

**The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's
Washington State Achievers Program
Year 1 Evaluation Summary**

February 15, 2003

**Prepared for the
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**

Fouts & Associates, L.L.C.

**The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's
Washington State Achievers Program
Year 1 Evaluation Summary**

February 1, 2003

**Prepared for the
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**

Fouts & Associates, L.L.C.

Jeffrey T. Fouts
Duane B. Baker
Candace A. Gratama
Shawn D. Bachtler
Heather R. Stroh

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION: THE CREATION OF HIGH ACHIEVEMENT HIGH SCHOOLS	1
Achievers High School Grants	2
Grant Requirements and Expectations	3
Achievers Scholarship Program.....	6
THE SCHOOL GRANTEES	7
EVALUATION DESIGN	11
A Theory of Change for Creating High Achievement Schools	11
Evaluation Focus	14
Research and Evaluation Questions.....	16
Measures and Data Collection Methods	18
Evaluation Activities, 2001-2002	20
SUMMARY OF EVALUATION FINDINGS, 2001-2002	22
Year 1 Grant Related Activities.....	22
Overview of Grant Progress in the Schools	23
Approaches to Reinvention.....	25
College Awareness	29
School and Classroom Baseline Assessments	30
The Role of Technical Assistance.....	32
Contextual Factors: Challenges in the Future	33
SUMMARY	37
Appendix A School Grantee Demographic and Achievement Data	
Appendix B Quarterly School Report Guidelines and Sample Report	
Appendix C Teacher Questionnaire Items, Factor Analysis Results, and Sample School Profile	
Appendix D Sample <i>January 2002 Washington State Achievers Program: Preliminary Evaluation Report</i>	
Appendix E Sample <i>July 2002 Washington State Achievers Program: Year 1 Evaluation Report</i>	
Appendix F Achievers High Schools Collaboration Time Schedule	

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Washington State Achievers High Schools

Year 1 Evaluation Summary

INTRODUCTION: THE CREATION OF HIGH ACHIEVEMENT HIGH SCHOOLS

In the year 2000 the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation announced a \$350,000,000 funding commitment to education. “The Foundation’s three-pronged investment strategy reflects a commitment to growing successful models that help all students achieve at high levels.”¹ The approach included: (1) recognizing and encouraging high achievement schools and school districts; (2) promoting professional development to enhance district, school and classroom leadership; and (3) helping remove financial barriers to higher education through targeted scholarship programs. Major grants have been awarded in each of these three areas since that announcement.

An important component of this overall strategy is the Washington State Achievers Program with four primary goals:

1. to encourage school redesign into small learning communities that facilitates high academic achievement and increased college enrollment among all students at the selected high schools;
2. to identify and reduce financial barriers to college for talented, low-income students who have overcome difficult circumstances and who are motivated to attend college;
3. to provide mentoring to ensure academic support is available to students once they are enrolled in college; and
4. to develop a diverse cadre of college-educated citizens and leaders in Washington State.

In 2000 and 2001 the foundation’s Model Schools and Model Districts grants were awarded to “Washington State schools that have excelled at and are committed to helping all students achieve.” The Achievers program, however, focuses more on disadvantaged student populations with the intent of getting every student prepared for college: The goal being “to provide economically disadvantaged and underrepresented students the educational and financial incentives necessary to enroll in the colleges and universities of their choice and to successfully complete four-year degree programs.”

¹ Quotations in this section, the contents of Table 1, and the descriptions of the school grantees initial plans for the grants are taken from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation website, education division.
<http://www.gatesfoundation.org/learning/ed/default.htm>

The goal of high school redesign into smaller learning communities and focus on college preparation and attendance for *all* students is and continues to be a major focus around the country of the foundation and other groups. However, the second and third goals are a very unique aspect of this grant program and address other reasons for non-college attendance besides educational preparedness. To achieve these goals, the foundation has developed two overlapping grant programs—the Achievers high schools grants and the Achievers Scholarship Program.

Achievers High School Grants

In the spring 2001, as part of the Washington State Achievers Program, the foundation awarded five-year grants to 16 high schools serving largely economically disadvantaged student populations. The grants given to these public high schools ranged from \$180,400 to \$1,140,000 depending on the school student enrollment, and were intended “to raise academic achievement and increase college-going rates at these schools.” The work of these schools is to reinvent the school in two major ways: (1) develop small learning communities of no more than 400 students and (2) prepare all students for college.

Tom Vander Ark, Executive Director for Education at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation stated: “We believe preparedness and financial resources are two of the most difficult barriers to higher education. We are proud to make a long-term commitment to work with these 16 schools to knock down those barriers.” The Achievers program will work with students beginning in middle school, through high school, and into college. Mr. Vander Ark sees this as “a comprehensive approach to addressing issues of access to higher education.” The schools selected include large urban, small rural, and suburban schools. All serve large populations of low-income students, with an average of 38 percent of students in the schools qualifying for free or reduced lunch. In addition, 45 percent of the students are minorities. The schools received \$500 per student to support redesign efforts and another \$100 per student to strengthen early college awareness efforts at the middle school and junior high level.

To be eligible for the grant there must have been a willingness to convert or maintain small schools, to have 20% or more of their students qualify for free or reduced lunch, to have at least two teachers trained in using technology for learning, and to have a commitment to using research-based practices. Schools also had to demonstrate a budget match of at least 20 percent of the grant.

Grant Requirements and Expectations

The Creation of Small Learning Communities

The creation of grades 9-12 small learning communities of no more than 400 students is a required component for the Achievers high schools. While there are no specific grant requirements about how this is to be accomplished, this expectation is seen as fundamental to achieving successful high school reinvention². The expectation is based on very specific views of the American high school, and particularly the role the size of the institutions play in determining school success. “While elementary and middle schools have been the focus of numerous education reform efforts, high schools have largely been ignored. Even in the mid 1990s, when high schools began receiving better-prepared students, achievement remained flat, meaning that high schools were adding even less value than before. One of the main problems is the large size of the schools: today’s high schools often have enrollments of 2,000, 3,000, even 4,000 students.”

“These large, impersonal institutions are failing to teach young people what they need to know to lead meaningful lives, succeed in college and earn a decent living. This is disproportionately true for children from low-income neighborhoods. Student in large high schools also report having few significant relationships with teachers and mentors, in large part because teachers see so many students every day that it is almost impossible to build any sort of relationship with most of them.”

In contrast, “Small high schools can provide a personalized learning environment where every student has an adult advocate and the opportunity to develop a relationship with a teacher or mentor. Students in small schools feel less alienated and tend to be more actively engaged in school activities. Respect and responsibility are hallmarks of these schools.” In addition, “Studies show that small schools have higher attendance rates, higher grade-point averages, lower dropout rates, and students and teachers who report being more satisfied with the experience.”

The foundation has stated, “We need to redesign large, ineffective schools, create new, small high schools and replicate proven models.” While creating small learning communities is certainly a central component to the grant, “school size alone does not make a good school.” Other factors, or *attributes*, are also a focus of the Achievers reinvention efforts.

The Attributes

Prior to announcing the education initiatives, foundation personnel consulted with over 600 education experts from around the country, “representing a broad range of roles and interests to gain perspective and information on the state and future of education.” They concluded, “Schools with a common focus, high expectations, data-driven decisions, and time for teachers to work on shared challenges are better prepared to help all students achieve.” Based on these and other ideas, foundation personnel developed a list of characteristics or *attributes* for students and teachers, and for schools based on months of

² Quotations in this section about school size are from *Making the Case for Small Schools*, by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, available at: <http://www.gatesfoundation.org/education/smallhighschools/default1.htm>

consultation and research. In many ways, these attributes have become grant goals as the schools seek to change their practices, or reinvent themselves, along these lines. The foundation’s Attributes of High Achievement Schools are shown in Table 1.

Therefore, the school grants are to be used to create small learning communities focused on “rigor and relationships.” Schools are also expected to “reflect seven key attributes: *common focus, high expectations, personalized learning environments, respect and responsibility, time to collaborate, performance-based systems, and employing technology as a tool.* Schools also will emphasize relationships – between students and their work, between students and their teachers and the relationships among staff.” Finally, classroom instruction should reflect high levels of *active inquiry, in-depth learning, and performance assessment.*

TABLE 1. ATTRIBUTES OF HIGH ACHIEVEMENT SCHOOLS

Students Focused on Clear Expectations

Successful schools focus on literacy and a few other important learning goals such as those articulated by Hugh Price of the National Urban League. Students should:

- **Literate:** capable of demonstrating a working command of reading, writing, and speaking in English.
- **Mathematically competent:** have command of the basic computational skills required in the modern workplace and in everyday adult life.
- **Problem solvers:** eager to seek out information, discover answers, and apply their skills in reasoning and critical thinking to solving problems.
- **Scientifically literate:** capable of appreciating nature and the environment, familiar with the scientific method and the role of science in modern life, and cognizant of the uncertainties of the scientific method.
- **Good citizens:** well-grounded in the forces and values that have shaped this nation historically, culturally, demographically, politically, and economically with an appreciation for the relationship of the United States to the rest of the world and this country’s role in the world.
- **Technologically advanced:** comfortable with technology and capable of using computers and related technologies in the normal course of everyday work and learning.

Teachers Focused on Improving Teaching and Learning

The foundation’s education grant programs are predicated on three essential components of powerful teaching and learning (adapted from *How People Learn: Bridging Research and Practice*, National Research Council, 1999) in a standards-based technology-enabled environment:

- **Active Inquiry:** Students are engaged in active participation, exploration, and research; activities draw out perceptions and develop understanding; students are encouraged to make decisions about their learning; and teachers utilize the diverse experiences of students to build effective learning experiences.
- **In-Depth Learning:** The focus is competence, not coverage. Students struggle with complex problems, explore core concepts to develop deep understanding; and apply knowledge in real world contexts.
- **Performance Assessment:** Clear expectations define what students should know and be able to do; students produce quality work products and present to real audiences; student work shows evidence of understanding, not just recall; assessment tasks allow students to exhibit higher-order thinking; and teachers and students set learning goals and monitor progress.

Attributes of High Achievement Schools

The growing numbers of schools that are successfully helping diverse groups of students achieve at high levels exhibit the following attributes:

- **Common Focus:** In high achieving schools, the staff and students are *focused* on a few important goals. The school has adopted a consistent research-based instructional approach based on shared beliefs about teaching and learning. The use of time, tools, materials, and professional development activities are aligned with instruction.
 - **High Expectations:** In high achieving schools, all staff members are dedicated to helping every student achieve state and local standards; all students are engaged in an *ambitious* and rigorous course of study; and all students leave school prepared for success in work, further education and responsible citizenship.
 - **Personalized:** In high achieving schools, the school is designed to promote powerful, sustained student relationships with adults where every student has an adult advocate and a *personal* plan for progress. It is vital that schools are small, intimate units of no more than 600 students (less than 400 strongly recommended) so that staff and students can work closely together.
 - **Respect and Responsibility:** In high achieving schools, the environment is *authoritative*, safe, ethical, and studious. The staff teaches, models, and expects responsible behavior and relationships are based on mutual respect.
 - **Time to Collaborate:** In high achieving schools, staff has time to *collaborate* and develop skills and plans to meet the needs of all students. Parents are recognized as partners in education. Partnerships are developed with businesses in order to create relevance and work-based opportunities and with institutions of higher education to improve teacher preparation and induction.
 - **Performance Based:** In high achieving schools, students are promoted to the next instructional level only when they have achieved competency. Students receive additional time and assistance when needed to achieve this competency. Data-driven decisions shape a *dynamic* structure and schedule.
 - **Technology as a Tool:** In high achieving schools, teachers design engaging and *imaginative* curriculum linked to learning standards, analyze results, and have easy access to best practices and learning opportunities. Schools publish their progress to parents and engage the community in dialog about continuous improvement.
-

Middle School College Awareness Curriculum

An important element of preparing students for college is creating the attitudes and beliefs about the importance of college and the knowledge about college itself. A requirement of the grant is that the high schools begin the education process early by working and coordinating with feeder middle schools to implement a formal college awareness curriculum in grades 7 and 8. The college awareness efforts are to continue in high school in a less formal manner, but there is still an expectation that the high schools will make a concerted effort to create an environment where student focus is on developing knowledge about colleges and universities.

College Scholarships Eligibility

A truly unique aspect of the Achievers High School grants is the eligibility of the schools' students for a college scholarship to a Washington college or university. The student not only receives financial assistance to attend college but is also assigned a mentor during high school for encouragement and during college to assist in the transition to college life. This program is described in the next section.

Achievers Scholarship Program

The foundation provided a \$100,000,000 endowment to the Washington Education Foundation (WEF) to provide scholarships to select Achievers high school students. For 13 years students who attend these high schools are eligible to apply for college scholarships that, for all practical purposes, eliminate financial barriers to attending college.³ Over 500 scholarships per year are provided to students in the 16 schools. Scholarships are awarded in the students' junior year, and after receiving the scholarships student are provided mentors to assist them in their academics, college application process, transition from high school to college, and progress through college.

The mission of the Achievers scholarship program is “To provide economically disadvantaged and underrepresented students the educational and financial incentives necessary to enroll in the colleges and universities of their choice and to successfully complete four-year degree programs.” The WEF staff believes if substantial progress is to be made in increasing college enrollment and completion among low-income and minority youth, efforts to reduce financial barriers to higher education must be accompanied by adequate preparation in K-12, high expectations, and academic support while in high school and college. They feel most schools, particularly those serving low-income populations, are not currently structured to provide these support systems to all students, and the Achievers program is designed to provide a select number of Washington State high schools with the opportunity to redesign and better serve all students.⁴

³ When the grant was awarded by the BMGF there was a commitment to provide scholarships through the WEF to 13 cohorts of students. Both juniors and seniors received scholarships in 2001. In subsequent years scholarships will be provided to students in their junior year. Scholarships for WEF are “last dollar in.”

⁴ This section adapted from the WEF website, 2002: <http://www.waedfoundation.org>.

THE SCHOOL GRANTEES

The 16 schools selected to receive grants are diverse in size, student populations served, and geographic location. A listing of the demographic, achievement and other school characteristics is provided in Appendix A.

During the application process the schools identified current areas of strengths and weaknesses and developed a plan for use of the foundation funds. There was a clear expectation from the beginning for these schools to develop 9 – 12 autonomous learning communities of 400 students or less. How they would go about doing so was left to strategies outlined in their grant proposal and subsequent planning. Therefore, in one sense, each school had its own specific set of goals for the grant, while at the same time, all of the schools were to focus their efforts on the student, teacher, and school attributes, preparing all students for college, and reorganizing into small autonomous learning communities focused on rigor and relationships. These expectations provide a common set of goals to all of the grants.⁵ A brief description of the grantees unique school foci and initial plans for the grant are presented below.⁶

A. C. Davis High School, Yakima School District (1,619 students – \$971,400 grant)

In the heart of Yakima, Davis students come primarily from low-income urban neighborhoods. Many don't speak English at home, but by way of a written contract, the school has elicited the commitment of each student's parent in helping their children develop good literacy skills. Davis intends to personalize learning through the establishment of four academies in four separate buildings on its campus. Students will choose a career pathway at the end of 9th grade, following extensive career exploration during the 8th grade. Each academy will have approximately 400 students with 100 per grade level. These 100 students will have five teachers, representing five disciplines, who work with them for an entire year.

Cleveland High School, Seattle School District (737 students – \$90,000 grant)

At Cleveland High School in Seattle the college dreams of too many students are deterred by more immediate considerations, most financial. Cleveland has recently gained momentum behind school reform that will help all of its students succeed. It will continue this momentum by adding to its already existing academies so that all its students participate in schools within schools each with no more than 200 students. For example, one of the schools will be for students who want to concentrate on information technology. To remove some of the barriers that keep students from applying to college, Cleveland will implement an awareness program where role models speak to students from first-hand knowledge and college recruiters visit with students.

⁵ Small schools were defined as 400 students or less. Schools within the program with less than 400 students were not required to convert the school into smaller units although one school chose to do so.

⁶ School and grant descriptions were taken from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation website: www.gatesfoundation.org/wa/prog.

**Clover Park High School, Clover Park School District
(1,485 students – \$900,000 grant)**

Clover Park reached a milestone on Wednesday, February 7, 2001 when its staff of over 115 certificated and classified educators came to consensus to move forward in restructuring Clover Park High School and creating smaller learning communities where all students can thrive. Under its plan, ninth and tenth grade students will be placed in groups of no more than 200 students and assigned a core group of staff. Eleventh and twelfth grade students will learn in houses selected by broad interest areas and career paths with no more than 180 students per house. Clover Park already has a program geared at helping students learn about colleges and financial planning, but with help from this grant, the high school will expand this program to include Lochburn Middle School.

**Foster Senior High School, Tukwila School District
(740 students – \$427,790 grant)**

The city of Tukwila is a small community located 15 miles south of Seattle. Initially established as a farming community, Tukwila has now become an urban center at the convergence of four major highways. Foster High School has developed a plan to ensure its students continue to learn in the best possible environment. This includes high expectations for all students, more personalized learning opportunities and technology integration. In addition to improving the school basics, Foster has plans to implement a college awareness curriculum in a feeder-style, beginning in middle and junior high schools. Goal setting, career and college exploration, and family involvement will be key components of Foster's college preparation curriculum.

