Sacramento City Unified School District: Smaller Learning Communities Grant Year 4 Evaluation Report

Prepared by: Alyssa Okita, Alberto Guzman-Alvarez, Theresa Westover, and Lisa Sullivan

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## Contents

Introduction .................................................................................................................................................. 5

Teacher perspectives: Establishing personal relationships between teachers and students .......... 5

About students ................................................................................................................................................. 7

School Environment ....................................................................................................................................... 11

Professional Development .......................................................................................................................... 18

Student Survey Results ................................................................................................................................. 24

Summary and Discussion ............................................................................................................................. 32

  How do the SLCs appear to impact student and teacher relationships? ................................................ 33

  How do SLCs support a student culture of community? ......................................................................... 36

  How do SLCs encourage community among teachers? ........................................................................... 38

  How do teachers participate in and value professional development opportunities? .......................... 38

  How do schools with SLCs support a college/career ready culture? ...................................................... 39

References ..................................................................................................................................................... 40
List of Figures and Tables

Figure 1: Percent of teachers, by school, who agree with the select statements for 75% or more of their students .................................................................................................................. 8
Figure 2: Percentage of teachers, by school, who call students’ home at least weekly in a given month to report either something positive or something that concerns them ........................................ 9
Figure 3: Percentage of teachers, by school, who contact students’ home at least once a month for 50% or more of their students .......................................................................................... 10
Figure 4: Percentage of teachers, by school, who discuss college/future careers with their students “somewhat often/weekly” ........................................................................................................ 11
Figure 5: Percentage of teachers, by school, who said each statement was somewhat true or true .................................................................................................................................................. 12
Figure 6: Percentage of teachers, by school, who said the following statements were somewhat true or true.......................................................................................................................................... 13
Figure 7: Percentage of teachers, by school, who do the following often/weekly ........................................... 14
Figure 8: Percentage of teachers, by school, who think the statement ”I feel having the organizational structure of the SLCs/Pathways/Academies positively impacts my relationships with my students” is somewhat true/true ........................................................................ 15
Figure 9: Percentage of teachers, by school, who think students are benefitting academically and socially moderately/very much ...................................................................................................... 16
Figure 10: Percentage of teachers, by school, reporting there have been changes that have benefitted students .......................................................................................................................... 17
Figure 11: Percentage of teachers, by school, reporting there have been changes that have benefitted teachers ........................................................................................................................................ 18
Figure 12: Teacher participation in Professional Development during the 2011-2012 school year ...................................................................................................................................................... 19
Figure 13: Percentage of teachers participating in particular CSMP content-specific PD .......... 20
Figure 14: Percent of teachers, by school, who were satisfied/very satisfied with the CSMP PD ....................................................................................................................................................... 21
Figure 15: Percentage of teachers, by CSMP PD attended, who were satisfied/very satisfied with the PD ............................................................................................................................................... 21
Figure 16: Did the professional development help you/your school meet its goal of improving students’ academic outcomes? (Percentage of teachers, by schools) ......................................................................... 22
Figure 17: Percentage of teachers, by school, who somewhat agree/agree with the following statements ................................................................................................................................................. 23
Figure 18: Teacher has contacted parents/guardians directly, percentage of students, by school 26
Figure 19: Percent of students who answered “yes” their parents/guardian had been contacted indicating a positive or negative report .............................................................................................. 27
Figure 20a-d: Percentage of students who answered ”Yes” to the following statements ........ 28
Figure 21a-d: Percentage of students who thought the following statements were somewhat true/true......................................................... 30
Figure 22: Response rates (Percent responding to surveys).......................................................... 33
Figure 23: Perceptions of teacher and student relationships......................................................... 34
Figure 24: Indicators of personal relationships............................................................................ 35
Figure 25: Teacher contact with students’ families...................................................................... 36
Figure 26: Indicators of students' sense of community ................................................................. 37

Table 1: Number and percentage of teacher respondents by school............................................. 5
Table 2: Percent of teacher survey respondents per grade and subject, by school..................... 6
Table 3: Percent of teachers in each SLC/Academy ...................................................................... 7
Table 4: Number of student respondents by school, response rate within school, and percentage of overall responses .......................................................... 24
Table 5: Percentage of students, by school, in each grade and each middle school ................. 25
Introduction

Over the past decade, many educational experts have advocated establishing Small Learning Communities (SLCs) in large comprehensive high schools in order to provide a more personalized and supportive learning environment for students, by providing “schools within a school” (Cotton 2001; Bloom, Thompson & Unterman 2010). Sacramento City Unified received a grant to establish SLCs in five of its large high schools in 2008-09. This report is a summary of student and teacher perspectives on various aspects of these SLCs in the fourth year (2011-12) of this grant. The CRESS Center, in the School of Education at University of California, Davis (UCD) has provided both professional development services for SLC through the Subject Matter Projects and evaluation services through the Center for Education and Evaluation Services (CEES). Past evaluations have focused primarily on teacher response professional development activities. The teacher survey this year expanded the focus to include questions related to SLC development, SLC impact on teacher and student culture, SLC-specific objectives, and teacher satisfaction. A student survey, mirroring many of these themes was also administered this year to permit both teacher and student viewpoints to be represented.

