Multiple Case Study on Effective Practices in Urban

Schools: Piloting of the *SOP Implementation Inventory*

Cross-Case Analyses

Prepared by and submitted to
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Introduction to *Schools of Promise*

To help close achievement gaps in Ohio, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) developed the state Superintendent of Public Instruction's *Schools of Promise* program in 2000-2001. The purpose of the program was to identify, recognize and highlight schools that are making substantial progress in ensuring high achievement for all students. To meet the criteria for *Schools of Promise*, a school had to have enrollment of at least 40 percent or more of students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and meet or exceed the state standard of 75 percent passage in reading and/or mathematics (overall and for each racial/ethnic subgroup) on the Ohio Achievement Test (OAT), Ohio Proficiency Test (OPT), or Ohio Graduation Tests (OGT). Since that time, ODE has recognized schools that meet the criteria on an annual basis.

In addition to recognizing schools, ODE reviewed the research and literature on effective, high-performing, high-poverty schools and developed an *SOP Framework of Practice* that identifies research-based practices organized around five themes that include:

- Rigorous instruction aligned to state standards;
- Leadership that focuses on continuous improvement;
- Instruction designed to ensure every student succeeds;
- Engagement of parents and community in supporting student success; and
- Creating a culture where each individual feels valued.

Case Study Research on *Schools of Promise*

Recently, ODE sponsored case studies by five research organizations that examined the effective instructional practices and cultural qualities of *Schools of Promise*. The studies centered on five categories:

- A mix of rural, small town, and urban schools with an emphasis on reading/language arts achievement;
- Schools that had 75 percent of their students with disabilities proficient n reading, mathematics, or both;
- Rural schools with an emphasis on mathematics achievement;
- Schools with a focus on teacher quality and effectiveness in schools; and
- Effective practices in urban schools.

This is the cross-case analysis report for the urban school study.

Purpose of the Multiple Case Study on Urban Schools

This study's purpose was to highlight and document effective research-based strategies used by six selected urban schools aligned to the *SOP Framework of Practice* – a review of research and literature organized around the five major themes. A second aspect of this study was to pilot the *SOP Implementation Inventory*, a tool designed to help a school examine and document its practices using the *SOP Framework of Practice*.

Methodology

Once a school agreed to participate in the study, a researcher from RMC Research Corporation visited each site for one day and trained the principals and school teams, identified by the

principal, in the use of the SOP *Framework of Practice* and the *SOP Implementation Inventory*. The *SOP Implementation Inventory* lists the five *Schools of Promise* themes, four to seven sub-themes under each theme, and two to five questions for each sub-theme. For example, schools were asked to identify what grade levels had aligned their curriculum with the Ohio academic state standards and assessments. The total number of questions across the Five *SOP* Themes was 80. Some questions asked schools to complete tables, provide a descriptive answer, or submit copies of documentation (e.g., the school's improvement plan).

The six participating schools submitted completed inventories with supporting documentation electronically or by paper. Researchers obtained additional records from the schools and ODE's web site, the districts' web sites, the participating schools' web sites, and web sites from other relevant organizations or commercial companies on programs or assessments. One to two researchers conducted a two-day validation site visit to each of the six schools between February and April 2006. The site visits included classroom observations and individual interviews with the principals and other administrators, other school staff (e.g., counselors, literacy coaches), teachers, students, and parents. Researchers prepared a case study for each participating school. They collected data on the classroom observations using a standard protocol. The interview questions were open-ended and tailored to each school based on the review of the submitted *SOP Implementation Inventories*.

Organization of Findings

This cross-case analysis report has five sections. The first section describes the six urban *Schools of Promise* that participated in the study. Section two shares findings on the three elementary schools, while the third section shares findings on three high schools. The fourth section shares general findings and conclusions across the participating elementary and high schools aligned to the five *SOP* themes. The fifth and final section describes the piloting of the *SOP Implementation Inventory* and provides a summary of feedback and recommendations on the instrument from the six schools that participated in the study.

The five *Schools of Promise* themes emphasize the importance of providing rigorous instruction aligned to state standards; providing leadership that leads to continuous improvement, providing instruction to ensure every student's success, engaging parents and the community to support student performance, and creating a culture where individuals are valued.

Background Information on Participating Urban Schools

In 2005, the Ohio Department of Education selected six urban schools for the study based on student performance on state assessments in either, or both, reading or mathematics in 2004-2005. The sample included three elementary schools – Central Community Elementary in Reading, Harold R. Walker Elementary in Canton, and Douglas MacArthur in Cleveland – and three high schools, Eastmoor Academy High School (EAHS) and Columbus Alternative High School (CAHS) in Columbus and Memorial High School in Campbell.

The number of years the participating schools were recognized as a *Schools of Promise* ranged from one to four years. ODE recognized all six schools as *Schools of Promise* for their performance on reading assessments. Two elementary schools and one high school were also recognized as *Schools of Promise* for their performance in mathematics. Two elementary schools and one high school received a building rating of "Excellent" for meeting the state's

indicators, two high schools were rated as "Effective," and one elementary school was rated "Continuous Improvement."

Table 1 provides a summary of demographic information on each school. The sizes of the participating schools ranged from small (154 students) to moderate (730 students). The percentages of economically disadvantaged students ranged from 43 percent to 100 percent. Racial and ethnic diversity of student populations varied across the schools. The enrollment of students with disabilities ranged from four to 25 percent.

Table 1: 2004-2005 Profiles of Participating Schools

	Central Community Elementary School	Douglas MacArthur Elementary School	Walker Elementary School	Columbus Alternative High School	Eastmoor Academy High School	Campbell Memorial High School
2004-2005 Profiles of Participating Schools						
Number of Years Identified as School of Promise	2	4	1	2	1	3
Grade Level and Academic Subjects Identified for SOP in 2004-2005	3rd-5th grade reading 3rd, 4th, & 6th-grade mathematics	3rd-5th grade reading	3rd-5th-grade reading 3rd-4th grade mathematics	10th-grade reading and mathematics	10th-grade reading	10th-grade reading
2004-2005 Building Rating	Excellent	Continuous Improvement	Excellent	Excellent	Effective	Effective
Student Enrollment	313	154	500	610	730	452
Grade Levels	Kindergarten -6	Kindergarten - 5	Kindergarten -5	9-12	9-12	9-12
Economically Disadvantaged Students	51.9%	100%	55.2%	43.1%	56.2%	51.3%
African American Students	5.7%	52.2%	12.8%	59.9%	88.4%	26.6%
Hispanic Students	Not calculated	8.4%	Not calculated	2.6%	1.8%	15.2%
White Students	90.7%	29.1%	79.5%	33.1%	7.8%	54.1%
Multi-racial Students	Not calculated	7.0%	6.2%	Not calculated	<10	4.1%
Students with Disabilities	13.8%	25.3%	20.3%	4.4%	13.6%	12.8%
2003-2004 Graduation Rates				99.2%	97.1%	96.7%