**Harry S. Truman High School, Federal Way School District
(191 students – \$182,400 grant)**

Harry S. Truman is the alternative high school in Federal Way and views the design and construction of a new building as a perfect opportunity to redesign the Truman program. Truman's vision for the future is two schools of 102 students each with six learning teams per school. Truman proposes a highly individual college awareness program that puts students directly in contact with colleges and universities through college fairs and campus visits. Internships and mentoring with local businesses will give students first-hand experience and insight into career possibilities.

**Henry Foss High School, Tacoma School District
(1,905 students – \$1,140,000 grant)**

Henry Foss High School prides itself on its unique mixture of ethnic and cultural diversity. Drawing students from four counties, Foss was the first school in the state to have an international baccalaureate program. Because it is not a neighborhood school, Foss sees the importance of establishing a community within the school. Through the Washington State Achievers Program, Foss will establish five autonomous learning centers, each with fewer than 400 students in grades 9-12. Students will spend four years with a team of teachers and students in a safe, positive learning environment.

**Kittitas High School, Kittitas School District
(266 students – \$180,400 grant)**

Kittitas High School in central Washington wants its students to benefit from the new technology-driven economy. This means changing the way they are prepared for the work

force. Students themselves have been directly involved in the school's redesign, beginning with a forum seeking their feedback on plans for the effort. Kittitas' plan fosters close relationships between faculty and students not only through its smaller size, but also through 20-minute morning classes that provide immediate personal attention to every student at the beginning of the day.

**Kent-Meridian High School, Kent School District
(1,352 students – \$795,000 grant)**

Kent-Meridian is aware of the ambitious nature of this generation of adolescents. More students now want to go on to college and professional jobs than did their peers before them. Kent-Meridian's mission is to enable all students to reach their potential and realize their ambitions. To do this, the school will reconfigure itself into a multiplex structure with five autonomous academies, schools that promote in-depth learning through real world predictable and unpredictable situations. Each student will be connected to one teacher who will serve as that student's mentor or advocate.

**Lincoln High School, Tacoma School District
(1,676 students – \$1,018,323 grant)**

The most ethnically diverse high school in Tacoma, Lincoln High School wants to raise the level of achievement for all of its students. The current senior class of 205 students entered Lincoln as a group of 562 freshmen. With the help of the Achievers grant, teachers are determined to help all Lincoln students achieve academic success. Students, teachers and parents will work together, beginning in eighth grade, to personalize each child's learning environment. Students and teachers will collaborate in small learning communities of 200-400 students, staying together for all four years of high school.

**Mabton High School, Mabton School District
(329 students – \$40,100 grant)**

Isolation and poverty are two factors Mabton High School believes keep its students from aspiring to higher education. It is hard for many students to leave such a close-knit community. But the future of Mabton's students is not just an interest of parents. The larger community is also behind improving the educational opportunities for young people. As part of its early college awareness effort, each student will be required to begin a college portfolio, participate in mock college searches and the application process, explore career options, and review and understand ways to finance college. Mabton believes there are many other schools across the nation like it and looks to be a pathfinder for success.

**Mariner High School, Mukilteo School District
(1,725 students – \$1,003,920 grant)**

The recent passage of a maintenance levy will bring 28 new classrooms, a new common area for students, and common office and conference space. The significance of this model is in its design. The addition creates groups of three to five modular classrooms with a common project area that can facilitate large group activities. Mariner will use this opportunity to redesign into six academies with 12 teachers and 280 students per academy. Each academy will have an individual area of intellectual focus. Students will select their area of interest with guidance from teachers, a counselor and parents beginning in the 7th grade. To keep parents actively involved in their child's education, the school will conduct special outreach beginning in the 6th grade.

**Mount Tahoma High School, Tacoma School District
(1,332 students – \$870,400 grant)**

Mount Tahoma High School is truly a community school, with nearly 75 percent of its student body forgoing bussing in favor of attending their neighborhood school. Yet, Mount Tahoma's students struggle to succeed. With the help of the Washington State Achievers Program, Mount Tahoma teachers and administrators will create a learning environment with opportunities for success for each and every student. Mount Tahoma will be redesigned into four autonomous learning environments, each with 100 students per grade. Students will work with mentors, parents and teachers to create specially designed programs that take each student's individual needs into consideration. Mount Tahoma students will know all of the options available to them in the future, and will have the skills to make post-secondary education attainable.

**Stevenson High School, Stevenson-Carson School District
(394 students – \$315,000 grant)**

Stevenson High School has watched its community fall into economic depression as the once booming logging and milling industries have slowly declined. The only high school in Skamania County, Stevenson has fewer than 400 students. The staff of Stevenson has made a commitment to reach every one of those students. Through the Washington State Achievers Program, Stevenson's students, teachers, parents, and advisors will work together to develop personalized curricula for every student. Local businesses will continue to partner with both the high school and the school district to encourage every student to consider college. Helping each student succeed will truly become a community effort.

**Tonasket High School, Tonasket School District
(411 students – \$315,000 grant)**

Tonasket High School, in the north part of Okanogan County, has been engaged in a self-study to develop a plan for improvement since the beginning of the 2000-2001 school year. In addition to improving technology, staff development and adult/student mentoring, Tonasket is focusing on improved college preparation. Tonasket's early college awareness plans begin with an eighth grade college and career exploration lab at Tonasket Middle School; this is one step in the development of a five-year education plan. To encourage students to become self-guided learners, each is integrally involved in the development of his or her own education plan designed around individual interests and strengths.

**West Valley High School, West Valley School District
(801 students – \$480,000 grant)**

Outside of Spokane with students from industrial and evolving rural areas, West Valley High School draws from families with working class pride and attitudes valuing hard work. With these values at its core, the community is behind West Valley's goal to redesign itself. The dream looks like this: two parallel, self-governing schools with 100 students per grade level. Within each school students will belong to a smaller Affinity Group determined by academic and personal interests. To engage students in college preparation, West Valley plans school-wide Career Days with employers from the region emphasizing the relationship between higher education and first class careers. Sixth grade students from Centennial Middle School and West Valley City School will be encouraged to begin thinking about jobs and careers early.

**Yelm High School, Yelm School District
(1,289 students – \$848,400 grant)**

When the staff at Yelm was asked their opinion of redesigning the school, the response was overwhelmingly positive. A "Dream Team" was formed to synthesize ideas from faculty and staff. The result was a school plan to design academies. The four academies envisioned include: a community service academy, which would increase learning while benefiting others; an alpha academy that provides a more structured environment; an academy of applied academics, where students investigate careers while studying the core subject required; and an academy of interdisciplinary studies, where each grade level has a different theme and at least three of the core classes would be team taught.

EVALUATION DESIGN

A Theory of Change for Creating High Achievement Schools

In contemporary American education there are examples of excellence, that is, where all students achieve at high levels. In some cases, these examples are high achieving classrooms that are part of a larger unit—the school. Sometimes these classrooms of excellence have been successful with the aid of the overall school functioning, and sometimes in spite of the school bureaucracy and environment. In fewer instances there are entire schools that are high achieving. It is not uncommon to have both high achieving and low achieving classrooms within a single school. The challenge is to create a school environment in which *all* students achieve at high levels.

The foundation's Achievers program is closely related to the Model Schools and Model Districts Initiatives and theories of change. In the Model Districts Initiative the attempt is to change all schools within the district, with the district serving as the unit of change (see *The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Model District Initiative: Year 1 Evaluation Results*, 2001. Available at <http://www.gatesfoundation.org/education/researchandevaluation/>). Within that model all schools are expected to "reinvent" themselves following the seven Attributes of High Achievement Schools with the assistance and direction of the school district. In the Model Schools Initiative schools are also expected to reinvent themselves along the seven attributes, but there is minimal expectation that the district will provide a leadership role in the process.

In both the Washington State Model Schools Initiative and the national grants for creating smaller, personalized high school environments the school is seen as the unit of change, with the expectation that they will create a high achieving learning environment throughout the school. The Achievers program follows the general theory of change as those schools in the Model Schools Initiative (see *The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Model District Initiative: Year 1 Evaluation Results*, 2001. Available at <http://www.gatesfoundation.org/education/researchandevaluation/>). One additional element for Achievers high schools is the expectation to coordinate with feeder middle schools to help develop attitudes and knowledge that will encourage all students to pursue a college education. This includes implementing middle school college awareness courses, providing

challenging courses designed to prepare students for college, and forming small schools where students can maintain strong relationships throughout their high school experience.

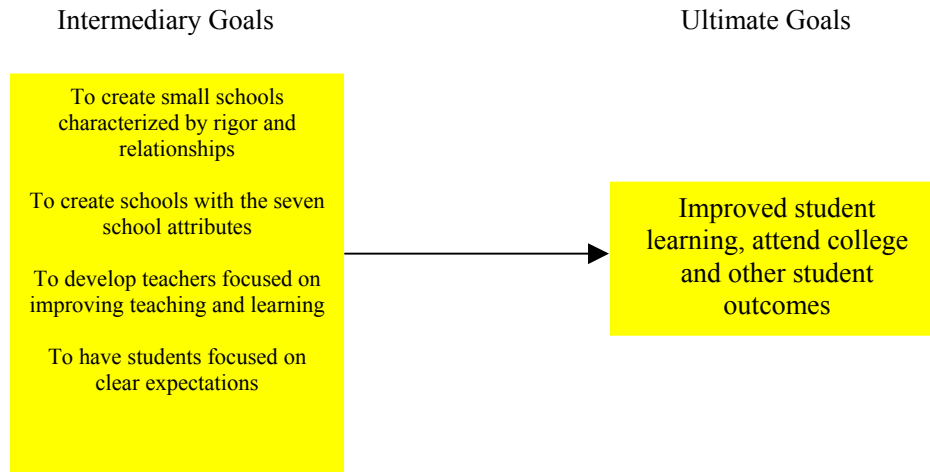
The desire to create schools that are “reinvented”—to create qualitatively different institutions that greatly improve student outcomes such as student learning, school completion, and post-secondary success is central to the work of the foundation. To accomplish this goal there must be institutional changes that are seen as incremental enabling factors. The nature and degree of institutional changes reflect the national movement of the last two decades of moving school *reform* to *restructuring* to *reinvention*; the latter, a term used by the foundation, “helping schools reinvent themselves.” The rationale for change follows this sequence:

- To increase both the quantity and quality of student learning and to improve other student outcomes, students must be focused on new, clear learning expectations in improved learning environments.
- To have students focused on new clear learning expectations and to improve other student outcomes, teachers must be focused on improving teaching and learning through the development of improved teaching strategies and learning environments.
- To have teachers focused on teaching and learning, schools must change how they are organized and function by developing practices based on seven school attributes.

Consequently, grants have been given to schools in Washington with the expectation that these schools will change practices to come more in line with the seven school attributes and work with and enable the teachers to teach differently and to enhance student learning both qualitatively and quantitatively. The school and classroom attributes (Essential Components of Teaching and Learning), therefore, are seen as intermediary or enabling goals illustrated graphically in Figure 1.

Thus, the grants are intended to change the very nature of the schooling experience for many students by creating or reinventing school and classroom practices with the intent of improving or changing public school output. A graphic illustration of the complete Theory of Change for Standards-Based Technology-Enabled Environment for the Washington State Achievers Program is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 1



This theory of change model explains the grant program’s activities and resources in relation to the intermediary outcomes and ultimate program goals. The ultimate program goals, improved student and post-secondary outcomes on the far right of the diagram, are believed to be most directly affected by improved classroom level instruction consisting of *active inquiry*, *in-depth learning*, and *performance assessment*, but also affected by the nature of the entire school environment. The school environment is also seen as an instrumental factor in promoting or allowing teachers to improve their instruction. The creation of small autonomous schools is a specific tactic that the foundation believes is vital for the creation of the educational environments described by the seven attributes. These small schools are expected to have autonomous curriculum, space (location) and budget. The high school works with its feeder middle/junior high school(s) to help students see the importance of college, to develop college awareness and to be aware of the Achiever scholarships available in their junior year.

The driving force for change and reinvention may have multiple sources for any given school, but the arrows to the left of the School Level section of the diagram suggest that for all of these schools there are at least three common sources. The first is the foundation grant program that has brought a high degree of visibility to the reinvention efforts. The second driving force, however, is the initiatives underway in the schools already, such as existing school improvement plans. State directives and initiatives in Washington are the third force driving the changes in the schools. These directives are not specific on school practices, but are rather mostly focused in the area of student outcomes with the implementation of the Washington Assessment of Student Learning and new graduation requirements for high school students. While there may be some tension among these three forces, the belief is that they are in general alignment with one another. These school initiatives already underway are also evident through the professional development activities present within the districts and at these schools. Additionally, the schools are provided coaching support from the Small Schools Coaches Collaborative at the University of Washington, and they may use their grant money for professional development activities based on the needs of an individual school. These activities are shown at the bottom of the graph. These efforts are to be aligned with and focused on the seven attributes and the improvement of classroom instruction.

Finally, these schools exist in a much broader environment than can be captured by a single diagram, and many contextual factors must be considered during the change process and in evaluating the degree to which these schools can be or have been successful. A few of the contextual factors that must be considered and perhaps addressed are shown on the far left of the diagram, with the recognition that no such list could be complete and will vary from school to school.

Evaluation Focus

The grants awarded to the 16 high schools are based on a theory of change that is near all encompassing for a school, requires multi-level changes (student, classroom, and school), and is longitudinal in nature (five years of grant implementation and following years for sustainability). A common evaluation design has been developed for all 16 schools receiving grants, using common methods, procedures, and measures.

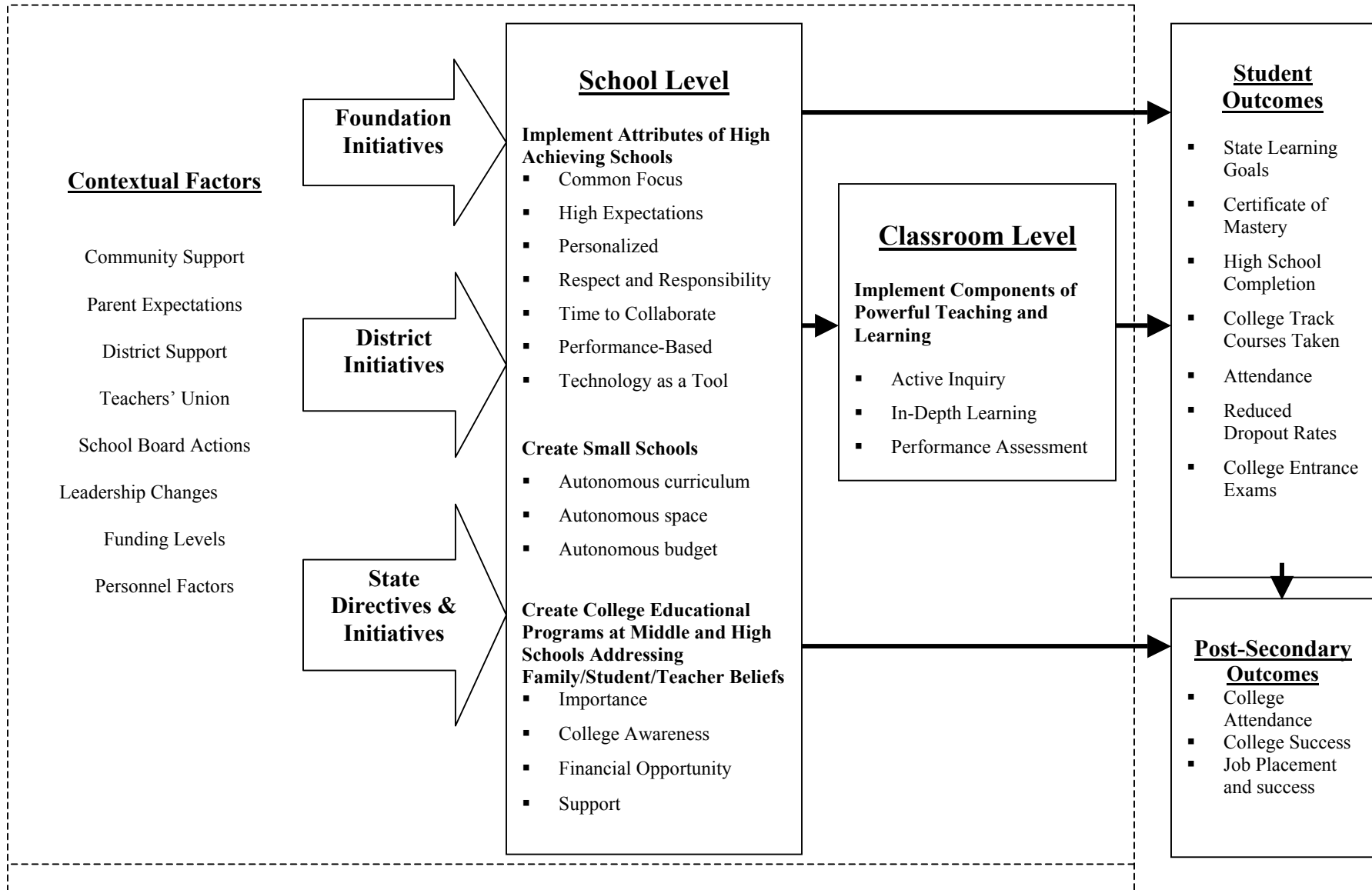
The evaluation design includes common areas of focus across the schools determined *a priori*, while at the same time includes a *dynamic* component that is evolving as the reinvention process proceeds. The change process, in general, will be studied in all 16 schools throughout the life of the grant. However, each school has unique contextual factors from which new evaluation questions are emerging. For example, three schools experienced a change in principals by the end of the first year of the grant, producing unique challenges in those locations. Additionally, district support to help schools secure planning and collaboration time differed across the schools, with some schools being given additional release time every week for planning, while other schools had no additional time. These and other developments are providing evaluators the opportunity to study the school reinvention under difficult circumstances, but within the common evaluation focus and activities.

