

Estacada School District Jr. High Academic Growth Plan 2004-2006

Report to the Estacada School District
Board of Directors
August 11, 2004

Prepared by:
The Jr. High School Sub-Task Force of the
Academic Enhancement Task Force

Executive Summary

In November 2003, a sub task force of the Academic Enhancement Task Force was formed for the sole reason to explore and uncover alternate methods to increase academic achievement at the Estacada Jr. High School. The Jr. High School Academic Enhancement Task Force developed a series of improvement options to study and understand if they would, from our research, have a positive effect on Academic Achievement in our seventh and eighth grades in Estacada. Included in this document are the improvement options we researched, our findings of that research and any recommendations for the School District Board of Directors for implementation. This Task Force focused on what to do based on research; some of the details of how to do it should be the work of the Building Administrator and other School District Leadership.

Jr. High School Academic Enhancement Sub-Task Force Members

Parents/Citizens

Deanna Marcus
Phyllis Randle
Teresa Lewis

Representing

Junior High School
River Mill Elementary School
River Mill Elementary School

School Board

Mark Greene

Vice Chairman, Chairman of the Jr. High School Task Force

Administrators

Dr. Howard Fetz
Bob Espenel
Kevin Olds

The District, Curriculum & Special Services Director
Junior High School, Principal
Clackamas River Elementary School, Principal

Licensed Staff

Frank Franklin
Sally Woods
Elizabeth Warren
Scott Sullivan
Christi Orengo
Dante Torgersen
Deb Wexler
Debbie Brochis
Zach Davidson
Adonica Greene
Bonny Day

Junior High School, Mathematics
Junior High School, Mathematics
Junior High School, Mathematics
Secondary Schools TOSA 7-12
Junior High School, Language Arts
Junior High School, Science
Junior High School, Science
Junior High School, Counselor
Junior High School, Social Studies
Junior High School, Language Arts
Junior High School, Administrative TOSA

Advisory

Gerry Balaban

Clackamas County Education Service District

Table of Contents

The Jr. High Academic Growth Plan Process	5
District Philosophy Regarding Jr. High Education	6
Summary of our Current Academic Status.....	7
Findings Regarding Various Improvement Options	9
Recommendations Regarding Various Improvement Options	13
Anticipated Timeline to Achieve the Recommendations	16
Anticipated Costs to Achieve the Recommendations	16
Periodic Evaluation of the Plan by the School District	17
Appendix A.....	18
Appendix B.....	22
Appendix C.....	24
Appendix D.....	26
Appendix E.....	47

The Jr. High School Academic Enhancement Plan Process

This sub task force was formed because increasing the academic performance at the Estacada Jr. High School is the fourth goal listed in the Estacada School District Goals developed in 2003.

The Sub task force met first on November 3, 2003. The entire task force listed all of the potential improvement options to increase student achievement. Once they were all listed, they were prioritized and then small groups were formed to study these options as they related specifically to Estacada Jr. High.

Each specific small group collected data on their selected option from previous studies, interviews and surveys. That data was then collected and presented to the chairman of the sub task force. In some cases, not enough supporting data was collected to either prove or disprove an option as it related to improving academic performance at the Estacada Jr. High school, in those cases, no recommendation to change was the result.

In every recommendation listed within this report, overwhelming data was collected to support the recommendation.

All meetings were open to the public.

All meetings were held at 3:00 in the Jr. High School Library.

The dates meetings were held were:

November 3, 2003

December 8, 2003

January 19, 2004

February 2, 2004

March 15, 2004

April 12, 2004

District Philosophy Regarding Education at the Junior High Level

Philosophy Regarding Program Design, Administration and Management

The District believes that academic growth at the Junior High level is essential to increasing academic performance district wide. None of our District wide academic goals can be achieved if our Junior High program is not strong and does not complement those goals.

The educational curriculum that Estacada School District develops in Math, Science, Language Arts and Social Studies allow all students to learn at their appropriate learning levels, beginning in the seventh grade. Therefore, in order for students to achieve their greatest potential in High School and beyond, it is essential the environment we offer in seventh and eighth grade maximize their learning abilities.

Students graduating from the eighth grade must be prepared to set their academic goals in High School, their preparation at that point will determine the success and variety of the programs that are offered at High School level.

Conversely, the academic requirements for the seventh grade will determine the breadth and depth of the learning goals set at all three elementary schools. The value of strong elementary level academic programs is diminished if the education offered in the seventh grade does not compliment and expand that existing knowledge base.

If the academic goals and opportunities at the seventh grade level are high, the academic goals set by the elementary schools will be forced to be set high as well, as the two exist in a cause and effect relationship.

The seventh and eighth grade will be the first time most students in our District will have options regarding their academic goals and course of study. It is essential for academic growth at this level to offer as many options to students as is possible. In addition to appropriate classes in Math, Science, Language Arts and Social Studies, students attending the Junior High should also have the choices to learn more in the following subjects: Choir, Band, Foreign Languages, Physical Education, Art, Technology, Drama and Industrial Arts.

The Administration at the Junior High School must be prepared to foster an environment that allows for continued growth of students in all of these academic areas. The Administration at the Junior High School must also be committed to remove or mitigate impediments to academic growth, both internally and externally.

Philosophy Regarding Professional Development

The district believes that professional development is very important for Junior High Instructors. This professional development should be ongoing and include both in-district and out-of-district experiences. Outside consultants should be retained to introduce and assist the district in developing best practices. In addition, in-house “experts” should be utilized to maintain, refine and continue staff development. These “experts” should also be provided with ample opportunities to hone their skills and develop curriculum while attending out-of-district workshops and classes.

Summary of our Current Academic Status

Reading

There exists a slight trend upward in reading, 2003 marking the first year we exceeded the state average in reading scores since 1999. It is not clear if last years windfall is a continuation of a trend or an anomaly in this particular class.

Writing

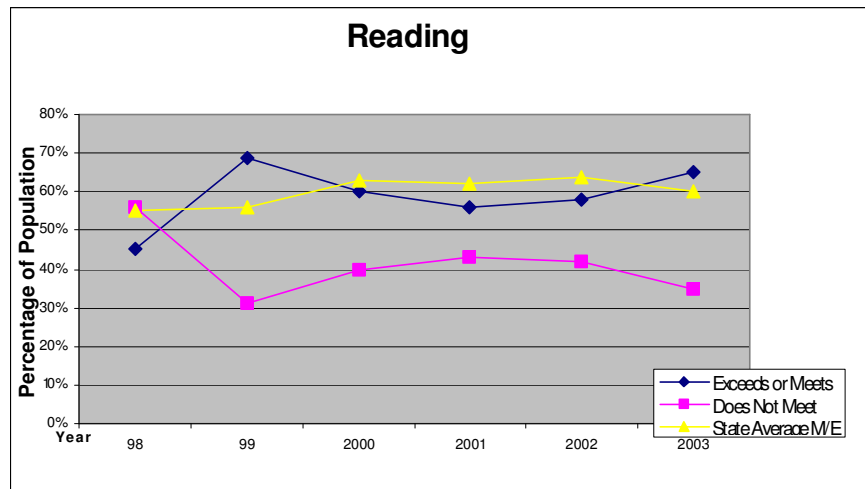
Our writing scores took a dip in 2003; again it is hard to tell from the limited data if this is an anomaly or the beginning of a drastic trend. Although state averages are not available on this chart, our eighth grade test scores have been consistently below the state average in this area, except in 2002.

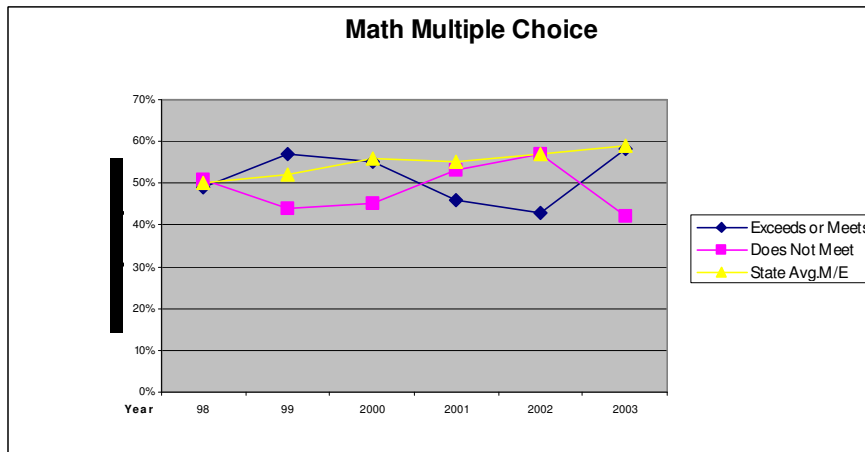
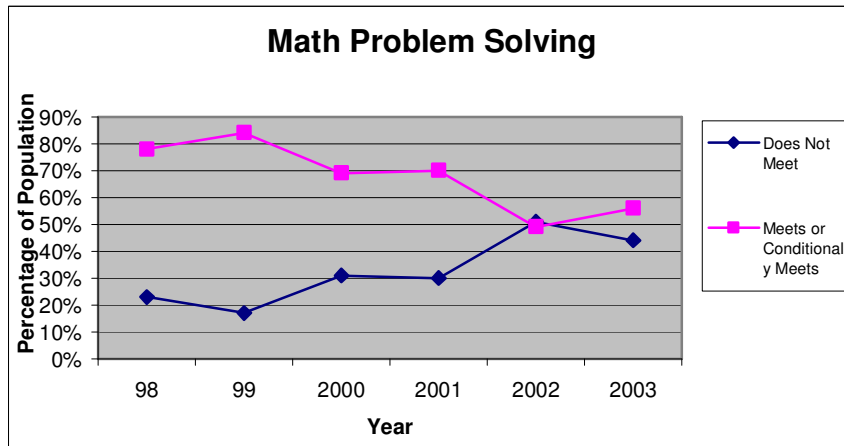
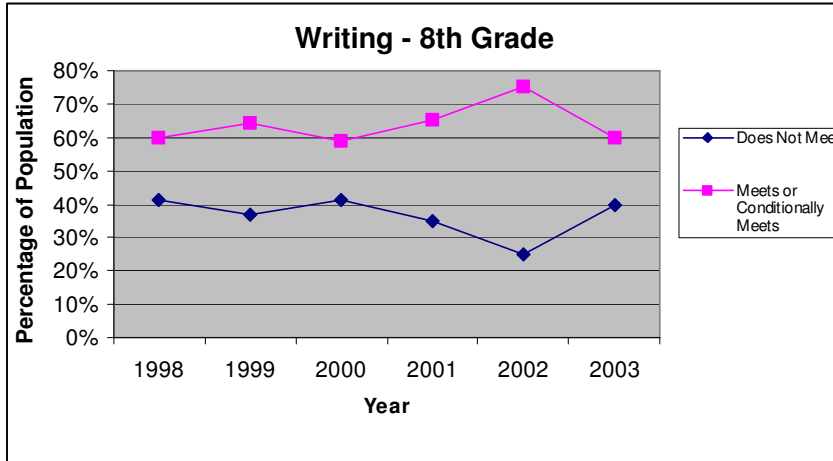
Math Problem Solving

Estacada Junior High School has ranked above the state average in this category consistently for some time. There is, however, a disturbing trend in our test scores over the last several years.

Math Multiple Choice

Estacada Junior High School has historically performed below the state average in this category. This is unfortunate in light of our historically strong results in the problem-solving category. Statistics indicate a current upward trend.





Findings Regarding Various Improvement Options

1.1. Interdisciplinary Teaming

- 1.1.1. There is a history of teaming at the Jr. High in the Estacada School District. It was ultimately discontinued for a variety of reasons. We have assessed those reasons to be:
 - 1.1.1.1. High Cost.
 - 1.1.1.2. Lack of Understanding by the Administration.
 - 1.1.1.3. Lack of a champion in the local Administration.
 - 1.1.1.4. A negative public perception of reduced instruction time.
- 1.1.2. Student test scores for Reading, Math and Science (6,7,8 grades) are highest when comparing students taught in teams with the highest levels of common planning (CP) time vs. low common planning time or no teaming.
- 1.1.3. Teams with high levels of common planning time report both engaging in team activities more frequently as well as developing a more positive team climate.
- 1.1.4. Teams that have been working together for a longer period of time have benefited from the longevity of their team relationship as evidenced by more coordination activities as well as greater feelings of success in their work.
- 1.1.5. Teams with high levels of common planning time report the highest levels of parental interaction and involvement.
- 1.1.6. Regardless of certification type, teachers in schools who are teaming with a high level of common planning time achieve higher levels of professional effectiveness.
- 1.1.7. All classroom practices, with the exception of writing skill enhancement, are also occurring more frequently in schools that are teaming with high common planning time than in schools that are teaming with low or no common planning time or not teaming.
- 1.1.8. Test results suggest students are more satisfied after they have been part of a looping/teaming structure.
- 1.1.9. Teaming and scheduling can present a major challenge for administration.
- 1.1.10. Without follow-up work and ongoing management, teaming alone is not likely to achieve sustained outcomes.
- 1.1.11. Teaming provides an environment to enhance Staff Development as well as a better communication vehicle to parents and the community.
- 1.1.12. Of the 6 local area 7-8 configuration schools that outperform Estacada regularly, 5 have teaming of some variety employed as a strategy for academic enhancement.
 - 1.1.12.1. Waluga Jr. High, 560 Students, 4 Teams
 - 1.1.12.2. Lake Oswego Jr. High, 650 students, 4 Teams
 - 1.1.12.3. Rowe Jr. High, 675 students, 4 Teams
 - 1.1.12.4. Sunrise Middle School, 1100 students, 3 Teams
 - 1.1.12.5. Alder Creek Middle School, 850 students, 6 Teams
- 1.1.13. The sixth school that outperformed Estacada was Corbett. They do not use teaming as they have 102 students set in a four-day week. They are set up in self-contained classrooms so each student only has one period a day.

1.2. 7-8 vs. 6-8 Configuration

- 1.2.1. Although this configuration provides many advantages for social and academic consistency, we are limited by physical space to accommodate the sixth grade at our Jr. High facility.

1.3. Graduation Requirements for 8th Grade

- 1.3.1. There is very little evidence to suggest graduation requirements for eighth grade completion enhance academic performance of a particular school in general
- 1.3.2. Drop out rates for at risk students increases in eighth grade with the implementation of graduation requirements for completion.
- 1.3.3. School Districts that employ a strategy of tracks (both high and low) for specific subjects do not typically have a formal graduation for completion in eighth grade.
- 1.3.4. The general continuity of education is disrupted by a formal graduation process employed in the middle of an education process that takes twelve years to complete; it is more effective to test, evaluate and continually place students in the tracks for which they are most suited.