Teacher perspectives: Establishing personal relationships between teachers and students

The literature supporting the establishment of SLCs suggests that breaking large high schools into smaller “schools within a school” permits teachers to become more personally acquainted with their students as individuals (Cotton 2001; Bloom, et al., 2010). In this study, we operationalized that concept for teachers in terms of the extent to which teachers know their students’ names and something about their personal lives, their expectations for their students to go to college, and the extent to which teachers communicate with students’ families/guardians.

The web-based teacher survey was sent electronically to 454 teachers in May 2012 using email addresses provided by the Sacramento City Unified School District. Reminders to complete the survey were sent every week for one month. A total of 147 surveys were returned for an overall response rate of 32.4% (See Table 1 for number and percentage of Teacher Survey respondents by each school).

Table 1: Number and percentage of teacher respondents by school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% within school</th>
<th>% overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burbank</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McClatchy</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>29.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kennedy</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosemont</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unlike the previous years when only core subject area teachers were surveyed, all teachers were surveyed this year. Table 2 breaks down the percentage of respondents teaching each grade- and subject-level. These percentages reflect the fact that teachers teach multiple grade-levels and subjects. Additionally,

Table 3 breaks down the percentage of respondents in each SLC/Pathway/Academy. Note, some teachers may have selected more than one SLC/Pathway/Academy.

Table 2: Percent of teacher survey respondents per grade and subject, by school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Burbank</th>
<th>McClatchy</th>
<th>Johnson</th>
<th>Kennedy</th>
<th>Rosemont</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td>43</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grade Taught (%)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th</td>
<td>81.4</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>70.6</td>
<td>74.8</td>
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<td>10th</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>81.3</td>
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<td>76.2</td>
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<td>11th</td>
<td>65.1</td>
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<td>71.9</td>
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<td>94.1</td>
<td>71.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>12th</td>
<td>74.4</td>
<td>89.5</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>82.4</td>
<td>73.5</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Subject Taught (%)</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>5.3</td>
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<td>36.1</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>24.5</td>
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<td>Math</td>
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<td>16.7</td>
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<td>21.1</td>
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<td>Science</td>
<td>9.3</td>
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<td>25.0</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>History/Social Science</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>22.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Computer Science</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.4</td>
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<td>Special Ed</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
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<td>11.1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine Arts</td>
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<td>6.3</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>9.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foreign Language</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech Ed</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>7.5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table 3: Percent of teachers in each SLC/Pathway/Academy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>SLC/Pathway/Academy</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% within school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burbank</td>
<td>Law &amp; Social Justice</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medicine &amp; Health Services</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>International &amp; Environmental Studies</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visual Performing Arts</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Construction &amp; Design</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McClatchy</td>
<td>Law &amp; Public Policy Academy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Justice Academy</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Humanities &amp; International Studies</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson</td>
<td>Science, Technology Engineering, Medicine</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Corporate &amp; Business Academy</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School of the Arts</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Human &amp; Legal Services</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education Leadership Academy</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kennedy</td>
<td>School of Public Service</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Technology and Design</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Business and Marketing</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Program in American and California Exploration</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Law and Equity</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visual and Performing Arts</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosemont</td>
<td>Creative &amp; Performing Arts</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>71.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Green Academy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

About students

Teachers were asked, “For what proportion of all your students do you: (a) know all their names, (b) know something about their home life/personal life, and (c) expect them to earn a college degree.” Teachers could check “all,” “about 75-100%,” “about 50-75%,” or “less than
The majority of teachers indicated they knew at least 75% of their students’ names across all five schools. Fewer teachers knew something about 75% or more of their students’ home life/personal life, and in general, even fewer expected 75% or more of their students to earn a college degree. Figure 1 shows the percentage of teachers, by school, who, for at least 75% of their students, know their students’ names, something about their home life/personal life, and expect them to go to college.

**Figure 1: Percent of teachers, by school, who agree with the select statements for 75% or more of their students**

> It is difficult to interpret differences among schools since the response rates and total number of teachers responding from each school varied widely. The extent to which the respondents are representative of their school is uncertain.