The grant evaluation activities focus on four main areas.

I. The Conversion Process. Nine of the 16 schools began the grant process with student populations greater than 400. These schools are expected to convert their large comprehensive high schools into smaller autonomous schools of 400 or less. The processes being used to convert the schools along with common strategies and context factors helping and/or hindering progress are being collected as part of the on-going collection of qualitative information through school quarterly progress reports and periodic interviews/focus groups.

Figure 2

Theory of Change for High Achievement High Schools



II. School and Classroom Attributes. Schools will participate in a longitudinal study over the five-year period of the grant focusing on the degree to which schools and classroom teachers have changed their practices and “reinvented” themselves along the lines of the attributes. Baseline data were gathered in the first year using both quantitative and qualitative methods. This information has served as formative feedback for the schools and will be repeated in the third and fifth years. Classroom observations in over 500 classrooms will be conducted during the second year of the grant and will serve as one source of baseline data for the nature of classroom instruction in the schools. The data collection will be repeated in Year 5. The unique contextual factors of each school will serve as the basis for the on-going development of specific research questions. Follow-up studies in later years will determine the degree to which these changes are sustainable over time.

III. Student Outcomes. Over the five-year life of the grant and subsequent years student outcomes will be monitored in the areas of student achievement, including traditional measures of standardized test scores and grades, graduation rates, discipline rates, attendance, course-taking patterns, college enrollment/completion rates, and college awareness and attitudes. In addition, in conjunction with the American Institutes of Research and SRI International, research is being conducted on the nature and quality of student intellectual work over the life of the grant. Improved student outcomes are viewed as long-term grant goals and the result of several years of student involvement in the new learning environments.

IV. The Role of the Grant in Facilitating School Change. Schools chosen to receive grants have a number of initiatives already under way in their buildings, and separating the effects of the grant from other school improvement efforts will prove difficult. Nonetheless, attempts are being made to monitor and record the role that the grants are playing in the overall school efforts at improvement, reinvention, college awareness and coordination with feeder schools. Self-reporting in the form of quarterly grant activity/compliance reports and verification of accuracy by external evaluators through the use of interviews, focus groups and survey instruments are being used as a main source of information.

Research and Evaluation Questions

General Evaluation Questions for the Project

The purpose of the school reinvention grants is to create learning environments that are substantially different than those created by the traditional schools, with the ultimate goal of improved student outcomes. Therefore, six broad process and product questions have been developed to provide focus to evaluation activities.

- *How have the schools changed over the course of the five years?*
- *Have the schools been successful in creating/enhancing small autonomous schools and learning environments reflecting the school, classroom, and teaching attributes?*
- *What strategies were used for school reinvention and which were most successful?*
- *Has the nature of teacher assignments and the quality of student work changed?*
- *What contextual factors affected the reinvention efforts?*
- *Are the changes at the schools related to improved student outcomes?*

Process Questions for Formative Evaluation Reports

Throughout the life of the grants the attributes, the change process, college awareness and attitudes and coordination with feeder schools will be a major focus of the evaluation. Baseline formative evaluation reports for each school were prepared in January 2002 and focused on the following questions:

1. *To what extent is the high school faculty aware of the expectations of the Achievers grant?*
2. *To what extent is there a willingness and a plan in place to reinvent the high school?*
3. *To what extent do the seven Attributes of High Achievement Schools exist?*
4. *What are the middle and high school teacher and student attitudes toward college?*
5. *To what extent are the middle school faculty members aware of the role they play in the Achievers grant?*

Year 1 formative evaluation reports for each school were prepared in July 2002 and focused on the following questions:

1. *To what extent are school personnel cooperating with evaluation activities?*
2. *To what extent are faculty members aware of the expectation to develop the Attributes of High Achievement Schools?*
3. *To what extent are faculty members aware of the expectation to develop the Essential Components of Teaching and Learning, active inquiry, in-depth learning and performance assessment?*
4. *What is the strategy and plan of action to bring about change?*
5. *What are the plans for the following year?*
6. *What are the contextual factors to consider when evaluating grant progress?*
7. *To what extent are students anticipating, and feeling prepared, to attend college?*
8. *To what extent is the high school facilitating the development of college awareness curricula with its feeder middle/junior high schools?*
9. *What has been the response to the implementation of the CollegeEd curriculum?*
10. *What has been the impact of technical assistance?*

Yearly formative reports will be written for each grantee based the general evaluation questions in addition to questions that emerge over the next few years unique to each locale and as the reinvention process proceeds. Each of the school attributes is a potential area of inquiry. Examples of the types of processes to be addressed are listed below.

- *What are the expertise/assistance needs encountered by the schools during the year, and have those needs been met?*

- *What activities/strategies are the schools employing to develop or strengthen their **common focus** on a few important goals?*
- *What planning or steps are being implemented to increase a **performance-based** system that is data driven?*
- *What progress is being made on integrating **technology as a tool** in the learning environment?*
- *Similar questions on **High Expectations. Personalized. Respect and Responsibility. Time to Collaborate.***
- *What factors are preventing the needed changes from taking place?*

Additional Questions

The nature of the reinvention grants provide the opportunity to study school reform and to pose a variety of questions that do not fit precisely in the process/product categories. Generally, these questions pertain to the broader questions of school reform and implied cause and effect. Sample questions include:

- *What strategies for school reinvention were most successful?*
- *What strategies for school conversion were most successful?*
- *Was the size of the school an important factor for successful reinvention?*
- *What forms of technical assistance and capacity building had the most effect?*
- *What is the relationship between the changes in teacher and student technology skills and student achievement?*
- *What is the effect of the technology enhancements on the classroom climates?*
- *What is the effect of the program on teacher and student technology skills and teacher instructional techniques?*
- *What was the effect of the district supporting or hindering school reinvention in the success of a school?*
- *What was the effect of CollegeEd on students' decisions to attend college?*

Measures and Data Collection Methods

Data are being gathered at three levels: (1) the school, focusing on the attributes and the change process; (2) the classroom, focusing on classroom instruction and the teaching attributes; and (3) the student, focusing on both traditional outcomes, such as achievement, and affective areas, such as attitudes toward college. In addition, other data are being collected as part of related studies during the reinvention process. Both quantitative and qualitative data are being collected, and some instruments and methods provide data on multiple levels. A summary of the data collection instruments and activities are provided below.

Teacher Perspectives Questionnaire. The questionnaire focuses on the teachers' individual school practices related to the school attributes. It also asks questions about the classroom and

teaching practices in the individual teacher's school. Sections were developed specifically for this project, while other sections were taken from an instrument used in an earlier educational reform study in Washington. (90 items, 9 factors: Constructivist Teaching, Standards-based Teaching, Personalization, Technology Access, Environment, Partnerships, Teacher Input, Quality of Education, Distributed Leadership)

National School District and Network Grants Program: A National Evaluation Student Survey.

The survey was developed by the American Institutes of Research and SRI International for Gates high school grantees. The survey contains 15 factors reflecting both school and classroom attributes.

TAGLIT. Taking a Good Look at Instructional Technology (TAGLIT) is a series of on-line student, teacher, and school technology leader questionnaires. An on-line summary report was available for each school in June and was to be used for their technology self-assessment and planning purposes. These assessment results serve as baseline data for the school technology attribute.

Interviews. Evaluator interviews with central office administrators, high school and middle school principals, school coaches, teachers, parents, students, and Community Involvement Officers are conducted each year and focus on school practices related to the school/classroom attributes, college awareness, the extent of the conversion to small schools and other grant activities.

Focus groups. Evaluator-led focus groups with a random selection of high school and middle school teachers, parents and students are conducted yearly and focus on school practices related to the school/classroom attributes, college awareness, the extent of the conversion to small schools, and other grant activities.

Quarterly progress reports. Schools are required to file quarterly grant reports that include school activities related to the grant and on-going self evaluations. Verification of accuracy is provided by external evaluator end of year interviews and focus groups focusing on report contents.

College Awareness Survey. The purpose of the survey, administered spring 2002, was to determine 9th and 11th grade students' perceptions regarding college. Survey results helped to identify students' plans regarding college, students' perceptions regarding teacher and parent expectations, and common sources of college information. In addition, the survey measured whether students think attending college is important for their future and if they feel their high school experience has prepared them to be successful in college.

CollegeEd Curriculum Student Survey. The *CollegeEd* curriculum was developed by Teachers College for middle school students. Students participate in a pre-and post- course surveys designed to determine students' knowledge about college.

Classroom Observations. Classroom observations will be conducted during Year 2 of the projects in all schools using the Teaching Attributes Observation Protocol, which was developed around the teaching attributes of *active inquiry*, *in-depth learning*, and *performance assessments*. The purpose of the study will be to establish baseline data on the nature of classroom instruction and to verify the Constructivist Teaching factor of the Teacher Perspectives Questionnaire.

Teacher Assignments and Student Work. In conjunction with AIR and SRI, samples of teacher assignments and student work will be collected from six Achiever high schools in year 2 and year 4 of the grant. These data will be used to determine if the intellectual rigor of teacher assignments and the quality of student work change following a successful conversion to small schools.

Student Outcomes Data.

- 9th grade Iowa Test of Educational Development (ITED)
- 10th grade Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) results
- Other standardized assessments used by the individual schools
- Alternative assessment results, such as on-line testing, as they become available
- State and school data on expulsion/suspension rates, attendance patterns, high school completion rates, student attitudes, and other pertinent measures

Evaluation Activities, 2001-2002

Grant contracts included a requirement for each school to appoint an on-staff certificated employee as a school evaluation coordinator to facilitate the activities of the external evaluators throughout the year. Grant funds could be used for reimbursing the costs of these coordinator positions if necessary. This arrangement resulted in excellent school cooperation and very smooth and efficient data collection throughout the year in all of the schools. During the first year of the grant the following evaluation activities were conducted.

Spring Conference. Evaluators were first introduced to grantees at a conference spring 2001, following the public announcement of the selection of the 16 Achievers high schools.

August On-Site Visits. Evaluators visited each of the grantee schools in August or September 2001 to explain the evaluation design, process, and data collection schedule. External evaluator and building evaluation coordinator roles and expectations were clarified. Evaluation coordinator job descriptions were provided to all grantees.

Quarterly Progress Reports. The school evaluation coordinator is responsible for filing a quarterly report with the external evaluators describing the school reinvention activities, progress, and areas of need. Four reports were received from each school throughout the year. The guidelines for the quarterly report and a sample report are provided in Appendix B.

Fall On-Site Visits. Evaluators conducted on-site visits to all of the schools during fall 2001. There were four major purposes for the visits: (1) to determine the degree to which school personnel understood the grant requirements; (2) to determine the degree to which the reinvention concept had permeated the school; (3) to verify the activities and accomplishments reported in the first quarterly progress report; and (4) to conduct base-line assessments of school functioning in relation to the seven Attributes of High Achievement Schools. Data collection methods during this visit included interviews with principals, interviews and focus groups with all or a representative sample of teachers, focus groups of parents and students, and analysis of appropriate school written materials at the high school and feeder school(s). The results of these activities and initial baseline assessment of the seven attributes are reported in the January 2001 *Washington State Achievers Program: Preliminary Evaluation Reports* (see below).

Teacher Perspectives Questionnaires. In November and December all or a representative sample of teachers completed a questionnaire that focused on the school in relation to the seven Attributes of High Achievement Schools and the Essential Components of Teaching and Learning: *active inquiry, in-depth learning, and performance assessment*. The factor scores derived from these questionnaires and resulting school profiles serve as baseline data for the schools and were provided to the schools by September 2002 (see Appendix C).

January 2001 Washington State Achievers Program: Preliminary Evaluation Reports. A mid-year or preliminary evaluation report was prepared for each school based on data and information gathered from the fall on-site evaluator visits and the Teacher Perspectives Questionnaire. Each school received a copy of the report to be used as formative evaluation for future planning. Copies of the report were also provided to the foundation. The reports included an overview of the grant activities in the school to date, an evaluation of the degree to which school personnel understood the full intent of the grant, the origin of the school model, strategies for change, an evaluation of school practices in relation to each of the seven Attributes of High Achievement Schools, awareness of and attitudes about college, sources of college information, and coordination among the high school and feeder school(s). These reports served as formative feedback for the schools and also as a baseline evaluation for grant goals for school reinvention. A sample copy of one of these reports is provided in Appendix D.

Winter On-Site Visits. Visits were made to the schools in January at which time the evaluators presented the results of the interviews and focus groups, and summarized the written January report to building principals.

Student Surveys. College Aware Surveys and the AIR/SRI national surveys were administered to samples of 9th and 11th grade students in each school during February, March, and April.

TAGLIT. Taking a Good Look at Instructional Technology (TAGLIT), the series of on-line student, teacher, and school technology leader questionnaires, was available for schools during March, April, and May. An on-line summary report was available for each school in June, and was to be used for their technology self-assessment and planning purposes.

Spring On-Site Visits. Evaluators conducted on-site visits to all of the schools during April, May or June 2002. There were five major purposes for the visits: (1) to determine the progress of grant activities in the school; (2) to further identify contextual and historical factors within the school affecting the reinvention; (3) to verify the activities/accomplishments reported in the February, April, and June quarterly progress reports; (4) to identify the school's "plan of action" or reinvention strategy for the next year; and (5) to update assessments of school functioning in relation to the seven Attributes of High Achievement Schools. Data collection methods during this visit included interviews with principals, interviews and focus groups with all or a representative sample of teachers, focus groups of parents and students, and analysis of appropriate school written materials at the high school and feeder school(s). The results of these activities are reported in the July 2001 *Washington State Achievers Program: Year One Evaluation Reports* (see below).

Attendance at Periodic School Network Meetings. Throughout the year evaluation team members attended various school network meetings sponsored by BMGF and WEF as observers of the process and content of technical assistance.

July 2001 Washington State Achievers Program: Year One Evaluation Reports. An end-of-the-year evaluation report was prepared for each school based on data and information gathered from the spring on-site visits, student surveys, and the school compliance/activities reports. The Year 1 reports are an update and supplement to the mid-year reports prepared in January 2002. The reports include an overview of grant activities and progress to date in the school, the school contextual factors that are influencing the reinvention process, an update of school functioning relating to the seven Attributes of High Achievement Schools, strategies for converting to small schools, college awareness, coordination among schools, the role of technical assistance and the school's plan of action for the coming year. Each school received a copy of the report to be used for formative purposes. Copies of the report were provided to the foundation. A sample copy of one of these reports is provided in Appendix E.

School Student Outcomes Baseline Data. Student outcomes data for 2001-2002 has been collected from the state and schools to establish a baseline for project student outcomes. These outcomes consist of student achievement, including traditional measures of standardized test scores and grades, graduation rates, discipline rates, attendance, course-taking patterns by ethnicity, college enrollment/completion rates, other appropriate outcomes, and technology usage.

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION FINDINGS, 2001-2002

Year 1 Grant Related Activities

The grant announcements to the 16 schools in spring 2001 were high profile events, with newspaper articles and television coverage around the state. At that time there was a clear understanding on the part of principals and teachers about the basic expectations of the grant in a general way: convert to small schools and prepare student for college. However, an understanding of the truly comprehensive nature of the grants differed across the schools. Each school had prepared a grant proposal, and the degree to which large numbers of staff were involved seemed to affect the level of overall understanding. The proposals reflected attention to the attributes, plans to convert to small schools, preparation of students for college, and coordination with feeder schools. In the months immediately following the announcements and well into the 2001-2002 school year, considerable energy was devoted to clarifying the depth of coordinated grant services and the true nature of the grants. This proceeded throughout the year at differing rates among the schools. In some cases the understanding came quite quickly, while in other schools the understanding evolved over the entire year and needed to be facilitated by visits by the foundation program officer to the school to clarify expectations. By the end of the year the expectations had become clear to the key leadership people in all of the schools. With the clarity, however, came resistance, and in at least two cases as the complete nature of the grant became clear high school faculties engaged in serious discussions about not continuing with the grant.