1.4. Staff Development

- 1.4.1. The following are characteristics of an effective professional development practice

- 1.4.1.1. Activities are conducted in school settings and linked to other school wide improvement efforts

- 1.4.1.2. Teachers are actively involved in planning, setting goals, and selecting activities

- 1.4.1.3. Self-instruction is emphasized and a variety of “differentiated training opportunities” are offered

- 1.4.1.4. **Ongoing support** and resources are provided

- 1.4.1.5. Training is concrete and includes **ongoing feedback, supervised trials, and assistance on request**

- 1.4.2. Teacher classroom practices have a significant effect on student achievement.

- 1.4.3. High-quality professional development focusing on higher-order thinking skills and diversity issues does appear to strongly influence classroom practice.

- 1.4.4. Teacher quality and classroom practice can have an effect on student achievement equal to or exceeding that of comparable socioeconomic status.

1.5. Counseling, Advisory, Transition

1.5.1. The movement from self-contained 6th grade elementary schools to junior high creates a high state of anxiety (stressors) for the majority of incoming 7th grade students

1.5.2. Challenges include:

- 1.5.2.1. Changing classes
- 1.5.2.2. Reduced parent involvement
- 1.5.2.3. More teachers
- 1.5.2.4. Lockers & combinations
- 1.5.2.5. No recess or free time
- 1.5.2.6. New grading procedures
- 1.5.2.7. More peer pressure
- 1.5.2.8. Developmental differences between boys and girls
- 1.5.2.9. Cliques
- 1.5.2.10. Fear of older students
- 1.5.2.11. Unrealistic parental expectations
- 1.5.2.12. Lack of experience in extracurricular activities
- 1.5.2.13. Following the school schedule
- 1.5.2.14. Earlier starting of the school day
- 1.5.2.15. Long range assignments (projects)
- 1.5.2.16. Coping with adolescent physical development
- 1.5.2.17. Social immaturity
- 1.5.2.18. Lack of basic skills for some students

1.5.3. A transition program from 6th through 7th grades lessens the anxiety of students and also increases their academic performances.

1.5.4. A transition program must meet the social needs of students who have a perception that the transition to secondary (junior high) school is a decline in quality of this part of school life.

1.5.5. A transition program must provide several activities that will involve students, parents, teachers and other staff members from both the elementary and junior high schools.

1.5.6. Advisory classes increase student's accountability, lower drop out rate, increase attendance, and lower negative behavior.

1.5.7. Advisory Classes are used for attendance, class preparation, teacher to student relationship building, study skills enhancement, schedule and time management review.

1.5.8. Advisory teachers establish a trusting relationship with students and parents. There is more parent inclusion in the school community life of the students. Parents have an established person within the school that helps them with student's school related activities and academics.

1.6. After School Activities

1.6.1. It is clear that after school activities are a key component in the educational process at the Junior High School/Middle School level. The activities we identified are broken into several categories; we focused mainly on the Academic, Sports and Other Existing.

- 1.6.1.1. Academic Activities
 - 1.6.1.1.1. Science Club
 - 1.6.1.1.2. Math Club
 - 1.6.1.1.3. Benchmark Enhancement Program (BEEP)

- 1.6.1.2. Sports Activities
 - 1.6.1.2.1. Volleyball
 - 1.6.1.2.2. Basketball, girls and boys
 - 1.6.1.2.3. Track
 - 1.6.1.2.4. Baseball
- 1.6.1.3. Other Existing Activities
 - 1.6.1.3.1. Guitar Club
 - 1.6.1.3.2. Annual Play (part time)
 - 1.6.1.3.3. Student Council
 - 1.6.1.3.4. Yearbook

Recommendations Regarding Various Improvement Options

1.1. Interdisciplinary Teaming

1.1.1. The sub-taskforce recommends implementing teaming at the Jr. High utilizing a model with three teams.

1.1.2. Common Planning time should take one period a day, every day.

1.1.3. The subjects that should be taught in by the teams should include:

- 1.1.3.1. Math
- 1.1.3.2. Language Arts
- 1.1.3.3. Science
- 1.1.3.4. Social Studies

1.1.4. The schedule should be changed to better accommodate a more diverse curriculum at the Jr. High, especially with the advent of teaming. We will defer to the local administration on schedule specifics; however, a sample schedule is shown below.

Table 1 7 Period SAMPLE SCHEDULE

Period							
Class	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Math A	CPT	Individual Prep	PA-7	M-7	Lunch-Adv.	A-8	A-8
LA A	CPT	Individual Prep	LA-8	LA-8	Lunch-Adv.	LA-7	LA-7
Science A	CPT	Individual Prep	SCI-7	ADV SCI-7	Lunch-Adv.	SCI-8	SCI-8
SS A	CPT	Individual Prep	SS-8	SS-8	Lunch-Adv.	SS-7	SS-7
Math B	A Honors-8	M-7/8	CPT	Individual Prep	Lunch-Adv.	PA-7	M-6/7
LA B	LA-7	LA-7	CPT	Individual Prep	Lunch-Adv.	LA-8	LA-8
Science B	SCI-8	ADV SCI-8	CPT	Individual Prep	Lunch-Adv.	SCI-7	SCI-7
SS B	SS-7	SS-7	CPT	Individual Prep	Lunch-Adv.	SS-8	SS-8
Math C	PA Honors -7	PA-7	M-7/8	A-8	Lunch-Adv.	CPT	Individual Prep
LA C	LA-8	LA-8	LA-7	LA-7	Lunch-Adv.	CPT	Individual Prep
Science C	SCI-7	ADV SCI-7	SCI-8	ADV SCI-8	Lunch-Adv.	CPT	Individual Prep
SS C	SS-8	SS-8	SS-7	SS-7	Lunch-Adv.	CPT	Individual Prep
Exploratory 1	Team A	Team A	Team B	Team B	Lunch-Prep	Team C	Team C
Exploratory 2	Team A	Team A	Team B	Team B	Lunch-Prep	Team C	Team C
Exploratory 3	Team A	Team A	Team B	Team B	Lunch-Prep	Team C	Team C
Exploratory 4	Team A	Team A	Team B	Team B	Lunch-Prep	Team C	Team C

1.1.5. It is imperative that the new teaming model accommodates all of the work completed by the Math and Science sub task forces. It is critical for the long-term success of teaming that it be managed and that the structure be allowed to be dynamic.

1.1.6. A campaign to educate the community and parents to the benefits of teaming at the Jr. High should start once it has been adopted and continue on a periodic basis.

1.1.7. The educators and Administration at the Jr. High should attend training to better understand how to use their common planning time to increase student academic performance.

1.1.8. The Administration should attend training to understand how to better set up the schedule to accommodate all the student body.

- 1.1.9. The faculty and students assigned to a team in 7th grade should loop to 8th grade. This will allow for better consistency and a reduction in the natural stress imparted on the student body.
- 1.1.10. There must be a formal process developed to allow a student to appeal to belong to another team should personal or academic reasons warrant it.
- 1.1.11. A separate Teaming Advisory committee should be formed to help measure and understand the challenges and issues associated with Teaming. They should be in existence for at least the first year after implementation. On the committee should be:
 - 1.1.11.1. At least 1 school board member
 - 1.1.11.2. Principal
 - 1.1.11.3. Faculty Representatives
 - 1.1.11.4. Representative from the PTA
- 1.1.12. Local Management (Principal) must be trained in the concepts of Teaming and it's advantages and areas for improvement. There must be a particular emphasis placed on training when a new Principal is employed. The training for successful teaming must be researched and the most appropriate program developed to provide that training.

1.2. 7-8 vs. 6-8 Configuration

- 1.2.1. No Change Recommended at this time.

1.3. Graduation Requirements for 8th Grade

- 1.3.1. The sub task force recommends The Jr. High School not adopt any graduation requirements for 8th grade completion.

1.4. Staff Development

- 1.4.1. Jr. High professional development activities should become a part of an overall district-wide program for all subjects. A professional development plan addressing these needs in a more global sense is currently under development (contact Scott Sullivan for details).
- 1.4.2. Utilizing Interdisciplinary Teaming will enhance staff development. Some staff development activities can be built into the Common Planning Time that is available and scheduled for every day.

1.5. Counseling, Advisory, Transition

- 1.5.1. A formal transition program should be developed and implemented for incoming 7th grade students.
- 1.5.2. The transition program should be a full day and include:
 - 1.5.2.1. Introductions to teachers and subjects
 - 1.5.2.2. Building orientation
 - 1.5.2.3. Rules and Regulations
 - 1.5.2.4. Introduction to Teaming
 - 1.5.2.5. How to solve personal problems
- 1.5.3. Two four-hour parent-student open houses should be held for teachers and parents to introduce them to and train them on on-line grading/software, academic expectations, and social expectations, ect.
- 1.5.4. A transition questionnaire should be given to incoming 7th grade students prior to their enrollment to understand their fears and concerns and then again a month after they have been enrolled at the Jr. High to measure how effective the Transition training is.
- 1.5.5. This sub task force recommends a 15 minute advisory class be implemented utilizing the time before lunch. The advisory class will of course consist of the members on the team

that each student is assigned. Teaming will allow for better communication and collaboration during Advisory Class.

- 1.5.6. The Advisory Teacher should be on the Team that their students are on to allow for better collaboration and understanding of issues.

1.6. After School Activities

- 1.6.1. The sub task force recommends the following programs be implemented:

- 1.6.1.1. Science Club
- 1.6.1.2. Math Club
- 1.6.1.3. BEEP

- 1.6.2. The sub task force recommends the following activities continue to be funded at their current levels

- 1.6.2.1. Volleyball
- 1.6.2.2. Girls Basketball
- 1.6.2.3. Boys Basketball
- 1.6.2.4. Track
- 1.6.2.5. Baseball
- 1.6.2.6. Annual Play
- 1.6.2.7. Student Council
- 1.6.2.8. Yearbook
- 1.6.2.9. Guitar Club

- 1.6.3. The sub task force recommends the following club sports be emphasized at the Jr. High and other club sports be evaluated.

- 1.6.3.1. Football
- 1.6.3.2. Wrestling

- 1.6.4. Although this task force did not study the viability or interest of other after school activities and student clubs, their value is not meant to be understated in this report. We suggest these types of activities continue to be investigated and tested to determine what interests exist within the student body.

Anticipated Timeline to Achieve the Recommendations

Table 2 Implementation Timeline				
Tasks	To be completed By			
	1/1/2005	3/1/2005	6/1/2005	9/1/2005
Develop Training and details for Teaming				
Communicate benefits of Teaming to Community				
Develop a Proposed Schedule				
Train Teachers of Teaming				
Develop Transition Program				
Set agenda for Advisory Class				
Training for new Teachers on Teaming				

All Improvement Options should be implemented for the 2005-2006 School year.

Anticipated Costs to Achieve the Recommendations

Very minimal costs will be incurred to implement this plan. The following items have been identified:

Table 3				
Option	FTE	Training Costs	Stipend Costs	Total Cost
Interdisciplinary Teaming	0	\$ 4,000	0	\$ 4,000
Staff Development	0	0	0	0
Transition/Advisory	0	0	0	0
After School Activities *	0	0	\$ 4,500	\$ 4,500
Total Cost		\$ 4,000	\$ 4,500	\$ 8,500

* Most of this cost will be absorbed for the first year at least by an existing grant just obtained. The sports recommended have already been included in the 2004-2005 Adopted Budget.

- **Periodic Evaluation of the Plan by the School District**

The purpose of evaluating the Jr. High Academic Enhancement Plan on a periodic basis is to monitor implementation, adjust to changing educational strategies and fiscal appropriations, and identify future needs.

Since the topics for improvement were selected from the Task Force Body, there are probably more topics and ideas that could have a positive effect on academic achievement that have not been studied by this Task Force. It is our recommendation that this Task Force be re-kindled periodically to study other improvements that might be implemented.

It is the recommendation of this Sub-Task Force to have this plan reviewed by the school district on an annual basis.

The Jr. High Principal will report to the Board on an annual basis, separate from the KPI reports, after completing the assessment of the Plan, to inform the Board about the “State of the Jr. High”.

Appendix A State Report Card

2002-2003 School Report Card

**ESTACADA
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**



Dear Parents and Community Members,

January 29, 2004

The Oregon Department of Education is proud to issue the fifth annual school report card. As Oregon schools and districts continue to face many challenges, educators remain committed to providing the highest quality education for Oregon students. This year you will find two ratings displayed on this report card: an Oregon rating and a federal rating required by the No Child Left Behind Act. The report card is not meant to tell you everything about your school, but it offers a starting point for discussions about where improvement might be needed and for celebrating successes in education for Oregon's children.

Susan Castillo
Susan Castillo, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Federal Adequate Yearly Progress Rating: NOT MET

DID NOT MEET MET
See rating details on back page

Oregon Report Card Overall Rating: SATISFACTORY



SCHOOL AT A GLANCE

Testing Participation
School Characteristics Rating: **EXCEPTIONAL**

Grade 8	School	State
Participation in 2002-2003 Statewide Assessment	100.0%	99.6%

English Language Learners	School
Percentage of Students in ESL Programs	5.3%

School Size	School
Number of Students	415

Expulsions	School	State
Number of Expulsions Due to Weapons	0	380

Staffing	School
Administrators (FTE)	1.0
Teachers (FTE)	20.5
♦ Average Years of Experience	11.0
♦ With a Master's Degree or Higher	28.1%
♦ With Emergency or Provisional Credential as of November 25, 2003	5.0%
♦ Classes Taught by Teachers Who Meet Federal Definition of Highly Qualified Teacher	0.0%
Instructional Assistants (FTE)	9.1
Other Staff (FTE)	5.8

Department of Education Notes

For more information, contact your local school.

