

“They Are All Our Kids”

**CalSTAT Leadership Sites
Emerging Models and Practices**

December 2006

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The full-length individual profiles of Leadership Sites on which this cross site analysis is based can be found on the CalSTAT website, www.calstat.org. An executive summary of the cross site findings can be found on the website as well.

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INTRODUCTION AND METHODS

Seventeen Leadership Sites received awards through CalSTAT in 2005 and 2006 to support research-based approaches to a unified model of education. This analysis defines the common characteristics that have emerged from the sites' implementation of these approaches. It provides a description of practices in the field that may be of use to schools, districts or funders considering or implementing change.

The analysis is based on information gathered from interviews with Leadership Sites conducted by CalSTAT staff in the spring of 2006; written materials provided by sites at the interviews; site responses to interview follow-up questions; site applications for CalSTAT funding; and school accountability report cards published on the Internet. This information was used to create a series of profiles (one for each Leadership Site). The findings from those profiles are summarized in this document. Table 1 provides a listing of the schools and districts interviewed.

TABLE 1 LEADERSHIP SITES INTERVIEWED IN SPRING 2006		
Middle and High Schools (11 schools)	Districts (5 districts)	Behavioral Support Site (1 school)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atascadero Jr. High School • Big Bear Middle School • Iron Horse Middle School • Marine View Middle School • McKinleyville Middle School • Pine Hollow Middle School* • Rancho Middle School** • Rincon Middle School • Sanger High School • Valley View Middle School* • Vista View Middle School 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elk Grove Unified School District • Hesperia Unified School District** • Paradise Unified School District • Point Arena Union District • Richmond School (with district Special Day Classes on an elementary school campus) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mesa Verde Middle School

* Pine Hollow and Valley View Middle Schools are both in the Mount Diablo Unified School District.

**Rancho Middle School is in the Hesperia Unified School District but received a separate Leadership award.

See Appendix A for a listing of Leadership Sites, their student populations, and locations.

This analysis summarizes the experiences of the schools and districts that received awards for **collaboration, literacy, parent participation** and **behavior support**.

The **first part is divided into sections reflecting the stages of development** for inclusive collaborative models. Each section describes themes that emerged across sites for a given stage of development.

- The first section reviews the impetus for change at schools and districts, including common practice prior to implementation.
- The second section covers early implementation.
- The third section discusses later implementation.
- Replication and expansion are described in Section IV.
- The role of literacy interventions is included in Section V.
- In Sections VI and VII, challenges and successes are reviewed.

The **second part** of this report summarizes the approach of the Leadership Site that received an award for its **comprehensive positive behavioral supports**. This site's approach was unique among the Leadership Sites and thus is summarized separately from the others.

Terminology

The changes in special education noted in this paper have been described using many different terms. Some districts have given names to their programs or strategies (for example, Elk Grove's "CAST" or Collaborative Academic Support Teams; Hesperia's "ExCEL" or Excellence, a Commitment to Every Learner) and these names have become well recognized in California and beyond. Although focused on change in special education, the model encompasses many elements of school reform commonly linked with changes in general education. Some have referred to the model described in this paper as the "CalSTAT model" or the "collaborative model." In short, there are many possible ways to characterize the emerging model.

For the purposes of this paper, there needs to be a term that can be used as shorthand for the group of changes that usually began in special education but that have affected many other aspects of schools and schooling. While there is no current agreement in the field or in the literature about the ideal term to use, this paper uses the term "inclusive collaboration."

PART I COLLABORATION, LITERACY, AND PARENT PARTICIPATION SITES

Introduction

Prior to undertaking the changes that led to their selection as Leadership Sites, all the sites without exception provided special education in traditional models. This generally included

- Pullout classes for resource support
- Special Day and resource classes held in separate physical locations from general education classes
- Occasional participation of students receiving special education services in general education classes
- Individual teachers responsible for the students in their individual classrooms/teaching in isolation from other educators
- Few pathways to academic support or remediation for struggling students who did not qualify for special education.