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is supporting school reinvention in Washington State through a three-part approach that includes funding, formative evaluation, and technical assistance in the form of school coaches and an assistance network. Funding for school reinvention provided \$500

per student at the high school level plus \$100 per student to support coordination with feeder schools to develop college awareness. The support and evaluation activities surrounding the Achievers program grants were similar to those of the model district grants. School leadership teams attended periodic meetings throughout the year during which time they participated in a variety of activities to help build capacity within the school for change. External speakers were invited to the sessions to help develop the vision of what a reinvented school and an environment in which all students achieved at high levels might look like. Sessions were devoted to specific topics of interest or need, such as process skills or the value of creating small learning environments. In the second half of the year the focus of the meetings shifted from why and how to convert to small schools to a focus on protocols and teaching and learning. The meetings ranged in content from the abstract “vision” to “how to do it.”

Each school was assigned a “project coach.” The Small Schools Coaches Collaborative (SSCC) at the University of Washington led these efforts. The SSCC is a partnership between the Small Schools Project, the Coalition of Essential Schools Northwest Center and the National School Reform Faculty. The SSCC was established with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to provide coaching to grantee schools in Washington State. Coaches are provided free to Achiever grantees, but other grantee schools from other foundation initiatives pay for services. The coaches provide assistance in a variety of areas at the school level, such as group facilitation and change strategies. The work of the coaches was intended to facilitate the school processes to enable and to encourage school reinvention around the attributes and conversion to small schools. The role of the coaches is described in more detail in a later section on technical assistance.

Year 1 Evaluation Summary Focus. During the first year of the grant, evaluation activities focused on four tasks: (1) establishing baseline databases of student outcomes; (2) establishing baseline assessments of the school and classroom attributes in each school; (3) establishing baseline assessments of student college awareness; and (4) conducting case studies on the grant reinvention process. The specific evaluation findings for each school are contained in the January 2002 and July 2002 evaluation reports. This summary is based on a synthesis of those reports and is organized around the following topics:

- An overview of grant progress in the schools;
- Reinvention strategies and plans for the coming year(s);
- The status of the college awareness efforts, including coordination with feeder schools and curriculum implementation;
- An overview of the first year’s college scholarship experience;
- School and classroom attributes baseline assessment results;
- College awareness baseline assessment results;
- The role of technical assistance; and
- Contextual factors affecting reinvention.

Overview of Grant Progress in the Schools

The schools receiving the grants are diverse in size, student populations, resources, support infrastructure, and level of community involvement. They are also diverse in relation to the seven Attributes of High Achievement Schools and the degree to which students are aware and knowledgeable about college. Nonetheless, the progress of the grants followed a similar pattern in all but one or two of the schools. The initial task was to develop an understanding of the all-

encompassing reinvention expectation. The components of this included the development of the school and classroom attributes, the preparation of students for college, and the coordination with feeder schools to develop college awareness. For most educators at the larger schools, most of the focus during the first year was on converting to small schools. The overall focus of the small schools moved more quickly into the school and classroom attributes.

The grants were awarded in the spring 2001, and during the initial fall visits evaluators discovered that all of the schools understood the basic mission to convert to small schools and to prepare students for college to enable them to take advantage of the Achievers scholarships. However, this understanding did not necessarily equate with acceptance of the idea of converting to small learning environments. On the contrary, many staff members expressed reluctance and trepidation about converting to small schools but went along with the grant application for the sake of the student scholarships. One person said, “The scholarships were what motivated many staff who were on the fence to support the grant application in the first place.” There was little understanding, however, of the all-encompassing nature of the grant. Few teachers knew the high school was required to work with the feeder schools on college awareness and on implementing a college awareness curriculum. Nor were they aware of the mentor program for the scholarship recipients or of the Community Involvement Officers to be stationed at the schools. In general, teachers had only a very general understanding about certain aspects of the grant and little or no knowledge about certain components of the grant.

The primary motivation for pursuing the Achievers grant in a majority of the schools was the opportunity for student scholarships. Faculties have accepted reinvention of the high school as a concurrent requirement for receiving the Achievers scholarships and grant. Reinvention in general and conversion in particular, however, does not have the unanimous support in all schools in the way the scholarships do. Regardless of the motivation for pursuing the Achievers grant, all of the schools’ faculties express a desire to better meet the needs of their under-performing students, and a majority of faculties are in favor of continuing to pursue reinvention efforts.

The concept of school conversion and reinvention, once understood, stimulated extensive discussion in the schools. In almost all schools concerns surfaced about conversion and reinvention of the high school. In a number of schools teachers are concerned how the changes will impact their own careers. Specifically, teachers speculated that if specific school offerings, such as vocational, IB, AP, and elective programs, are eliminated, they might lose their jobs. A second set of concerns was voiced in approximately half of the schools. In these schools teachers are concerned that “the district” would not support reinvention of the high school and/or philosophical and curriculum alignment of the middle schools. Many teachers are apprehensive about moving ahead with reinvention because of fears that their work will be thwarted in time by district-level political issues. These concerns were present in many of the schools independent of the school’s size. While the challenges to reinvention are generally greater in the large schools, the small schools encountered their own struggles dealing with staff attitudes, perceptions and acceptance of raising academic standards, preparing all students for college, and developing personalized learning environments.

School Size and Grant Progress

School size played an important role in determining the progress or direction of grant activities during Year 1 of the grant. The five smaller high schools (400 or less students) not facing the difficult task of converting to smaller learning communities were able to begin to immediately plan on ways to address the school attributes, to improve curriculum and instruction, and to develop

student college awareness. The 11 high schools with more than 400 students, however, were faced with the formidable task of converting the schools to smaller learning communities.

As faculties at the 11 large high schools began to understand and discuss more thoroughly the requirement to convert to small schools and change course offerings to help all students attend college most schools experienced moderate to significant levels of resistance. Although teachers were not always convinced of the need or value of converting to small schools, most remained convinced they could not give up the college scholarships that were a part of the program. One person said, “Even if you don’t want to reinvent, how can you say ‘No’ to scholarships for your kids?” Although some uncertainty remained in two or three schools even to the end of the first year, all schools, regardless of the level of resistance, have chosen to continue the grant.

Because of the controversial nature of converting large high schools into small autonomous schools, the large schools spent most of the year confirming the need to change, investigating small-school models, and developing a plan to convert. Four of the 11 large schools made very little progress because of ongoing teacher resistance and lack of acceptance of the importance of small schools. In addition, these schools also were handicapped by a lack of leadership at the school and staff distrust. These schools will need a second planning year and assistance in addressing these issues. The other seven large schools made significant progress and ended the year with plans in place to evolve into small schools during the second year or to implement a full school conversion in Year 3.

The five small schools spent much of their time more directly focused on the Attributes of High Achievement Schools and Essential Components of Teaching and Learning. They also made significant changes to curriculum offerings and student achievement standards. Three out of the five high schools that already have a student population of less than 400 (Kittitas, Stevenson, Tonasket) do not plan to convert into smaller units but to simply focus on developing the Attributes of High Achievement Schools. One school (Truman), although less than 400 students, did decide to divide into two autonomous grades 10 – 12 schools of approximately 100 students each. Likewise another school (Mabton) has decided to divide its grade 6 – 12 secondary school into two separate schools grades 6 – 8 and 9 – 12 respectively beginning in Year 2.

Approaches to Reinvention

At the end of the first year of the grant, the schools’ reinvention plans are varied. Some appear to have a relatively clear and articulated strategy to guide their activities for the coming year(s), and others seem to have identified a series of activities related to reinvention, while the overall strategy or plan lacks clear articulation. Some schools are somewhere between these two extremes, and in one or two schools the reinvention strategies have not yet emerged because of internal problems. For all of these schools the reinvention process involves the development of grantee capacity through increased political, social, and human capital, creating structures for decision-making and change, and a series of plans to create or improve the Attributes of High Achievement Schools and other grant requirements.

Developing Social Capital

Teacher and administrative leaders within the schools are attempting to build or create institutional capacity for change by developing the social capital of the school, that is, the professional and personal connections that exist among educators attempting similar efforts now or

previously. By creating these relationships the educators are hoping to increase the knowledge and abilities of their own staffs necessary to be successful in this effort. This effort is being enhanced by the foundation's network of grantees, meetings, and assistance efforts associated with the grant. These have become an important part of the schools' efforts and strategies. In addition, many of the schools have been associated with a variety of school improvement programs in recent years, and there are efforts to link these earlier programs with the current reinvention grant. The schools are being influenced by the Coalition of Essential Schools (CES), Authentic Teaching, Learning, and Assessment for all Students (ATLAS), Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP), 21st Century Grants, and Ruby Payne's *A Framework for Understanding Poverty*, among others. In all but one case the schools are planning to develop their own model for converting the schools. This one exception is attempting to replicate the MET (Providence, Rhode Island).

Building Political Capital

Once the full impact of the grant expectations became understood, teachers and administrators recognized that successful reinvention would be dependent on community, parent and school board acceptance of the reinvention outcomes. To ensure this acceptance, the educators have begun to attempt to engage parents and the community in the reinvention efforts, to build "political capital" with the various constituencies affected by the reinvention. The primary strategies used include focus groups, presentations, newsletters, community forums and surveys. Although they made concerted efforts to engage the community, staff members are cognizant that many parents do not understand the changes occurring at the high schools, and that this is a challenge for the coming years.

School personnel are also attempting to build political capital with the school board and the district office. The principals have provided updates about school reinvention to the school board and the superintendent to help maintain support. Board members and the superintendents have attended school visitations to learn about small schools, and likewise, in many cases monthly meetings occur between district administrators and the principal to discuss reinvention strategies and design. School board members and district level administrators have also attended work-sessions at the schools focusing on small school design and visited their respective school during regular school hours to better understand the needs of the school. Because of this work, in many cases, positive relationships have developed among the Board, district office and the schools. For example, in one district a commission is being developed to identify ways to establish autonomy with the Achievers high schools in a district that is very centralized. In another district school board policy was developed to facilitate reinvention and to create a common language at all levels.

Developing Human Capital

Professional development has been used extensively to build "capacity within the teachers" to enable them to effectively reinvent the school. Common activities included retreats focusing on specific reinvention strategies and Small Schools Workshops. In many of these activities outside expertise in the form of consultants guided the activities. In addition, some schools have reviewed research and literature on school reform to guide them as they make their decisions.

Conducting school visitations is a key strategy used at most Achievers high schools to "create a vision," to see a variety of reinvention options, and to enhance staff participation. Staff and administration at all levels, including central office administrators and school board members, have

attended visitations. One person indicated their school was “having as many staff as possible attend site visits – not just the elite,” and the site visits have increased enthusiasm and understanding. While nearly everyone felt this was a good strategy, there was some discouragement that “several of the schools [that were visited] didn’t match the grant requirements.” Specifically, there were few examples of comprehensive schools converting into smaller autonomous schools. Most of the school plans include visitations to national high school models to create a vision of what is possible. Some of these school models include:

- The MET
- Julia Richman Educational Center
- Minnesota New Country School
- New Tech. High
- High Tech. High
- Urban Academy

At many schools, staff members began discussing what reinvention would look like for their school, looking at data to identify the needs of their students, and determining level of staff buy-in. There was a clear understanding that staff buy-in was necessary to create lasting change. People began developing mission statements and a focus for reinvention. In some cases teachers were told to “dream” about ways to improve the school. Through this process staff members developed a “common belief system,” “cohesiveness,” initial plans to reinvent the school, and in most cases they became “united on the issues.”

Creating Structures for Decision-making and Change

Faculties at most schools also developed a governance structure and decision-making process to manage the reinvention. In some cases they established leadership teams and committees to assist with decision-making. Others have adopted the Coalition of Essential Schools model and used critical friends and tuning protocols. When there was a clear governance structure and decision-making matrix in place, teachers felt they were able to “focus” on the reinvention. In those schools where the governance and/or decision-making structures were not in place or were not clear, teachers were not as willing to move forward with reinvention efforts.

Faculty members established a timeline for reinvention during Year 1. Implementation of major changes in four of the five small schools is scheduled for the 2002-2003 school year, the second year of the grant. The fifth small school began major changes during the first year of the grant. Faculties from nine of the 11 larger schools plan to implement major changes during Year 3, while the other two schools began phasing in the changes during the first year. Strategies for conversion/reinvention were in place in most schools, and most schools had established tentative timelines for conversion and/or curricular implementation.

Conversion Strategies

Two distinct strategies have emerged among the 11 high schools expected to convert to small schools of no more than 400 students. Some schools adopted an evolutionary model of change, and others developed a Request for Proposal (RFP) model of change. Those schools using the evolutionary model divided 9th grade students into learning communities and assigned staff in Year 1 of the grant. By the end of the year these schools had made plans to transition the 9th grade students into 10th grade while matriculating incoming freshmen into one of the teams, thus creating 9/10

learning communities in year two. The plan for year two is that the students and teachers within these learning communities will develop identity as autonomous groups and then continue to expand in year three. In most instances schools are planning to include both grades 11 and 12 in Year 3 rather than waiting another year.

Many staff felt this was a reasonable strategy because it allowed teachers and students to get used to the changing system at the same time two important things were happening. First, the *conversion* was “officially starting” so those who were reluctant to change did not have time to gather support for inaction. And second, although students were evolving into the schools one year at a time, teachers in most cases were assigned to a 9 – 12 learning community in order to begin coordinating and team building. This strategy allowed the teachers to plan (philosophically) together as a 9 – 12 team without the burden of implementing a plan (practically) until more prepared to do so.

Other schools have adopted an RFP model of conversion. These schools spent the first year of the grant planning as a whole school and developing a process by which teachers could propose the creation of small schools. Year 1 was spent primarily gaining support for conversion in general and developing the specifics of the RFP process in particular. Year 2 of the grants is intended to focus on approving the small school proposals and actually developing the small schools. Rather than phasing in the conversion, these schools are planning full implementation of 9 –12 schools in Year 3 of the grant.

These two conversion strategies have resulted in two implementation differences: 1.) how school identity is developed, and 2.) how students are assigned to a school. Those schools that have chosen to evolve into small schools have simply assigned students to a school and have left the development of school identity to also evolve as the teachers and students work together over time. In the RFP schools on the other hand, they are developing schools based on interest (Science and Math Academy, The Met, etc...) and will then go through a process of advertising and recruiting students into the schools.

Developing Plans Around the Attributes

The schools are using the Attributes of High Achievement Schools as focal points for many of their reinvention efforts. Specific attention to the attributes has come about because of their own recognition of the attributes’ importance to successful school functioning and because of the formative evaluation data provided to the schools through the evaluation process. *Time to collaborate*, *high expectations*, and *personalized* are examples of how the attributes are used in a number of locales to stimulate discussions about the school environment, and schools are developing plans for addressing their perceived short-comings.

Throughout the first year of the grant educators from all schools realized that collaboration time is essential to plan for the reinvention, to focus on teaching and learning and to prevent “burn-out.” As a result, collaboration time has been built into the schedule at most of the schools in the form of late arrival/early release days. At other schools, teachers and administration have submitted proposals to secure collaboration time for the 2002 – 2003 school year. In addition, many are trying to incorporate common planning time in the master schedule for teachers to plan in their respective small schools.

Two findings from the preliminary evaluation reports (January, 2002) were the startling lack of *high expectations* for student achievement and the lack of a *personalized* educational experience for students. Although some faculty members indicated that expectations for academic achievement are high in some “high-end classes,” they readily acknowledged that a high failure rate exists throughout the school with few support services to act as a safety net for preventing a pattern of student failure. Over the course of the year, staff members realized they do not have high expectations for their students. In many cases this became evident when they reviewed the results from the Teacher Perspectives Questionnaire in the preliminary report. Some teachers felt that students, in general, are not motivated, are too busy with jobs and outside interests, and/or do not have sufficient support from home. One student said, “Nobody is pushing me whether I’m failing or passing. It’s totally ok to fail your class and not get credits.” None of the schools were completely satisfied with the level of personalized education, and in the large schools most felt like there was no effective system in place to meet the needs of all students. One staff member said, “Many of our students do get lost in the system.” Another person said that the staff “. . . didn’t support high standards and allowed students to slip.” Still a third said, “Most students don’t have high expectations for themselves, and the staff doesn’t have high expectations for the students.” Consequently, staff members used in-service time to discuss strategies to “raise the bar” and “increase academic rigor.” Some of the strategies included increasing graduation requirements, preparing all students to matriculate to a four-year institution, eliminating low-level courses and intervening with students who are reading two or more grades below grade level.

Similarly, teachers at both small and large schools realized a need to create a more personalized learning environment. As a result, they are intentionally identifying ways to connect with students and to “insure that every student has an adult advocate.” Nine of the schools identified definite plans to implement an *advisory* during the 2002 – 2003 school year that meets the needs of the students and is “not [a] study hall.” Teachers from the other schools plan to develop unique strategies to personalize education and connect with the students as they create smaller learning communities.