ACCOUNTABILITY INFORMATION REQUIRED BY THE FEDERAL NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT

The information below is used to determine the Adequate Yearly Progress designation for your school. A school is designated as *Not Meeting AYP* if any indicator is determined to be *Not Met*. The Student Achievement and Student Participation ratings are based on 2001-2002 and 2002-2003 Oregon Statewide Assessments for the students in your school identified as enrolled for a full academic year. The statewide goal for the minimum percentage of students expected to meet or exceed standards is 40.0% in English/Language Arts and 39.0% in Mathematics. Student Participation is expected to be 95.0% or greater. The statewide goal for the minimum graduation rate is 68.1%. The statewide goal for the minimum attendance rate is 92.0%. For more information, please view documents at www.ode.state.or.us/nclb/ayp/index.asp

STUDENT GROUP	STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT		STUDENT PARTICIPATION		
	ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS	MATHEMATICS	ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS	MATHEMATICS	ATTENDANCE
White	MET	MET	MET	MET	---
African American/Black	NA	NA	NA	NA	---
Hispanic	NA	NA	NA	NA	---
Asian/Pacific Islander	NA	NA	NA	NA	---
Am. Indian/Alaskan Native	NA	NA	NA	NA	---
Multi-Racial/Multi-Ethnic	NA	NA	NA	NA	---
Special Education	NOT MET	NOT MET	MET	MET	---
Limited English Proficient	NA	NA	NA	NA	---
Economically Disadvantaged	MET	MET	MET	MET	---
All Students	MET	MET	MET	MET	MET

NA Too few test scores or students to determine a rating.

--- No data available

Department of Education Notes

LOCAL INFORMATION PROVIDED BY YOUR SCHOOL OR DISTRICT

Estacada Junior High School

SCHOOL RATINGS AND SUPPORTING DATA

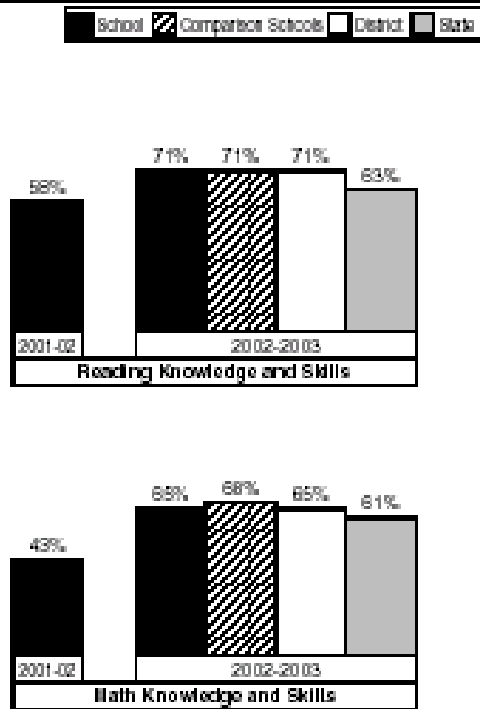
Academic Achievement

Student Performance Rating: **SATISFACTORY**

Percentage of Students Meeting Standards

The graphs below show the percentage of students in your school that met or exceeded the state standards on Oregon Statewide Assessments during the last two school years. District, state, and comparison school averages are displayed. Comparison schools are Oregon schools with similar demographics.

Grade 8



Attendance

Student Behavior Rating: **SATISFACTORY**

Attendance	School	District	State
2001-2002	93.1%	93.5%	93.9%
2002-2003	94.3%	93.6%	93.9%

For more information, see <http://reportcard.ode.state.or.us> or contact the Oregon Department of Education at reportcard@state.or.us or 503-378-3600 x2287

Estacada Junior High School

Improvement

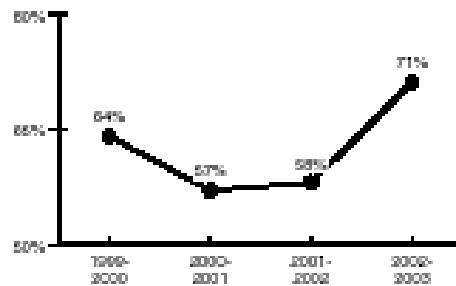
Assessments and Attendance

Improvement Rating: **STAYED ABOUT THE SAME**

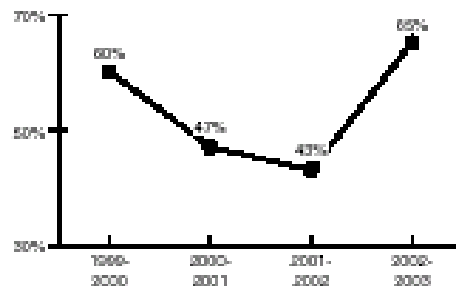
Four-Year Improvement

The graphs below show change during the past four years in the percentage of students meeting standards on Reading and Math Knowledge and Skills Statewide Assessments and in attendance. Improvement ratings are described by one of the following: Improved, Stayed About the Same, or Declined.

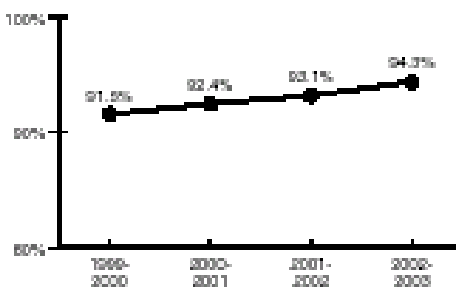
Grade 8 Reading



Grade 8 Mathematics



Attendance



SCHOOL RATINGS AND SUPPORTING DATA

Statewide Assessments

The table below shows the percentage of students in your school that exceeded, met, or did not meet state standards and participated in 2002-2003 Oregon Statewide Assessments. For more information, see www.ode.state.or.us/asm/t/results

STUDENT GROUP Race/Ethnicity	STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT						STUDENT PARTICIPATION	
	READING			MATHEMATICS			READING	MATHEMATICS
	EXCEEDED %	MET %	NOT MET %	EXCEEDED %	MET %	NOT MET %	%	%
White	19.2	46.3	34.6	16.6	41.7	41.7	100.0	100.0
African American/Black	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Hispanic	12.5	50.0	37.5	12.5	50.0	37.5	100.0	100.0
Asian/Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*	*	*	100.0	100.0
American Indian/Alaskan Native	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Multi-Racial/Multi-Ethnic	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Male	14.2	47.8	38.1	19.6	41.1	39.3	100.0	100.0
Female	23.6	44.5	31.8	13.0	42.6	44.4	100.0	100.0
Students with Disabilities	0.0	10.7	89.3	5.9	11.8	82.4	100.0	100.0
Migrant	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Limited English Proficient	*	*	*	12.5	50.0	37.5	100.0	100.0
Economically Disadvantaged	14.3	46.9	38.8	17.9	33.9	48.2	100.0	100.0
All Students	18.8	46.2	35.0	16.4	41.8	41.8	100.0	100.0

* Not displayed to protect student confidentiality.

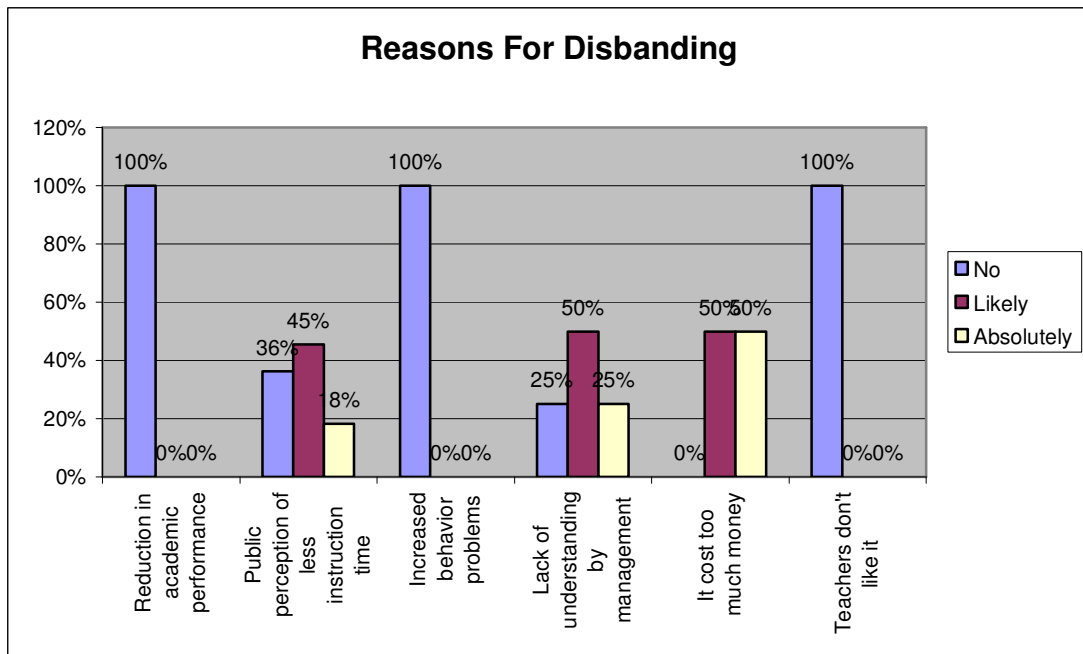
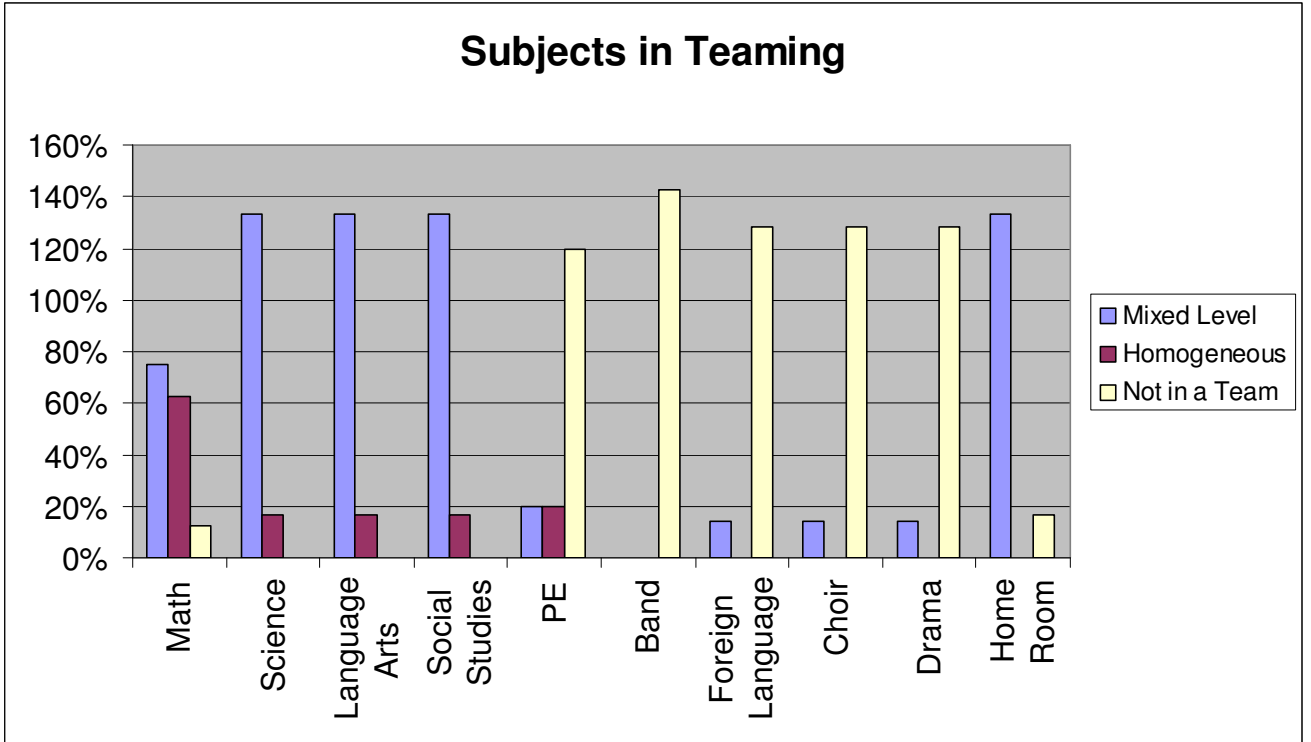
--- No data available

Department of Education Notes

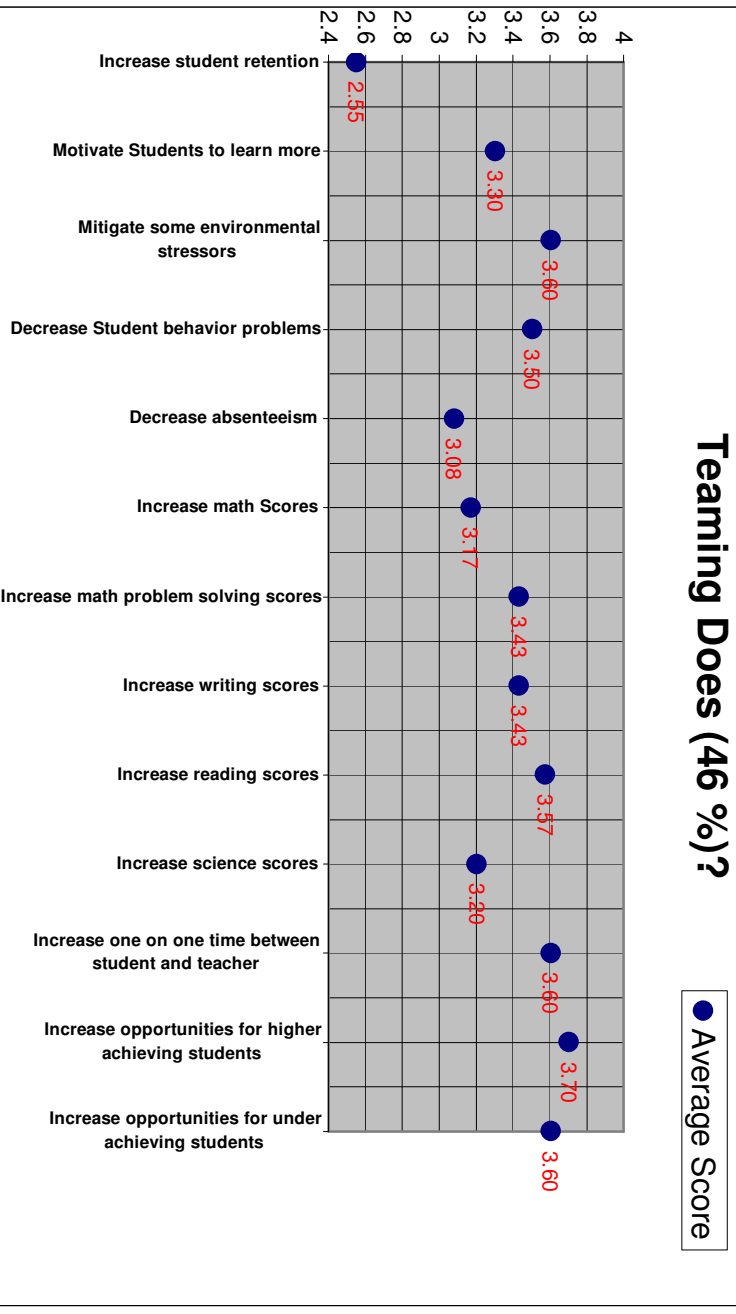
For more information, please view documents at www.ode.state.or.us/srda/reports.aspx

Estacada Junior High School

Appendix B Teacher Teaming Survey Results



Teaming Does (46 %)?