When asked **how often** in a given month, on average, teachers contact any individual students’ parents/guardians to report something either positive or something that concerns them about their student, teachers more often were calling home to report something that concerned them about their students. Overall, about 29% of teachers were calling home at least once a week to report something that concerned them about their students, while about 17% were calling students’ home at least once a week to report something positive about their students. Figure 2 shows the percentage of teachers by school who, in a given month, call home at least weekly to report something positive or something that concerns them.
In addition to frequency of calling students’ homes, teachers were also asked for what proportion of their students do they call parents/guardians at least once a month to report something either positive or something that concerns them. Except for Kennedy, teachers were calling home for 75% or more of their students to report something that concerned them more often than to report something positive about their students. Overall, about 10% of teachers were calling home at least once a month to report something that concerned them for 75% or more of their students, while about 9% of teachers were calling home to report something positive for 75% or more of their students. (See Figure 3 for percentage of teachers, by school, who contact home at least once a month for 75% or more of their students).
Next, teachers were asked how often they discuss college/future careers with individual students and their classes, as a whole. McClatchy teachers were talking to individual students the least about college or future careers (47%), while Rosemont teachers were talking to individual students the most about college or future careers (87%). Similarly, McClatchy teachers were talking to their whole classes about college or future careers the least (58%), while Burbank teachers were talking to their whole classes about college or future careers the most (85%). Overall, about 63% of teachers talked to both individual students and their whole classes somewhat often/weekly about college or future careers. (See Figure 4 for percentage of teachers who discuss college/future careers with their students somewhat often/weekly). However, it is important to note, when comparing among the schools, that survey response rates from each school varied and it is unknown how representative the respondents from any individual school may be of the entire schools’ teacher population.
Figure 4: Percentage of teachers, by school, who discuss college/future careers with their students “somewhat often/weekly”

School Environment

An additional characteristic of SLCs, theoretically, is their impact on school climate (Cotton 2001; Bloom, et al. 2010). The thought is that as teachers work closely together within their SLC based professional learning community, they develop mutual trust and respect and can share their ideas and experiences related to effective instruction. We operationalized these concepts in survey questions about trust, sharing concerns, respect for teacher leadership and for one another, shared vision, teacher voice, and freedom to innovate. We also asked about some of the more concrete activities expected in SLCs such as frequency and nature of collaboration among teachers.

Teachers were asked to what extent they thought the following statements were true:
- Teachers in this school trust each other;
- It’s okay in this school to discuss feelings, worries, or frustrations with other teachers;
- Teachers respect other teachers who take the lead in school improvement efforts;
- Teachers at this school respect those colleagues who are expert at their craft.

Lowest levels of agreement to these items came from Hiram Johnson, while highest level of agreement came from McClatchy. Overall, about 89% of teachers said that “teachers in this school trust each other” was somewhat true or true, 81% said that “it’s okay in this school to discuss feelings, worries, or frustrations with other teachers” was somewhat true or true, 85% said “teachers respect other teachers who take the lead in school improvement efforts” was somewhat true or true, and 92% said “teachers at this school respect those colleagues who are
expert at their craft” was somewhat true or true. Figure 5 shows the percentage of teachers who said each statement was somewhat true or true.

**Figure 5: Percentage of teachers, by school, who said each statement was somewhat true or true**

Teachers were also asked to what extent each of the following statements were true, regarding their SLC/Pathway/Academy (teachers referred to their SLC using different terms in different schools):

- Teachers have a collective/shared vision of outcomes they expect from their students;
- Teachers have freedom in how they deliver rigorous academic content to students;
- Teachers have opportunities to be innovative in programming that benefits students;
- Teachers have a voice to ensure appropriate pathway scheduling

In general, teachers from all schools agreed that they have freedom in how they deliver rigorous academic content to students more so than they did for the other statements in this section. Similarly, teachers from all schools agreed less with the statement that they have a voice to ensure appropriate pathway scheduling. Overall, 81% of teachers said that the statement “Teachers have a collective/shared vision of outcomes we expect for our students” was somewhat true or true, 83% said that the statement “Teachers have freedom in how we deliver rigorous academic content to students” was somewhat true or true, 77% said that the statement “Teachers have opportunities to be innovative in programming that benefits students” was somewhat true or true, and 57% said that the statement “Teachers have a voice to ensure appropriate pathway scheduling” was somewhat true or true. (See Figure 6 for the percentage of teachers who said these statements were somewhat true or true).
Next, teachers were asked how often they did the following (Never, Occasionally, Somewhat often, Often, Weekly):

- Have grade-level meetings with other teachers;
- Have department-specific meetings;
- Have SLC/Pathway/Academy specific meetings;
- Discuss individual students’ academic progress with other teachers (formally, not just in passing);
- Confer with other teachers in their SLC/Pathway/Academy about individual students’ behavior or personal issues that impact school performance.

Teachers from Burbank High School seemed to be doing the aforementioned activities more often than teachers from the other schools, while McClatchy and Rosemont High Schools seemed to be doing these activities the least (again, with the caveat that it is not clear that the respondents from each school are necessarily representative of all teachers at those schools).

Overall, 35% of teachers said they were having grade-level meetings with other teachers often/weekly, 47% said they were having department specific meetings often/weekly, 47% said they were having SLC/Pathway/Academy specific meetings often/weekly, 31% said they were discussing individual students’ academic progress with other teachers often/weekly, and 37% said they were conferring with other teachers in their SLC/Pathway/Academy about individual students’ behavior or personal issues that impact their school performance. (See Figure 7 for percentage of teachers who do these activities often/weekly).
When asked, “to what extent is the following statement true: “I feel having the organizational structure of the SCLs/Pathways/Academies positively impacts my relationship with my students,”” 100% of teachers from Burbank High School said that this was somewhat true/true. Teachers from Kennedy High School tended to agree with this less, with 53% of teachers saying this was somewhat true/true. Overall, 71% of teachers said that this statement was somewhat true/true. Figure 8 shows the percent of teachers who think the statement “I feel having the organizational structure of the SLCs/Pathways/Academies positively impacts my relationship with my students” is somewhat true or true.
Next, teachers were asked, “To what extent do you feel students are benefitting from the SLCs/Pathways/Academies?” both academically and socially. The large majority of Burbank High School teachers said that students were either moderately or very much benefitting from the SLCs/Pathways/Academies. The school where the fewest teachers felt this way was Rosemont. Overall, 59% thought students were benefitting academically moderately or very much, and 63% thought students were benefitting socially moderately or very much. See Figure 9 for percentage of teachers who think students are moderately or very much benefitting academically and socially from SLCs/Pathways/Academies.
Figure 9: Percentage of teachers, by school, who think students are benefitting academically and socially moderately/very much