Sources; Ohio Department of Education, 2004-2005 Local Report Card for Central Community Elementary School;, 2004-2005 Local Report Card for Douglas MacArthur Elementary School; 2004-2005 Local Report Card for Walker Elementary School; 2004-2005 Local Report Card for Columbus Alternative High School, 2004-2005 Local Report Card for Eastmoor Academy High School;, 2004-2005 Local Report Card for Memorial High School

Additional Notes about the Participating Schools in 2005-2006

Walker Elementary
For the 2005-2006 school year, Canton Local School District converted Walker Elementary School from a neighborhood kindergarten through fifth grade school to a districtwide school with grades three through five. Restructuring the three district elementary schools allowed 20 positions to be absorbed at no loss of programming or service to students. In difficult financial times, it saved the district funding and allowed for better collaboration opportunities.

Memorial Elementary
Cleveland's Douglas MacArthur Elementary School (grades kindergarten through five) was a Title I school that operated a year-round schedule from 1997-1998 to 2004-2005. The school year started in July and ended the following year in June for a total of 200 days of instruction (20 extra days of instruction). During the summer of 2005, Cleveland Municipal School District relocated MacArthur's principal and teachers, and transferred some of MacArthur's students to a new school building, Memorial Elementary, in a new neighborhood across town from the original school. Memorial School is a Title I school (grades preschool through eight) in its first year of operation. Eight percent of the students enrolled at Memorial were former students of Douglas MacArthur. Memorial has 35 certified teachers, many of whom transferred to Memorial from MacArthur. In 2005-2006, Memorial had a student enrollment of 550 students who transferred from three elementary and three middle schools. Memorial is primarily a neighborhood school. Memorial's principal and staff completed the Implementation Inventory and identified which practices had previously been used at MacArthur School. Hereafter, written descriptions in the case study will refer to Memorial Elementary School.

Columbus Alternative and Eastmoor Academy High Schools
The student enrollment for Columbus Alternative is entirely lottery-based, whereas Eastmoor Academy and other CPS high schools have students assigned to them by address and the remaining school enrollment is filled by lottery students. Columbus Public Schools (CPS) has a community choice and intra-district open enrollment program where parents may apply for their child to attend another school of their choice rather than the neighborhood school. The district operates a lottery in January for the following school year. Students can only enter CAHS at the beginning of the school year

Findings for Elementary Schools

Elementary: Rigorous Curriculum and Instruction Aligned to State Standards

All three elementary schools, Central Community, Memorial, and Walker, expected students to master the state standards, benchmarks, and indicators in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics at each grade level. It was obvious from interviews and documentation, that all three schools approached the state standards as the core of curriculum and instruction. Each elementary school had aligned their curriculum, instruction, and assessments horizontally across classes at each grade level and vertically across grade levels. To ensure that teachers and students were addressing the state standards on a yearly basis, the elementary schools and/or their districts created quarterly pacing charts, curriculum calendars, or maps that identified the state standards to be taught for each school year. In addition, lesson plans were coded by state standards.

To increase the knowledge and understanding of state standards by students and parents, Walker Elementary in Canton used "I CAN" statements based on state standards. For example, the adult statement of a third grade Ohio ELA standard which read, "Use letter sound knowledge and structural analysis to decode words," was transformed into a student "I CAN" statement: "I CAN use what I know about letters and sounds to identify words," which was much easier for a nine-year-old to understand and be able to talk about. Teachers used "I CAN" checklists and "I CAN" weekly quizzes on state standards to monitor student progress. Every student graphed their progress on "I CAN" quizzes and stored them in a data folder. Interviewed teachers reported that students knew the state standards because of the "I CAN" statements, ongoing assessments, and the data collected in students' data folders. Students were able to very specifically identify what they learned each day, and if assessed, how close they were to mastery of standards.

Each elementary school allotted between 75 to 120 minutes a day for English Language Arts. To ensure coordination of instruction at grade levels, all three elementary schools allotted each grade level common planning time for teachers. The elementary schools teamed reading specialists with classroom teachers during ELA instruction at least once a week. During the allotted time, students rotated through a variety of instructional activities (e.g., large group instruction, small group instruction, individual assistance, stations or centers) depending upon the approach of the reading program. While the reading approaches varied, all three elementary schools focused on the five research-based components of reading (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency). Each school implemented supplemental reading intervention programs for students who needed additional assistance or more individualized assistance. The supplemental reading programs were purchased through Title I funds or *OhioReads* grants.

Throughout the school year, the three elementary schools used a variety of screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring reading assessments of students to determine when and how to intervene. These assessments included:
- formal and informal screening and diagnostic,
- formal and informal assessments,
- informal teacher assessments (running records, quizzes),
- locally-created district assessments,
- benchmark assessments, and
- standardized district assessments.

The assessments were aligned with state standards, benchmarks, and indicators. Teachers used the assessment data on an ongoing basis to determine when and where students needed additional interventions and what differentiated instruction was needed. In addition, the three principals met with grade level teams to monitor on an ongoing basis how well the grades were meeting the school's goals or targets for student performance.

In each elementary school, the schedule for mathematics instruction ranged from 75 to 90 minutes daily. For instruction in mathematics, one school used a research-based approach, *Everyday Mathematics*, which was aligned with Ohio's mathematics standards. Another school blended inquiry-based learning with teacher directed instruction, manipulatives, computers, and daily reinforcements. The schools used the following assessments: textbook, teacher-based, and curriculum-based assessments. Teachers monitored student progress in mathematics on a monthly basis.

Elementary: Providing Leadership That Leads to Continuous Improvement

Interviewed school staff described the three elementary principals as well-read, driven instructional leaders with clear, high expectations. They were up-to-date with the latest research and theory on effective schooling. They continuously involved staff in reading articles and books about effective practices. They were visible throughout the school as they regularly visited classes. In some schools, the principal served as the instructional leader. They had a shared leadership approach in that various teams were used in decision-making.

Two of the three participating elementary schools had assistant principals. One assistant principal was primarily responsible for after-school programs and tutoring and summer programs.