Interviewees at Leadership Sites looked back at their schools' cultures and noted that, prior to collaboration, they were often characterized by:

- Conflict between students receiving special and general education services
- Lower academic and behavioral standards for students in special education than for those in general education
- Deterioration over time in relationships between the school and parents regarding special education issues. At a few sites, advocates were frequently present at IEP meetings.
- Infrequent communication between general and special educators

Section I. The Impetus for Change

In each of the sites, a group of factors came together to prompt reexamination of its approach to special education. In the resulting changes, general education was affected as well. Each site experienced a unique combination of events that moved individuals and institutions toward a new way of delivering special education services.

Inclusive collaboration took time to fully develop. The time frame for sites to move from the initial prompts toward full implementation was unique to each site as well, but ranged from **four to ten years**.

Standardized Testing

The advent of standardized testing was mentioned universally as a key element in reexamining “business as usual.” For example, interviewees noted that:

- Testing highlighted areas where all students, not just those receiving special education, needed academic improvement.
- Testing caused sites to face the extent to which students in special education were not being exposed to full curriculum.
- The pressures of testing were paired with a focus on the “least restrictive environment” to underscore needed changes in special education.
- Test results drew attention to the need to implement literacy interventions.

Costs of Special Education

The ongoing costs associated with special education, and the associated lack of positive results, were also noted by interviewees as important prompts toward change. They noted that:

- The percent of students in special education increased or was unsustainable.
- Special education services were encroaching on general education dollars.
- Low exit rates from special education caused educators to question the effectiveness of special education.

Special Education Process Not Meeting Student Needs

Related to the costs of special education were the issues of how special education was meeting the needs of children who needed support in their learning, but who were not qualified for special education.

- Special education referrals at some sites were going up while the percent of those referred who were eligible was going down.
- Students who needed assistance but did not qualify for special education services were not getting support through a traditional service configuration.
- Under traditional criteria, students had essentially to fail before they qualified for special education.

Social Isolation and Behavioral Problems

Many sites noticed that the traditional structure of special education seemed to promote social relationships that sites were no longer willing to tolerate. Among the issues that interviewees noted were:

- Special education teachers felt isolated from the rest of the school and sought recognition of their professional skills and contributions.
- Staff turnover rates for special educators were high (inability to retain teachers).
- Behavioral standards were lower for students in special education.
- High levels of conflict and low levels of respect between the students in special and general education caused school staff to seek schoolwide culture changes.

System Prompts

At a few Leadership Sites, events outside the schools or districts arose that impelled them toward considering inclusive collaboration.

- Full inclusion practices at a middle school created pressure on the high school to adopt parallel changes.
- WASC accreditation issues required an examination of current practices.

Leadership

In all cases, a period of reflection and planning followed the site's trigger events. During this period, leaders emerged to initiate and shape next steps and help sites answer the question, "What next?"

Leadership was the catalyst that allowed schools and districts to act on events to effect change. Leaders shared a strong, even **passionate, commitment** to change at their sites. This commitment would be the fuel for planning processes that often demanded many volunteer hours and a willingness to rethink the status quo.

Almost all sites involved teachers (and many included other school staff) in their planning efforts to design and implement changes, and this "**leadership from the middle**" encouraged educator ownership of inclusive collaboration. The voluntary nature of the planned changes, coupled with the strong and immediate evidence of positive results, tended to "sell" inclusive collaboration to staff that may have been resistant to change.

While educators were a vital part of any planning process, teachers alone did not bring about needed change. **Teachers needed administrative support to make long-term or systematic change.** This support came from site level administration, the district, the local SELPA/COE, or some combination of the three. In some cases, leadership emerged only after administrative or educator staff turned over. Change was accelerated if the new hire was experienced in or committed to collaboration.

Many leaders - whether principals, teachers or others - drew on the **organizational change principles** based on Margaret Wheatley's writings as taught by Sharon Keating and Steve Zuieback at CalSTAT Leadership Institutes. **Peer-to-peer technical assistance** facilitated by CalSTAT provided opportunities to talk with and observe others implementing inclusive collaboration.

Much of the effort that went into the **initial planning was voluntary and in-kind in nature**, though in one case, the availability of local grants supported some of the work. Release time and funds to obtain training also assisted in initial planning.