When asked if there have been any changes this year in their SLCs/Pathways/Academies at their school that have benefitted students, teachers, for the most part, said there were not any changes. About 60% of Burbank High School teachers said there were changes that benefitted students, while only 21% of Kennedy High School teachers said there were changes that benefitted students. Overall, about 40% of teachers across all schools said there were changes that benefitted students. Figure 10 shows the percentage of teachers reporting whether or not there have been changes that benefitted students.
Teachers were also asked whether or not there have been changes that have benefitted teachers. In general, fewer teachers noted that there had been changes that have benefitted teachers. Only 9% of teachers from McClatchy High School said that there were changes that benefitted teachers, while 53% of teachers from Rosemont High School noted that there were changes that benefitted teachers. Overall, about 37% of teachers said that there were changes that benefitted teachers. (See Figure 11 shows the percentage of teachers reporting whether or not there have been changes that have benefitted teachers).
Figure 11: Percentage of teachers, by school, reporting there have been changes that have benefitted teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burbank</td>
<td>54.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McClatchy</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kennedy</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosemont</td>
<td>53.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>37.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Professional Development

Teachers were asked what types of professional development they participated in during the 2011-2012 academic year. Overall, about 58% of teachers reported participating in content-specific professional development provided by one of the California Subject Matter Projects as part of the SCUSD Cohort 8 Grant from UC Davis, 34% reported participating in content-specific professional development provided by a different provider (such as County Office of Education, a professional conference, etc.), and 18% reported not participating in any content-specific professional development. (See Figure 12 for the level of teacher participation in professional development during the 2011-2012 school year).
Figure 12: Teacher participation in Professional Development during the 2011-2012 school year

*Note: Percentages do not add up to 100% within each school because teachers were allowed to check more than one option.

The teachers who responded that they participated in the CSMP PD were then asked specifically which CSMP PD they attended. Overall, about 25% participated in Science, 22% participated in Math, 24% participated in Social Studies/History, and 28% participated in English. (See Figure 13 for percentage of teachers participating in each of the content-specific PD).
Next, teachers who attended any CSMP PD were asked to what extent they were satisfied with the professional development they received. Overall, about 72% of teachers were satisfied/very satisfied with the CSMP professional development. (See Figure 14 for percentage of teachers who were satisfied/very satisfied with the CSMP PD they received). When analyzed by professional development received, the subject that received the highest level of satisfaction was English (about 79% were satisfied/very satisfied), while Science received the lowest level of satisfaction (about 62% were satisfied/very satisfied). See Figure 15 for percentage of teachers who were satisfied/very satisfied with specific PD subjects.
Teachers were also asked if they professional development they participated in helped them/their school meet its goal of improving students’ academic outcomes. In general, more teachers said that the professional development did help them/their school meet its goal of improving students’
academic outcomes than teachers who said it did not. Overall, about 58% of teachers said the professional development helped, 14% said it did not, and 28% said they were not sure. See Figure 16 for percentage of teachers who said the professional development helped them/their school meet its goal if improving students’ academic outcomes.

Figure 16: Did the professional development help you/your school meet its goal of improving students' academic outcomes? (Percentage of teachers, by schools)

Lastly, teachers (who specified they participated in some type of PD during the academic year) were asked a variety of questions regarding to whether or not the professional development has increased their ability to do a variety of things related to supporting their students. Overall, McClatchy High School teachers seemed to have the highest level of agreement across all statements, while Rosemont High School teachers seemed to have the lowest level of agreement across all statements. Overall, 82% of teachers thought the PD increased their ability to provide students with regular opportunities to think and reason, 84% thought the PD increased their ability to engage their students in learning activities, 82% thought the PD increased their ability to support their students with a variety of strategies and tools, 76% thought the PD increased their ability to encourage their students to learn from each other, and 78% thought the PD increased their ability to provide their students with multiple opportunities to demonstrate their understanding of concepts (see Figure 17).
Figure 17: Percentage of teachers, by school, who somewhat agree/agree with the following statements