The three elementary schools had continuous improvement committees or school improvement teams. School staffs identified these teams as problem solvers who particularly addressed instruction, climate and management.

Teacher leaders were identified in each elementary school. For example, Central Community had two instructional leaders, classroom teachers given release time, who provided professional development and facilitated teacher study groups. Two schools had grade-level team leaders who facilitated weekly team meetings, particularly focused on curriculum, instruction, assessments, and student progress.

In addition to the scheduled district in-service days, these three schools arranged schedules and organized staff so that job-embedded professional development was provided during the school day. For example, the instructional leaders at Central Community facilitated book studies, and coached and assisted teachers. Walker Elementary had two literacy coaches who provide job-embedded professional development to classroom teachers through modeling, demonstrations, co-planning, and ongoing supporting and closing curriculum gaps. Other times, they reviewed student progress reports, or coordinated curriculum and instruction. Memorial also had a literacy team that promoted literacy and professional development.

Elementary: Providing Instruction to Ensure Every Student Succeeds

In the three participating elementary schools, grade level teams of teachers met monthly and quarterly to review student performance data from assessments and determine if grade level benchmarks had been met in ELA and mathematics. These schools developed levels of

interventions for students not making sufficient progress or for students at-risk of failing in reading and mathematics. In addition, the three schools restructured daily schedules, flexibly assigned reading and special education interventionists to grade levels and specific students on an as-needed basis, and created after-school and summer programs to extend the instructional time for students. Walker created a daily intervention time in reading at the end of the day for all grade levels that provided students time for practice, remediation, or enrichment activities. Central Community developed a four-leveled Intervention Based Services approach ranging from in-class interventions to referral to the Intervention Based Services Team. The three schools provided after-school tutoring to students in academic subjects. As a result, very few students failed grades or were retained.

To address the needs of students with disabilities, the three elementary schools had Intervention Specialists who were assigned to specific grade levels and students with disabilities in general education classes. The Intervention Specialists worked closely with the general education teachers to coordinate instruction and supports.

Elementary: Engaging Parents and the Community to Support Student Performance

Two of the three elementary schools, Walker and Memorial, had positions designated for parent involvement. The positions were supported through funds under the *No Child Left Behind Act.* Walker Elementary school had a parent coordinator who was responsible for supervising all parent and volunteer activities, including the recruitment, scheduling, and training of parent volunteers. Memorial School had a Family Liaison who prepared the Title I School/Parent/Student Compacts, arranged for parent meetings, and facilitated parent workshops and family events. Memorial School created three different versions of the compact – one each for parents, teachers, and students. Parents had to keep copies of the signed compact. The school used the compacts as a contract with students and teachers.

All three elementary schools had School or Parent Teacher Organizations that met monthly. In addition to the formal organizations, these schools maintained daily contact with parents through e-mails, phone calls, or daily assignment sheets. Throughout the school year, the schools scheduled times for students and families to interact with the school staff around academic goals. For example, Walker Elementary in Canton sent the grade level "I CAN" statements to parents at the beginning of each grading period. As a result, parents knew what their children would be expected to learn during that quarter. Daily, Walker sent all parents classroom assignment sheets that required parent signatures. In addition, Canton Local School District reformatted their progress reports for students and parents to a standards-based grading. Walker Elementary provided Parent Information Night and reading workshops funded by grants from *OhioReads*. Memorial School provided Proficiency Workshops for parents so they could learn how to help their children at home and gave parents ready-made materials and problems to use in reading and mathematics. Central Community had a parent resource library with materials that parents could borrow and use with children.

Two of the three elementary schools had actively engaged a number of local community businesses to support their academic programs. For example, one company provided scholarships to Central Elementary students for an after-school science program and sponsored an annual Black History Essay contest. A second company volunteered and assisted with the Center of Science Industry's *COSI on Wheels* program, a traveling program that brings hands-on science experiences to Ohio schools. Memorial Elementary developed partnerships with the

local Junior Achievement that resulted in lessons on science and social studies and John Carroll University, which supplied books for classroom teachers in early elementary grades.

Elementary Schools: Creating a Culture Where Individuals are Valued

The staff in these elementary schools deliberately focused on creating and maintaining positive school cultures that fostered close, positive working relationships among teachers and staff, between teachers and students, and with parents, creating a safe, orderly school environment. Interviewed teachers and parents at every participating school described teachers as committed, caring individuals who focused on maintaining high expectations for each and every student. The teaching and non-teaching staff at each school also believed in the philosophy that if students liked their schools and teachers, students would work hard to meet their expectations.

Two of the three elementary schools have focused on creating a professional learning community where teachers collaborate, develop positive trusted relationships with each other, and maximize school resources. One challenge for Memorial Elementary, which was in its first year of operation, was to create a culture that integrated staff and students from three elementary schools and three middle schools into a new school.

Two of the three elementary schools, Central Community and Walker, had firmly established schoolwide discipline programs. Central Community had four school rules and a colored-coded system with rewards and consequences so teachers could provide immediate feedback to students. Central teachers maintained behavior charts on students according to compliance with the rules. Walker's disciplinary program had three components (homework, adult signature on the daily assignment sheet, and the school's six core rules). Walker students who met all three components on a daily basis received recognition and awards. Walker students and the school's office tracked discipline data.

One of Memorial's challenges was that the school had students ranging from preschool age to 14 years old. Being in its first year of operation, this school was still developing its schoolwide discipline approach.

In addition to the schoolwide discipline program described above, Central Community developed a variety of bullying prevention programs for students in grades two through six. Central also trained fifth- and sixth-graders in peer mediation. Central was unique in that they had a leadership council in which students participated. The students were selected by submitting a written essay on why they thought they would be good leaders. The council identified how to help the school, organized a can drive and raised funds during spirit week.

Besides ensuring that students and parents were aware of the schools' behavioral and academic expectations, all three elementary schools frequently recognized students when they met and/or exceeded these expectations. Daily, Memorial Elementary used Kindness Coupons to recognize students who demonstrated kindness. Students accumulated the coupons and received recognition and rewards. Weekly, Central Community recognized students for quality work and/or high achievement by receiving a Principal's Award, which included the student's picture with the teacher and a pencil. Walker Elementary recognized student performance weekly, as well, particularly for students who completed their homework for the week, turned in parent signatures on all assignments, and demonstrated good behavior. Monthly, Memorial held Citizenship Assemblies that recognized good citizens and students with perfect attendance. Central and Walker Elementary also held quarterly assemblies for students who achieved and

met expectations for attendance, attitudes and academics. In particular, Walker provided awards to students for perfect attendance,100 percent completion of homework, academic performance on report cards, and 80 percent or above on computerized assessments.