Among Leadership Sites, there were many ways that individuals representing different roles and levels within the system demonstrated leadership in the process of creating new and unified systems of general and special education. For example:

Principals showed leadership by:

- Asking teachers to initiate planning and program changes
- Participating in and supporting planning and implementation
- Suggesting and encouraging innovation
- Following through on the planning process to ensure implementation
- Collaborating with district, SELPA or COE in planning
- Providing a specific focus for planning, e.g. improved achievement in language arts, writing; increased parent participation; universal ownership of children's achievement

Teachers showed leadership by:

- Initiating change by approaching administration with proposals
- Volunteering time for initial planning
- Conducting research, including site visits, on best practices for use at their sites
- Collaborating across traditional general/special education divisions
- Showing willingness to innovate and try new methods

District personnel showed leadership by:

- Convening school principals and teachers to plan for change
- Participating as partners in school and district-level planning
- Showing commitment to full inclusion
- Requiring a school to make changes
- Showing flexibility if initial implementation fell short of goals
- Encouraging school-initiated and planned change
- Pursuing research-based reading interventions along with inclusive collaboration

SELPA's showed leadership by:

- Offering grants to schools who designed new delivery models
- Providing facilitation and expert consultation for the planning process
- Providing in-kind support and collaboration to support change efforts

Section II. Early Implementation

As sites moved from planning to implementation, the first change efforts emerged.

Voluntary and Small-Scale Beginnings

With the exception of one site, early implementation was voluntary in nature. Educator staff was persuaded, not required, to begin experimenting with new approaches. Initial efforts were small in scale: a single classroom, a small group of students, a selected subject. At some sites, a Learning Center was created, but was not fully utilized right away.

All the elements that would characterize the core of inclusive collaboration - collaboration, data-driven decision-making, blended and team-taught classes, and more - were present at most sites early on, but were “piloted.” Schools found that early successes with these smaller-scale efforts allowed for later expansion of their inclusive collaboration approaches.

For example, interviewees used these strategies early on:

- Identification of willing general or special education teachers to team in a general education classroom
- Out-of-class consultation, planning and support provided by special educators to general education teachers who made the decision to try blending their student populations
- Exploration of new behavioral or discipline approaches together with academic support, understanding that both needed to be addressed together to be most effective
- Beginning to conduct universal screenings and assessments in order to target instruction and academic supports
- Providing instruction by ability groupings, usually beginning with intensive literacy instruction, based on assessed need and not on student qualification for special education services
- More systematic collection of student data to assist in placement decision-making

In the case of the site that embarked on a non-voluntary full-scale effort its first year, staff found they needed to regroup and reconsider their methods. Beginning in its second year, the site focused its efforts on two academic departments rather than all departments, and has been able to sustain that model up to the present.

Technical Assistance

Schools were able to use technical assistance (TA) to select interventions and target their efforts. TA provided by CalSTAT provided a framework for change cited by several sites. For example:

- Some sites used the ERIA (Effective Reading Intervention Academy) offered by CalSTAT in January 2005 to match literacy interventions to student needs. This academy was a milestone for sites moving from earlier informal or pilot efforts, toward more focused and larger scale changes using research-based literacy interventions.
- Some sites used the organizational and systems change principles articulated at CalSTAT workshops and regional institutes in early implementation. They mentioned their work “below the green line” as the foundation for all subsequent organizational or collaborative change.

Section III. Later Implementation

While there was no firm line that separated “early” from “later” implementation, at most sites “later” implementation meant a move from more casual, small-scale and experimental change, to broader-scale commitment of resources and a shift toward inclusive collaboration as the standard method of operation at the site. While participation of individual teachers continued to be voluntary under later implementation, traditional methods of special education delivery became the exception rather than the rule.