Appendix C
Article 1 – Research on Middle School Renewal

RESEARCH ON MIDDLE SCHOOL RENEWAL
What Makes Interdisciplinary Teams Effective?

Nancy Flowers, Steven B. Mertens, & Peter F. Mulhall

Nancy Flowers is the coordinator of research programs, Steven B. Mertens is a senior research scientist, and Peter F. Mulhall is the director of the Center for Prevention Research and Development at the University of Illinois, Champaign.

Two of the biggest misconceptions surrounding the implementation of interdisciplinary teaming in the middle grades are that (a) the work is complete after teachers and students have been assigned to teams and the class schedule has been rearranged so that students on each team have all their classes together (i.e., the structures are in place) and (b) the implementation of teaming ensures that a school will positively impact teacher and student outcomes. However, the truth is that not only is the most challenging work tackled after teams have been formed, but, without the follow-up work, teaming alone is not likely to achieve sustained outcomes (Erb and Doda, 1989; Felner, Jackson, Kasak, Mulhall, Brand, & Flowers, 1997).

For many teachers who are assigned to a team for the first time, working on an interdisciplinary team represents a change from the security of their often isolated classrooms to a setting that requires collaboration, teamwork, and ongoing communication with other teachers. Since interdisciplinary teams are comprised of groups of teachers from different subject areas who work together to coordinate instruction, communication, and assessment for a common group of students, teachers must learn to work collaboratively, establish equitable responsibilities among team members, and set attainable goals for the team. Further, once teams have established professional and interactive relationships, they must learn how best to use their group efforts given the goals they have set for themselves. Since very few educators are trained or prepared to work on teams, these are challenging and often frustrating tasks for even the most dedicated and caring teachers. However, when a team can crystallize its goals and tasks, its members can work together to influence curriculum and instruction, which in turn influences the learning process. In fact, schools engaged in interdisciplinary teaming have a more positive school climate, have more frequent contact with parents, have higher job satisfaction among teachers, and report higher student achievement scores than non-teaming schools (Flowers, Mertens, and Mulhall, 1999).

This article will identify and explain the types of practices and interactions that teams engage in, which in turn influence instruction and student learning. Data will also be presented to illustrate the impact that common planning time, the size of teams, and the length of time that a school has been engaged in teaming have on team activities and interactions. The data were collected from a group of 155 middle grades schools in Michigan that are part of the Middle Start Initiative funded by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. These schools participated in the School Improvement Self-Study, a set of surveys completed by staff, students, and administrators, during 1994-95 and again in 1996-97 (Felner, Mertens, & Lipsitz, 1996; Mertens, Flowers, & Mulhall, 1998).

Impact of Teaming Practices

Ask fifty middle grades teachers what types of coordinated efforts they undertake with their fellow team members and you will likely receive many diverse explanations, but at the core of the responses will lie some startling similarities. The activities of most interdisciplinary teams fall into one of the following three categories: (a) curricular and instructional issues; (b) student-centered issues, and (c) issues about communication.

The Center for Prevention, Research and Development's (CPRD) Self-Study measures the frequency with which teachers engage in these team activities through a series of survey questions. Based on factor and reliability analyses, the team activities measured include curriculum coordination (how often teams work together to coordinate learning activities), coordination of student assignments, assessments, and feedback (how often teams work together to coordinate the nature and timing of student assignments, the manner in which they are assessed, and the type of feedback provided), parent contact and involvement (activities that promote the involvement of parents in the education of their children), and contact with other building resource staff (communication with administrators, media center, special education). By measuring how often teams engage in these types of coordinated activities, we hope to begin to shed light on their impact in allowing teachers to effect change in the classroom.

Common planning time increases team activities

There is no magic formula for determining how often teams should engage in coordinated team activities. However, we propose that the more a team works on these activities (i.e., weekly or daily), the more likely they are to regularly influence classroom instruction. Another seemingly obvious conclusion is that teams that have the benefit of common planning time are more likely to have opportunities to engage in team activities than teams that do not meet during a common preparation period (Warren & Muth, 1995).

Among the 155 Michigan Middle Start schools, CPRD has identified 25 with high levels of common planning time (i.e., at least 4 meetings per week with each meeting lasting at least 30 minutes), 76 with low (i.e., some common planning time, but less than the highest level) or no common planning time, and 34 that are not teaming. Twenty schools were not classified because they were special education/alternative schools or only had pilot teams. The schools that were teaming with high levels of common planning time have significantly higher team activities than schools in the other two categories. It is not surprising that the team activities among non-teaming schools were very low. Of particular interest, however, are the statistically significant differences between the team-practices average scores of the teaming with high common planning time schools and the teaming with low or no common planning time schools. The more highly implemented schools consistently engaged in more frequent team-related, middle-grades practices, thus the impact of high levels of common planning time is clearly evident.

Smaller teams engage in more team activities

Many schools struggle with determining the optimal number of students that should be assigned to each team. Should each team consist of 130 students, or would they function better with fewer students? Undeniably, the size of a team influences the frequency and success with which team activities can occur. Teams who are coordinating instruction for 100 versus 200 students have a much more manageable task to contend with. In order to examine the effects of team size on team activities, CPRD selected only those Michigan Middle Start teachers who taught core academic subjects (i.e., reading, language arts, math, science, social studies), were members of a team, and taught in a school that had implemented teaming in some or all of its middle grades. For analysis purposes, teams were grouped into three size categories: 90 students or less (340 teachers); 91-120 students (338 teachers), and 121 or more students (295 teachers). As expected, teachers who are part of teams with fewer students (90 or less) engage more frequently in team activities, particularly curriculum coordination and coordination of student assignments. Clearly, coordination activities are more manageable and thus more likely to occur in teams with fewer students.

Schools teaming longer engage in more team activities

Another critical question for consideration is whether team activities occur more frequently in schools that have been teaming for a longer period of time. In addition, does the level of common planning time in place combined with how long the school has been teaming have

an added impact on team activities? In an effort to answer these questions, Michigan Middle Start schools were categorized by the length of time they have been teaming: 1-2 years (19 schools), 3-4 years (39 schools), and 5 or more years (42 schools). Two important findings emerge from this data:

Schools with lower levels of common planning time show little to no difference in the frequency of team activities by the number of years they have been teaming. Schools with high levels of common planning time show increased frequencies of most team activities the longer they have been teaming.

Schools with high levels of common planning time consistently engage in more frequent team activities than schools with lower levels of common planning time, regardless of the number of years they have been teaming.

Clearly the length of time a school has been teaming has some impact on the frequency that teams engage in team activities; however, this impact is also influenced by the level of common planning time in place. The impact of continuity is enhanced by high levels of common planning time.

Teacher interactions on teams

While the frequency that teams engage in various team-related practices is important to the success of interdisciplinary teaming, the types and quality of interactions among team members are equally important. Interactions like how well team members work together and the level of support of each other's work that is present also influence a team's success. To measure these interactions, CPRD constructed several scales or dimensions based on analyses of team interactions questions on the Self-Study. Team interactions are measured by how much teachers agree that their teams have a positive climate, are effective in their work, and relate well with students, parents, and other individuals at the school.

High quality team interactions among members is associated with higher levels of positive team practices. In other words, teams that meet together more frequently (i.e., high levels of common planning time), are more positive in the assessment of their own group interactions than teams with low levels of common planning time. This may be the simple fact that teams that are able to meet more often have the opportunity to work out differences of opinion and arrive at common ground more readily than teams that do not meet as frequently. In addition, team interactions are also more positive among teams with smaller team sizes (i.e., 90 or fewer students), as well as among teams that have been engaged in teaming for a longer period of time. Lastly, in schools engaged in some level of teaming, the frequency of team practices correlates very highly with the quality of team interactions. This indicates a strong, positive relationship between how often teachers engage in teaming activities and their attitudes about the quality of team interactions. These findings may seem predictable, especially for teachers and schools that are already immersed in teaming. But for those that have not yet implemented teaming in their schools, these data-based findings can illuminate the potential impact teaming can have on a middle grades school.

Summary

Clearly the implementing of and the functioning of teams is a very complex process. The Self-Study data, however, illustrate several critical issues for schools to consider on the path to teaming. The first is that after teams have been formed, teachers must focus on learning to work together as well as what types of activities they will undertake as a group. These activities and relationships are what will eventually influence classroom teaching and learning. Second is that common planning time is a critical component of a team's success. Teams with high levels of common planning time report both engaging in team activities more frequently as well as feelings of a more positive team climate. Third, teams with fewer students engage more frequently in team activities and have more positive interactions among team members. And finally, teams that have been working together for a longer

period of time have benefited from the longevity of their team relationship as evidenced by more coordination activities as well as greater feelings of success in their work. Although many of the findings regarding team activities seem intuitive, having data to substantiate the impact of teaming strengthens the argument that school administrators and school boards should allocate more resources for the implementation of teaming in middle grades schools. The next logical question is, how do the activities of teams translate into practices at the classroom level, thus directly having an impact on students? The answer to this question will be the topic of a future column.

Author's note:

We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge Dr. Robert Felner, who was the Principal Investigator on the initial grant from the Kellogg Foundation to the University of Illinois. His contribution to this work is greatly appreciated.

References

- Erb, T. O., & Doda, N. M. (1989). *Team organization: Promise-practices and possibilities*. Washington, D.C.: National Education Association.
- Felner, R. D., Jackson, A. W., Kasak, D., Mulhall, P., Brand, S. & Flowers, N. (1997). The impact of school reform for the middle years: Longitudinal study of a network engaged in Turning Points-based comprehensive school transformation. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 78(7), 528-532, 541-550.
- Felner, R., Mertens, S. B., & Lipsitz, J. (1996). *Assessment of middle grades education in Michigan: A report to the W. K. Kellogg Foundation's Middle Start Initiative*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois.
- Flowers, N., Mertens, S., & Mulhall, P. (1999). The impact of teaming: Five research-based outcomes of teaming. *Middle School Journal*, 31(2), 57-60.
- Mertens, S. B., Flowers, N., & Mulhall, P. (1998). *The Middle Start Initiative, Phase 1: A longitudinal analysis of Michigan middle-level schools. (A report to the W. K. Kellogg Foundation)*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois.
- Warren, L. L., & Muth, K. D. (1995). The impact of common planning time on middle grade students and teachers. *Research in Middle level Education Quarterly*, 18(3), 41-58

Appendix D

Article 2 – Student Satisfaction with Teaming and Looping

Student Satisfaction with Teaming and Looping In Middle-school Adolescents: A presentation to the MWERA Annual Meetings, Columbus, Ohio October, 2002

**Lawrence Sherman, Kris Fitz, Richard Hofmann
Miami University, Oxford, Ohio¹**

ABSTRACT. Middle school children (n=172) were surveyed with regard to perceptions of satisfaction with a looping and teaming curriculum structure throughout their 7th and 8th grade years. Comparisons between their memories of their 7th grade experience and their present perceptions of their 8th grade experience, as well as comparisons among three teams, revealed consistent responses to the survey items. Increases in positive perceptions were obtained from the 7th to the 8th grade year. Festinger's Cognitive Dissonance theory was used to explain these results. The analyses support earlier theoretical expectations with regard to the positive effects of interdisciplinary teaming and looping structures.

Positive evidence supporting the use of *interdisciplinary teams* and *looping* in the middle grades is abundant. However there appears to be a lack of information describing problems associated with this structure. One problem might be associated with student satisfaction with this type of curricular structure. The present study is an attempt at examining student perceptions of satisfaction in interdisciplinary and looped teams in a local middle school program.

The middle school population being studied is very responsive to the needs of its students, teachers, and community in regard to teaming and looping. A question still remains unanswered by the literature addressing a lack of "student-generated" data about their level of satisfaction with teaming and looping. With what characteristics of teams do the students seem most/least satisfied? How do the students' recollections of their first year on the team compare with their thoughts at the present time during the second year on the team? Also, research states that teaming and looping should be a positive experience, yet there are students who continue to switch teams/loops between the 7th and 8th grade. How satisfied are the students with their choice to remain on the same team or switch to another team? How does the data of the students who switch teams compare with those who stay in the loop?

This research is significant in order to understand the feelings of the students toward the teaming and looping structures. In order to gain an understanding of students' need to make a mid-loop lateral movement some of the teaming/looping barriers need to be identified. Research could uncover possible weak areas that staff and other students could address in order to help less-satisfied students feel better about the team, regardless of whether or not a switch was made.

Lastly, a lack of empirical evidence or study based on research exists. Of sixteen research articles only four had an experimental or quantitative basis; the others were descriptive in nature. Black's (2000) article focuses on a longitudinal study comparing attendance rates, number of retentions, and amount of discipline problems before and after looping was instituted. Grant (2000) also cites research on discipline and attendance rates, as well as the impact on the number of special education referrals. Lincoln (1998) reports a difference between looped and non-looped students' academic achievement scores, social skills, self-efficacy, and attitude toward school. Lastly, Erb (1997) describes that teamed students score higher on standardized tests, are less likely to be late, and have higher self-esteem scores. None of this past research deals with student attitudes toward switching teams, looping, or general perceptions of satisfaction with the team/looping experience. Thus, it is necessary to add to the research base that deals with the satisfaction and expectations of students involved in teaming and looping situations.