The PD I participated in during the academic year has increased my ability to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Provide my students with regular opportunities to think and reason.</th>
<th>Engage my students in learning activities that allow them to deepen their understanding of key concepts and subject matter content.</th>
<th>Support my students with a variety of strategies and tools that scaffold student learning.</th>
<th>Encourage my students to learn from each other.</th>
<th>Provide my students with multiple opportunities to demonstrate their understanding of concepts, as well as to practice their skills/competencies.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burbank</td>
<td>83.9</td>
<td>83.8</td>
<td>77.4</td>
<td>70.9</td>
<td>81.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McClatchy</td>
<td>86.6</td>
<td>86.7</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>86.7</td>
<td>86.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>67.9</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>82.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kennedy</td>
<td>75.8</td>
<td>79.3</td>
<td>72.4</td>
<td>75.9</td>
<td>72.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosemont</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>77.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>81.5</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>75.9</td>
<td>78.3</td>
<td>81.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student Survey Results

Pencil and paper surveys were administered to all 9\textsuperscript{th} – 11\textsuperscript{th} grade students in the spring semester during their English class. Overall, 62\% of the eligible students responded to the survey. Variation in response rates among the schools suggests that there may have been some English classes which did not administer the survey, possibly introducing some response bias, particularly at Burbank and McClatchy. See Table 4 for response rates by school.

Table 4: Number of student respondents by school, response rate within school, and percentage of overall responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% within school</th>
<th>% overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burbank</td>
<td>641</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McClatchy</td>
<td>612</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson</td>
<td>810</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kennedy</td>
<td>1106</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosemont</td>
<td>975</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The percentage of student respondents was fairly evenly distributed across all three grades in each of the five schools (See Table 5).
Table 5: Percentage of students, by school, in each grade and each middle school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade (%)</th>
<th>Burbank</th>
<th>McClatchy</th>
<th>Johnson</th>
<th>Kennedy</th>
<th>Rosemont</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>641</td>
<td>612</td>
<td>810</td>
<td>1106</td>
<td>975</td>
<td>4144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>29.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>40.2</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>36.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Middle School (%)</th>
<th>Burbank</th>
<th>McClatchy</th>
<th>Johnson</th>
<th>Kennedy</th>
<th>Rosemont</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albert Einstein</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>58.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fern Bacon</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Still</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kit Carson</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosa Parks</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam Brannan</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sutter</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will C. Wood</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>46.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice Birney</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waldorf-Inspired</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caleb Greenwood</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genevieve F. Didion</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Morse</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Therapeutic Center</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leonardo da Vinci</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin Luther</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King, Jr.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students were asked if at least one of their teachers talked to their parents/guardians directly during this past school year. Overall, about 36% of students said that their teachers have talked to their parents/guardians directly, 42% said their teachers have not talked to their parents/guardians directly, and 23% said they were not sure (see Figure 18).
Next, students were asked, “Why did your teacher contact your parents/guardians?” In general, students responded that their teacher contacted their parents/guardians to report something positive more so than to report something negative. Overall, 34% of students said that a teacher has contacted their parents/guardians to report something positive, while 22% said that a teacher has contacted their parents/guardians to report something negative. See Figure 19 for full descriptives.
Figure 19: Percent of students who answered “yes” their parents/guardian had been contacted indicating a positive or negative report*

*Note: percentages do not add up to 100% because not all students responded to this question. Also note, students were allowed to check more than one option.

Next, students were asked whether or not (Yes, No, Not sure) the following statements related to college and career preparation were true:

- A teacher has discussed what I need to do to prepare for college with me, personally;
- A teacher has discussed what I need to do to prepare for a career in one of my classes;
- A counselor has discussed what I need to do to prepare for college with me, personally;
- A counselor has discussed what I need to do to prepare for a career in one of my classes;
- My parents/guardians/family expect(s) me to go to college;
- My parents/guardians/family expect(s) me to graduate from college;
- I am planning on going to college;
- I have a detailed plan on how to complete the UC a-g requirements;
- I am on track, in terms of credits, to graduate at the end of my senior year;
- I know what classes I need to take to prepare for my college or other career plan;
- If you were to go to college, would you be the first person in your generation to go to college?

Aside from the last question, of all the statements, the fewest students said that they had a detailed plan on how to complete the UC a-g requirements (41% overall), followed closely by “a counselor has discussed what I need to do to prepare for college (42% overall). Overall, 44% said that this statement was true. See Figure 20a-d for percentage of students who answered “Yes” to the above statements.
Figure 20a: Percentage of students who answered "Yes" to the following statements

A teacher has discussed what I need to do to prepare for college with me, personally.

A teacher has discussed what I need to do to prepare for a career in one of my classes.

A counselor has discussed what I need to do to prepare for college with me, personally.

Figure 20b: Percentage of students who answered "Yes" to the following statements

A counselor has discussed what I need to do to prepare for a career in one of my classes.

My parents/guardians/family expect(s) me to go to college.