Classroom Changes

The foundation of most inclusive collaboration was a set of classroom and instructional approaches paired with a collaborative planning process to support classroom changes. Generally, the classroom changes were:

- Team teaching by special and general educators and paraeducators
 - *The roles of special and general education teachers would vary within the classroom and could include full joint coverage of the curriculum, in-class support to any struggling student by the special educator or paraeducator, out-of-class consultation on accommodation, modification or adaptation, or any combination of the preceding.*
- Creation of ability groupings (usually for language arts or math) for part of the school day
 - *Students were sometimes grouped by ability into tiers that determined the amount of academic support or intervention they received. This process was variously termed scaffolding, tiering, or leveling, and was applied universally to students regardless of their eligibility for special education.*
 - *Under this system, students received instruction and/or remediation in accordance with their tier level.*
 - *Placement in a tier was fluid and based on frequent student assessment.*
- Maintenance of grade-level groupings of blended student populations (classroom populations inclusive of students in both general and special education) to ensure coverage of grade-level curriculum
 - *Teachers used “differentiated instruction” and multiple modalities to convey information to their blended student populations.*

- Creation of a Learning Center or Lab where classroom instruction was augmented in a variety of ways. A Learning Center might:
 - *Provide extended time for classroom work or academic support for students in general and special education.*
 - *Provide a place for individual or small group teaching, or test and assignment accommodation*
 - *Be open both during and after school*
 - *Serve as a setting for accelerated instruction, or remediation*
 - *Provide career and transition planning for high school students*
 - *Be staffed by teacher rotation or by a dedicated staff person, general or special educators, professionals or paraeducators.*
 - *Serve as a location for collaborative planning*

- Other flexible academic support options, such as:
 - *In-school (elective) or after-school core support,*
 - *study skills development*
 - *homework help*
 - *tutoring*

Collaboration

These classroom and instructional changes required continual planning and review by teachers and administrators to operate smoothly. This planning and review generally took place in collaborative meetings. These meetings ranged from informal and unscheduled meetings during teachers' free time, to scheduled and structured meetings held during common prep or other time allocated for that purpose.

The main tasks in collaborative meetings included:

- Case conferencing regarding individual students
 - *Assembling and reviewing data relating to individual student needs*
 - *Using data from assessments, grades and other sources to make decisions regarding student placement and support, including applying protocols for placement in tiers/scaffold levels and assessing student responses to academic or behavioral interventions.*
 - *Jointly planning differentiation strategies, or modifications and accommodations for students*
 - *Planning for pre- and re-teaching of general education curriculum*

- Planning instructional approaches
 - *Developing content-based benchmarks and pacing plans*
 - *Creating protocols for tiering or scaffolding*
 - *Using classroom-level data to plan for needs of incoming students*
 - *Standardizing and implementing assessments at the grade, school, or district levels*

- Systems change
 - *Purposefully creating a collaborative and cooperative culture*
 - *Focusing on results*
 - *Generating and arraying data at the student, classroom, grade, school and district levels to meet multiple planning needs*
 - *Robust articulation with other schools*
 - *Schoolwide teaming and planning*
 - *Parent involvement and satisfaction*
 - *Obtaining professional development for skills needed for new collaborative environment*
 - *Planning for longer-term or larger-scale change*

Administrative Support

Schools frequently cited the power of the master schedule in supporting change: scheduling in-school electives and interventions, collaborative opportunities, and allowing for flexible placement of students over the course of the school year. Other types of support provided by districts and site administrators to instructional staff included:

- Release time and substitute coverage for professional development and collaboration

- Provision of materials and supplies needed for new curricula or interventions (particularly literacy interventions)

Professional Development

While most sites sought professional development outside the site, some felt that staff with outside training could bring back needed information to others at the site. A focus on ongoing professional development was viewed by interviewees as a vital part of inclusive collaboration. Key mechanisms for professional development included:

- Off-site professional development at conferences and seminars

- Districtwide training provided by the SELPA

- Site-based reading groups or learning circles to improve topical professional knowledge
- Peer-to-peer consultation such as that facilitated by CalSTAT
- “Train the trainers” approach whereby selected staff brought back needed information to the larger group from a conference, seminar, or consultation
- Hiring new staff with experience and willingness to operate in a collaborative setting

Topics most frequently mentioned as subjects for professional development or training included

- Targeting reading interventions
- Differentiated instruction
- How to use collaborative time effectively

Behavioral Supports

The issue of student behavior had initially served as a prompt to some Leadership Sites in adopting changes in their special education delivery model. Whether behavioral issues were an initial impetus to change, or an ongoing concern, many sites adopted positive behavioral support programs after implementing inclusive collaboration. Many with and without formal behavioral programs saw improved behavioral indicators at their sites after collaborative changes were implemented, though this was not universal.