Methodology, Design and Analysis

To address concerns of past research, a "descriptive study" was accomplished making use of quantitative survey data. The data resulted from a 27-item survey instrument utilizing a semantic differential structure, scaled from 1 (positive perceptions) to 5 (negative perceptions), to measure the students' general perceptions of satisfaction with their teaming/looping experience. The survey and procedures were guided and approved by Miami University's Institutional Review Board. The survey was administered to 8th grade students (n=172) in their homerooms where they volunteered to anonymously respond to the 27 item survey. This was done at the end of their 8th grade year in May. (See Figure 1 for a graphic display of the time lines associated with this study). The survey asked them to rate two sets of 8 parallel items, 16 in all, 8 which were associated with their memories of the 7th grade experience, and 8 which dealt with their current 8th grade perceptions. The survey instrument also included such demographic items as team membership, gender, and whether or not the respondents switched or did not switch teams at the end of the seventh grade. (See Appendix A, The **Looping Survey**) The instrument was piloted on a sample group. Coefficient-alpha was determined on the three parts of the survey as an indicator of its reliability.

Comparisons using paired t-tests were made between the parallel forms of the survey requesting information on the students' attitudes regarding the present eighth grade experience and their recollections of the seventh grade experience. Other comparisons of attitudes using a between subjects one-way ANOVA were used to examine differences in perceptions between those students who switched teams and those who did not. The three teams were compared among each other with regard to the 8 parallel items obtained for their 7th grade reflections and 8th grade current perceptions using a within subjects one-way analysis of variance. The 8th grade perceptions on the 8 items were compared among each other using a repeated measures ANOVA design.

Inasmuch as the nature of this study was descriptive, testing specific hypotheses was not the primary objective. Allowing the data to generate

hypotheses was more in line with our approach. Differences in attitudes of students who switched and did not switch teams were examined. Potential differences among demographic categories (gender, teams, age) within the three teams were analyzed using the Chi-square statistic.

In addition two different factor analyses of the survey items was made. The first looked at the overall satisfaction associated with the last 8 items (items 20 through 27). The second factor analysis examined 16 items, the two 8 item parallel sets associated with either the 7th grade reflections and the 8 items associated with their current 8th grade perceptions.

Results

The results are reported in 6 Tables and 3 graphs. Of the known 195 students in the eighth grade, 183 surveys were obtained. Thus approximately 94% of the 8th grade student body volunteered to respond to the survey. However, 11 of these were students who had not attended this middle school last year. They have been excluded from data analysis since they are missing appropriate 7th grade reflections. The remaining 172 respondents were demographically distributed among the three cohorts (Teams A, B and C) based on their gender, age, and whether or not they switched teams and are described in Table 1. The survey instrument was examined for reliability using coefficient alpha as the statistic which was calculated separately for each of the three subsets of items: the 8 items associated with the 7th grade reflections (**coefficient alpha** = .83); the 8 items associated with the 8th grade current perceptions (**coefficient alpha** = .86); and, the 8 overall satisfaction items (**coefficient alpha** = .94). The distribution of gender among the three teams was found to be equivalent ($X^2_{(2)} = 2.23, p > .05$). The age groups were distributed in an equivalent manner as well ($X^2_{(4)} = 5.15, p > .05$) (only three age groups were used in this analysis, collapsing the 15 and 16-yr-olds together into one category: students who were 15 years old or greater). The 15 students who did switch teams were equally distributed amongst the three 8th grade teams ($X^2_{(2)} = .43, p > .05$). Thus the three teams appear to be equivalent on all demographic variables. These findings allowed us to assume equivalency among the three cohort teams.

[Insert Table 1 about here]

Table 2 displays the descriptive statistics obtained for the 7th grade reflections on the 8 items (4 through 11). For the most part no statistically different mean ratings were obtained from contrasts among the three teams across the 8 items associated with their 7th grade reflections. The only exception to this pattern occurred in Team C as contrasted with the other two teams (A and B). Inasmuch as no significant differences were obtained among the three teams, looking at the overall mean ratings among the 8 items rated by all respondents did not reveal any significant differences either. The most negative appear to be "Exciting, homework, reputation, and success." The lowest most positive ratings were associated with "Friends, humor, good people, and teaching well."

[Insert Table 2 about here]

Table 3 displays the descriptive statistics obtained for the 8th grade current perceptions on the 8 items (12 through 19). Once again, no statistically different mean ratings were obtained from contrasts among the three cohort teams across the 8 items, with the exception of Team B that was

more negatively rated than Teams A or C. Inasmuch as no significant differences were obtained among the three teams, looking at the overall mean ratings among the 8 items rated by all respondents did not reveal any significant differences either. Overall, these ratings appear to be in the moderate range tending towards the positive end of the range (less than 3). A 2-way Repeated measures ANOVA was applied to these 8 survey items (the repeated measures factor) across the three teams (the non-repeated factor) and obtained a statistically significant ($p < .05$) interaction, $F_{(14, 1134)} = 2.125$. As can be seen in Table 3 and Figure 2, the two items, "exciting classes" and "amount of homework" received the highest scores (indicating the most negative feelings) across all three teams. These responses were found to be statistically different from the other six items. Also, two variables, "friends" and "teachers who teach well" were significantly different from the variable "success". The characteristic showing the most satisfaction (i.e., lowest score) on Team B was the "use of humor in the classroom." However, these same students report less satisfaction with the level of "excitement" in the classroom (rated 2.59). Team C has also reported an unexpected incongruity. They believe their "teachers teach well" (rated the highest level of satisfaction, 1.71), but are less satisfied with the "amount of homework" and "excitement" (2.79 and 2.60 respectively). The highest reported score (measuring the least satisfaction) was a mean of 2.87 for the variable "homework" on Team A, which is less than the mid-point of the scale (a value of three). Again the students' ratings for all eight variables indicate an overall satisfaction with the teaming and looping experience.

[Insert Table 3 and Figure 2 about here]

Table 4 displays the descriptive statistics obtained for the last 8 items which attempted to focus on overall satisfaction with the looping experience. Again, no statistically different mean ratings were obtained from contrasts among the three cohort teams across the 8 items (items 20 through 27). And, these ratings tended to be the most positive, tending towards the low end of our scale, 1. The last eight items on the survey asked students to reflect on their decision to switch teams or stay on the same team. The data generated from the student responses can be found in found in Table 4. A 2-way repeated measures ANOVA was utilized to examine the differences among the 8 items (the repeated measures factor) and the three teams (the non-repeated measures factor) and is shown in Figure 3. While a marginally significant interaction F-ratio was obtained, it appeared somewhat complex and difficult to interpret ($F_{(14, 1113)} = 1.733$, $p < .04$). To explore this further, 8 1-way ANOVA, one for each of the 8 items, contrasted the three teams mean ratings of the 8 items. None of these analyses obtained any significant differences, so each team must have received responses that were relatively similar to the other teams. This is a desirable outcome, which symbolizes that for these items, the teams are equal; no team stands out as one whose members are any more or less satisfied than the others. Despite the lack of significant differences, some trends in the data are worth noting. Team B received the lowest average scores for five of the characteristics measured by the survey, including level of acceptance, feelings of success, fulfillment, thankfulness, and overall team satisfaction. It is important to reiterate that a lower average score indicates the highest level of the positive characteristic. Also, Team A received the highest average scores for five of the characteristics including, "feelings of success, fulfillment, level of inclusion, lack of anxiety, and overall team satisfaction." While the highest value reported for this part of the survey was 2.29 for the variables describing the "relaxed"

feeling and "overall satisfaction" with their choice, this value still relays a general feeling of satisfaction when viewed on a one-to-five scale.

[Insert Table 4 and Figure 3 about here]

A factor analysis of these last 8 items obtained one single factor accounting for 73% of the variance. Factor scores (See Table 4) from this analysis were applied to these 8 items to derive a single "Satisfaction" score which was then used to examine differences among four types of students who either switched or did not switch teams and were "glad" or not glad about this decision. Significant differences among these four subgroups were obtained ($F_{(3, 157)} = 21.06, p < .00001$). As can be seen in Figure 4, children who expressed "gladness" or satisfaction with the looping/teaming experience also tended to rate the last 8 satisfaction items the most positive (lower mean scores) and children who said they were "not glad" of their decision to switch or not switch teams tended to rate these same items more negatively (towards the high end of the scale). While most of these ratings were quite positive (tending towards the low end of our Looping/Teaming survey scale) those children who were "not glad" of their decisions rated the satisfaction items significantly higher. Only 24 out of 162 children (nearly 15%) said they were "not glad" of their decision to either switch (6 children) or not switch (18 children). Thus, the majority of the children (85%) were "glad" of their decision to either switch (8 children) or not switch (129). We believe the statistically significant patterns obtained in this analysis tend to establish some internal construct validation to our instrument, as well as a confirmation of Festinger's (1957) cognitive dissonance theory.

[Figure 4 here]

One further factor analysis was done on the 16 items which were parallel among the 7th grade reflections (items 4-11) and 8th grade current perceptions (items 12-19). This oblique solution determined three significant factors whose loadings are displayed in Tables 2 and 3. The first factor of this analysis loaded on all 8 of the items associated with the 8th graders. We believe this factor has to do with overall satisfaction with the Looping/Teaming experience in the 8th grade (See Table 3). The second factor loaded on 5 of the 8 items associated with 7th grade reflections. All of the items seemed to focus on social relationships and we chose to describe this factor as the "**social issues**" factor. The third factor tended to load on 7th grader reflections associated with teaching issues and we chose to describe it as "**pedagogy**" factor. Both the second and third factor loadings are displayed in Table 2. Using these three factor scores as dependent variables we then applied several ANOVAs which examined differences which might be attributed to gender, age, the three cohorts (Teams A, B, and C) in either the 7th grade reflections or the 8th grade perceptions, switched vs no switch, and the combination of switch/glad, switch/not glad, stayed/glad and stayed/not glad. Neither the sex or ages or cohort membership of the children significantly differentiated these three dependent measures. Whether or not the children switched or stayed in the same cohort during their 8th grade year was not significant for any of the three dependent measures. All three dependent measures were differentiated by the fourway grouping of 1) switched/glad, 2) switched/not glad, 3) stayed/glad and 4) stayed/not glad. For factor 1, the **8th grade satisfaction** factor, we obtained statistically significant results ($F_{(3, 157)} = 11.54, p < .0001$). The same was true with regard to factor 2, the **7th grade social issues** factor ($F_{(3, 157)} = 6.58, p < .0003$), as well as the 7th grade pedagogy

factor ($F_{(3, 157)} = 5.71, p < .001$). We have tried to portray these findings in Figure 5

[Figure 5 about here]

Discussion

Several research questions were addressed by administering a 27-item survey to the three different teams of 8th grade students. In general, the three teams appear to have equivalent and for the most part quite perceptions. Only two of the variables showed a statistical difference when the teams were compared, and these differences did not exist for both the 7th grade reflections and the 8th grade perceptions. In other words, although Team C was less satisfied with the team's reputation in 7th grade, the perception of their reputation in 8th grade was not statistically different from the other teams. The same can be said about the amount of homework for Team B. The Team B students were more satisfied than the other teams for the 8th grade, but this difference had not existed in the 7th grade perceptions. However, there was a slight tendency for Team B to respond as more satisfied than the other teams, and Team A to be rated with less satisfaction. While these differences are not statistically significant, team attitudes should continually be monitored for the appearance of an "elite" team. Overall students seem to be most satisfied with the social aspects of their teams ("good people", "friends", "humor") and less satisfied with curricular aspects ("excitement in the classroom", "homework", "academic success"). These attitudes are fairly consistent with what would be expected for adolescents, given their inclination toward the social aspect of any event.

All of the variables were rated lower (again indicating more satisfaction) when describing the present 8th grade team when compared to the recollections of the 7th grade team. The idea indicates that students are more satisfied after they have been part of a looping/teaming structure. Perhaps a longitudinal study in the future could reproduce these differences and at the same time eliminate the inaccuracy introduced when people report on a recollection or memory of an event.

The data collected about the students' satisfaction with their choice to leave a team or stay provided useful insight. The switch that some students make does not appear to exclude them from a new team or make them social outcasts; those who switched and were glad were the most satisfied group studied, a prediction that Festinger's (1957) theory would predict. Conversely, staying on the same team does not in any way guarantee satisfaction. The students who regretted their choice to stay on the same team were often the least satisfied group. A large majority of students who did stay on the same team rated that team experience with high satisfaction levels.

The 24 items on the survey were rated with a fairly high degree of satisfaction, so the teaming/looping structure appears to be working for the majority of students at this middle school. In this sense, we believe our data suggests the looping/teaming structure is a positive and satisfying experience for middle school children.

Some suggestions for future research include a longitudinal study in order to eliminate the less reliable answers generated when people are asked to "...reflect on an earlier experience." This longitudinal format could be

useful to predict the 8th grade satisfaction from the 7th grade ratings. Lastly, the student perceptions could give insight into areas of this curricular structure that could be improved or refined to better meet the needs of future students. A qualitative research strategy might be tried on the children who actually did make a switch from one team to another. Those children who actual did make the switch from one team to another might be interviewed about their experience and their responses might be qualitatively examined for patterns.

¹Author notes

Lawrence W. Sherman, Ph. D. is a Professor of Educational Psychology in the Department of Educational Psychology at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio 45056. He may be reached through e-mail at: shermalw@muohio.edu. Copies of this paper may be requested from Lawrence W. Sherman, Department of Educational Psychology, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio 45056. The paper is available on the web at: http://www.users.muohio.edu/shermalw/Fitz_MWERA2002.htm

Kris Fitz received her Master's in Education from Miami University in 2001. This paper is an outgrowth of a research project which she completed in partial fulfillment of her Master's Degree in Education at Miami University. She is presently a middle school teacher in the Ross Local School District, Ross, Ohio. She may be reached through e-mail at: RO_Fitz@SWOCAI.SWOCA.NET

Rich Hofmann is a Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio 45056. He may be reached through e-mail at: hofmanr@muohio.edu

References

- Black, Susan. (2000). Together again. *The American School Board Journal*, 187 (6), 40-3.
- Chapman, Janet. (1999). A looping journey. *Young Children*, 54 (3), 80-3.
- Crosby, Patricia. (1998). Looping in the middle school: why do it?. *Teaching PreK-8*, 29 (3), 46-7.
- Elliot, Ian. (1998). When two years are better than one. *Teaching PreK-8*, 29 (3), 38-41.
- Erb, Thomas O. (1997). Meeting the needs of young adolescents on interdisciplinary teams. *Childhood Education*, 73 (5), 309-11.
- Festinger, L. (1957). *Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*. Evanston, Il: Row, Peterson & Company.
- Gable, Robert A. and Manning, M. Lee. (1999). Interdisciplinary teaming: solution to instructing heterogeneous groups of students. *Clearing House*, 72 (3), 182-5.
- Gaustad, Joan. (1998). *Implementing Looping*. Eric Digest: ED429330. http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed429330.html.
- Grant, Jim. (2000). In the loop. *School Administrator*, 57 (1), 30-3.
- Jordan, Doris. (2000). Looping: discovering the difference. *Teaching PreK-8*, 30 (6), 58-9.
- Kruse, Sharon D. and Louis, Karen Seashore. (1997). Teacher teaming in middle schools: dilemmas for a school wide community. *Educational Quarterly*, 33 (3), 261-89.
- Lincoln, Robert D. (1997). Multi-year instruction: establishing student-teacher relationships. *Schools in the Middle*, 6 (3), 50-2.
- Lincoln, Robert D. (1998). Looping in the middle grades. *Principal*, 78 (1), 58-9.
- Little, Thomas S. (1999). Looping: moving up with the class. *Educational Leadership*, 57 (1), 42-5.
- McMackin, Mary C. and Blackwell, Alison. (1997). Exploring the multiage classroom. *The New England Reading Association Journal*, 33 (2), 22-3.
- Vann, Allan S. (May, 1997). Looping: looking beyond the hype. *Principal*, 76, 41-2.
- Vann, Allan S. (October, 1997). Leveling about looping. *The Education Digest*, 63, 52-3.
- Walsh, Kevin J. and Shay, Kevin J. (1993). In support of interdisciplinary teaming: the climate factor. *Middle School Journal*, 24 (4), 56-60.