Findings for High Schools

High Schools: Rigorous Curriculum and Instruction Aligned to State Standards

All three high schools – Campbell Memorial, Eastmoor Academy and Columbus Alternative (CAHS) – focused on students graduating from high school and being prepared for postsecondary education and/or employment. To reach that goal, the three high schools offered college preparatory programs as well as Advanced Placement courses. The number of AP courses ranged from two to 16 and varied by content. The three high schools not only exhibited high levels of student performance on the Ohio Graduation Tests, but their graduation rates ranged from 97 to 99 percent, which was higher than the state standard of 90 percent and the state graduation rate of 85.9 percent (for 2003-2004).

In addition to the common high school academic courses, each participating high school had developed specific programs and courses. For example, Campbell Memorial High School had a technical preparation program that included courses (such as integrated software applications, internet-web authoring, or multimedia) and practical opportunities for students to apply what they learned in these courses. Students enrolled in the internet-web-authoring classes maintained the web sites of the school and the district. The students enrolled in multimedia classes hosted and produced morning announcements, which were broadcast live every morning, and filmed major sporting, academic and extracurricular activities.

CAHS offered the *International Baccalaureate Diploma Program*, a challenging two-year curriculum which leads to qualifications recognized by the world's leading universities. The program aimed primarily at students aged 16 to 19. CAHS was one of eight Ohio schools with the *IB* program.

Both CAHS and Eastmoor had developed integrated, multi-disciplinary Humanities courses at each grade level that incorporated explicit instruction in study skills. These innovative courses were team-taught by two teachers (English and History), and integrated history, geography, culture, and English Language Arts. As part of the ninth-grade Introduction to Humanities courses, students learned how to use good study skills (e.g., outlining, highlighting, note-taking and organization) and to write well in academic content.

The two Columbus high schools focused on extensive writing across the curriculum, culminating in student writing portfolios. These two schools placed a heavy emphasis on students learning to write well on a variety of assignments (including analytical and critical writing, research papers and literary criticism). Eastmoor used the district's mandated *Collins Writing Program*, which defined five types of writing assignments with clear methods for evaluation of each. CAHS used a writing-across-the-curriculum approach within the district's guidelines for writing. As a result of their emphasis on writing, Eastmoor had received the *Creative Communication's Poetic Achievement Award* three times for exhibiting special merit, and the CAHS' student literary magazine was recognized for excellence by the National Council of Teachers of English.

Both Eastmoor and CAHS extended instruction by assigning their students summer reading and writing projects. These schools provided their students with lists of required and recommended

reading lists and assignments to be completed during the summer in a number of courses (e.g., Humanities, American Literature, Advanced Placement Literature and History). Students were required to read at a minimum two to three books and complete in-depth writing assignments for each course. For example, in 2006, Eastmoor students had to read *Ishmael: An Adventure of the Mind and Spirit* by Daniel Quinn, write extended paragraphs on 10 subtopics addressed in the book, collect and write about 10 quotations from the book, and collect articles from newspapers and magazines on environmental problems or disasters.

One of the three participating high schools (CAHS) identified specific expectations for students and parents. To ensure students and parents were knowledgeable of CAHS expectations, CAHS required all students and parents to sign a *CAHSmic Scholars Pledge,* which identified 11 expectations (e.g., assignments, number of courses per year, extra-curricular participation) for a student and five parental expectations (attendance at Parent-Teacher Conference Days, join the Friend of CAHS parent organization).

The three high schools used a variety of activities (e.g., weekly study, explanations of terms, practice tests, tutoring) to prepare ninth- and 10th-grade students for passing the Ohio Graduation Tests. In addition, the staff of both CAHS and Eastmoor provided assistance to students preparing for college entrance examinations. These two high schools also assisted parents and students in preparing for college interviews and completing college and scholarship applications.

High Schools: Providing Leadership That Leads to Continuous Improvement

The three high schools had a principal and one or more assistant principals. The principals of these high schools promoted a positive working environment for teachers and staff. They were described by interviewed staff as approachable and open to helping teachers and staff problem-solve. The principals were highly visible throughout the school and had frequent individual contacts with students. They provided opportunities for teachers and staff to provide input on important decisions.

Interviews with school staff and results on district surveys indicated that two of the three high school principals had a shared vision that focused on student learning and guided school practices. Interviewed staff and parents described these two principals as purpose-driven, collaborative and democratic. Monthly staff meetings were geared toward improving instruction and discipline, sharing best practices, and recognizing and celebrating successes.

Two of the three high schools had active improvement teams that met monthly and reviewed the school's progress toward meeting school goals and targets. The principals of these two high schools met with school teams and established high expectations and concrete yearly goals and targets for improvement. Throughout the year, the principals kept staff focused on reaching those improvement goals and targets. As a result, staff in these two schools reported that there was a collective sense of responsibility for meeting high expectations. There was a joint responsibility for continuously self-examining the schools' practices in light of their expectations and student outcomes.

All three high schools used district-provided in-service days for professional development on state standards, academic content, instructional practices, and technology that impacted teaching and learning. One high school librarian had identified and placed on the school's web site a variety of professional development resources for individual faculty members to access. Two high schools utilized school days to provide job-embedded professional development. For

example, one high school participated in weekly study groups that focused on increasing student achievement in mathematics and science through standards-based, inquiry-centered instruction. Another high school studied and established a professional learning community where its leaders and teachers choose a theme in relationship to the school's mission and vision. The focus of the professional learning community was on improving the climate and culture of the school. Interviewed staff at the three high schools reported that the professional development activities they had received had been useful and effective in improvement efforts.

High Schools: Providing Instruction to Ensure Every Student Succeeds

To ensure that students performed well on the Ohio Graduation Tests (OGT), the three high schools focused on preparing ninth- and 10th-grade students so they could pass all sections and graduate. For example, the teachers at Campbell Memorial repeatedly explained, defined, and used terms (e.g., hyperbole) from the OGT. CAHS and Eastmoor devoted one day a week to OGT study in classes and targeted specific areas where additional practice was needed. Eastmoor also offered OGT tutoring after school. Both Campbell Memorial and Eastmoor administered the OGT practice tests. In addition, CAHS and Eastmoor provided tutoring and assistance to students preparing for college entrance examinations, such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and/or the American College Tests (ACT).