The behavioral support programs implemented by Leadership Sites fell into three categories:

- Formal, research-based behavioral support programs such as “BEST” (Building Effective Schools Together) or “Positive Action.” One site adopted school violence prevention (anti-bullying) programming, “Don’t Laugh At Me” and “Let’s Get Real.”
- Teacher-designed programs to support positive behavior by students.
- Mentorship or buddying programs that paired students in general education with those receiving special education services for academic, co-curricular or extracurricular activities.

Resources Used

Some sites, though not all, had financial resources to draw upon to support their inclusive collaboration. When funds were not available, sites often utilized staff in non-traditional ways, or drew on volunteer time.

- Title I and School Improvement, and Reading First funds were used to support paraeducators, pay for substitutes, and support a family resource position.
- Districts provided planning grants, release time and substitute coverage to support program development, ongoing collaborative planning, and professional development. Districts also protected special education staffing levels to support inclusive collaboration models when the number and percent of students in special education dropped as a result of model implementation.
- Research-based literacy programs, requiring frequent and labor intensive assessments, were staffed by substitutes or by trained volunteer parents who could administer the assessments and tabulate results.

Section IV. Replication and Expansion

As sites settled into full implementation of their collaborative changes, some sought ways to expand, deepen, or replicate what they were doing. Some of the expansion strategies used and examples from specific sites include:

- **Expanding teaming and blending to other subjects**
 - *A school began with teaming and blending in English and language arts, and then expanded the approach to science and social studies classes.*
 - *At first, students receiving resource support and those in Special Day classes were placed in a single social studies class with a general education teacher adept at differentiating his instruction. Now all social studies and science classes are taught to blended student populations.*

- **Expanding teaming and blending to other grade levels**
 - *A middle school began with blended and teamed 6th grade math one year, and maintained the approach as that cohort of students moved into to 7th and 8th grades. The school continued to introduce each subsequent incoming 6th grade class to blended and teamed math classes until all three grades at the middle school were taught under the new approach.*
 - *A district started inclusive collaboration in a subset of district elementary schools; then expanded it to all elementary school; and is beginning planning with middle and high schools.*

- **Expanding the use of assessments and tier placement**
 - *A science teacher informally used information about his students' tier placements to level groups in his class and provide appropriate support to them.*

- **Expanding academic supports to new subjects**
 - *A school will plan on introducing math remediation after results show the positive impacts of language arts remediation*

- **Expanding the populations brought into teamed and blended classes**
 - *First students receiving resource support were placed in general education classrooms, and then students in the Special Day program were included.*
 - *Students in Special Day Classes are “pushing in,” or being included in, general education science classes. Next year, they will be included in Social Studies; the following year, in either English or Math, and subsequently will be included in the remaining class, resulting in full inclusion.*

- **Expanding the populations brought into teamed and blended classes**
 - *At a high school where expansion was planned, the district first set aside collaborative time, then planned to provide coaching on effective collaboration, then would attempt programmatic change after relationships were established*
 - *A school began with informal collaborative time for teachers, and has moved to instituting time in the schedule specifically allocated to collaboration*

- **Creating pressure on schools “upstream” and “downstream” to move away from a traditional special education delivery model**
 - *The district’s high school is reexamining its approach to special education, and has learned, through attendance at a district-sponsored institute, about the collaborative approach two of its middle schools have taken.*
 - *With the middle school’s adoption of a collaborative model, there is increased awareness that entering 7th grade students will be expected to master a 7th-grade curriculum. This has affected teaching and expectations at feeder elementary schools for the middle school.*

Section V. The Role of Literacy Interventions

Many (though not all) sites selected research-based literacy interventions as part of the quest to improve the academic achievements of all students. The adoption of these interventions usually followed the examination of data from standardized tests that indicated lack of student proficiency in some aspect of language arts.

