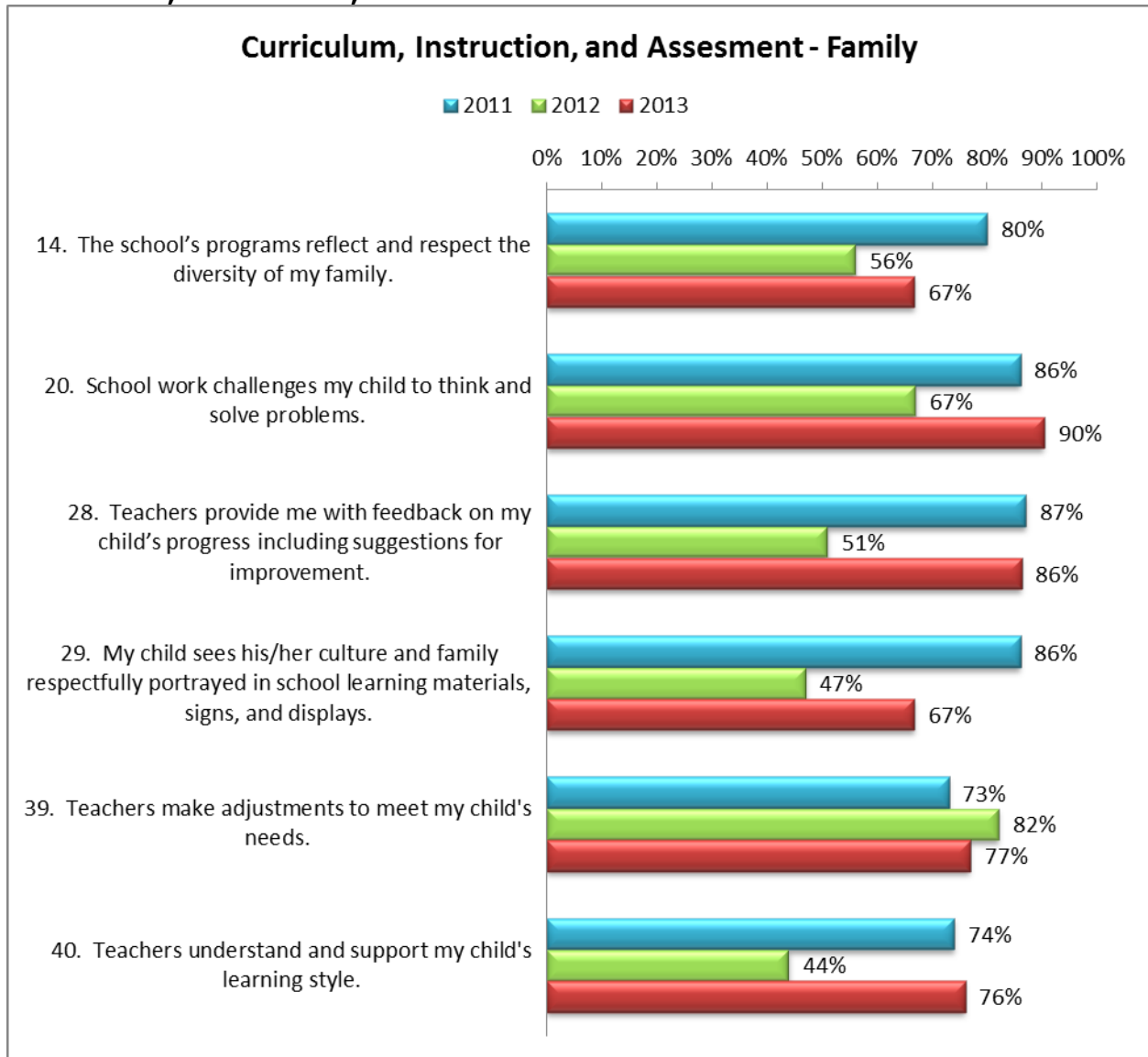
Effective School Leadership



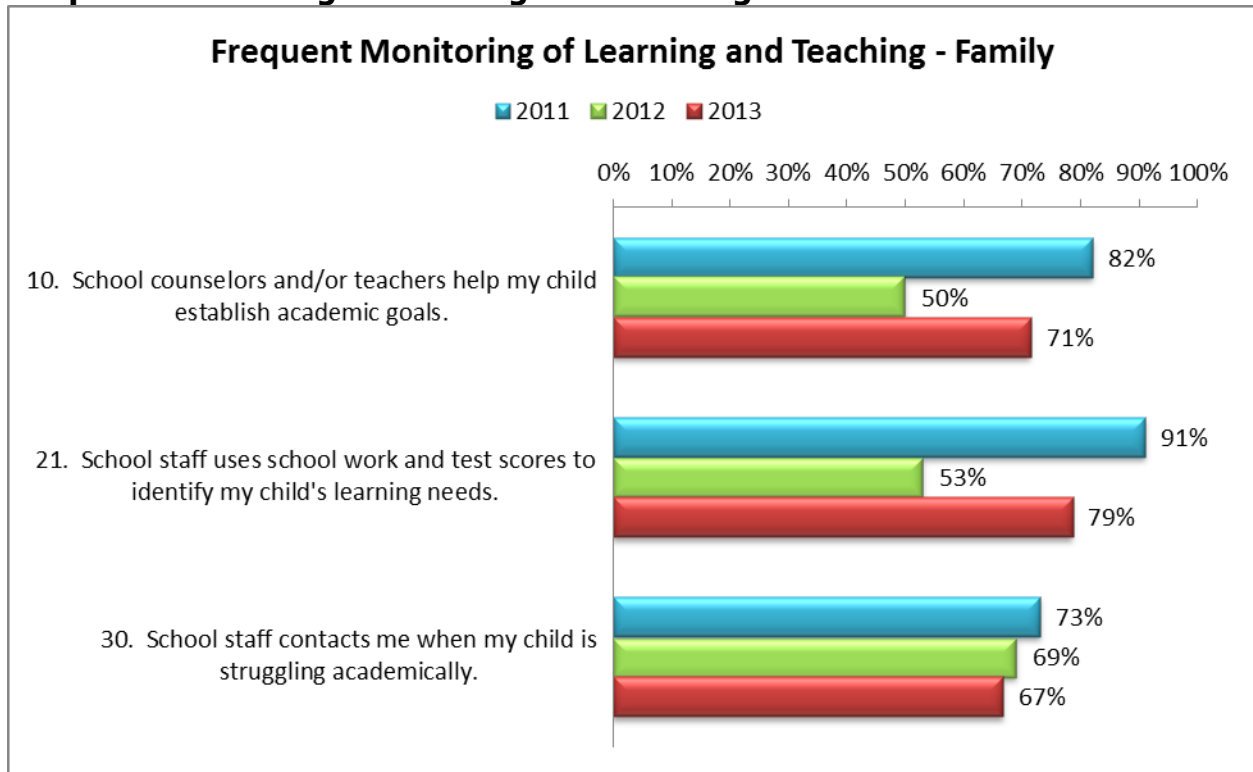
High Levels of Communication and Collaboration