My parents/guardians/family expect(s) me to graduate from college.
Figure 20c: Percentage of students who answered "Yes" to the following statements

- **I am planning on going to college.**
  - Burbank: 85.3%
  - McClatchy: 79.0%
  - Johnson: 87.7%
  - Kennedy: 87.6%
  - Rosemont: 85.3%

- **I have a detailed plan on how to complete the UC a-g requirements.**
  - Burbank: 37.9%
  - McClatchy: 42.3%
  - Johnson: 38.0%
  - Kennedy: 50.2%
  - Rosemont: 33.4%

- **I am on track, in terms of credits, to graduate at the end of my senior year.**
  - Burbank: 58.1%
  - McClatchy: 63.3%
  - Johnson: 52.4%
  - Kennedy: 67.4%
  - Rosemont: 61.7%

Figure 20d: Percentage of students who answered "Yes" to the following statements

- **I know what classes I need to take to prepare for my college or other career plan.**
  - Burbank: 51.1%
  - McClatchy: 55.5%
  - Johnson: 48.9%
  - Kennedy: 62.2%
  - Rosemont: 55.7%

- **If you were to go to college, would you be the first person in your family to go to college?**
  - Burbank: 27.1%
  - McClatchy: 22.0%
  - Johnson: 16.3%
  - Kennedy: 31.7%
  - Rosemont: 22.0%
Lastly, students were asked to what extent the following statements were true:

- The teachers and administrators at this school care about all the students;
- My teachers expect me to be responsible for my own learning;
- I have a positive relationship with most, if not all, of my teachers;
- Most of my teachers have high expectations about my academic achievement;
- Most of my teachers expect me to earn a college degree;
- I feel comfortable expressing my opinion in most of my classes;
- I feel comfortable asking questions in most of my classes;
- I feel comfortable asking most of my teachers for individual help when I am having trouble understanding something;
- If I had a problem in my personal life, there is an adult at my school who I would feel comfortable talking about this issue;
- I know most of the other students in my classes fairly well – (i.e. I know their names and something about their interests and life, in general);
- I take most of the same classes as my closest friends.

Of all the above statements, the one with the least agreement was the statement “If I had a problem in my personal life, there is an adult at my school who I would feel comfortable talking about this issue” (overall, 43% said this was somewhat true/true). The statement with the most agreement was “My teachers expect me to be responsible for my own learning” with 89% agreement overall. See Figure 21a-d for percentage of students who thought each statement was somewhat true/true.

**Figure 21a: Percentage of students who thought the following statements were somewhat true/true**

![Graph showing percentage of students who thought each statement was somewhat true/true](image-url)
Figure 21b: Percentage of students who thought the following statements were somewhat true/true

![Bar chart showing percentages of students who thought the following statements were somewhat true/true]

- Most of my teachers have high expectations about my academic achievement.
- Most of my teachers expect me to earn a college degree.
- I feel comfortable expressing my opinion in most of my classes.

Figure 21c: Percentage of students who thought the following statements were somewhat true/true

![Bar chart showing percentages of students who thought the following statements were somewhat true/true]

- I feel comfortable asking questions in most of my classes.
- I feel comfortable asking most of my teachers for individual help when I am having trouble understanding something.
- If I had a problem in my personal life, there is an adult at my school who I would feel comfortable talking about this issue.
Figure 21d: Percentage of students who thought the following statements were somewhat true/true

Summary and Discussion

All the teachers and students at the five high schools where the small learning communities are being implemented were invited to respond to end of year surveys. Response rates varied among the schools with, overall, about a third of the teachers and 62% of students responding (Figure 1). Response rates were lowest for both groups at McClatchy. While this section compares some teacher and student responses, it is important to note that there is no way of knowing how representative the responses may be of the total school populations of either group, particularly at McClatchy, consequently interpretation of these comparisons should be considered as suggestive, not definitive. See Figure 22 for response rate descriptives.
How do the SLCs appear to impact student and teacher relationships?

Proponents of SLCs suggest that developing small schools within a large school promotes a sense of community among teachers and students. Survey responses illustrate that the great majority of teachers (93% overall) report that they know at least 75% of their students’ names. Somewhat fewer say they know something about at least 75% of their students’ home or personal lives (61% overall). Most students (77% overall) report that teachers and administrators at their school care about students and most also report having positive relationships with most of their teachers (82% overall). They feel their teachers have high expectations about their achievement (82% overall), most feel comfortable asking questions in class (74%) and asking their teachers for individual help if they don’t understand something (75%).

Most teachers (71%) report that the SLC structure has had a positive impact on their relationships with their students. Figure 23 illustrates how teachers and students each view their relationships, both overall and across the schools. These items are not directly comparable, they are framed differently, but they do suggest that while students’ responses are fairly positive and uniform across schools, teachers’ perceptions vary among the schools regarding the impact of the SLC structure on their relationships with their students. Burbank teachers are the most positive about the SLCs’ impact (100%) and Kennedy teachers the least (53%).
Teachers’ open-ended comments reflect variations in their opinions about the impact of the SLC on their relationships with their students. There were no identifiable patterns among the open-ended comments that would explain the variation among the schools – there were positive and negative comments from teachers at each school, although Burbank teachers’ comments tended to be predominantly positive. While there were numerous comments regarding the value of the SLCs in assisting teachers to get to know their students and to share their insights about individual students with other teachers, there were also a number of comments from teachers suggesting that the SLC structure is not uniform across schools or students, which they perceive as either making questions about SLCs irrelevant or as a problem in obtaining the benefits from an SLC structure. Examples of teachers’ comments:

*It’s what I do in the classroom that connects me to the kids, not my SLC. Beyond that, not all of my kids are in my SLC.*

*It would work better if there was more SLC purity in classes. Only about 50% of my students are in my SLC.*

*The SLC’s don’t incorporate all the students. Many students aren’t even put into SLC’s.*

*Smaller groups of teachers means more personalized interaction with the students. Since we have the same group of students for multiple years, we tend to know them better.*

*I feel that the SLCs become little families. When a student is not performing to their abilities in one class, most teachers will know and will confer with that student.*
makes the students feel as if their teachers care about them and want them to succeed, increasing a positive relationship with teachers.