By the end of the year most teachers were aware of the attributes and were incorporating them into the reinvention plans. Fewer were aware of the Essential Components of Teaching and Learning (three classroom attributes of *active inquiry*, *in-depth learning* and *performance assessment*). However, teachers from the smaller schools focused more on teaching and learning than the larger schools. At some schools, teachers are piloting exhibition projects, incorporating project learning opportunities and developing internship possibilities. At a few schools teachers have begun focusing on developing curriculum, narrowing electives to increase academic rigor, and eliminating remedial English and math courses. Teachers are beginning to discuss curriculum integration, project-based learning, performance assessment and exhibition projects.

College Awareness

The high schools have addressed the college awareness requirements of the grant by various methods. A number of strategies have been used to coordinate the programs with their feeder middle schools with varying degrees of effectiveness. At some schools the building principals at the high schools and feeder schools work together; at other schools building liaisons have been identified to assist with coordination; and at two schools district office personnel assumed the responsibility. In most cases, coordination has gone well. However, in school districts with GEAR UP grants or no direct feeder pattern, coordination has been more problematic.

The *CollegeEd* curriculum, developed by the College Board, was implemented in 21 of the Achievers feeder schools. Fourteen of the schools implemented the curriculum in the seventh grade, five in the eighth grade, and two schools implemented in both seventh and eighth grades. Some administrators and teachers indicated that the rushed schedule and WASL forced them to implement the *CollegeEd* curriculum in the eighth grade. Subsequently, administrators at three high schools are considering moving the curriculum to the seventh grade in the 2002 – 2003 school year. At some schools, teachers supplemented the program with college visitations, and students have created college portfolios.

Teachers and administrators were enthusiastic about the *CollegeEd* program and reported positive results. Teachers often reported that students were talking about college more and enjoying the curriculum. They indicated that the program is good “because it helps the kids begin mapping a plan,” and “students are beginning to see a connection between their grades and future career.” While the teachers were very positive about the program, most indicated that the lessons were too long and some of the skills were too advanced for the students. Consequently, they made adaptations and additions to the curriculum.

Parents were also overwhelmingly enthusiastic about the program. One parent said, “It’s nice for kids in middle school to hear about college and begin thinking about college. There’s things you can do in middle school to get a head start.” They also noticed that their children were thinking about college and their future. A parent said, “I see a difference in my son already. He was going to join the Marines after high school; now he is planning to go to college first. He said if he goes to college then he can ‘enter the Marines as an officer.’” Some parents expressed a concern that eighth grade students were not receiving the curriculum. A parent said, “You’d get a better audience out of eighth grade students.”

School and Classroom Baseline Assessments

Baseline assessments of the school and classroom attributes involved interviews, focus groups, and survey results from the *Teacher Perspectives Questionnaire (TPQ)* and *College Awareness Survey*. Baseline assessments for student college awareness and school climate were based on interviews, focus groups, and survey results from the *College Awareness Survey* and the *AIR/SRI National Evaluation Student Survey* respectively. The interviews and focus groups took place during fall 2001 and spring 2002. In October and November all or a representative sample of teachers in the schools completed the TPQ that focused on their school in relation to school and classroom components of the Attributes of High Achievement Schools. In March through May samples of students in grades 9 and 11 completed the College Awareness Survey, which focuses on knowledge and attitudes about college, and the AIR/SRI National Evaluation Student Survey, which focuses on school environmental factors, student attitudes, and student outcomes. The information provided below is a brief summary of these assessments. Complete baseline assessments for each school are part of the formative evaluation information provided to the grantees and to the foundation.

Attributes of High Achievement Schools: Key Findings.

Interviews and focus group findings strongly supported the Teacher Perspectives Questionnaire results. All schools possess some degree of the seven Attributes of High Achievement Schools. The attribute of *respect and responsibility* is the most developed among all schools, and in most cases the other six attributes are developed minimally.

Respect and responsibility. In most cases faculty members described their respective school climates in positive terms including “caring,” “fun,” “friendly,” “supportive,” and “encouraging.” Both students and faculty members reported that they enjoy school interactions and being in the school. There were some cases where faculty reported concerns about disrespectful student behavior.

Common focus. Teacher questionnaire results indicated 39% agree staff and students are focused on a few important goals. However, in almost every case no clear, common curricular focus emerged during interviews and focus groups. To the contrary, faculty members listed multiple initiatives underway and often commented that there was not a common focus. In most cases high school faculty members said their main “focus” for the school year is to clarify and carry out reinvention efforts.

High expectations. The attribute of *high expectations* is one of the least developed attributes among all the schools. For example, on the questionnaires only 20% of the teachers agree their school is known for its academic excellence, and only 23% agree all students are engaged in a rigorous course of study. Many teachers reported the desire to have high expectations, but that due to student apathy and deficit skills, teachers are not able to hold students to high academic standards. In some cases high schools have particular programs that are recognized as having high expectations, including AP and IB programs, but for the most part the students are allowed to select their own course of study, which was described by many as “taking the path of least resistance.”

Personalized. TPQ results indicated that only 15% of the teachers agree that students have a personal plan for progress, and only 13% agree the school is designed so that every student has an adult advocate. From the interviews it became clear that there are few formal structures in place in the schools to help personalize the learning experiences for students. Although some teachers provide individual mentoring to students, few official opportunities exist for creating adult advocates for all students. One person said, “There is some unofficial advising going on, but for the most part there is no formal strategy to personalize the experience.” Many teachers feel the schools are too big to develop personalized relationships, but hope that converting the school into smaller schools “would help that.” Even in the small schools the personalized teaching and learning environment is more often a function of the size of the building and the good will of individual teachers than it is the intentional connection with students.

Time to collaborate. Many of the schools have secured monthly or weekly late arrival days to provide professional development to faculty and for discussion of the reinvention efforts. However, teachers do not recognize this as “time to collaborate” as much as they see it as “time for planning reinvention.” There are few examples of teachers collaborating within or between grade-levels on a daily or weekly basis focused on individual students or on teaching and learning.

Performance based. Most schools are in the very early stages of awareness and exploration of performance-based teaching and learning. Most faculty members recognize the desire to develop a more “real-life” performance-based learning experience for students. However, the attribute is not prevalent in the schools. In the interviews and focus groups teachers reported that students are more regularly promoted to the next grade level by putting in seat time rather than by demonstrating competencies. On the questionnaire only 20% of the teachers agreed students are promoted to the next instructional level only when they have achieved competency.

Technology as a tool. In most schools access to technology is limited, and extensive use of technology as a learning tool is rare. Questionnaire results showed relatively high levels of access to technology. However, interview and focus group findings revealed that in many cases the “access” was in theory only. In other words, the computers did exist for student use, but the sign up process and waiting lists made use of the computers prohibitive in many cases.

The Role of Technical Assistance

Leadership teams from the schools met four times throughout the year for learning and support in addition to specific meetings called to review preliminary evaluation results and to gather feedback on the scholarship granting process. The meetings were directed by the foundation’s program officer, covered a range of topics and provided time for sharing among the teams. Many of the teachers that attended the meetings indicated that they shared the information with their respective staffs. They felt like they received “great information” and enjoyed “networking” with staff members from other schools. Many people indicated that the Critical Friends information is useful. Faculty members from the smaller schools found meetings that focused on teaching and learning to be more helpful than meetings that focused on converting into smaller learning communities. Overall, the participants viewed the meetings as very valuable. They were described as well organized and as a place where they were valued as professionals.

Administrators and teachers at the Achievers high schools generally found their school coach to be “helpful” and “knowledgeable.” The school coaches assisted the faculty with reinvention plans, helped principals reflect on their work/leadership, worked with teachers, facilitated groups and provided a variety of resources. Although personnel at most schools found the assistance of the school coach to be beneficial, there were some difficulties at two schools. At one school they struggled with how to best use their coach. One person said that they “haven’t figured out how to use” their school coach and that they are uncertain about the role. At another school, they initially did not think the coach was a “good fit,” however, over time they found the school coach to be effective.

Four primary strategies were reported to help coaches transition into their role at the schools, including observation, reflection, professional development, and gathering resources. First, many schools indicated their coach started out by observing classrooms and attending committee meetings. Teachers indicated this helped them get to know their coach in a productive work atmosphere. Second, principals and leadership team members, in many cases, expressed the value of being able to ask questions of their coach and to reflect on a staff or committee meeting. Third, in a few cases by mid-year school coaches had taken on significant leadership roles in the schools by establishing and leading transformation committees and working directly with staff to develop conversion Requests

for Proposals (RFPs). Finally, many schools reported their respective coach helped to gather resources, specifically research related to students of poverty and school transformation.

Contextual Factors: Challenges in the Future

There are unique circumstances in every school that have and will continue to provide challenges for the reinvention process. Throughout the year evaluators identified the contextual factors within each school that are most likely to affect the reinvention process. The factors that have emerged during this first year are not atypical of schools throughout the country. The process of reinvention is dynamic, as are the environments in which these schools function. Over the next several years a number of additional factors will undoubtedly emerge to challenge the educators attempting to reinvent education in their schools. Some of the existing and potential challenges are listed below.

Staff acceptance of reinvention. Staff members at several schools described how the “Gates grant gave pride” to the school, and they “understand the urgency” of the work. The faculties were supportive of the reinvention, excited to change and had a high level of buy-in. At other schools, the staff was largely “divided.” While some members wanted to restructure the school and create smaller learning communities, others did not support the strategy. One teacher said faculty members “like the idea of focusing on students” and creating small schools, whereas others feel there already is a “degree of intimacy.” In most cases at schools where the faculty did not collaboratively write or overwhelmingly support the grant proposal from the beginning, there is still considerable resistance to the reinvention efforts.

leadership changes. Given the average tenure of school principals, it was probable that there would be changes in school leadership in one or more of the schools during the five years of the grant, thus affecting the reinvention process. Additionally, changes in leadership in the years immediately following the end of the grant can affect the degree to which the changes are sustained over time. That said, many schools are facing significant leadership changes during the 2002 – 2003 school year, and others are anticipating changes in future years. Principals at three high schools have resigned, as well as two assistant principals and the Building Leadership Team (BLT) leader at a fourth school. There is also speculation that principals from three additional high schools will retire in the near future. These changes have left teachers feeling some uncertainty, but many also feel this is their “chance to step up” and become leaders of the reinvention.

Collaboration time. Faculties at 12 of the 16 Achievers high schools had collaboration time built into the schedule in the form of late arrival/early release time. Teachers consider this time invaluable, and they believe they have effectively used the time to plan for the reinvention and share information from workshops and visitations. There is a general concern at many of the schools that the district offices and school boards will not support late arrival/early release time next year. At nearly all the schools the faculty has submitted proposals for additional collaboration time during the 2002 – 2003 school year. The degree to which these requests are approved may greatly impact the reinvention progress long term. Appendix F contains details about professional days for the 2001 – 2002 school year.

Governance structure and decision-making. A clear governance structure and decision-making matrix has helped staff members move forward in the reinvention. Teachers are more likely to

accept decisions when they understand and support the governance structure and decision-making process. When the process is less clear, many report “frustration” and “confusion,” and in some cases it has slowed the process. For example, in one school where the decision-making process was not clear one person said that even “bringing it to faculty vote didn’t work.” Establishing or maintaining these processes are important considerations because of the need for collaboration time and because of on-going changes in building staff and leadership.

Impact on careers. Concerns arose at some schools about staffing and job security. As teachers began developing proposals for small schools they became aware they might have to teach different subjects or grade levels. In addition, there was also concern that “elective teachers will be ousted” from the school. Teachers speculated that if vocational, International Baccalaureate, and elective programs are eliminated, some teachers may lose their jobs. Some staff felt that it is “not ethical, fair, professional or possible to create a school” unless all teachers, including those from electives and other special programs, are fairly represented during the design of the school. Addressing these issues will provide continual challenges.

Multiple funding sources. The reinvention efforts are complicated because many schools have a number of funding sources and initiatives that have created confusion among some teachers about “which grants go where.” Other initiatives and funding sources include the Bill & Melinda Gates Model Districts Grant, ATLAS, GEAR UP, The Broad Foundation Building Leadership Team training, and Focus on Results, to name a few. How these initiatives work together is a point of confusion among staff members. The demands of the initiatives create additional work for the faculty and at times overlap. For example, GEAR UP is a college awareness program. Coordinating GEAR UP with *CollegeEd* has been difficult and an area of concern at some schools. A teacher said, “Very often, it is not immediately obvious which side of the monolith is Gates.”

Parent involvement. Administrators and teachers at all schools have made concerted efforts to inform parents about the reinvention. Despite the efforts, they acknowledge that most parents are not aware of the changes occurring in the high schools. Parents reported that they receive information about the reinvention through newsletters, presentations and focus groups. In general, they are supportive of the changes, but they are unaware of the specifics of the reinvention and, in many cases, are confused about the scholarships. The parents suggested that administration and faculty provide “more information to parents” so they can make informed decisions. One parent said, “Information needs to be sent to parents!” Another added, “In addition to traveling all over the planet they need to make sure parents are informed. We do not have a clue unless we come in and seek.”

District-level support. Faculty members at nearly all schools identified district level support, or lack thereof, as a significant contextual factor. At some schools, teachers reported they have “100% support” and that a “relationship developed” among the school board, district office and the school. In some cases, district office personnel were in the process of reinventing the school district at the same time the school was restructuring, which was seen as an asset. Teachers cited several ways that they felt supported by the district office. For example, many felt support from the district office and school board when they approved late arrival/early release collaboration days. Faculty at one high school reported that the superintendent and other senior management staff teach classes on Wednesday mornings to allow the faculty to have school-wide collaboration time. At another high school, four out of five school board members spent an entire day learning about the needs of the school. Additional indicators of support were identified as standing meetings between building principals and district office administrators to discuss reinvention strategies and “hot issues.”

Finally, some district office administrators and school board members attended site visitations to learn more about small schools.

At other schools there are concerns about district level support. These concerns largely center on the level of autonomy allowed in making reinvention decisions. At one school, faculty members were concerned about “top-down” decision-making and felt the “ultimate decisions will come from central office.” Other districts were described as “centralized,” and many believed the district would not support changes that resulted in schools that “look different” within the district. One person said, “Central office says we want you to be different, but we want you to look the same.” Another said, “They are trying to make everything the same when the school is trying to change.”

In some districts the policies, practices, and procedures serve the functional purpose of supporting and reinforcing the traditional educational bureaucracy and learning environments. The roots of these practices run deep, and therefore schools may find their reinvention efforts to be at odds with district policies. For example, district transfer policies are sometimes based on seniority, and schools may find themselves with new faculty members may not be in agreement with the reinvention efforts or unable to deal effectively with existing teachers who are not in agreement. Other district policies or practices involving student transportation schedules, release time, professional development, technology support, or curriculum materials may limit school reinvention efforts unless the districts understand and are supportive of the reinvention efforts. District policies will become even more important during the implementation stages of the reinvention in the next two years.

The Achievers high schools face the same type of challenges in this area as do the high schools in the 10 districts of the Model District Initiative. However, the high schools in the Model District Initiative have the advantage of clearer district understanding and support for reinvention, along with district review of district policies that hinder or help the reinvention efforts. District personnel in which the 16 schools are located vary considerably in their understanding and support of the reinvention efforts.

State initiatives and regulations. There are current discussions in the state of Washington around several pertinent issues that can impact the reinvention efforts. Two elements of critical importance are the future of the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) and school accountability.

The WASL, administered in grades 4, 7, and 10, is a performance assessment of reading, writing, math, and listening. The content of the test is taken from the state’s Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs) and has forced many schools to refocus their curricula and teaching efforts away from local district curricula and toward the state EALRs. A school’s passing rate on the WASL is being carefully scrutinized, and although no formal accountability system was passed by the state legislature in 2001, discussions will continue in this area for the foreseeable future. Although there is currently no formal account state accountability system, there is certainly political and community pressure within the districts and from parents and school boards for schools to continue to improve their passing rates.

In the theory of change model presented earlier, the forces for change in the schools represented by the arrows on the far left hand side of the diagram were said to be in general

agreement, and indeed at the present time that is the case. The state learning expectations (EALRs) generally require the type of learning outcomes described by the foundations *clear expectations* for students (Table 1) and best taught by teachers who use *active inquiry, in-depth learning, and performance assessments*. School personnel, for the most part, have not seen major inconsistencies between the types of learning required by the state and described by the foundation's model. However, among some in the state there has been an undercurrent of dissatisfaction with the WASL and efforts have been made to eliminate it from use. At the present time this seems unlikely. However, should this happen and the state return to traditional tests of basic skills on which to base an accountability system, district and school personnel may find themselves in the difficult position of being held accountable for content and the results of tests that are at odds with the foundation's model.

SUMMARY

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation awarded 16 school grants as part of the Washington State Achievers Program. The schools selected to receive grants are diverse in terms of size, student populations served, and geographic location. The purpose of the grants is to reinvent the school in two major ways: (1) develop small learning communities of no more than 400 students and (2) prepare all students for college. To accomplish this task, schools are expected to “reinvent” themselves by developing seven school attributes and by transforming classroom instruction and learning. This provides a common set of goals for all of the schools, while at the same time allowing for school personnel to focus on specific areas of need within the school.