Eastmoor and CAHS developed specific interventions for students who struggled during a course or were at risk of failing a course. Both offered tutoring before, during and after school. In addition, in 2005-2006, CAHS changed its daily study hall period to a once-a-week period when students could meet with teachers, make up tests or quizzes, or receive additional tutoring. If students were identified at risk of failing a course, both schools scheduled Intervention Assistance Team meetings, developed intervention plans, and monitored students' progress. At times, students were referred to the counselor by a teacher if there were concerns about a student's learning or behavior. The counselor arranged an Intervention Assistance Team meeting to determine if the concerns warranted further interventions or referral for eligibility for special education.

Despite the above interventions, there were a small number of Eastmoor and CAHS Students who failed courses or grades. The students were then eligible to participate in the district's Credit Recovery Program two days a week. The Credit Recovery Program included a self-paced instructional program that combines individualized teacher instruction with the use of technology. Students must demonstrate mastery of course objectives in the Credit Recovery program. A student received a pass or fail grade once he or she completed the Credit Recovery; however, a student's failing grade was not removed from the transcript.

To meet the needs of English Language Learners, the three high schools took different approaches. Eastmoor had a teacher and assistant who served students during two periods of English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) classes as well as supported students in general education classes. Eastmoor staff closely monitored students who exited the ESL classes into general education classes. If a student seemed to be falling behind, the student received additional ESL support and tutoring. CAHS offered students special courses in ESL English and history, in addition to supports during other academic courses. Campbell Memorial had a part-time ESL tutor who assisted students with homework during study halls and non-academic courses.

The three high schools served students with disabilities enrolled in both general and special education classes. At Campbell Memorial, special education teachers collaborated with general education teachers on instruction and OGT preparation. CAHS had both self-contained classes for students with multiple disabilities and a specific learning disabilities instructor who worked with students and teachers in general education classes. Eastmoor served students with disabilities in resource and self-contained classes.

High Schools: Engaging Parents and the Community to Support Student Performance

To engage parents, the three high schools had parent organizations which met monthly and served different functions. The Campbell Academic Association (not associated with the Parent Teacher Association) raised funds, sponsored the National Honor Society and the Academic Challenge, provided award certificates to students, and provided scholarships to five students. The Eastmoor Academy Booster Parent Teacher Association (EABPTA) funded scholarships and supported various school academic and athletic programs and activities. In addition, the EABPTA provided breakfasts to students on the mornings of the OGT testing. All parents of CAHS students were expected to participate in Friends of CAHS, the official Parent Teacher Organization. Both the EABPTA and the Friends of CAHS coordinated teacher appreciation breakfasts and luncheons. The Friends of CAHS also raised funds to purchase items requested by faculty (e.g. microscopes or audio-visual equipment). Both CAHS and Eastmoor reported high percentages of parents who participated in school activities.

While the three schools had formal parent/teacher organizations, two of the high schools had part-time parent consultants who maintained weekly contact with parents and led parent engagement activities. The *No Child Left Behind Title V* Section for parent engagement funded these positions. The positions were only open to parents of students attending the schools. The consultants stayed in contact with and provided information to parents about school policies and procedures through e-mails and telephone calls. In addition, the consultants contacted students and parents regarding attendance, standardized testing and conferences.

Both CAHS and Eastmoor had developed community-based internships for students in grades 10 through 12. Students were assigned to various community businesses and organizations (e.g., the Ohio Senate, Nationwide Insurance, and Doctors Hospital West). The internship sites provided students hands-on work and career exploration experiences. The full-time community coordinators placed and evaluated the interns. The length of the internships varied from one semester (15 weeks) to an entire school year (30 weeks). Students participated for a full day and earned a half credit per year for the internships. Interviewed students described the internship programs as one means of preparing them for postsecondary experiences.

In addition to the internships, all Eastmoor students had career passports that helped students identify educational, occupational and life goals. In 2005-2006, Eastmoor hosted its first Career Day where guest speakers helped freshmen and sophomores understand what they needed to do to reach occupational aspirations.

High Schools: Creating a Culture Where Individuals are Valued

The three high schools have established safe and orderly school environments and positive school climates where students and adults knew each other well and formed positive relationships. Interviewed school staff and students talked about a sense of family and community in each school.

The student enrollment in the three high schools ranged from 452 students (Campbell Memorial) to 730 students (Eastmoor Academy). The small to moderate sizes facilitated school staff knowing students and parents well, fostered close student-teacher relationships, and promoted safe school environments. Interviewed staff at the three high schools emphasized that positive, close relationships among staff and between students and teachers were critical for their success. Campbell was unique in that the principal and many of the teachers had attended Campbell as students themselves. While CAHS did not have homerooms, Campbell Memorial assigned students to one homeroom teacher for four consecutive years. In addition, Campbell's principal and guidance counselor met with each and every student to discuss a student's schedule for the next school year.

All three high schools were experiencing increases in the diversity of students. Campbell Memorial has experienced an increase in cultural and linguistic diversity while Eastmoor and CAHS have students representing a variety of socioeconomic levels, races/ethnicities, and religious diversity. Two of the schools, Eastmoor and CAHS, drew students from across a large city and focused activities on students getting to know each other and developing sensitivity and respect for diversity. Eastmoor sponsored a variety of activities to increase student sensitivity to diversity (e.g., International Fair and African-American assembly). In addition, Eastmoor had programs to promote positive student relationships. For example, the Impact Team was a student operated club that focused on positive community influences. The Gentleman's Club helped groom male students to become positive role models in the community.

While the three high schools had discipline policies, a challenge across schools was to respond to changes in student motivation and behaviors and consistently apply consequences for discipline violations. Both CAHS and Eastmoor followed the Columbus Public Schools' Guide to Student Conduct. Students and parents or guardians had to sign forms indicating they had read and understood the Code of Conduct. The codes created expectations for appropriate student behavior. Faculties used the signed Code of Conducts to remind both parents and students of their commitments to the schools' behavioral standards. While Campbell Memorial had a student handbook with disciplinary policies and procedures, the faculty recently recognized a need for improving the consistency across staff in carrying out disciplinary procedures.

The three high schools offer a variety of organizations for student participation, engagement and relationships. For example, common clubs across the three participating high schools included: Spanish, French, art and science. The number and diversity of clubs and after-school activities varied among the participating high schools and reflected the interests of their student population and the school's community. For example, CAHS had 14 different clubs, some of which included: Amnesty International, Gay-Straight Alliance, Chess Club, Youth to Youth, Thespian Society, and Black Cultural Awareness Club. The three highs schools had web sites that included pictures, projects and examples of the activities for many of the organizations.