Literacy interventions were a natural fit for program approaches that were using tiering or leveling (grouping by ability), and grouping by grade level for core subject areas. Some sites developed intervention protocols based on levels of literacy; grade level instruction was able to take their literacy levels into account.

As sites gained more targeted knowledge about what aspect of literacy (comprehension, fluency, or phonemic awareness) needed development in their unique student populations, they were able more closely to match intervention to student need.

Following is an example of how this worked at one particular school site.

- Students reading at grade level or above would be placed in “Tier 1” and would use Holt reading materials and supplemental materials for acceleration.
- Students reading no more than two grade levels lower than their grade level would be placed in “Tier II” and would be termed a “strategic learner.” The student would be assessed to receive an individualized mix of the following possible interventions: “Rewards” for decoding; “Read Naturally” for fluency and comprehension; after-school small-group practice sessions; “Soar To Success” for comprehension.
- If a student’s reading level was more than two grade levels lower than school grade, s/he was placed in “Tier III” for intensive intervention. The student would receive an individualized mix of the following interventions: “High Point” for English language acquisition; or “Language!” or “Read 180” for vocabulary, comprehension, and writing skills. At this school, students did not receive grade-level instruction in science or social studies until they moved into Tier II.

Some special education teachers working with IEP’s found that research-based literacy programs yielded assessments that were detailed enough to help determine whether students were reaching specific IEP goals.

Some teachers working with English Language Learners found that detailed assessments and targeted interventions could help them more readily sort out English acquisition issues from learning disabilities.

One site adopted a universal schoolwide writing program, “Step Up to Writing” across all subjects, though most literacy interventions focused on reading ability. The “Six Minute Solution” was used at another school during the daily enrichment period.

Section VI. Common Challenges

Resistance by teaching staff to inclusive collaboration, a universal challenge at leadership sites, was managed by allowing for voluntary adoption of new methods, by setting in place scheduling incentives for those who did participate, and by focusing on the positive effects on student achievement and behavior. Some sites focused on providing training on differentiated instruction and other topics to help teachers enhance their skills in these areas.

The challenge of carving out **sufficient collaborative planning time** was met with a wide variety of responses. A few sites delegated student placement decisions to Learning Center staff or a paraeducator in a support position. Some teachers found informal time on an ad hoc basis to collaborate and plan. Some volunteered at lunchtimes or after school to meet with students, parents, or other teachers. The majority found that setting up protected time to collaborate, whether weekly or semi-monthly, served their needs best.

In early implementation, some sites did not **communicate proactively with parents**, leaving parents with the impression that their children were not receiving the interventions or special education to which they were entitled. This challenge was met variously by providing information prior to the start of the fall term, holding information sessions during the school year, and going to transition IEP meetings. This challenge was almost universally one of early implementation, since parents were usually quickly convinced of the appropriateness of inclusive collaboration by the positive effects on their children and on the classroom and school environments.

Many literacy programs brought an **increased workload in assessment** and tracking progress. Sites found parent volunteers or hired substitutes to help manage this challenging aspect of literacy interventions.

Sites struggled with **adequate staffing** to team, collaborate, and remediate. Those with Title 1, School Improvement Funds, or district support were able to utilize those resources in support of their changed programs. However, many sites made changes by reallocating resources and drawing on in-kind donations of time, rather than obtaining additional financial resources. Some districts provided problem-solving and support staff to assist schools in identifying solutions to time and resource challenges.

In some of the larger districts, high growth rates affected the ability to replicate the model during busy expansion times or in very crowded school facilities.

Section VII. Successes and Results

While not all sites experienced all positive results listed below, all sites reported some positive results from collaborative inclusion. Following are examples of the kinds of improvements that sites reported experiencing in implementing inclusive collaboration.