Appendix A

THE TEAMING AND LOOPING SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Please fill in the bubble for the answers that describe you. You may use pen or pencil.

Please bubble in your sex male female

Bubble in your age 13 14 15 16

- .1 What team were you on in 7th grade?
 1. A team 2. Dream team 3. Extreme team
 4. None of these apply (student new to the school)- do #2, then skip to question #12.
2. What team are you on now (in eighth grade)?
 1. A team 2. Dream team 3. Extreme team
3. Describe your situation about switching teams between 7th and 8th grade.
 1. switched teams and I'm glad 2. switched teams and wish I hadn't
 3. did not switch teams and I'm glad 4. did not switch teams but wish I had

Directions for items 4-27. Rate your feelings by bubbling in a number from 1 to 5 for each question. Circling 1 means you feel strongly about the quality on the left side of the scale, circling a 5 means you feel strongly about the quality on the right side of the scale, and a 3 would be no real feelings about one quality or the other. A 2 or 4 mean your feelings are somewhere in between.

Looking back, I thought my seventh grade team had...

- | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|----------------------------|
| 4. many of my friends | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | few of my friends |
| 5. a good reputation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | a bad reputation |
| 6. teachers who taught well | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | teachers who taught poorly |
| 7. good sense of humor | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | lacks a sense of humor |
| 8. not much homework | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | too much homework |
| 9. exciting classes | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | boring classes |
| 10. ways to help me succeed | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ways to make me fail |
| 11. good people to be around | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | people I'd rather avoid |

I think my eighth grade team has...

- | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|----------------------------|
| 12. many of my friends | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | few of my friends |
| 13. a good reputation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | a bad reputation |
| 14. teachers who taught well | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | teachers who taught poorly |
| 15. good sense of humor | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | lacks a sense of humor |
| 16. not much homework | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | too much homework |
| 17. exciting classes | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | boring classes |
| 18. ways to help me succeed | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ways to make me fail |
| 19. good people to be around | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | people I'd rather avoid |

What feelings do you have now about your choice to switch or not switch teams?

- | | | | | | | |
|----------------|---|---|---|---|---|----------------|
| 20. accepted | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | not accepted |
| 21. successful | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | unsuccessful |
| 22. fulfilled | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | unfulfilled |
| 23. thankful | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | regretful |
| 24. included | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | excluded |
| 25. relaxed | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | nervous |
| 26. in control | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | out-of-control |
| 27. satisfied | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | unsatisfied |

28. If you are new to this school, how long have you been here? _____months

Notes:

This survey instrument was designed for a Master's Degree project that Kris Fitz carried out in 2001 for the Department of Educational Psychology at Miami University. As part of the project *coefficient alpha* reliability for the instrument was computed on a sample of 183 middle school children. Coefficient Alphas were computed separately for each of the three sections of the

instrument: Section 1 (items 4 through 11) obtained an alpha of .83; Section 2 (items 12 through 19) obtained an alpha of .86; and Section 3 (items 20 through 27) obtained an alpha of .94.

Table 1.

Demographic Information for n=172 students.

Team	N	Gender ¹		Age ²				Switched? ³	
		Male	Female	13	14	15	16	Yes	No
A	61	30	31	10	45	5	1	6	55
B	59	37	22	9	46	3	0	4	55
C	52	29	23	12	32	7	1	5	47

—

Note. There were 11 new students in the school between seventh and eighth grade. Their responses have not been included in this data

¹The distribution of gender among the three teams was found to be equivalent ($X^2_{(2)} = 2.23, p > .05$).

²The age groups were distributed in an equivalent manner as well ($X^2_{(4)} = 5.15, p > .05$). Ages 15 and 16 were collapsed together for this analysis.

³The 15 students who did switch teams were equally distributed amongst the three 8th grade teams ($X^2_{(2)} = .43, p > .05$).

Table 2.
Descriptive statistics and factor loadings for 7th grade items 4 through 11 for the three teams.

7 th grade	Total n=172	² Factor Loadings	² Factor Loadings	Team A n=62	Team B n=55	Team C n=55
Items 4-11	Mean/ SD	Factor 2, 7th grade social issues	Factor 3, 7th grade pedagogy	Mean/ SD	Mean/ SD	Mean/ SD
Exciting: M	2.98	0.14	0.01	2.98	2.96	3.00
SD	1.17			1.18	1.20	1.14
Homework: M	2.88	0.04	0.26	2.87	2.73	3.04
SD	1.29			1.25	1.38	1.23
Success: M	2.34	0.29	0.68	2.37	2.36	2.28
SD	0.96			1.04	0.93	0.90
Reputation: M	2.24	0.70	0.06	2.06	2.13	*2.56
SD	1.08			0.94	1.14	1.10
Good people: M	2.13	0.56	0.36	2.13	2.16	2.09
SD	1.10			1.09	1.12	1.10
Humor: M	2.12	0.56	0.26	2.15	1.98	2.22
SD	1.03			0.85	1.19	1.04
Teach well: M	2.13	0.00	0.70	2.08	2.31	2.00
SD	1.13			1.12	1.18	1.06
Friends: M	2.12	0.73	0.01	1.98	2.35	2.05
SD	1.07			1.02	2.05	0.99

Note. A **low** score (1) describes the more **positive** attribute for any item. A reliability coefficient alpha for this part of the survey was found to be .83.

*Significantly different from the other teams, independent sample ANOVA, p<.05

²Factor analysis of all responses (n=161) of the 16 7th and 8th grade items (4 through 19) from the survey obtained an Oblique solution indicating three factors of which the second (**social issues**) and third (**pedagogy**) factors are displayed in this table. Factor 2, **social issues**, accounted for 20% of the variance while factor 3, **pedagogy**, accounted for 25% of the variance. Factor 1, **overall satisfaction with the looping experience of the 8th grade**, is displayed in Table 3 and account for 28% of the variance in this oblique solution.

Table 3.

Descriptive statistics for 8th grade items 12 through 19 by Teams.

8 th grade	Total [†] n=171	² Factor Loadings	Team A n=60	Team B n=59	Team C n=52
Item 12-19	Mean/ SD	Factor 1, 8 th grade satisfaction	Mean/ SD	Mean/ SD	Mean/ SD
Exciting: M	2.66	0.57	2.80	2.59	2.60
SD	1.11		1.14	1.10	1.11
Homework: M	2.63	0.49	2.87	*2.24	2.79
SD	1.25		1.26	1.26	1.14
Success: M	2.12	0.50	2.17	2.07	2.14
SD	1.00		1.10	0.99	0.92
Reputation: M	1.99	0.52	2.08	1.85	2.04
SD	0.97		1.00	0.93	1.00
Good people: M	1.99	0.59	2.12	2.00	1.83
SD	1.05		1.14	1.07	0.90
Humor: M	1.98	0.55	2.23	1.80	0.81
SD	1.04		1.08	1.14	
Teach well: M	1.94	0.56	2.12	1.95	1.71
SD	1.07		1.18	1.12	0.82
Friends: M	1.85	0.56	1.82	1.81	1.92
SD	1.02		0.97	1.07	1.04

Note. A **low** score (1) describes the more **positive** attribute for any item. A reliability coefficient alpha for this part of the survey was found to be .86.

*Significantly different from the other teams, independent sample ANOVA, p < .05

†A repeated-measures ANOVA contrasting the 8 items amongst each other obtained a significant F(7, 1148) = 26.75, p < .05.

²Factor analysis of all responses (n=161) of 16 7th and 8th grade items from the survey obtained an Oblique solution indicating three factors of which the first factor displayed in this table accounted for 28% of the variance. The other two factors are displayed in Table 2. We believe this factor describes **overall satisfaction with the looping experience of the 8th grade**. All 8 items significantly contributed to this factor.

Table 4.

Descriptive statistics and overall factor loadings for items 20 through 27 by teams.

Items 20-27	Total n=166	¹ Factor Loadings	Team A	Team B	Team C
	Mean/ SD		n=58 Mean/ SD	n=56 Mean/ SD	n=52 Mean/ SD
Accepted: M	1.92	0.86	1.92	1.75	2.12
SD	1.14		1.19	1.09	1.13
Success: M	1.95	0.90	2.14	1.80	1.90
SD	1.08		1.28	1.07	0.82
Fulfilled: M	2.07	0.89	2.19	1.88	2.15
SD	1.05		1.08	1.08	0.96
Thankful: M	2.03	0.86	2.10	1.84	2.15
SD	1.17		1.22	1.11	1.16
Included: M	2.01	0.88	2.09	1.98	1.94
SD	1.11		1.21	1.12	0.99
Relaxed: M	2.15	0.85	2.29	2.07	2.06
SD	1.20		1.30	1.21	1.06
Control: M	2.07	0.76	2.07	2.09	2.06
SD	1.08		1.07	1.16	1.02
Satisfied: M	2.02	0.82	2.29	1.79	1.98
SD	1.27		1.45	1.09	1.19

Note. A **low** (1) score describes the more **positive** attribute for any item. A reliability **coefficient alpha** for this part of the survey was found to be .94.

¹Factor analysis of all responses (n=166) to the last 8 items of the survey obtained an Oblique solution indicating three factors of which the first one single factor accounted for 73% of the variance. The other two factors were relatively weak and contributed little to the solution, therefore the first factor was utilized in later analyses. We believe this factor describes overall satisfaction with the looping experience.

Figure 1.

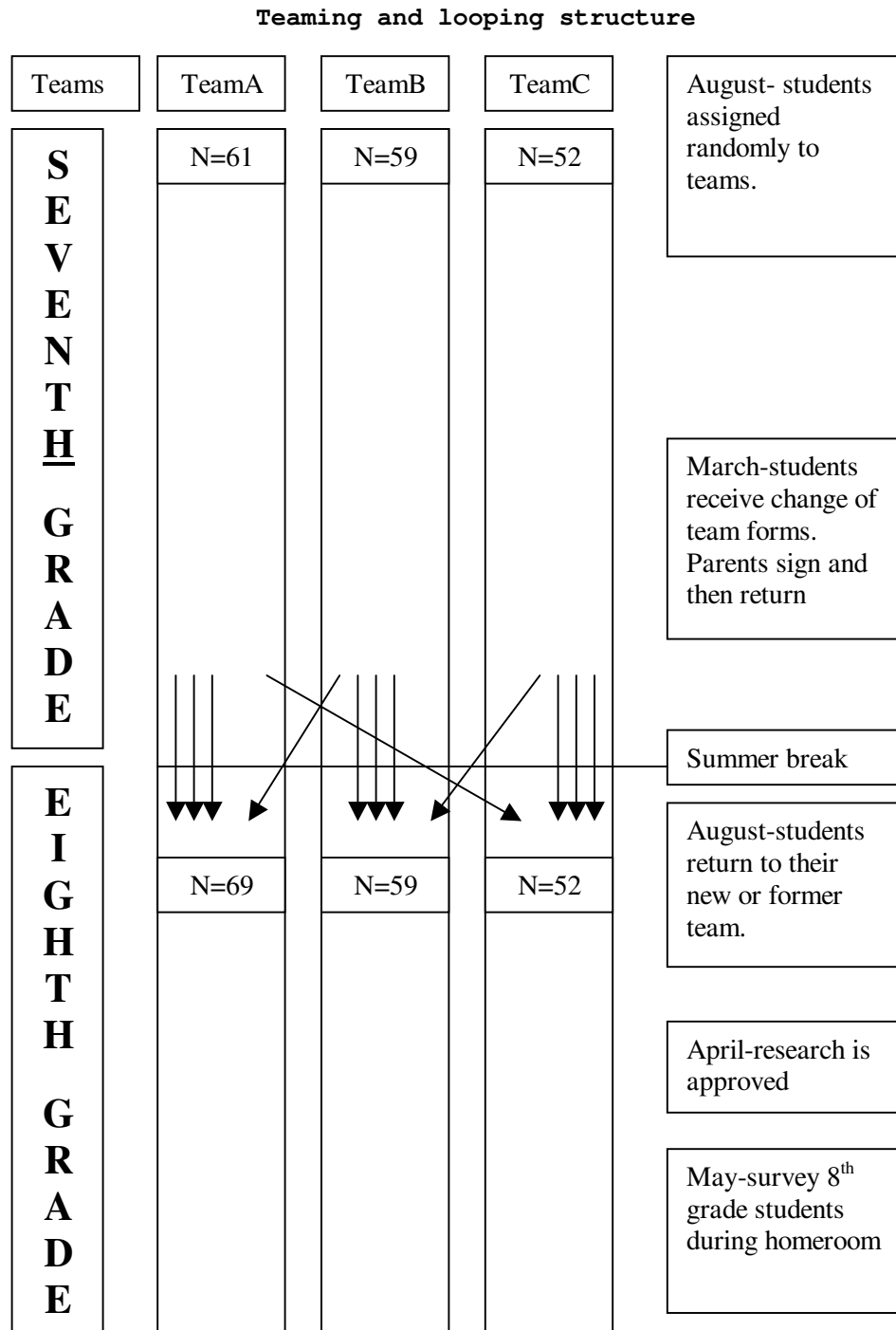


Figure 1-The Teaming/Looping Structure at a Mid-western Middle School

Figure 2.