Eastmoor and Campbell Memorial have athletic programs while CAHS does not. If CAHS students wanted to participate in athletics, they had to make arrangements with their neighborhood schools. Interviewed CAHS students reported that they were able to balance the

homework requirements of CAHS and participate in the sports activities of their neighborhood schools.

When students met or exceeded the schools' academic, attendance and behavioral expectations, the three high schools used a variety of activities to recognize students. Across the three schools, students were identified for the Honor Roll if they earned a Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0 to 3.5. Eastmoor had a Super Honor Roll which recognized students with GPA of 3.5 or higher while Campbell Memorial had a High Honor Roll for students who maintained a GPA of 4.0. Campbell also had a National Honor Society to which students had to apply and have a GPA of 3.25.

Yearly award assemblies or showcase events were common to the three schools. For example, Campbell held a yearly award assembly where students were recognized and received certificates and medals for meeting academic expectations. CAHS held an annual event, Kaleidoscope, which showcased student work for parents and community members, as well as a special awards night where awards were presented in a formal recognition of excellence. In addition, the three schools also used newsletters, web sites, and quarterly events (such as ice cream socials or picnics). For example, Eastmoor's web site and monthly newsletters highlighted when and how staff and students met expectations

General Findings and Conclusions Across Schools

Rigorous Curriculum and Instruction Aligned to State Standards

The first of five *SOP* themes is: *Schools of Promise deliver rigorous instruction aligned to the state's academic content standards.* Research on high-performing, high-poverty schools have documented that effective schools use state standards to explicitly plan, design and evaluate curriculum and instruction, and assess student work (Haycock, 1999).

The six participating urban elementary and high schools not only were using the state academic content standards in English Language Arts and mathematics, but had aligned their curriculum, instruction and assessments with the standards to some degree. The three elementary schools had extensively aligned their English Language Arts and mathematics curriculum, instruction and assessments vertically and horizontally to the state's academic content standards, benchmarks and indicators. One elementary school had even translated the state standards into child-friendly and parent-friendly statements. Three elementary schools and two high schools had curriculum matrices or pacing charts that identified the scope, sequence, and pacing of instruction aligned with state standards and assessments. Two of the three high schools viewed the state academic content standards as the minimum standards for students. All three high schools incorporated standards and examinations for college entrance and from the Advanced Placement program. One high school had a program based on international standards.

Five of the six schools restructured the school day or school year. This provided teachers with more time for collaboratively planning, instruction in English Language Arts and/or mathematics, and student interventions. All six schools incorporated technology and software applications into academic subjects. Instructionally, the schools used a variety of strategies, including large group and small group instruction, individualized instruction and tutoring, inquiry-based instruction, higher-order thinking skills, and cooperative learning.

Five of the six schools had set yearly measurable, performance goals for all students on state assessments. All six schools prepared students for the state assessments, by explaining terms, using practice tests, or by focusing on specific targeted sub-topics based on analyses of student performance. In addition, the majority of school personnel were actively involved in frequently assessing students and their progress in English Language Arts and mathematics through a variety of formal and informal assessments. The schools' staff reviewed, analyzed and used student performance data and immediately intervened when students were struggling to meet expectations. Five schools had not only extended instructional time to help students meet the standards, but provided additional interventions. Five of the six schools focused on continuously improving the performance of students.

Providing Leadership that Leads to Continuous Improvement

The second *SOP* theme is: *Schools of Promise have leadership that leads to the continuous improvement of the school.* Research on effective schools has documented that administrators and other leaders continually strive to improve the instructional effectiveness of schools (Cotton, 1995).

Interviewed staff members reported that all six school principals promoted positive staff relationships and cooperation. The principals were described by interviewed staff as approachable and open to helping teachers and staff problem-solve. They provided opportunities for teachers and staff to provide input on important decisions. They were highly visible to students, teachers and parents. They had frequent contacts with students.

Five of the schools had principals who established high expectations and concrete goals for all students and staff to meet. The principals with school teams established yearly improvement goals based on student performance data. Throughout the year, the principals kept staff and students focused on reaching those goals/targets. As a result, staff had created a collective sense of responsibility for ongoing improvement.

Findings on Professional Development Across Schools

Research on effective professional development has documented that teachers need to participate in ongoing, continuous, sustained staff development focused on what students are to learn and how to address different problems students may have (*National Partnership for Excellence and Accountability in Teaching, 2000)*.

The principals of the six schools ensured that teachers and staff had the necessary professional development opportunities that directly enhanced the teaching and learning of the schools. Most of the principals were well-read, shared research and literature with teachers, and encouraged study groups.

In addition to the scheduled district in-service days, three of the schools had rearranged schedules and organized staff so that job-embedded professional development activities were provided during the school day. Teachers in the participating schools assumed greater roles in collaboratively planning professional development opportunities. For example, one elementary school had two instructional leaders, classroom teachers provided release time, who worked with other classroom teachers. They met with grade level teams, facilitated book studies and assisted teachers. Another elementary school had two literacy coaches who provided job-embedded professional development to classroom teachers through modeling, demonstrations,

co-planning and ongoing support. Mathematics and science teachers in one high school participated in weekly study groups as part of the *National Science Foundation's Urban Systemic Program*, which focused on increasing student achievement through standards-based, inquiry-centered instruction.

One elementary school and one high school focused on creating professional learning communities. The purposes of the professional learning communities were to reach consensus on school goals; improve communication, interactions and collaboration among staff and teachers; and maximize resources. In the high school the professional learning community leaders planned the school's professional development in alignment with the school's improvement plan.

Across the six schools, the content focus of professional development directly related to teaching and learning and included topics such as, literacy, writing, mathematics and science instruction, curriculum alignment, standards, instructional strategies (e.g., differentiated instruction, higher level thinking skills), state and local assessments, data analysis and use, discipline and technology. Interviews with school staff reported that the professional development had contributed to the school's improvement processes and kept them up-to-date with the latest literature and research, particularly on instruction.

Providing Instruction to Ensure Every Student Succeeds

The third *SOP* theme is: *Schools of Promise design instruction to ensure every student's success.* Research on high-performing schools has documented that effective schools establish high expectations for all students and provide the supports necessary to achieve these expectations (Brook, et al., 1989, Howard and McCabe 1990).