Standardized Testing

- AYP targets, API scores and rankings, percentages achieving a “proficient” score, CAHSEE passage rates, increased.
- Achievement gaps between students receiving special education and those in general education were decreasing or closing, as measured a variety of ways

Special Education

- Number and percent of the student population in special education were decreasing or have leveled off
- Referrals into special education were decreasing; percentages of those referred who qualify, is increasing
- Exit rates from special education have increased
- Writing scores, test scores improving for children receiving special education
- Students in special education were showing improvement on the “general knowledge” section of the Woodcock-Johnson test

Grades

- Students referred into intervention classes have increased grades awarded in that subject by two full levels, on average

Student Behavior and School Culture

- Student behavior overall has improved, attributed to fewer frustrations in reaching academic goals and/or schoolwide behavioral supports

- Teachers' consistent behavior expectations were having a positive impact on student behavior
- Reduced discipline and behavioral issues with students receiving special education, attributed to higher peer expectations in blended classrooms
- Teachers noted an atmosphere of trust and cooperation among teaching staff as well as with administration, and resulting satisfaction with their job duties
- Students were taking pride in academic accomplishments and demonstrating a seriousness in their approach to schoolwork
- Students in special education were participating more frequently in social and extracurricular activities at the school
- Students in general education were showing compassion and acceptance toward students in special education

“They Are All Our Kids”

Finally, Leadership Sites reported nearly universally that inclusive collaboration fostered a sense of accountability for all students, whether in general or special education. This sense of accountability was in contrast to the prevailing culture prior to inclusive collaboration, in which teachers felt responsible only for their own classrooms or students. The sense that “they are all our kids” was attributed to the joint effort expended in teaming, blending classrooms, and creating interventions to assist all students in succeeding.

PART II BEHAVIORAL SUPPORT - MESA VERDE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Introduction

While most of the other sites addressed behavioral issues in the context of inclusive collaboration, Mesa Verde Middle School was the only Leadership Site for whom behavioral supports were the primary program of change. Because its program was unique among Leadership Sites, it is reviewed separately in this section.

Section I. The Impetus for Change

In 2004, the school lost an assistant principal and a counselor through staff cuts, and no longer had the personnel to deal with office referrals for behavior issues. The school psychologist saw the crisis as a potential opportunity to shift the school's approach from that of "behavior management" to "behavior support." Basing his proposal on research by Diana Browning Wright, George Sugai, Roy Mayer, and others, he suggested to the principal a new schoolwide Positive Behavior Support System. The new program was implemented in the fall of 2003.

Section II. Implementation

- **The support call**

The key element of Mesa Verde's implementation was the "support call." In return for ending the system of referring students to the office, the administration promised a ten-minute response time if a teacher had a problem with a student's behavior and called for support. The administrator would then immediately address the issue in the hallway with the student. He or she would also immediately call the parent(s) and enlist parents' support. The administrator would deal with the student behavior right then and usually return the student to the classroom.

- **Parent consultation**

Parents were treated as allies in supporting positive behavior. Because they were notified within minutes of a behavior issue, they could participate in a timely way in the resolution of the problem.

- **Use of data to determine student needs for behavioral and academic interventions**

The school administration used assessments aligned with the California Standards Test to generate data to determine individual children's proficiency levels in content covered in the test. The school gives the information to teachers to guide their teaching of individual students, and to administrators to assist them in planning behavioral and academic interventions. Any behavioral issues can be addressed in the context of academic needs as well.

- **Training for all staff**

The school provided initial and ongoing training of all staff on positive behavior support. It has just begun training teachers in "Quantum Learning," a behavior support approach for adolescents.

- **Academic interventions for the most at-risk students**

The school psychologist assembled behavior data after a year to assess the program's effectiveness. Through that process, he was able to identify children who were having repeat behavior calls and decided to implement additional interventions with them. Those children were placed in an intervention during the school day called "Success Club." Administrators taught this class, in which students were pulled out of their elective and helped with building their academic skills. While the Club mainly consisted of children formally identified for ongoing participation, the administrative team also included additional children if they were failing, and kept them in the Club for two to three days to bolster their learning.

- **Natural consequences**

The program focused on requiring natural consequences of students, rather than punishment.

Section III. Replication and Expansion

Mesa Verde's previous principal, who was initially responsible for the behavioral program's implementation at the school, is now creating a similar program at a newly opened middle school where he is now the principal. With this new program, two of four middle schools in the district will have positive behavioral support programs. A school counselor is also starting up a similar program in another new school.