The evaluation plan for the grants is based on a theory of change model that explains the grant program’s activities and resources in relation to the intermediary outcomes and ultimate program goals. The ultimate program goals are improved student learning and post-secondary outcomes. However, there are intermediary or enabling goals at the classroom and school levels derived from the conversion to small schools and the development of seven Attributes of High Achievement Schools that allow for a multi-level evaluation over time. The evaluation plan also includes consideration of the role of technical assistance, as well as the influences of a variety of contextual factors. Both qualitative and quantitative data are being used for the evaluation of the projects. Six broad process and product questions have been developed to provide focus to evaluation activities.

- *How have the schools changed over the course of the five years?*
- *Have the schools been successful in creating/enhancing small autonomous schools and learning environments reflecting the school, classroom, and teaching attributes?*
- *What strategies were used for school reinvention, and which were most successful?*
- *Has the nature of teacher assignments and the quality of student work changed?*
- *What contextual factors affected the reinvention efforts?*
- *Are the changes at the schools related to improved student outcomes?*

In addition, more specific and timely questions are being used to guide the yearly formative evaluation process. During the first year of the grant considerable attention was given to assessments of the school and classroom attributes in each school, and conducting case studies on the grant reinvention process. The majority of Achievers high schools made progress toward developing the Attributes of High Achievement Schools since the preliminary report in January. Most schools were working to improve the *time to collaborate*, *high expectations* and *personalized* attributes.

The progress of the grants followed a similar pattern in all but one or two of the schools. The initial task was to develop an understanding of the all-encompassing reinvention expectation. This was followed by extended discussions among teachers on the concept of reinvention, resulting in a variety of plans for converting to small schools and/or for implementing changes to develop the seven attributes.

An important part of the grants is the opportunity for student scholarships to college. Educators and parents overwhelmingly understand and appreciate the magnitude of opportunities that the scholarships bring, not only for students but for keeping high school reinvention efforts on track. Having the scholarships available is universally appreciated.

Each of the schools faces its own set of contextual factors that will influence the reinvention process in the coming years. During the evaluation process a number of common challenges were identified, including changes in leadership, district structures, policies and support, parental and community support, community economic and cultural factors, the existing teacher culture, the teachers' union, and state initiatives and regulations.

Appendix A. School Grantee Demographic and Achievement Data

Demographics (2000-2001)	WA State Average	DAVIS HIGH SCHOOL	LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL	CLEVELAND HIGH SCHOOL	CLOVER PARK HIGH SCHOOL	MABTON HIGH SCHOOL	YELM HIGH SCHOOL	TONASKET HIGH SCHOOL	KITTITAS HIGH SCHOOL	KENT MERIDIAN HIGH SCHOOL	
Building Enrollment		1619	1676	737	1485	329	1289	411	266	1352	
% Free or Reduced Lunch	31%	36%	54%	53%	38%	82%	30%	47%	27%	36%	
% African American Enrollment	5%	4%	25%	35%	21%	0%	2%	0%	0%	16%	
% Asian Enrollment	7%	2%	18%	43%	22%	0%	3%	1%	0%	16%	
% Hispanic Enrollment	10%	50%	11%	10%	10%	89%	4%	13%	12%	10%	
% Native American Enrollment	3%	2%	4%	2%	3%	0%	3%	1%	2%	1%	
Total % Non-White Enrollment	25%	58%	58%	90%	56%	89%	12%	15%	14%	43%	
% White Enrollment	74%	42%	43%	10%	44%	11%	88%	85%	86%	56%	
Graduation Rates	80%	97%	100%	67%	85%	69%	88%	84%	97%	98%	
9th Grade ITED (NCE)	Math	59	46	41	38	44	41	50	61	57	NA
	Reading	53	40	39	35	42	34	51	57	53	NA
	Expression	54	44	42	41	44	40	49	55	55	NA
10th Grade WASL (% met standard)	Math	39%	21%	15%	8%	23%	6%	22%	35%	33%	26%
	Reading	62%	48%	38%	29%	48%	22%	51%	68%	63%	52%
	Writing	47%	33%	21%	20%	30%	22%	47%	50%	30%	37%

Demographics (2000-2001)	WA State Average	FOSTER HIGH SCHOOL	STEVENSON CARSON HIGH SCHOOL	WEST VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL	MOUNTLAKE TERRACE HIGH SCHOOL	MOUNT TAHOMA HIGH SCHOOL	MARINER HIGH SCHOOL	HENRY FOSS SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL	TRUMAN HIGH SCHOOL	
Building Enrollment		740	394	801	1884	1332	1725	1905	191	
% Free or Reduced Lunch	31%	43%	27%	26%	15%	47%	28%	43%	34%	
% African American Enrollment	5%	20%	1%	1%	3%	20%	6%	22%	24%	
% Asian Enrollment	7%	18%	4%	1%	14%	16%	16%	23%	6%	
% Hispanic Enrollment	10%	13%	4%	3%	5%	7%	8%	6%	9%	
% Native American Enrollment	3%	2%	4%	3%	2%	3%	2%	2%	4%	
Total % Non-White Enrollment	25%	53%	13%	8%	23%	45%	33%	52%	42%	
% White Enrollment	74%	47%	87%	92%	77%	55%	67%	48%	58%	
Graduation Rates	80%	82%	0%	89%	82%	91%	86%	84%	100%	
9th Grade ITED (NCE)	Math	59	45	50	59	56	45	53	51	45
	Reading	53	39	52	53	54	43	49	47	43
	Expression	54	44	51	51	53	45	50	49	41
10th Grade WASL (% met standard)	Math	39%	13%	33%	41%	39%	20%	24%	27%	5%
	Reading	62%	44%	59%	69%	60%	48%	54%	53%	61%
	Writing	47%	37%	31%	53%	49%	30%	34%	36%	21%

Appendix B. Quarterly School Progress Report Guidelines and Sample Report

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Achiever High Schools

QUARTERLY REPORT GUIDELINES for High School On-Site Evaluation Coordinators

Due Dates

November 1, 2001
February 1, 2002

April 1, 2002
June 1, 2002*

Format

Heading

- School Name
- Prepared in coordination with the principal by (name of coordinator)
- Report Date (i.e. due date)

Length

- 3 pages maximum—(an addendum may be attached to further clarify a specific reported activity.)

Style

- 12-point New Times Roman font; single-spaced
- footer to include school name, report date, page number
- Present information in sections II and III within the format of a bulleted list of statements.

Text of Report

I. Opening Summary Paragraph

Open with a paragraph noting overall progress toward grant goals including highlights, successes, and challenges.

II. ‘Bulleted’ Statements Organized in the Following Contexts:

- Provide an update on specific grant-related activities.
- Explain how the school is moving forward in relation to each of the seven Attributes of High Achievement Schools.

III. ‘Bulleted’ Statements to Describe:

- What is the high school doing to help the middle schools implement the *CollegeEd* curriculum?
- ‘What we are doing well...’
- ‘Where we need support...’
- Note planned activities for the next two months (all reports).

** Report is to include end of year summary paragraph and ‘plan of action’ for the upcoming year*

Gates Grant Report

[Name of School]
[Name of District]
[Name of Site Evaluation Coordinator]
[Date of Self-Report]

Grant Progress Specifics

I. Opening Summary Paragraph

The second quarter has been very busy for us at Sample High School. All of the staff has made a visitation to a restructured school, either a local one like David Douglas in Portland, OR; or a longer visitation to schools in Chicago, Minnesota or New York. During the month of January we have conducted focus groups in our community that have been very successful. We have gotten positive feedback from the community, and had a nice write up in the local paper, which never happens. This quarter has been very positive and productive for the entire staff as we begin to work on our restructuring.

II. Grant Progress

- 20 focus groups conducted throughout the month of January.
- Every staff member facilitated a focus group.
- Visitations have been made, ideas gathered and shared with the faculty.
- Staff has begun to identify the ideas that we want to use to make changes.

Common Focus

- We have begun to identify how we want our school to change and are beginning to arrive at consensus on what those things are.
- We have realized that we need to begin discussing the idea that *all* students should be prepared to go to college.

High Expectations

- We just had an inservice and were trained on how to read our MAP test scores, so we can use the data to help each individual student in reading and math.
- We have looked at our D & F list for first quarter and began a discussion on what we can do to get those students off of that list. It was surprising how long it was.

Personalized

- We have almost reached a consensus on extending our advisory program to meet more often in order to allow teachers to help each of their 10-15 students individually.

Respect & Responsibility

- As a staff we have decided that we want to raise the level of expectations for behavior in ourselves and our students and are going to train in Habits of Mind this summer in order to implement that program next year.

Time to Collaborate

- Our in-services have been going well, and the staff is working together on all aspects of the grant.

Performance Based

- Working on a grant that links our school and The Vancouver School of Arts and Academics. Designed with Lewis and Clark in mind, and will use drama to share stories of Lewis and Clark. The plan is that students will write, direct, and perform the pieces.
- This has been identified as one of the important aspects of our restructuring process and we are going to form a work group who will come up with ideas on how to implement this change in our school.

Technology as a Tool

- More teachers are going to be applying for the TLP grant
- Some staff visited a school in Idaho that is doing innovative things with technology and publishing.
- We have also discussed using our video conferencing capabilities to expand the kinds of classes we offer at the high school and to link students to other schools in other cultures.

Coordination with Middle School

- Our counselor, has met with every 7th grader in the school during their advisory, Home Base. He has been working on explaining the requirements of Sample High School and the requirements for going to college.
- All students will be attending a college fair at the community college.
- *CollegeEd* will be implemented in about 2 weeks, and the staff is very excited about the program.
- A middle school teacher has been invited to make a visitation to an expeditionary learning school in Denver along with several teachers from the high school.

Areas where the grant activities are going well:

- Our steering committee is working hard to get as many of the staff involved as possible. We have begun a discussion about changing the way the steering committee operates. We are going to begin establishing work groups that will take on some of the big ideas that have

come up. These groups will come up with ideas and solutions and report back to the Steering Committee. The goal is that through this process everyone on the staff will eventually become involved in the Steering committee and therefore be part of the decision making process.

- Our focus groups were a huge success. The staff got excited about facilitating them after they participated in one. The community has been very positive in their feedback.
- The visitations that were made over the last few months have generated many new ideas, and much of the staff is very excited about what we are doing.

Areas where there is need for support:

- We need to be more deliberate in including the middle school in the changes that are going to be made. They are still a little apprehensive about what is going on at the high school and how it is going to affect them.

Planned activities for the next two months:

- We are at the jumping off point, and now we need to begin making decisions about how we are going to change.
- Develop work groups who will begin to develop the specifics on how we change.
- Get all of the staff to be involved in the steering committee, which will in essence change the way our school makes all of its decisions.

Appendix C. Teacher Questionnaire Items, Factor Analysis Results, and Sample School Profile

Appendix C Teacher Questionnaire Items, Factor Analysis Results, and Sample School Profile

Constructivist Teaching (alpha = .92)

Items:

1. Student work shows evidence of understanding, not just recall.
2. Assessment tasks allow students to exhibit higher-order thinking.
3. Students apply knowledge in real world contexts.
4. Students are engaged in activities to develop understanding.
5. Students are presented with a challenging curriculum designed to develop depth of understanding.
6. Teachers utilize the diverse experiences of students to build effective learning experiences.
7. Students present to real audiences.
8. The learning focus is competence, not coverage.
9. Students are engaged in active participation, exploration, and research.
10. Students produce quality work products.
11. Teachers and students set learning goals and monitor progress.
12. Clear expectations define what students should know and be able to do.

Standards –based Teaching (alpha = .80)

Items:

1. The school has adopted a consistent research-based instructional approach based on shared beliefs about teaching and learning.
2. The staff and students are focused on a few important goals.
3. The use of time, tools, materials, and professional development activities are aligned with instruction.
4. Data-driven decisions shape structure and schedule.
5. Teachers design curricula linked to learning standards.
6. Staff members are dedicated to helping every student achieve state and local standards.

Personalization (alpha = .76)

Items:

1. The school is designed so that every student has an adult advocate.
2. The size of this school allows staff and students to work closely together.
3. Students have a personal plan for progress.
4. The school is designed to promote student relationships with adults.

Technology (alpha = .91)

Items:

1. Every staff member and student has access to: computer hardware
2. Every staff member and student has access to: basic software applications (i.e., word processing, database)
3. Every staff member and student has access to: internet connection
4. Every staff member and student has access to: technical support
5. Every staff member and student has access to: training and instruction

Environment (alpha = .84)

Items:

1. The school is an ethical environment.
2. The staff teaches, models, and expects responsible behavior.
3. Relationships are based on mutual respect.
4. The school is a safe environment.
5. The school is a studious environment.

Partnerships (alpha = .78)

Items:

1. Parents have many opportunities to get involved with school programs.
2. The school engages the community in discussion about continuous improvement.
3. Parents are recognized as partners in education.
4. The school makes learning results readily available to parents.
5. Partnerships are developed with businesses in order to create work-based learning opportunities.
6. Partnerships are developed with institutions of higher education to improve teacher preparation and instruction.

Quality of Education (alpha = .86)

Items:

1. All students leave school prepared for success in work.
2. All students leave school prepared for further education.
3. All students leave school prepared for responsible citizenship.
4. The school is known for its academic excellence.
5. All students are engaged in a rigorous course of study. □

Teacher Input (alpha = .80)

Items:

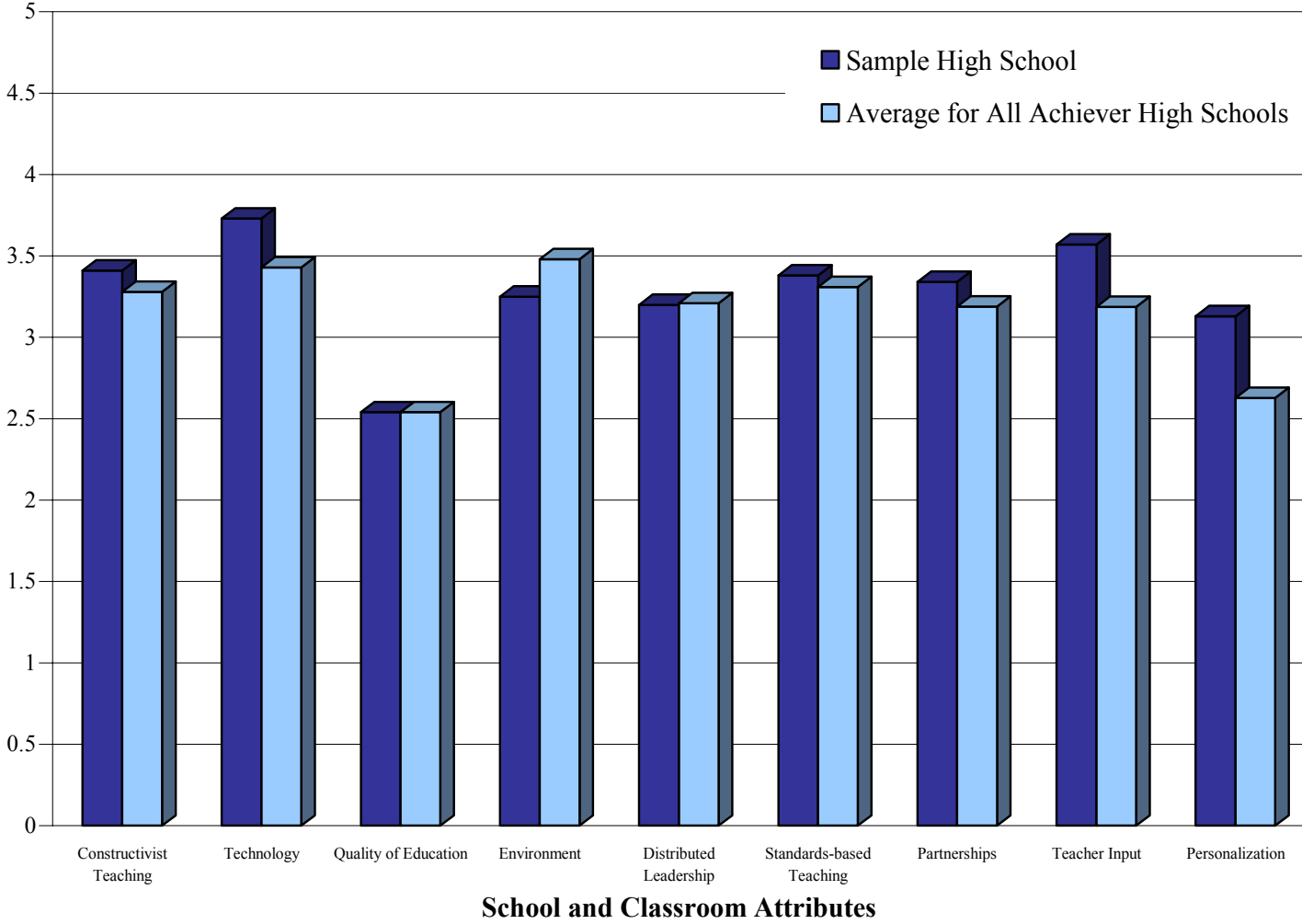
1. Staff have sufficient input on decisions about school programs.
2. School leaders try to solicit input from staff on how to improve the instructional program.