Five of the six schools provided documentation on school plans with yearly goals and targets focused on state indicators, particularly those addressing student performance in English Language Arts and mathematics and meeting adequate yearly progress targets. Many of the goals and targets were based on the analyses of student performance on previous district and statewide assessments. The district and schools' leadership or improvement teams set the targets. Some elementary schools set instructional goals and targets for each grade level, based on item analyses of student performance on state assessments.

The six schools provided additional support and assistance to students – albeit the range and depth of supports and interventions varied across schools. Three elementary and two high schools had developed scheduled and schoolwide intervention programs and approaches for students who were struggling or were at-risk for failing courses or grades. Daily and weekly interventions (e.g., individualized instruction, small group instruction, tutoring, computer-assisted instruction) were made available to students. Five of the six schools offered after-school tutoring or academic content programs for students. One high school reported that teachers were encouraged to take active roles in students' academic progress or failures, but it was up to individual teachers to determine the nature of the interventions.

To address the needs of English Language Learners and students with disabilities, the available programs and services varied across schools depending on the needs of students and the personnel assigned to the school. The range of services for English Language Learners varied from part-time tutoring, support for students in general education classes, and direct instruction in English-as-a-Second Language. All six schools provided special education services to students with disabilities in general education classes while three schools also had self-

contained special education classes. Special educators worked closely with classroom teachers to support students with disabilities in general education classes.

Engaging Parents and the Community to Support Student Performance

The fourth *SOP* theme is: *Schools of Promise engage parents and the community to support student success.* Research has documented that effective schools focus their efforts on engaging families and communities in developing trusting and respectful relationships with school staff and building strong relationships with community organizations (Henderson and Mapp, 2002).

Many of the schools adopted a philosophy that parent engagement was a key component of improvement efforts, and schools welcomed parents as important members of the school community. Interviewed parents and results on district-level parent surveys indicated that five of the six schools welcomed parents, frequently communicated with parents, and provided frequent activities to engage parents in learning more about the school, the school's expectations, and how to support children's learning at home. All six schools had formal parent organizations that carried out a variety of functions. The three elementary schools and two of the high schools communicated expectations for students and parents in each subject at each grade level. Student progress in meeting these expectations was also frequently reported to parents. Five of the six schools reported that they maintained daily/weekly contact with parents through phone calls, e-mails or assignment sheets. Two elementary schools and two high schools had formal positions (coordinator, liaison or consultant) designated for parent involvement supported through funds under the *No Child Left Behind A*c*t.* The responsibilities included training and scheduling of all volunteers, arranging for parent meetings, facilitating parent workshops and family events, and preparing Title I School/Parent/Student Compacts.

In addition to strong relationships with parents, four of the schools had built strong connections with community organizations to supplement or enhance the schools' programs. For example, two elementary schools partnered with local business to support science and social studies programs while one elementary school partnered with a local university. Two high schools partnered with community organizations to provide students community internships while one high school also sponsored a Career Day.

Creating a Culture Where Individuals are Valued

The fifth *SOP* theme is: *Schools of Promise create a culture where each individual feels valued.* Research on high-performing schools demonstrate that an effective school maintains a safe and orderly environment where students demonstrate respect for each other and are free of fear, and where the code of conduct is well-publicized, fair and uniformly enforced (Schwartz, 2001).

The six schools had developed strong and supportive relationships among teachers and staff and teacher-student relationships to create a sense of family and personalized learning environments. Interviewed staff at the elementary and high schools described how critical it was to have positive relationships among staff and between staff and students. Interviewed parents and students reported that the teachers were caring, committed individuals who knew students well and focused on maintaining high expectations and standards. Many interviewed staff reported that students will work hard to meet these expectations if students have a sense of belonging of the school through close relationships. Interviewed students reported that the relationships with teachers motivated students to excel. All six schools had activities and

programs to recognize students when they met or exceeded academic and behavioral expectations.

Five of the six schools had disciplinary rules and policies and procedures that created safe school environments and fostered students' sense of responsibility for appropriate behavior. One school was in its first year of operation and in the process of creating disciplinary policies and procedures. The three elementary schools developed approaches where positive student behavior was recognized and rewarded while inappropriate behavior had consequences. Some of the high schools also recognized students with good attendance. However, the three high schools were facing increasing incidences of behavioral infractions that presented new challenges to faculty.

Five of the six schools reported specific activities and programs that fostered student engagement in the schools' cultures and promoted positive student-student and teacher-student relationships. Some of the elementary schools had developed anti-bullying programs and student support groups. Two of the three high schools had developed courses and programs to increase the sensitivity of students to the diverse backgrounds of other students. While the three high schools sponsored a variety of extra-curricular activities and programs, only two schools had athletic programs.

Conclusions

Findings from this study indicate that the six urban schools were high-performing, high-poverty schools in Ohio that challenge the low performance trend on state assessments evident in other urban schools. What differentiated five of the six schools was the conscious effort principals and staff made to not only set deliberately high academic and behavioral expectations and standards for the school and students, but that each provide the time, supports, interventions, and resources necessary so all students could reach those standards. There was a drive to succeed, a willingness to work hard, and continuous examination and monitoring of the effectiveness of their practices. They held each other accountable and students accountable for meeting these expectations. As a result, these schools exceeded the state standards and average results on assessments in reading and mathematics and graduation rates in 2004-2005.

The next table presents a summary of practices used by the six participating schools and organized according to the five *SOP Themes.*