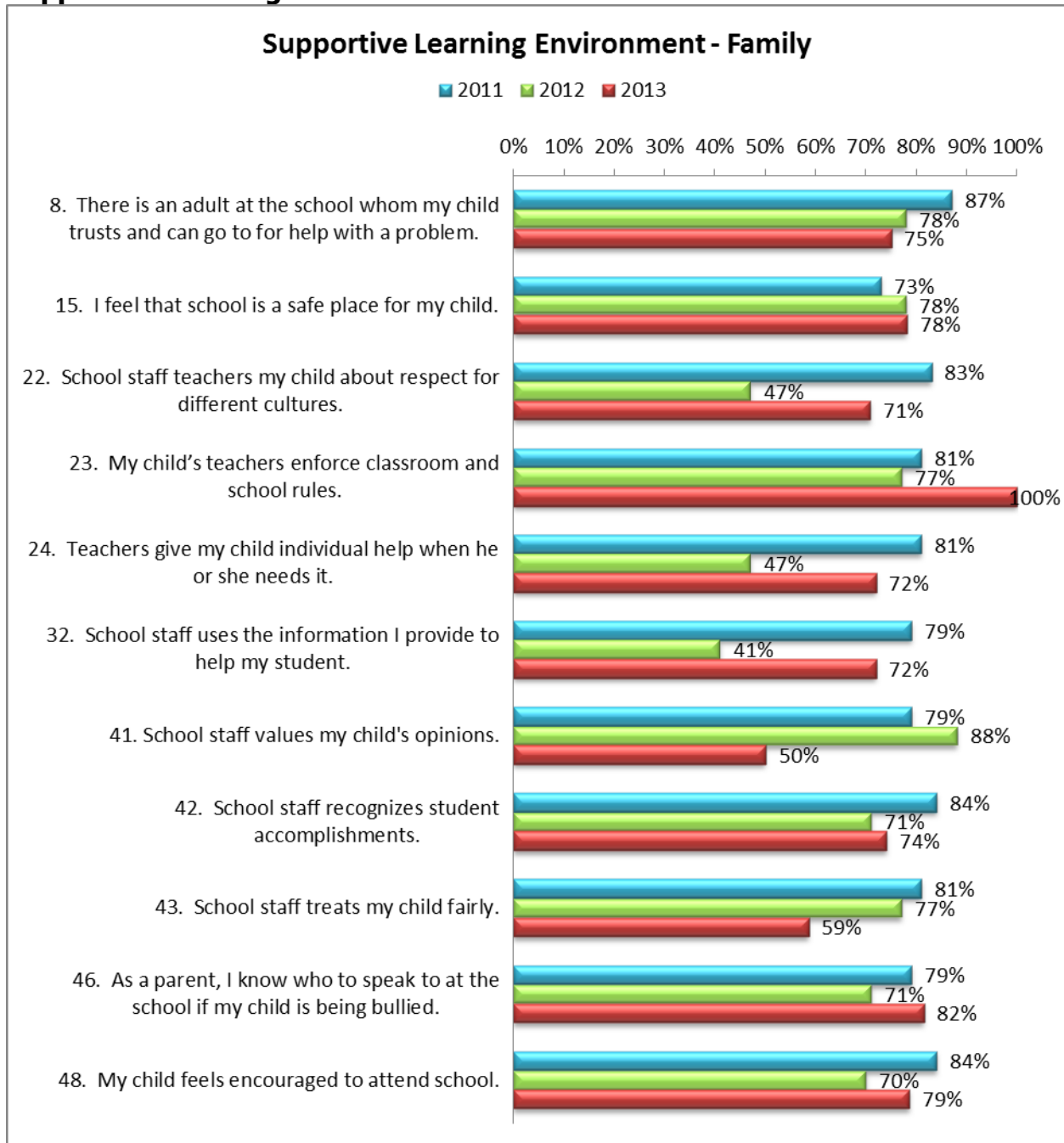
Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment



Frequent Monitoring of Learning and Teaching



Supportive Learning Environment



Family and Community Involvement