Section IV. Challenges

There remains a small subset of teachers at the school who do not support the new approach. However, they are a small enough number so that the school continues to use the new program even without their full buy-in. The culture at the school has shifted so greatly that it is now unusual for teachers to revert to former patterns of discipline.

Section V. Successes and Results

- Test scores increased for the entire school population. For the children in Success Club (usually those students failing both academically and behaviorally), grade point averages have increased substantially on average in just one trimester (the average increase for the whole group in the 2005 trimester: from 1.01 to 1.79). Success Club students are receiving fewer F's and D's; and some students have been able to return to regular classes.
- Assistant principal time was freed up to staff Success Club, support teachers and students, and assist with accelerated programs.
- Teachers came to rely on the program and will ask for help proactively, if they see a student unable to do his or her work.
- In an unexpected development, behavior on school buses improved: the referrals written by the drivers have dropped substantially since the new program was started.
- The school restrooms, formerly vandalized constantly (twice a week), had not been vandalized at all in the most recent school year.

PART III. APPENDIX

Individual School Leadership Sites						
Quick Facts						
Leadership Site Name	Year Awarded	Previous SIG1 Model Site	City	County	Award	Student Enrollment 2005-2006
Atascadero Junior High	2006	No	Atascadero	San Luis Obispo	Collaboration	711
Big Bear MS	2005	Yes	Big Bear Lake	San Bernardino	Collaboration	534
Iron Horse MS	2005	Yes	San Ramon	Contra Costa	Collaboration	961
Marine View MS	2005	No	Huntington Beach	Orange	Literacy	931
McKinleyville MS	2005	No	McKinleyville	Humboldt	Collaboration	403
Mesa Verde MS	2005	No	San Diego	San Diego	Behavior	1,380
Pine Hollow MS	2005	No	Concord	Contra Costa	Collaboration	760
Ranchero MS	2006	No	Hesperia	San Bernardino	Family Partnership	1,342
Richmond Elementary	2005	Yes	Ridgecrest	Kern	Collaboration	350/87*
Rincon MS	2005	Yes	Escondido	San Diego	Collaboration	1,473
Sanger HS	2006	No	Sanger	Fresno	Collaboration	2,224
Valley View MS	2005	No	Concord	Contra Costa	Collaboration	792
Vista View MS	2006	No	Fountain Valley	Orange	Literacy	884

District Leadership Sites									
Quick Facts									
Leadership Site Name	Year Awarded	Previous SIG1 Model Site	City	County	Award	Number of Schools in District		Student Enrollment 2005-2006	
Elk Grove USD	2005	Yes	Elk Grove	Sacramento	Collaboration	Elementary (K-12)	40	Elementary (K-12)	32,914
						Middle	8	Middle	9,858
						High	14	High	17,963
						TOTAL	62	TOTAL	60,735
Hesperia USD	2005	Yes	Hesperia	San Bernardino	Collaboration	Elementary	14	Elementary	9,639
						Middle (5-11)	5	Middle (5-11)	4,181
						High (7-12, 8-12)	8	High (7-12, 8-12)	6,447
						TOTAL	27	TOTAL	20,267
Paradise USD	2005	Yes	Paradise	Butte	Collaboration	Elementary (K-8, K-12)	7	Elementary (K-8, K-12)	2,404
						Middle	3	Middle	938
						High (7-12)	4	High	1,867
						TOTAL	14	TOTAL	5,209

District Leadership Sites									
Quick Facts									
Leadership Site Name	Year Awarded	Previous SIG1 Model Site	City	County	Award	Number of Schools in District		Student Enrollment 2005-2006	
Point Arena Schools (Arena Union Elem. SD and Pt. Arena Jt. High SD)	2006	No	Point Arena	Mendocino	Collaboration	Elementary (K-8)	2	Elementary (K-8)	282
						Middle	0	Middle	0
						High	2	High	188
						TOTAL	4	TOTAL	470

** 350 of the students at this site are enrolled in the elementary school and 87 are enrolled in the district's Special Day Class*

*** School sites are counted according to group to which the majority of students belong (for example: K-8 is counted as an elementary school).*