Distributed Leadership (alpha = .86)

Items:

1. District leadership encourages continuous improvement of teaching and learning.
 2. District leadership focuses the topic of visits, correspondence and meetings on student learning.
 3. District leadership engages parents and community members in an ongoing conversation about helping all students achieve at high levels.
 4. District leadership places top priority on literacy.
 5. The school board, administration and employee representatives share a goal of helping all students achieve. □
-

**Teacher Perspectives Questionnaire
Achievers High Schools - 2001-2002**



**Appendix D. *Sample January 2002 Washington State School Grant
Projects: Preliminary Evaluation Report***

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Preliminary Evaluation Report

_____ High School
January 2002

General Overview

The purpose of this report is to provide baseline information related to high school reinvention efforts, the Seven Attributes of High Achievement Schools, and general college awareness for faculty and students at _____ High School and three of its “feeder” middle schools, _____ and _____. _____ High School in the _____ School District is a 9 – 12 school with an enrollment of approximately 1700 students. On November 14, 2001, interviews and focus groups were conducted at the high school and at _____ Middle School that included 22 faculty members and 8 students. Along with the middle and high school interviews and focus groups the high school faculty completed a detailed questionnaire with a 100% return rate. The general questions being explored during this evaluation were:

1. To what extent is the high school faculty aware of the expectations of the Achievers grant?
2. To what extent is there a willingness and a plan in place to reinvent the high school?
3. To what extent do the Seven Attributes of High Achievement Schools exist?
4. What are the middle and high school teacher and student attitudes toward college?
5. To what extent are the middle school faculty members aware of the role they play in the Achievers grant?

Grant Overview

The grant proposal was written in a collaborative fashion involving high school faculty, and there was a clear understanding regarding the expectation to reinvent the high school. Scholarship opportunities for the students were the primary motivation behind reinvention efforts. A secondary motivation for pursuing the grant was to create smaller, more personalized, learning units and to coordinate college awareness opportunities with the three feeder middle schools.

_____ High School had not been pursuing any restructuring efforts prior to receiving the Achievers grant. Members of the grant proposal writing team indicated they were familiar with small learning community models from the Coalition of Essential Schools (CES), Schools That Work, and those described in Vision of the High School of the Millennium.

Teachers were impressed and inspired after they saw the students who had received the Achievers scholarships last year. They said, “These students would not have been able to go to college without this grant.” Others said that many _____ students would not have considered the possibility of going to a four-year college without the Gates Achievers scholarships.

Origin of school model. No particular model for change had yet been determined. During three late arrival days, however, faculty had been involved in a coordinated process and developed a timeline for reaching a decision about conversion of the high school into smaller autonomous schools. During a focus group activity, one teacher on the Steering Committee indicated he had been involved in a school that had restructured itself into three different schools on the three floors of the building. The three restructured schools were: (1) an entrepreneurial school, (2) a PAIDEA school, and (3) a regular school. He said he intended to share this experience with the others.

Strategies for change. The Steering Committee is leading the reinvention efforts and the principal is playing a supportive and largely passive role. The team members endorsed this relationship because they thought the plan would be supported better if faculty members generated it internally.

Faculty members have not yet determined how the school would convert into smaller units or whether their reinvention efforts will be driven by adopting, adapting or designing a model for change. They are simply in the early stages of the process. Staff members observed that it is too soon in the process to predict whether one or the other reconfiguration proposals would emerge as a preferred choice.

Stress and tension. Support for the grant and scholarships is strong. There are concerns, however, with the “non-negotiables” of preparing all students for a four-year college education, the definition of autonomous, the size (number of students) of the schools, and grade level limits described by Foundation representatives. Several faculty members are pessimistic whether they will want to pursue reinvention efforts in the same way the Gates Foundation “wants them to.”

There is also significant apprehension because faculty members are afraid that after they work to reinvent the high school, the district office personnel and policies might not support the change. For example, the faculty felt a lack of support when the district “cut” 28 Wednesdays back to 20, unilaterally changed to the six-period day, and eliminated the popular “walk around” registration process. One person said, “We are still not convinced the district will support us.” There is a belief among members of one faculty focus group that the superintendent “hadn’t even read the grant” because his comments at a recent staff meeting, though in support of the scholarships, had neglected to mention either the reinvention piece or the Seven Attributes of High Achievement Schools.

Excerpts from _____ High School's November, 2001 Quarterly

Each Achiever High School submits quarterly reports intended to chronicle grant-related events and progress toward reinvention. The following summary presents excerpts from _____ High School's first quarterly report, submitted November 1, 2001.

Reported progress to date. The focus for the first quarter of the grant centered on learning about school redesign, developing an organizational structure that allowed for distributed leadership and extensive staff involvement, public engagement, and supporting students in applying for the Achievers Scholarship program.

The learning goal was approached in several ways. During the summer staff participated in seven workshops that explored issues related to leadership, public engagement, advisory, small school design, reading and creating more intensive learning environments. Over half of the certificated faculty participated in three adult learning groups, reading articles and discussing them using the "final word" protocol developed by the Coalition for Essential Schools. The entire staff also began meeting to begin learning about and working on school redesign. Staff met for an entire day prior to the opening of school. This was followed by the first three of 20 staff planning workshops that are being held on Wednesdays when students arrive late for a half-day of school. During these "Go-Abe" Wednesday sessions, staff examined data about students, engaged in redesign activities and began an intensive effort to develop consensus around a common focus. Efforts were also initiated to inform staff about the Coalition for Essential Schools and to enroll them in attending the CES Fall Forum in Seattle. Staff also participated in a quarterly meeting sponsored by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation that focused on scholarships, public engagement and power.

An extensive committee structure and process was developed to engage staff in the redesign effort. To this end, a Steering Committee was formed with broad faculty representation along with nine subcommittees. The relationship between this structure and the SCDM (mandated School Centered Decision-Making Committee) was also established.

The public engagement effort was initiated with a mailing to all families with students enrolled at _____, informing them about the goals and components of the Achievers Project. The Back to School night revolved around a presentation on the Achievers Project and a college fair.

Finally, an extensive support system was put in place to assist students in completing their applications for the Achievers Scholarship. The early college awareness program was initiated at one of _____'s three feeder middle schools.

Grant activities that are going well. The faculty identified several areas of strength at _____ High School.

- Working well across departments in adult learning groups and Wednesday workshops
- Engaging one another in learning groups and staff workshop
- Establishing opportunities through the committee structure for staff participation
- Distributed leadership and using our coaches well
- A Community Involvement Officer was hired to coordinate the Achievers scholarship mentoring program
- A workshop was conducted to explain the Achievers scholarship application process with close to 150 students and parents in attendance
- An extensive schedule writing workshop was established with many faculty members volunteering their time to assist students with the essays for the Achievers scholarship
- One-hundred and five (105) students submitted completed scholarship applications
- The first college fair was held in conjunction with the Back-to-School night

Areas where support would be welcomed. The faculty identified only one area that needed further development, "... educating and enrolling the school board and cabinet to support our restructuring efforts."

Upcoming activities (Dec-Jan). Activities of the next several months include the following:

- The Steering Committee will hold a one-day planning retreat.
- There will be two more late arrival Go-Abe Wednesday workshops.
- The Public Engagement Committee may do a 30-minute presentation during a work session of the TPS School Board.
- All committees are and will continue to meet on a regular basis.
- Over 20 staff will participate in the evaluation focus groups or interviews at _____.
- Similar activities will take place at the three middle schools.
- Ten staff will be attending the CES Fall Forum.

Common Focus

No common curricular focus emerged during interviews and focus groups. When surveyed, 35% of teachers agreed that staff and students are focused on a few important goals, 65% remained neutral or disagreed with the item. There is, however, a clear desire of many faculty members to define what would happen as a result of grant reinvention efforts. District goals – improving attendance, improving student achievement, and increasing parent involvement were also mentioned as areas of focus.

High Expectations

Expectations of student academic performance are low from both staff and students. Faculty members readily acknowledged that a high failure rate is accepted as the norm, with few support services to act as a safety net for preventing a pattern of student failure. Teachers said they, themselves, have high standards and expectations, but that many students fail and do not seem to be motivated or care if they fail. Students provided a similar picture. They said many students do not care if they passed their classes, “they just like coming to school.” One student said, “Nobody is pushing me whether I’m failing or passing. It’s totally ok to fail your class and not get credits.” These findings support teacher questionnaire data.

- 6% agree all students leave school prepared for success in work.
- 9% agree all students leave school prepared for further education.
- 10% agree all students leave school prepared for responsible citizenship.
- 11% agree the school is known for its academic excellence.
- 12% agree all students are engaged in a rigorous course of study.
- 15% agree the school is a studious environment.

Personalized

_____ is a large high school with few structural or organizational factors in place to make it personalized. Although there is not an official “advisor/advisee” program, many teachers care a great deal about individual students and intervene on an individual basis. Students feel like the teachers care about them, and most students enjoy coming to school. Questionnaire data support a lack of a systemic personalized learning environment.

- 5% agree the school is designed so that every student has an adult advocate.
- 11% agree that students have a personal plan for progress.
- 16% agree that the size of the school allows staff and students to work closely together.
- 26% agree the school is designed to promote student relationships with adults.
- 35% agree that teachers and students set learning goals and monitor progress.
- 55% agree students receive additional time and assistance when needed to achieve competency.

Respect and Responsibility

Although some faculty members feel students are treated with consideration and respect, others indicated that if students are disrespectful, some staff members respond in a similar manner. The faculty feels that students love being around the school even if they are not making any progress academically. Comments were made that the school was “very nurturing,” “caring,” and “welcoming.” Questionnaire data support an enabling and moderately respectful and safe school environment.

- 58% agree the school is an ethical environment
- 61% agree relationships are based on mutual respect.
- 66% agree the school is a safe environment
- 70% agree the staff teaches, models, and expects responsible behavior

Time to Collaborate

Faculty members feel they collaborate more with families and agencies outside the school than they do with other teachers within the school. Teacher survey data support limited time to collaborate.

- 20% agree the staff has the time to collaborate on the needs of all students.
- 38% agree partnerships are developed with institutes of higher education to improve teacher preparation and instruction.
- 55% agree parents are recognized as partners in education.
- 64% agree partnerships are developed with businesses in order to create work-based learning opportunities.

Faculty collaboration does occur, however, during the late arrival. Faculty members feel involved in productive processes on these days, but also indicated that they feel apprehensive about moving forward with the reinvention planning. Some teachers are concerned that programs might be cut to enable autonomous learning centers with vertical (9 – 12) teams. These learning centers and teams are considered to be among the “non-negotiable” items from the Gates Foundation.

Performance Based

The teaching and learning experiences in most classrooms are not performance based. In most cases teacher and student experiences were described in traditional terms. Some teachers described classrooms where students got through a specific course by “putting in their time.” The following data support a general lack of performance-based expectations.

- 15% agree students produce quality work products.
- 24% agree students present to real audiences.
- 28% agree students are promoted to the next instructional level only when they have achieved competency.
- 28% agree students apply knowledge in real world contexts.
- 28% agree assessment tasks allow students to exhibit higher-order thinking.
- 30% agree students are engaged in active participation, exploration, and research.
- 40% agree clear expectations define what students should know and be able to do.

Technology as a Tool

Teachers expressed the concern that there are many technology needs in the school. Each faculty member acknowledged having a computer with some appropriate software, but indicated that few additional computers are in the regular classrooms for student use. In addition, many faculty members expressed a desire for additional computer training. Computers are available in one of five labs in the school, but teachers said access to the labs was difficult at times. The following data support a concern about technology access and use.

- 56% agree every staff member and student has access to technical support.
- 60% agree every staff member and student has access to basic software applications (i.e., word processing, database).
- 60% agree every staff member and student has access to computer hardware.
- 68% agree every staff member and student has access to Internet connection.

College Awareness and Attitudes

The high school faculty members clearly understand that the Achievers scholarship portion of the grant is designed to help more students complete a four-year college education. They understand many elements related to the Achievers Scholarships, including the application process, interviews, where students can attend college, and about the community involvement officer and hometown mentors. Faculty members said last year's scholarships generated a great deal of parent and student interest in college. They also reported that the career fair and back to school night had record attendance.

A major faculty effort went into helping students apply for the scholarships in fall 2001. The previous year 92 juniors and seniors received scholarships. In the present year, 120 juniors applied for the scholarships. Students found faculty support very positive during the application process. During the fall application process teachers helped proofread, set up key boarding labs, and helped write and edit applications. In addition, students indicated teachers spent hours writing recommendations for students. Faculty members expressed a concern, however, about the application process. They said the teacher recommendations seemed unnecessarily detailed and suggested eliminating or combining some items. One person said, "The amount of work required to do the staff recommendations was beyond reason." Another suggested, "The scholarship process should lead to essays and recommendations that could be used for other scholarships." Teachers recommended an outline or a one-page template for teachers to follow.

Teachers are very excited that underrepresented students have an opportunity to receive the scholarships and to attend a four-year college. They feel, however, that not all students are meant to go to four-year college. This issue is a source of debate among faculty members. Some teachers are very supportive and said, "Shooting for all kids going to a four-year college is a good goal;" "If teachers don't think students are college bound we need to change our thinking;" "We hope we can change the mindset of the whole community;" and "OK, not all kids will go to college. But if we don't set four-year college as the ultimate goal, what should be the goal?" Another person said, "They are capable of going to college, but it would ruin our economy." Still others feel very strongly that the school should not be undergoing changes to make all students ready for college. Many feel they would be serving students

better by not limiting their options and by helping them pursue whatever area of interest the student wanted. One person said, "The goal of the Gates grant is narrow; sending all kids to college is not realistic." Many feel that it was not realistic or even preferable to try to prepare every student for a four-year college. One person said, "Hell, every kid says he's going to college, but they won't because of real life. As crappy as their lives are, it's what they know and so they don't want to get out." Another person said, "The kids don't have a vision for college. Besides there are lots of opportunities to learn at the shipyard." There is a general consensus that students should have other options available. Teachers estimated 10% of students would likely pursue a four-year college education.

Students also had a very clear understanding of the Gates grant. Six out of the eight students participating in the focus group indicated an interest in attending college but feel most of their classmates are not interested. Students were more pessimistic than teachers by estimating 1% of seniors go on to college each year. They said many students in their junior or senior year think about college, but then "get discouraged because they don't quality." Students found faculty support very positive.

Sources of College Information

Students are aware of college in general and the Achiever Scholarship program in particular. Students are able to name several colleges in Washington State, describe what life is like at college, and had a general sense of the personal characteristics necessary for someone to complete college. Students are aware of colleges they can attend as part of the grant, they understand the role of the community college, they know how much money they would receive, and they are aware of required exams such as PSAT (juniors) and SAT (seniors).

Students feel the strategy to increase college awareness is supportive and effective. College recruiters come to campus once per month and students are provided an extended lunch period when college recruiters come to campus. Students said they find out about college from parents, family members, friends, teachers, and the school counselor. One student said, "College is everywhere around here." Another student said, "Information about college is everywhere. Lunch every month is extended to talk to a recruiter. Teachers talk about college. And 32 students just took a three-day, five-campus trip around the state of Washington visiting colleges."

Coordination Between Schools

Very little coordination has taken place between the high school and the three middle schools considered _____'s "feeder" middle schools. According to high school reports _____, and _____ were willing to collaborate and have varying levels of understanding related to their role in the Achievers grant. _____ participated in the national pilot, and _____ and _____ are eager to know more about the role they were to play.

Faculty interviews at _____ Middle School revealed a high level of enthusiasm for preparing students for college, but also confusion about the role they are expected to play. All three middle schools were asked to pledge support prior to _____ High School applying

for the Achievers grant and all three pledged 100% support. Since that time, however, they have waited to hear what to do next. Middle school teachers are excited about the opportunities their students will have to get a college scholarship. Teachers stated that efforts needed to be coordinated from the high school all the way down to all the elementary schools, if they are to have an impact on student thinking regarding college. They are also eager to learn about and support the reinvention taking place at _____ High School. One middle school teacher said, “If our kids are going to be flowing into a small schools model we will need to adjust too.”

Both high school and middle school faculty members are concerned that the district may not allow the coordination between levels to go forward. Faculty members raised concerns about the high school reinvention and middle school college awareness curriculum. Three concerning factors exist.

1. The district decided to hire one liaison to serve all ten middle schools and to coordinate college awareness efforts with all three Achievers high schools. Many high school faculty members think this interfered with their ability to be autonomous and develop programs with their middle schools consistent with their own reinvention efforts.
2. The superintendent is openly enthusiastic about the Achievers scholarships, but did not mention (or condone) the reinvention efforts of _____ High School during a fall presentation to the staff. Most faculty members took this as a signal that their reinvention efforts would not be supported. They question if they will be allowed to redesign their own school when the superintendent did not mention it and when they were not allowed to make decisions regarding middle school coordination, high school student scheduling, and early release days.
3. The district recently “unilaterally” changed all middle schools from a seven-period day to a six-period day. This caused middle schools to eliminate elective offerings and teacher collaboration time. One building did away with a course on college and careers when they moved to the six-period day. Now they are being asked to implement the College Ed. curriculum and they feel they were receiving mixed messages. One middle school teacher said, “I’m just afraid if we try to change so we are more aligned with the high school, in the future the district will just come in and change everything like they did with the seven-period day.” Another teacher said, “I am more concerned about support from the district level than from within the school.”