From the students’ perspectives, in spite of being generally comfortable with their teachers, when students have a personal problem only 43% of them, overall, agree that there is a there is an adult at their school they would talk to about personal issues. Figure 24 illustrates how teachers’ responses regarding knowing about students’ personal lives and students’ comfort in confiding in adults at school compare overall and among schools. These patterns suggest that while students feel supported academically, they may be less confident that the adults at school will support or understand their personal lives.

Figure 24: Indicators of personal relationships

A second component of teacher and student relationships is the extent to which teachers engage with the important adults in students’ home lives, their parents or guardians. Teachers were asked both about the frequency of contacting students’ homes and the proportion of their students whose families/guardians they contact. About a quarter of teachers reported making calls to students’ homes on a weekly basis (29% to discuss concerns and 17% to report something positive). However, it appears that most teachers are not making regular calls to the majority of their students’ homes. Only about 10% of teachers report calling the parents/guardians of 75% or more of their students each month. Teacher comments reflect the constraints of their busy schedules (e.g. “I am subject to an already overwhelming amount of expectations and time-lines to keep up with”), the routine communications that are already established such as progress reports and school events such as open house nights, and their sense that families have ready access to information (e.g. “with 24/7 info available to parents and students [they] have the information”). Comments also suggest that many teachers consider contact with families to be initiated on an “as needed” basis, rather than a routine activity.

A little more than a third (36%) of students report that a teacher contacted their home at least once during the school year. Interestingly, while teachers reported calling to report concerns or
problems somewhat more often than positive news, students were more likely to say that the teacher called their home to report something positive (34% overall, compared to 22% saying the teacher called to report something negative). Possibly students are more likely to remember a positive call home, than a negative one. Again, although the items on the two surveys are not directly comparable, teachers are reporting about their average contacts with families/guardians per month and students are reporting on any contact throughout the year, Figure 25 below illustrates in a general way how student and teacher perceptions about the frequency and nature of contacting families/guardians compare and vary across schools.

**Figure 25: Teacher contact with students’ families**

![Bar chart showing teacher contact rates for different schools.]

- **Overall**:
  - 21.6% of teachers called to report something negative
  - 33.5% of teachers called to report something positive
  - 35.5% of teachers have contacted home at least once
  - 17.0% of teachers make weekly calls to students' homes to report concerns/problems.
  - 29.0% of teachers make weekly calls to students' homes to report positive news.

- **By School**:
  - **Rosemont**: 15.0% negative, 33.6% positive, 33.6% contacted at least once
  - **Kennedy**: 19.8% negative, 31.8% positive, 43.7% contacted at least once
  - **Johnson**: 24.0% negative, 31.0% positive, 43.7% contacted at least once
  - **McClatchy**: 19.0% negative, 31.5% positive, 38.9% contacted at least once
  - **Burbank**: 10.0% negative, 32.6% positive, 38.9% contacted at least once

**How do SLCs support a student culture of community?**

Small learning communities are thought to not only allow students and teachers to become more familiar with one another but also to encourage students to build a sense of community among themselves. When teachers were asked if they thought the SLC structure was beneficial to students’ sense of community, most (63%) agreed (Figure 26). This varied among the schools from 33% agreement at Rosemont to 95% at Burbank. Again, teacher comments on this question varied. Examples include:
By halfway through their freshman year students have already become a group that appreciates diversity and has a connection that allows them to ask for help from their peers and work together for success.

Teenagers need an identity. SLC/Pathways/Academies provide such a positive identity.

Not all of the SLCs are authentically established yet.

Nothing is done within the SLC to build “community.” There aren’t any activities for the SLCs, activities school wide, etc.

Students report knowing most of the other students in their classes fairly well (80%), and a slight majority (60%) report that they take the same classes as their closest friends. Student surveys also asked about how comfortable students were asking questions in their classes (74% said this was true for them) and how comfortable they feel about expressing their opinions in their classes (70% responded “true/somewhat true”) which may also reflect the extent to which they feel comfortable with their classmates (Figure 20d). Interestingly, while teachers’ perceptions of whether the SLC encouraged students’ sense of community varied widely among the schools, students’ responses on these items varied much less among schools. As Table 5 shows, as an example of the way teacher and student opinions vary among the schools, students’ comfort in expressing their opinions in class does not vary much among the schools, nor in the same pattern as teachers’ opinions about SLCs’ impact on student culture. This is likely a reflection of the different structure of the questions to each group – teachers responded generally about “social benefits” and students responding more specifically about how comfortable they are expressing their opinions.