Table 2: Practices Used By the Six Participating Schools

Practices Used By the Six Participating Schools	Elementary Schools			High Schools		
	Central Community Elementary School	Memorial School*	Walker Elementary School	Columbus Alternative High School	Eastmoor Academy High School	Campbell Memorial High School
Lesson #1: Rigorous Curriculum and Instruction Aligned to State Standards						
Vertical & horizontal alignment	X	X	X	X	X	
Curricular matrices/pacing charts	X	X	X	X	X	
Increased instructional time for core academic subjects	X	X	X	X	X	
Incorporate use of technology in classes	X	X	X	X	X	X
Measurable student performance goals	X	X	X	X	X	
Frequent use of formal & informal assessments of student progress	X	X	X	X	X	X
Targeted preparation for State assessments	X	X	X	X	X	X
Continual use of assessment data	X	X	X	X	X	
Schoolwide focus on improving student performance	X	X	X	X	X	
Lesson #2: Providing Leadership that Leads to Continuous Improvement						
High expectations / goals for student & teacher performance	X	X	X	X	X	
Collective sense of responsibility for improvement	X	X	X	X	X	
Teachers in leadership roles	X	X	X	X	X	X
School-based job-embedded Professional Development (PD)	X	X	X	X	X	
PD content directly focused on teaching & learning	X	X	X	X	X	X
Lesson #3: Providing Instruction to Ensure Every Student Succeeds						
Differentiated instruction	X	X	X	X	X	
Formal school-wide intervention approach for struggling students	X	X	X	X	X	
Variety of daily / weekly interventions	X	X	X	X	X	
Extended Learning Opportunities (during, before/after school, & during summer)	X	X	X	X	X	
Assistance for LEP students	Not applicable	X	Not applicable	X	X	X
IEP students integrated in general education classes with supports	X	X	X	X	X	X
Lesson #4: Engaging Parents and the Community to Support Student Performance						
Daily / weekly contact with parents	X	X	X	X	X	
Formal parent organizations	X	X	X	X	X	X
Formal parent liaison position		X	X	X	X	
Partnership with community organizations/businesses/universities	X	X	X	X	X	X
Lesson # 5: Creating a Culture Where Individuals are Valued						
Collaboration among staff and positive professional relationships	X	X	X	X	X	X

Practices Used By the Six Participating Schools	Elementary Schools			High Schools		
	Central Community Elementary School	Memorial School*	Walker Elementary School	Columbus Alternative High School	Eastmoor Academy High School	Campbell Memorial High School
Safe and orderly school environment	X	X	X	X	X	X
Formal system to acknowledge / reward positive behavior & performance	X	X	X	X	X	X
School-wide, formal disciplinary policy	X	In process	X	X	X	X
Positive school climate/sense of community	X	X	X	X	X	X
Targeted activities to increase student engagement	X	X	X	X	X	X

*ODE recognized Cleveland's Douglas MacArthur Elementary School as a Schools of Promise in 2004-2005. During the summer of 2005, Cleveland Municipal School District relocated MacArthur's principal and teachers, and transferred some of MacArthur's students to a new school building, Memorial Elementary, in a new neighborhood across town from the original school. The staff from Memorial School participated in this study.

Piloting the *SOP Implementation Inventory*

In addition to studying the effective practices of urban schools, a second aspect of this study was to pilot the *SOP Implementation Inventory*. The *SOP Implementation Inventory* is an instrument that can assist high-performing schools in developing a deeper understanding of their effective practices and identifying those that could be strengthened to build capacity and sustain success. The *SOP Implementation Inventory* lists the five *Schools of Promise* themes, four to seven sub-themes under each theme from the *SOP Framework of Practice,* and two to five questions for each sub-theme. The questions vary from completing tables, to providing descriptive responses, to identifying documentation of the implementation of practices.

The six schools approached the completion of the *SOP Implementation Inventory* in different ways. The principal of one participating school mailed handwritten portions of the *SOP Implementation Inventory* with brief responses and a limited amount of supplementary information to RMC. For the remaining five schools, the principals and principal-appointed teams (ranging in size from two to nine staff, including members of the school's leadership team, assistant principals, literacy coaches, teachers, or district personnel) discussed and electronically completed the *SOP Implementation Inventories.* They divided the themes and sub-themes into sections and assigned staff members to one of the themes. Some shared the draft responses in their staff meetings before submitting the completed inventories. These five schools electronically submitted the completed inventories to RMC and mailed RMC the supporting documentation, and reported that it took approximately 20 to 30 minutes to discuss and answer each question. The amount of supplementary documentation ranged from copies of a few documents to two notebooks of copied documents organized by the five *SOP* themes.

Feedback from the Participating Schools on the *SOP Implementation Inventory*

During the site visits and interviews, the researchers asked the personnel of the six schools to provide feedback on the format and usefulness of the *SOP Implementation Inventory* as well as recommendations for changes and how the inventory *c*ould be used by other schools.

Usefulness of the *Inventory*
Five of the six participating schools found the *SOP Inventory* was helpful, useful, and provided opportunities for staff dialogue, self-analysis and staff reflection. The inventory reinforced shared beliefs on what was important to schools. For one school, it increased staff's awareness and knowledge of the school's parent involvement activities while for another school it made staff aware that they needed to focus more on parent involvement. Another school reported that the completion of the inventory allowed staff to see a more unified approach across themes and activities. These schools reported that the inventory validated their practices and their alignment with research-based practices. One school, which provided limited information to the study, reported that it was a meaningless task and not important.

Format of the *Inventory*
Five of the six participating schools reported that the *SOP Implementation Inventory* was too long. They found redundancy in the number of questions asked across the five themes. Some questions were directed at districts rather than school levels. The schools also wanted the option of not answering all of the questions. However, some schools reported that the inventory forced them to collect and organize information on activities around the five SOP themes. The schools recommended reducing the length and redundancy of the inventory, changing its

formatting, adding the reasons for the questions, changing the nature and focus of some questions, and increasing the specificity in wording of questions.

Focus of the *Inventory*
In terms of the nature and focus of the questions, the participating schools recommended that a section on accountability be added to Theme One (rigorous instruction aligned to the sate's academic content standards) and the questions about alignment of the curriculum to the standards be reworded as many schools have completed their alignment processes.

Recommendations of Possible Uses of the *Inventory*
Five of the six schools identified nine potential ways that other schools could use the inventory.

1. The *SOP Implementation Inventory* could be used by the Continuous Improvement Team (CIP) and staff members to review the school's current status and identify what needs to be improved. Responses on the *SOP Inventory* could be used to complete items on the district's Comprehensive Improvement Plan.
2. The *SOP Inventory* could be used by a team at the close of the school year to reflect on changes and improvement during the school year.
3. The *SOP Inventory* could be used by the Academic Achievement Plan Core team as an inventory for staff in-services.
4. School faculty could focus on one of the five themes of the *SOP Inventory* to document what research-based practices are currently being used and which sub-themes need increased attention and focus.
5. The *SOP Inventory* could be used by grade level teams to generate conversations on research-based practices and their links to a school's practices.
6. Theme One of the *SOP Inventory* (rigorous instruction aligned to the state's academic content standards) could be used by schools in academic improvement.
7. The *SOP Inventory* could be used to validate practices of other urban schools.
8. The *SOP Inventory* could be used by districts to ensure that every school is addressing the five themes of effective practices identified by *Schools of Promise.*
9. The *SOP Inventory* could be used as a school diagnostic instrument to identify themes and sub-themes where the school needs to improve their implementation of research-based practices.

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