Comparison of Team Ratings for Eighth Grade Items 12 through 19

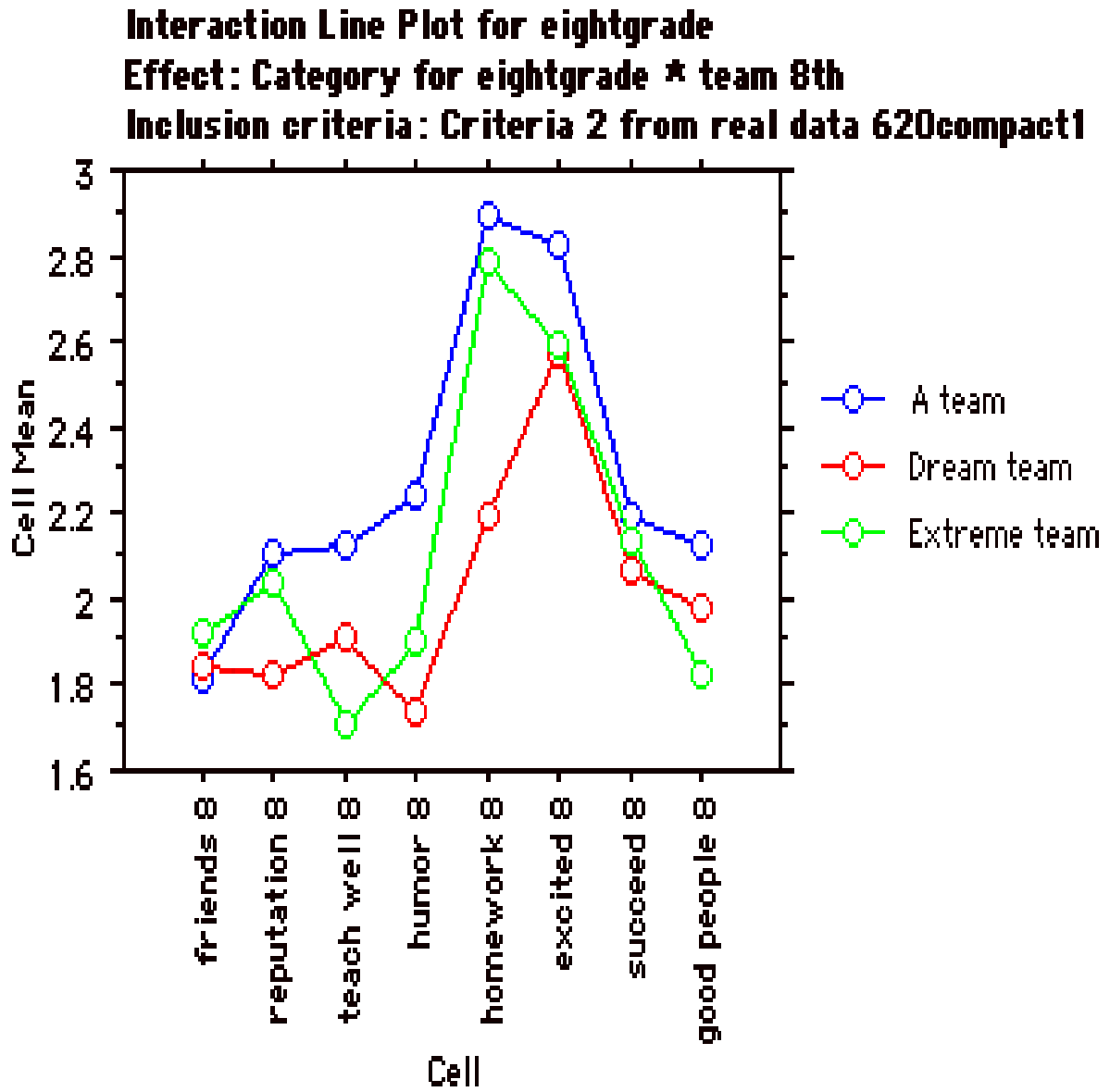


FIGURE 3

MEAN RESPONSES FOR ITEMS 20-TO 27 FOR THE THREE TEAMS

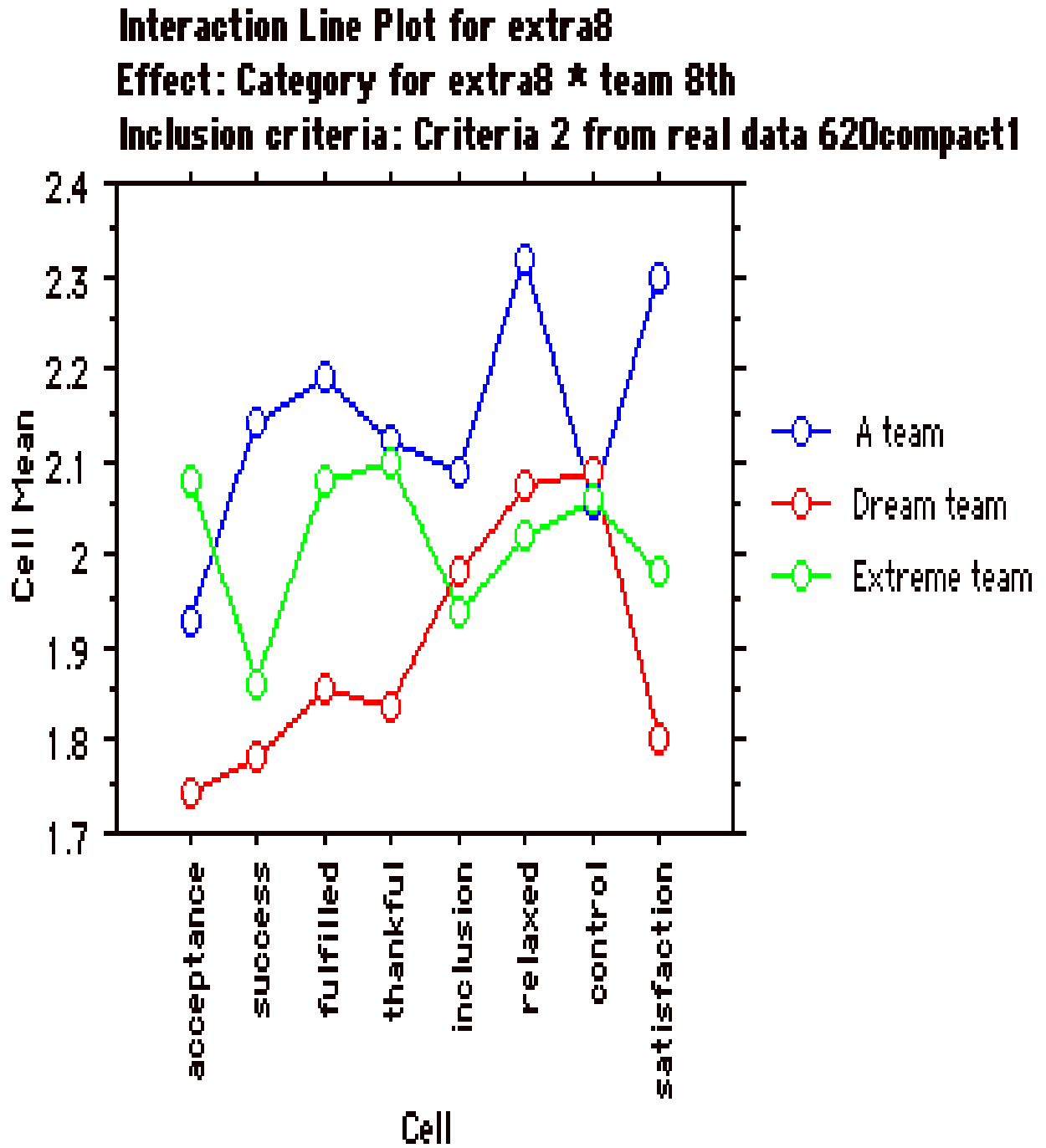


Figure 4
Bar Graph of four opinions regarding satisfaction with or with out switching from teams.

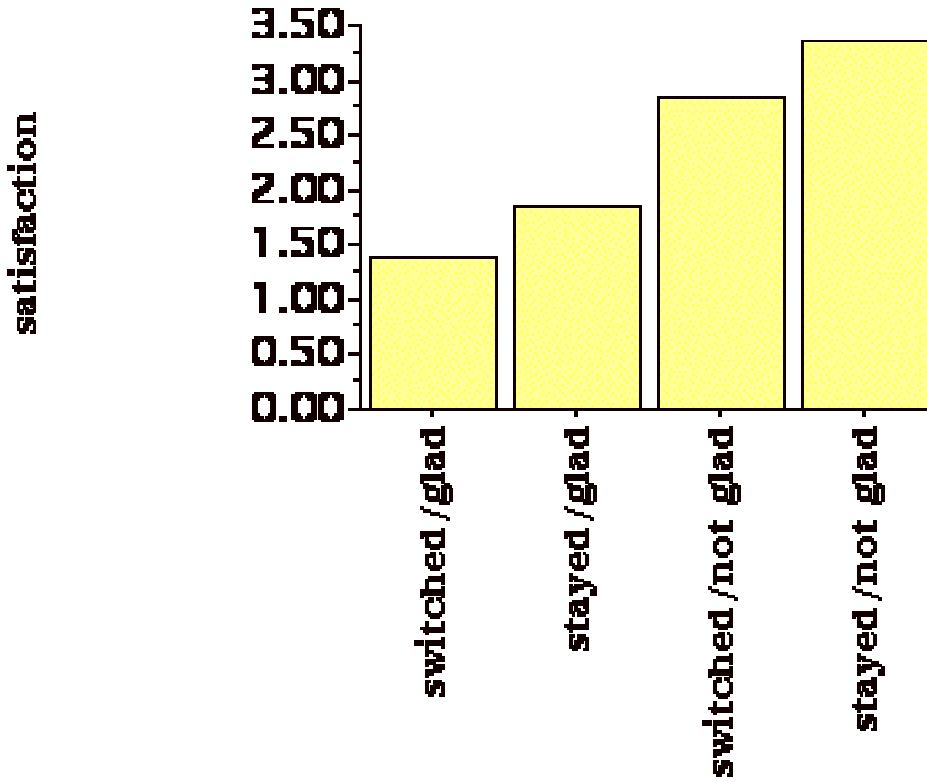
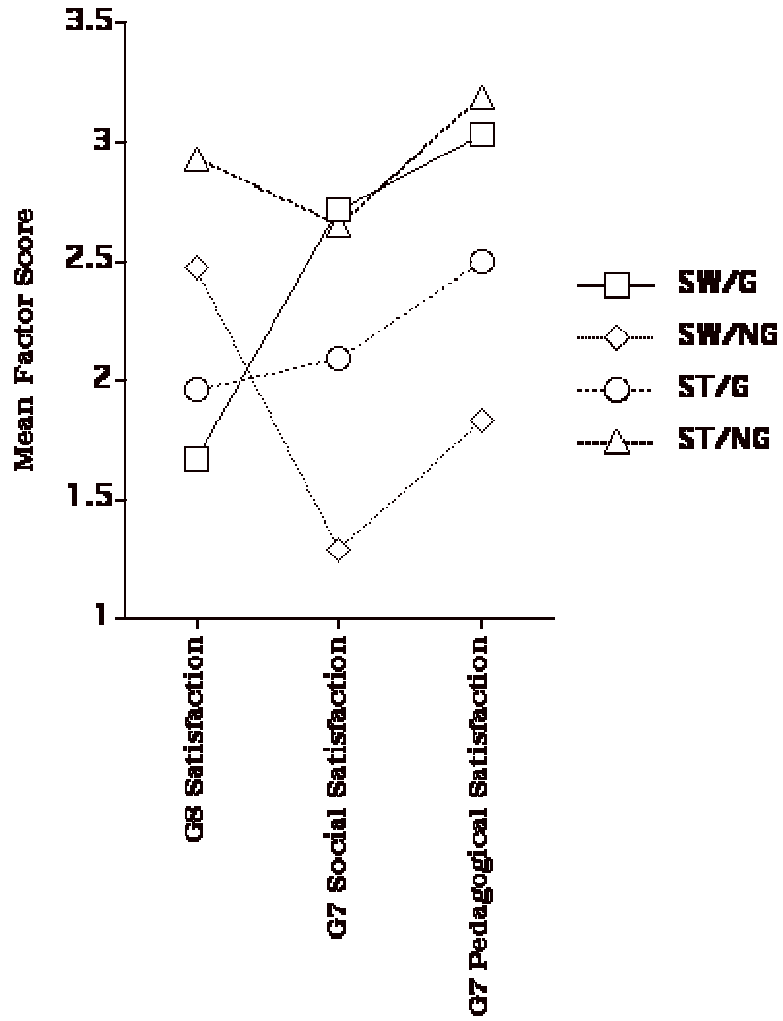


Figure 5
 Plot of Three Mean Factor Scores by Four Switch/satisfaction groups.



Appendix E

Article 3- Excerpts from - Mid South Middle Start Initiative Study

Introduction

Middle-grades education continues to receive fewer resources from national policy makers and school districts than those allocated to preschool, elementary, and secondary education. Yet nationally, middle-grades students currently experience high rates of underachievement. In addition, studies show that students in the middle grades are more prone to develop behavior patterns that can preclude them from achieving educational success in later grades and life success as adults.

In response to the needs of its young adolescents and to the outcry from its middle-grades schools for resources, the Foundation for the Mid South implemented the Mid South Middle Start Initiative in the states of Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi in 1998. The Initiative seeks to support and guide middle-grades schools through reform and restructuring, using the “best” educational, organizational, and technological resources and practices available, to improve student achievement and related student outcomes. Mid South Middle Start particularly targets and supports middle-grades schools that have significant numbers of disadvantaged students, and it has identified literacy and mathematics as its critical areas of focus.

Research Helps Guide the Reform Movement

Sixty-eight Louisiana schools serving middle-grades students responded to the Foundation for the Mid South’s invitation to join the Mid South Middle Start Initiative. Each school then collected data by participating in a set of surveys completed by teachers, administrators, and students. This data collection system, known as the School Improvement Self-Study, was designed and administered by the Center for Prevention Research and Development (CPRD) at the University of Illinois. Results from the Self-Study provide each school with reliable information for use in school improvement planning and monitoring efforts. The data also can inform educators and policy makers at local, district, and state levels about both the status of middle-grades education in Louisiana and the practices and programs best suited to help students succeed.