Figure 26: Indicators of students' sense of community
However, given how divergent teachers’ opinions appear to be about the benefits of SLCs for student community, it is interesting that students’ experiences with their peers do not appear to vary widely among the schools.

**How do SLCs encourage community among teachers?**

In addition to promoting a positive culture between students and teachers, one of the primary goals of small learning communities is to build strong professional learning communities where teachers work closely together. When asked about their relationships with other teachers, the majority of teachers from the five high schools responded that they trusted and respected their colleagues, and they felt comfortable discussing feelings and concerns. Overall, survey respondents reported that they trusted their fellow teachers (89%). This varied somewhat among the schools with a range from 70% (Johnson) to 97% (Burbank). Teachers surveyed also reported that there was a collective or shared vision of outcomes expected for students (81% overall).

In terms of taking leadership roles the majority of teachers responded that there is a level of respect for teachers who take the lead in school improvement efforts (85% overall). In addition a majority of teachers (83%) felt that they had freedom in how they delivered content to students. Overall the teachers were not as positive about the voice they had in ensuring appropriate pathway scheduling (57%). When asked about opportunities to have weekly grade-level meetings with other teachers the responses varied greatly between the five schools. Rosemont teachers reported that weekly meetings occur infrequently (6%) while 66% of Burbank teachers responded that they had weekly meetings. When teachers were asked if they discussed students academic progress with other teachers this same level of variation was reported (6% Rosemont to 66% Burbank). These two items had the highest variance across the five schools in terms of how teachers rated the collaboration and leadership opportunities in their schools.

**How do teachers participate in and value professional development opportunities?**

More than half of the teachers working in small learning communities reported that they participated in content specific professional development (58%) provided by the California Subject Matter Projects (CSMPs). Fewer than half of the teachers reported participating in other content specific professional development (34%) and a small percentage responded that they had not participated in any content specific professional development (18%).

Overall, when asked about their satisfaction with the professional development they received the teachers who had participated in content specific professional development provided by a CSMP reported that they were satisfied (72%). In addition, when asked if the professional development had helped them improve students’ academic outcomes, over half (58%) of the teachers reported that it had. However, when teachers were asked about specific areas of growth related to the professional development they had received they were more positive. A majority of teachers reported that the professional development they received through the CSMP had increased their ability to: provide students with opportunities to think and reason (81%); engage students in
learning activities to deepen their understanding of concepts (84%); support students with differentiation and scaffolding (76%); and provide students with multiple opportunities to show understanding and practice skills (78%).

How do schools with SLCs support a college/career ready culture?

Small learning communities should ideally provide additional opportunities for teachers and students to discuss college planning and career pathways. Just over half of the students reported that a teacher had discussed how to prepare for a career with them in class (56%) and less than half of the students (49%) reported that a teacher had discussed how to prepare for college with them. Half of the students (50%) said that a counselor had personally discussed how to prepare for college with them.

In contrast a majority of the students (90%) said that their family expected them to attend college and to graduate from college (87%). Most of the students also said that they planned on going to college (85%); however only (40%) said they had a detailed plan on how to complete UC a-g general requirements. Most of the students reported that they were on track to graduate from high school at the end of their senior year (62%).

Overall patterns and recommendations

Survey results suggest that, in general, students in these five comprehensive high schools feel supported by and comfortable with their teachers. Due to variation in both responses and response rates among teachers across the schools, it is difficult to determine the extent to which the SLC structure does or does not contribute to students’ sense of community and support. Student responses are fairly consistent in most items across the schools while teachers’ responses often vary widely. One area that student responses suggest might be an opportunity to improve supports is in preparing students for college and careers. While the vast majority of students indicated they expect to go to college, a much smaller proportion indicate having a detailed plan to do so or that their teachers or guidance counselors have discussed this with them.

The impact of the SLC structure on teachers is less clear. Teachers’ opinions vary widely both between and within the schools. While teachers tend to report high levels of collaboration and flexibility in delivering curriculum, issues of having a voice in scheduling pathways and having weekly scheduled collaboration time varied and were generally less positive. Teachers who have participated in the CMSP professional development tend to respond quite positively about its impact on their ability to support their students, although only a small majority are confident that the professional development (from any source) they participated in resulted in higher student achievement. Interpreting this discrepancy is difficult – open ended responses suggest that at least some teachers were “reserving judgment” until end of year test scores were available (survey implementation preceded end of year exams and release of CST scores). It might be useful in next year’s survey to differentiate between standardized test results and other, classroom based, assessments of mastery.

The evaluation team will work with SCUSD staff to encourage higher levels of participation among teachers in the next year’s survey in hopes of clarifying if differences among the schools are related to differing response rates or differences “on the ground” among the schools. It is
also apparent, both from survey responses and from discussions with SCUSD staff, that not all teachers and schools have the same conceptualization of what a small learning community is and whether it exists at their school. Given the many competing initiatives and overall turmoil in education policy in California over the past few years, this is probably not surprising.

References