Characteristics of Mid South Middle Start Schools

Louisiana’s diverse state-wide sample of Mid South Middle Start schools (68 schools, 1,800 staff, 26,300 students, and 60 administrators) that participated in the Self-Study in 1998/99 includes schools in rural, small-town, and urban areas. Thirteen Middle Start schools are located in the Delta¹ region of Louisiana; the remaining 55 schools are located in the non-Delta areas of the state. Mid South Middle Start focuses on schools with high percentages of economically disadvantaged students. Sixty-two percent of the Louisiana Middle Start schools have 60 percent or more of their student populations receiving free or reduced-priced lunch. The data presented in this report is based on these 68 Mid South Middle Start schools that completed the School Improvement Self-Study (see Table 1).

¹Delta counties include Caldwell, Catahoula, Concordia, E. Carroll, Franklin, Madison, Morehouse, Ouachita, Richland, Tensas, W. Carroll.

Table 1. 1998/99 Louisiana Mid South Middle Start School Characteristics

Geographic Location	Delta Location	Free/Reduced-Priced Lunch Status
Rural - 56% (population of less than 10,000)	Delta - 19%	0-39% of students - 25%
Small town - 10% (populations of 10,000 - 30,000)	Non-Delta - 81%	40-59% of students - 13%
Urban - 18% (populations of 30,000 - 100,000)		60-100% of students - 62%
Large Urban - 16% (populations of 100,000 or more)		

Forty-eight percent of the Louisiana Middle Start schools are middle schools (e.g., grades 5-8 or 6-8), 24 percent are traditional junior high schools (e.g., grades 7-8 or 7-9), and the remaining 28 percent of the schools have grade combinations such as 7-12 or K-12. Eighteen of the 19 schools that have combinations of elementary/middle or middle/high grade configurations are located in rural areas.

Forty-one percent of the schools have a student population that is comprised of a majority of white/Caucasian students, 31 percent have a majority of black/African-American students, and 28 percent have a student population that is ethnically mixed. Every school that has a majority of black/African-American students also has 60 percent or more of the students receiving free or reduced-priced lunch.

There are no significant differences between Delta and non-Delta schools based on geographic location, ethnicity, enrollment or lunch status. Delta schools are less likely to have middle grades configurations. Fifty-five percent of non-Delta schools are middle schools compared to only 23 percent of Delta schools. However, the reader should note that the Delta sample is small (13 schools), and it is therefore difficult to make one-to-one comparisons between the two groups of schools.

The Impact of Teaming and Common Planning Time

An important component of successful middle schools is that teaching and learning occur in smaller, personalized communities that foster nurturing and caring adult-child relationships. One way to create an environment where students can achieve both academically and socially is through interdisciplinary teaming, a practice whereby teachers from different subject areas coordinate curricula and instruction for the same group of students. Teaming enables teachers to work together to plan, develop, coordinate, and implement curricula. Authentic learning occurs by integrating subject areas and by teaching students that skills such as reading and math are interconnected and necessary for real-world applications.

In order to effectively create and implement coordinated and integrated curricula, interdisciplinary teams need regular time to plan and work together as a group (i.e., common planning time). Unlike individual planning time, common planning time enables teachers to meet together as a team to plan, share, and discuss team, student, and curricular issues.

For analysis purposes, CPRD developed a classification scheme based on the levels of interdisciplinary teaming and accompanying common planning time evident within each school. CPRD assigned one of three structural implementation categories to each school: 1) teaming with high levels of common planning time; 2) teaming/some teaming with low or no common planning time; and 3) not teaming. "High levels" of common planning time is defined as a minimum of four meetings per week, with each meeting lasting 30 minutes or longer. "Low levels" of common planning time is defined as some amount of common planning time, but less than the highest level. "Some teaming" refers to those schools in which only a portion of the middle grade levels is teaming (e.g., two out of three grades within a school). Schools that employ teaming with low or no common planning time and schools that have some teaming are combined into one category for this analysis. In addition, only the responses of core, academic teachers (i.e., language arts, reading, math, science, and social studies) are used when calculating the scores for team and classroom-practices scales in the subsequent analyses.²

In Louisiana, Middle Start schools practice interdisciplinary teaming with the following frequency:

- 7 schools (10%) are teaming with high levels of common planning time;
- 21 schools (31%) are teaming/some teaming with low or no common planning time; and
- 40 schools (59%) are not teaming.

Louisiana schools that are engaged in teaming are most likely to be located in small town/ suburban or urban areas, and have enrollments of 500 or more students. However, schools that are teaming with high common planning time are more likely to have fewer students (i.e., between 250 and 499) than schools that are teaming with low or no common planning time. Only one Delta school is teaming, and it is teaming with low or no common planning time. However, the sample of schools in the Delta and the sample of schools that are teaming with high common planning time are both very low.

The grade configuration of a school appears to impact the level of teaming implementation. The only schools that are teaming with high common planning time are middle schools (5 schools) and junior high schools (2 schools). Overall, 51 percent of middle schools and 31 percent of junior high schools are engaged in teaming at some level. The elementary/middle and K-12 schools that are teaming are doing so at lower levels, and none of the middle/high schools are teaming at any level.

Fifty percent of the Louisiana schools that are teaming have been doing so for 5 years or more; 32 percent have been teaming for 3-4 years, and 18 percent have been teaming for 1-2 years. Schools

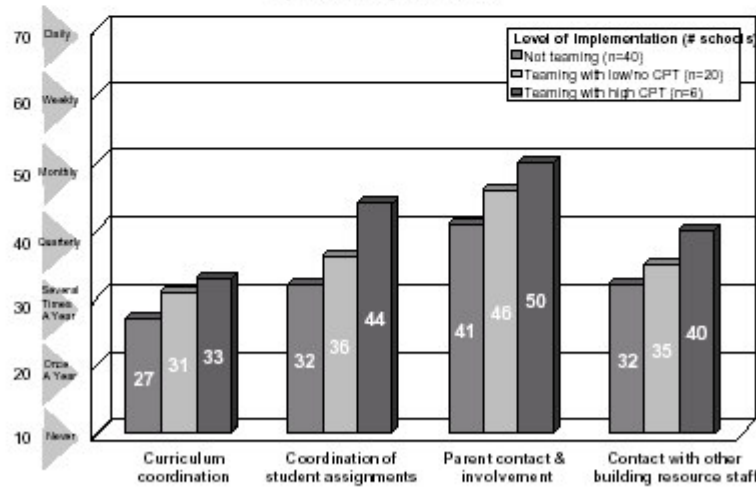
² Data from two schools are not included in the team and classroom-practices analyses because the number of core teachers that responded is too low to report.

with lower percentages of students receiving free or reduced-priced lunch appear to have been teaming for a longer period of time. Four of the seven schools that are teaming with high common planning time have been engaged in teaming for 5 or more years. This finding may indicate that it takes several years to get structures in place to support high levels of teaming.

Overall, Louisiana Middle Start schools report low frequencies of team practices (e.g., curriculum coordination, coordination of assignments). Team practices are occurring, at most, *quarterly*. Classroom practices (e.g., small-group active instruction, integration and interdisciplinary practices) are occurring with more varied frequency in that some practices are occurring *several times a year* or less, while others are occurring *several times a month* or more.

Several significant findings result from a review of team and classroom practices by implementation level, length of time teaming, and team size. First, team practices are occurring most frequently in schools that are teaming with high levels of common planning time (see Figure 1). All classroom practices, with the exception of writing skill enhancement, are also occurring more frequently in schools that are teaming with high common planning time than in schools that are teaming with low or no common planning time or not teaming (see Figure 2). Second, schools that are teaming with high common planning time show increases in the frequency of team practices the longer they have been teaming, whereas schools that are teaming with low or no common planning time do not show such improvements over time and, in most cases, show a slight decrease in the frequency of these practices. This finding suggests that the level of common planning time has a significantly greater impact on the frequency of team

Figure 1. 1998/99 Louisiana Team-Practices Dimension Scores by Level of Implementation¹



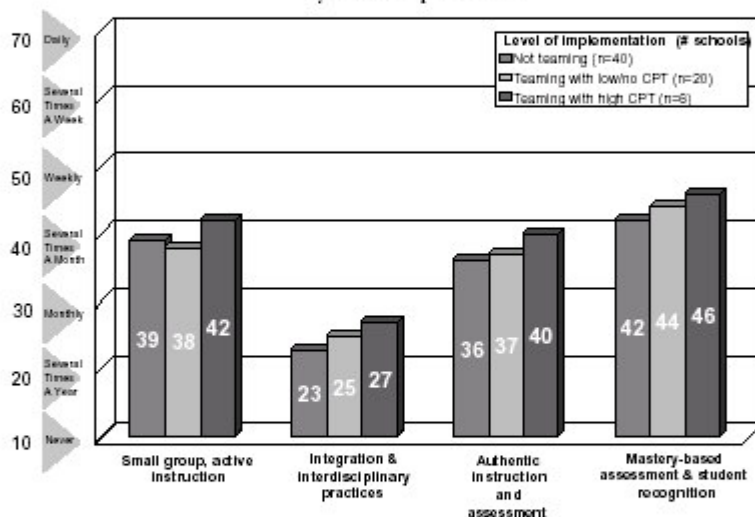
¹ Mean scores significant at $p < .05$

practices than does the length of time a school has been engaged in teaming. Finally, teachers on teams with 90 or less students report higher team and classroom practices than do teachers on teams with 91 or more students.

The impact of teaming with high levels of common planning time is further supported by the following findings. Louisiana schools that are teaming with high levels of common planning time report:

- higher quality of team interactions;
- higher frequency of teacher-led advisory activities; and
- more frequent contacts with parents.

Figure 2. 1998/99 Louisiana Classroom-Practices Dimension Scores by Level of Implementation



Teacher-led Advisory Programs

A teacher-led advisory program is another type of structure that middle-grades schools implement in an effort to create a smaller, more personalized environment for students. In a teacher-led advisory program, every student is paired with an adult advisor who serves as an advocate and small-group leader. Advisory groups meet on a regular basis and typically focus their discussions on educational advisement, study skills, and personal and social development. A teacher-led advisory program is intended to provide students with a safe, caring, consistent, and structured opportunity for growth.

Twenty-three of Louisiana Middle Start schools (34%) reported that they have a teacher-led advisory program. Schools with advisory programs are most likely to be located in the non-Delta (22 schools),

to be either middle schools or junior high schools (19 schools), and to be engaged in teaming (16 schools). Six of the seven schools that are teaming with high common planning time also have a teacher-led advisory program.

The majority of teachers at schools that have a teacher-led advisory program report that they meet with students *daily* (64%), and that an average meeting lasts 16 to 30 minutes with between 10 and 25 students. Overall, advisory activities take place, at most, between *quarterly* and *monthly* (*social skills issues*), and at least between *several times a year* and *quarterly* (*linkages to guidance and health resources staff*). However, teachers at schools that are teaming with high common planning time are most likely to report that they meet with students *daily*. Ninety-five percent of teachers at schools that are teaming with high common planning time report that they meet with students *daily*, compared to 48 percent of teachers at schools that are teaming with low/no common planning time, and 51 percent of teachers at schools that are not teaming. In addition, teachers at schools with high common planning time report higher frequencies of the advisory activities *social skills issues* and *academic and career issues* than do schools that are teaming at a lower level or not teaming.

Communication with Parents

An important yet challenging component of a successful school is the involvement of parents in the school and in the education of the child. Parents are instrumental not only in setting high expectations for their child, but also in providing support for student learning. The quality and quantity with which schools involve parents can significantly influence student learning and achievement. It is important, therefore, that schools strive to contact parents, not only about academic or behavior problems, but also about classroom activities, meeting individual student needs, and academic success.

Louisiana teachers contact parents most frequently about *information to increase parent involvement* and *homework to do with students* (an average of *quarterly*). Teachers at large urban schools tend to contact parents more frequently about *information to increase parent involvement*, *student performance and problems*, and *information or referrals for health and social services* than other teachers do. An additional finding is that teachers from schools in which 60 percent or more of the students receive free or reduced-priced lunch contact parents more often about *referrals for health or social services* and *student performance and problems* than do teachers from schools with fewer at-risk students. Interestingly, schools that are teaming with high levels of common planning time report the most frequent contacts with parents, especially when compared to schools that are not teaming. Finally, teachers at schools that have a majority black/African-American student population contact parents more often about *student performance and problems* than teachers at schools with a majority white/Caucasian or ethnically mixed student population.

Students report that their family is most involved in their education by *checking or helping with homework*, *asking about or rewarding school work*, and *discussing the importance of school and interactions with teachers and students* (all occurring an average of *sometimes*). As students get older, the frequency that their families *check or help with homework* declines.

An analyses of Louisiana student achievement data has revealed numerous findings. Although Middle Start schools had slightly lower ITBS scores as compared to the state sample, no differences were observed between Middle Start schools in Delta locations versus non-Delta locations. The differences in achievement test scores, for both the statewide and Middle Start sample, when examined by lunch status revealed no surprises. Schools with higher percentages of free/reduced lunch students consistently had lower ITBS scores attesting to the need for greater social equity among these schools (see Table 2). As was found with Michigan Middle Start schools, Louisiana Middle Start schools identified as having interdisciplinary teaming structures with high levels of common planning time had higher achievement test scores for both sixth and eighth grades (see Table 3).

Conclusion

The Self-Study data presented in this report serves as a starting point for the Mid South Middle Start Initiative partners in Louisiana to reflect on the characteristics and needs of its middle-grades schools. The statewide sample of schools in Louisiana (68 schools serving middle-grades students) is diverse and represents all geographic areas of the state of Louisiana. Although the data gathered thus far is baseline, the need for greater social equity among schools is clear, as evidenced by the disparities in school climate, in barriers to reform efforts, and in student achievement scores between schools with varying percentages of disadvantaged students. The data also clearly demonstrates the impact that implementing interdisciplinary teaming with high levels of common planning time can have on schools' outcomes. The Louisiana schools that are teaming with high levels of common planning time report higher quality of team interactions, higher frequency of advisory program activities, higher frequency of classroom practices, more frequent contact with parents, and higher student achievement scores. Following the next administration of the Self-Study in Louisiana, during the 2000/01 school year, CPRD hopes to build on this baseline data in order to consider the progress and improvements that schools will have made as they become more immersed in the Mid South Middle Start Initiative.