Summary

The Achievers grant has moderate support. The faculty is in favor of the scholarships, but is reserved regarding the reconfiguration into smaller learning environments. The primary concern of most faculty members at the high school and middle school is whether the district office policies and personnel will support the change needed to reinvent the high school and to coordinate middle-level changes. Each of the seven attributes is present to some degree, and all attributes have room for continued development. *Respect and Responsibility* is among

the strongest attributes, and *Common Focus*, *High Expectations*, *Personalized*, and *Time to Collaborate* are among those attributes that were the least evident.

Faculty and students are aware of college options and the Achievers scholarships. Although they are excited about the Gates scholarships, many feel college is not the route most _____ students will pursue. There is a strong “blue collar” expectation for students and many teachers feel preparing students for work is as important as preparing students for college. Many are concerned about the grant being intended to prepare all students for college. Students feel information about college is readily available, but that most students do not plan to attend because they do not believe it is an option. Collaboration between the high school and middle schools has not taken place but all are willing and eager. Both high school and middle school faculty are concerned the district may not support the reinvention of the schools.

Recommendations

Explore the deep-rooted beliefs regarding whether the curriculum should be redesigned to help all students get ready for college. A significant difference in opinion presently exists among faculty. Some think a four-year college education is a good goal others think __HS students would be better served by preparing them for “blue collar” jobs in the shipyard. Coming to some philosophical agreement regarding the importance of college may help guide future conversations regarding changes to the curriculum.

Begin coordination with the feeder middle schools. It may be beneficial for the schools to meet to review plans and expectations related to developing college awareness and the impact of *CollegeEd*.

Review this report with the school coach and leadership team. After review, discuss how to use this information to help direct future reinvention plans and to help develop the Seven Attributes of High Achievement Schools.

**Appendix E. *Sample July 2002 Washington State Achievers
Program: Year 1 Evaluation Report***

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Year 1 Evaluation Report

_____ High School
July 2002

Introduction

This report is a supplement to the preliminary findings presented in the mid-year baseline report (January 2002) and describes the progress and context of grant activities. Information was obtained during the spring evaluation site visit conducted on April 15, 2002, designed to determine the progress of grant activities and to verify the school evaluation coordinator's quarterly reports submitted throughout the year. Twenty-seven people participated in evaluation activities that included interviews, focus groups and classroom observations and involved school board members, administrators, teachers, parents, and students at _____ High School and _____ Middle School. The general questions being explored during this evaluation were:

1. To what extent are school personnel cooperating with evaluation activities?
2. To what extent are faculty members aware of the expectation to develop the Attributes of High Achievement Schools?
3. To what extent are faculty members aware of the expectation to develop the Essential Components of Teaching and Learning, *active inquiry*, *in-depth learning*, and *performance assessment*?
4. What is the strategy and plan of action to bring about change?
5. What are the plans for the following year?
6. What are the contextual factors to consider when evaluating grant progress?
7. To what extent are students anticipating, and feeling prepared, to attend college.
8. To what extent is the high school facilitating the development of college awareness curricula with its feeder middle school?
9. What has been the response to the implementation of the *CollegeEd* curriculum?
10. What has been the impact of technical assistance?

Evaluation Activities

_____ High School has both a grant coordinator and an evaluation coordinator to assist in the grant implementation and the evaluation activities. All quarterly reports were submitted in a timely fashion and visitations were well planned. The evaluation coordinator cooperated in the evaluation process by helping to administer student questionnaires and TAGLIT. Results of TAGLIT will be presented separately⁷.

The _____ High School faculty made observable progress during Year 1 of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Washington State Achievers Program grant. They describe themselves as still being "in the discussion/exploration phase" of the grant, but they have clarified their focus for reinventing their school. Although "no specific decisions have been

⁷ Students at Tonasket High School did not participate in TAGLIT.

made” regarding plans for next school year faculty members are confident that necessary processes are in place and are optimistic they will begin implementing some elements of the reinvention plan in the 2002 – 2003 school year.

Attributes

_____ High School faculty made progress toward the Attributes of High Achievement Schools since the preliminary report in January. The _____ faculty is clearly working to improve the *common focus*, *high expectations* and *time to collaborate* attributes.

Common focus. _____ High School faculty members have gained clarity regarding the need to change and made the decision to focus on two main items for the 2002 – 2003 school year. All faculty members were aware that the common focus for the upcoming school year was to explore and implement an advisory program and to develop high levels of assessment literacy. Several staff members see these two items as key factors in the reinvention efforts.

High expectations. After reviewing the preliminary report, faculty members became aware that their expectations for students were low. In an effort to raise expectations, however, plans are in place to intervene with all students who are reading two grades below grade level. Any student two or more years below grade-level (determined using multiple measures including ITBS, ITED, WASL, STAR, and teacher recommendation) will be assigned to the Read for Success class. This will supplement, not replace their regular language arts class. Parents also mentioned the need for high expectations for the students. One parent said, “I hope teachers have as high of expectations for our students as the parents do!”

Time to collaborate. High school faculty members are interested in having collaboration time built into the workday. Many faculty members feel the present schedule does not allow for effective collaboration time. Presently all teachers share a common prep at the end of the day. However, teachers said because many teachers coach and have supervisory responsibilities when students are released at the end of the day, and because many students stay after school to receive extra help, the time at the end of the day provides neither an opportunity to collaborate nor to plan.

_____ faculty members are clearly aware of the Attributes of High Achievement Schools and are carrying on discussions related to *active inquiry*, *in-depth learning* and *performance assessment*. It is in fact the pursuit of these ideas that many teachers are concerned the community may not support the reinvention. Faculty members have yet to work out any details related to plans for next school year. However, they do feel they will maintain a clearer focus and increase their expectations if they can get extended time to collaborate.

Plan of Action

_____ administration and faculty expressed a clear understanding of the purpose of the Gates Achiever Grant. They recognize the concept of developing a small, more personalized learning environment that will prepare all students for a 4-year college. One person noted that Bob Craves, from the Washington Education Foundation, told them: "I want you to know I'm in the four-year college business." Because they are already a school with less than 400 students most of their focus thus far has been to raise expectations so more students will be able to go to college if they want to. Because they do not feel comfortable saying four-year college is right for all students, _____ faculty described college in terms of "post secondary options," and "continuing education." No one interviewed supported a focus on preparing students for a four-year college only. They felt community college, apprenticeships, and military service were other positive continuing education options.

The strategy to bring about change has been straightforward and clear. First the faculty and administration began by completing their school accreditation process. They then made the decision to conduct multiple visitations to high schools around the country to gain awareness of reinvention options. They developed a common list of questions, conducted the visitations, organized the findings, presented to staff, decided on two areas in which to focus (advisories and assessment), and formed academic design teams around these two topics. It is presumed by many faculty members that they will begin to implement some form of advisory in the 2002 – 2003 school year. The following provides a list of some of the common questions pursued during visitations.

1. How did you structure learning around the student's interests and desired career?
2. How did you link 'out-of-school learning experiences to classroom learning'? i.e. Community service, senior culminating project.
3. How have you made the education for the students personalized? Do you use any kind of a mentor/advisor program, and if so, what does it look like?
4. What is required to issue a credit?
5. How do you integrate your curriculum (especially Fine Arts)?
6. Are there traditional subject areas/requirements that have been dropped?
7. What methods of major assessments do you incorporate?
8. What assessments are used for reading skills? Math skills? Do you have annual assessments in these areas?
9. What role did the school board, community, and parents play in restructuring?
10. Have you provided time for the teachers to collaborate in addition to their preparation time?

After the questions were developed and confirmed, visitation teams began their work. Every teacher who wanted to go on a visitation was able to do so. Only a very few teachers did not attend the visitations. Faculty saw this as a very strong strategy to help high school faculty consider teaching and learning differently. School visitations were scheduled for New Tech High, Julia Richmond Complex, Francis W. Parker and Fenway.

At the conclusion of the visitations, the Steering Committee categorized the findings into eight themes:

- Advisory
- Assessment

- Literacy
- Learning Communities
- Cultural Behavior
- Teaching Models
- Academic Planning
- Principal, Teacher, and Counselor Roles

Faculty then processed the “short list” on a Saturday in-service day. Everyone described the Saturday in-service as highly motivating, energizing and successful. Several commented that the staff was “fully engaged.”

School Context

_____ High School is the only high school in the _____ School District. It serves a student population that is 84% White, 14% Hispanic, 1% Asian, 1% American Indian, and 0% African American⁸. Over 52% of THS students qualify for free/reduced lunch.

_____ High School and school district have a stable, veteran group of educators. Unlike many Achiever high schools, _____ is not anticipating any teacher or principal retirements or resignations in their secondary schools. Likewise there are no anticipated personnel changes in the central office or on the school board. In many ways this was seen as a positive contextual factor because of the continuity of planning and design implementation. On the other hand, this stability has potential disadvantages according to some. It was stated, “The change that is going to take place is in the teaching process, and some veteran teachers may not want to change long-standing habits.”

A new committee was formed to help guide the professional development process connected to the reinvention of the high school. Prior to the development of this committee several faculty members described the reinvention process by saying they were “spinning their wheels.” There was a high level of frustration earlier in the year because people wanted to begin making positive changes at the school but were unsure how to get started. The newly established Planning Committee, initiated and led by the school coach, works in conjunction with the Steering Committee to facilitate progress in grant related activities. The Planning Committee is made up of the school coach and teachers, and meets to plan professional development activities before each major staff in-service. One person described the present enthusiasm and progress as a result of the teachers taking ownership of the change process.

As highlighted in the preliminary report (January), faculty members were concerned the district office might not support the type of change that may be called for to reinvent the high school. This issue has continued to be a concern and there is significant apprehension among many faculty members. Parents, teachers and administrators understand the reinvention efforts may lead to changes in how students “go” to school. They have discussed the possibilities of eliminating seat time and that students may do internships “in town.” Many faculty members understand these types of changes raise political questions for their superintendent and school board, and some question whether their plans will be supported if the “District” is concerned about passing levies.

⁸ Data taken from Great Schools web site, www.greatschools.com

Because of the difficulty in passing bonds and levies the district strategically runs the Maintenance and Operations (M&O) levy in the late spring when the local economy has a better chance of influencing school support positively. For example, they plan to run an M&O levy in late May. This may help them “drum up” the necessary “yes” vote. The disadvantage of running the M&O so late is that if it does not pass the deadline to provide Reduction in Force (RIF) notices will have passed. This is a concern for many in light of several employees being RIFed in the previous year and with continuing student enrollment declines.

These political and economic factors are influencing discussions around reinvention because of the need to maintain community support and because of wanting to maximize the full time equivalency (FTE) of students in schools. Because of how expansive the physical area is that is served by the _____ School District, 75% of the students are bussed. One person said, “A difficulty in gaining community support for change is that many parents never drive by the school. They have little affiliation with the school. Students are bussed 2 – 3 hours per day (round trip) and then some walk another 2 – 8 miles from the bus stop to their homes.” Diversity of area residence is another barrier to building community support. According to demographic reports, _____ has the largest contingency of Vietnam veterans in the state of Washington, many homesteaders whose families settled in the area in the late 1800s, many disenfranchised loggers, ranchers and orchardists due to local economic conditions, and a large community of people that refer to themselves as “hippies.” All this has influenced reinvention plans in two ways: (1) many want to be sure reinvention plans do not disrupt the delicate balance of support they have built over the last 10 years and (2) teachers want to require seniors to take a full load of classes so the school can receive the maximum student FTE funding from the state.

As previously mentioned, _____ school personnel spent the last decade building community confidence in the schools, which included building new schools and “keeping students off the streets.” There were strong concerns expressed that if part of the reinvention means students will be leaving campus and going out into the community for various reasons it would be a negative political move. One person suggested that whatever changes result from the reinvention must be done “at a pace the kids understand” because students would be primary ambassadors for the change. One person said, “Students are the ones that talk to their parents.” Many felt they needed to be purposeful in the change process and that they must be successful to maintain community support of all their schools.

Time to effectively collaborate on a daily or weekly basis in a meaningful way is non-existent. Teachers remain frustrated that there is not common collaboration time built into the school day or year. Several teachers described themselves and others as putting in a lot of time after hours and being concerned about widespread staff burnout if time is not allocated within the school day. One person said, “We need time to do this. It’s hard to do this with subs.” Another said, “Too many Saturdays and too many late nights and we will all burn out.”

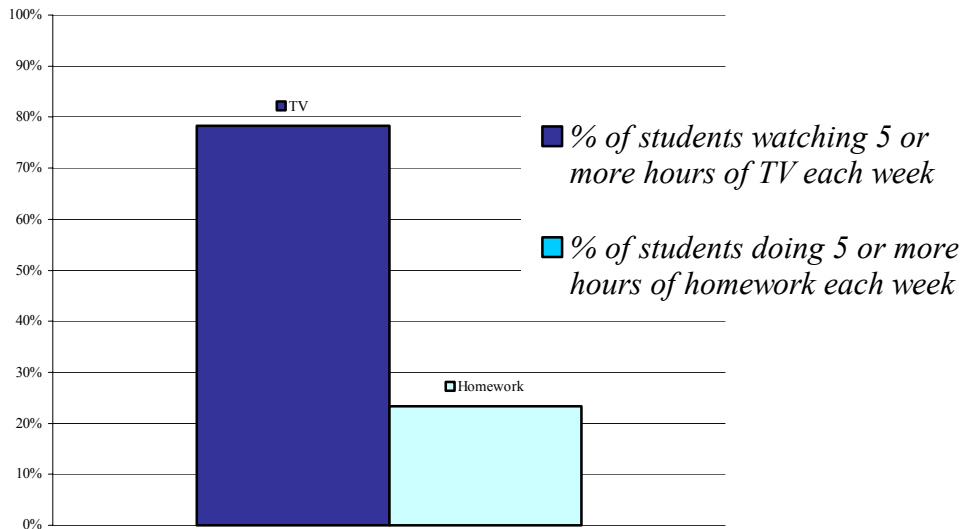
Student College Awareness Survey

A sample of 120 students completed the student College Awareness Survey. Of these, 85% felt a college degree is important for them to obtain a successful job, and 77% felt their future career depended a lot on going to college. In addition, 73% indicated they had a specific

career goal in mind. Only 56% of the students felt their high school had prepared them to succeed in college, and only 29% felt they would be able to afford college. Fifty-eight percent of the students found discussions with teachers about college to be helpful, and 38% found discussion with the counselor to be helpful. Approximately 60% of the students indicated their teachers expected them to attend a four-year college, and 60% of the students knew what high school courses they needed to prepare them for college. Approximately 34% of students identified teachers as the most helpful way they found out about college; 17% indicated parents/guardians, 18% school counselor, 13% Internet, 3% friends, and 3% TV and movies.

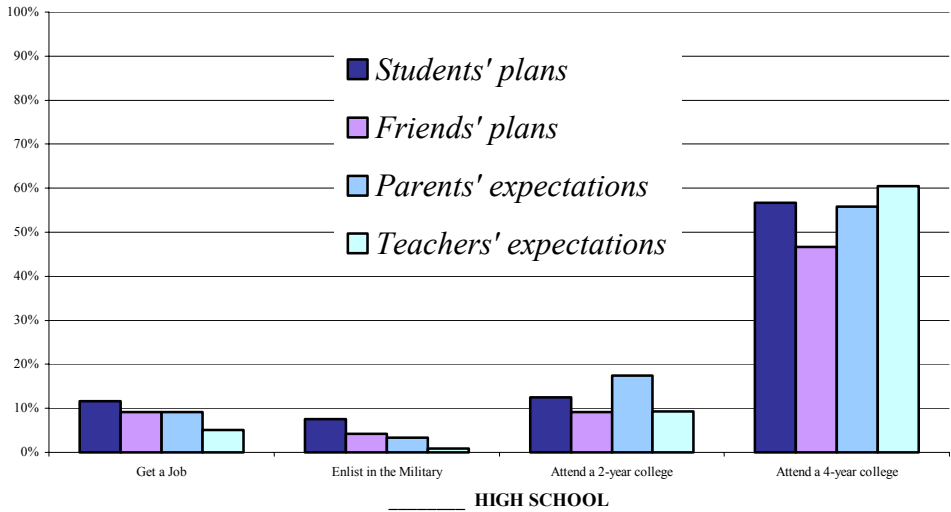
Students indicated they spent more time outside of school hours watching TV than working on homework. Only 23% of the students spent five or more hours on homework each week, while 78% indicated they spent five or more hours per week watching TV (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 - College Awareness Survey
Time spent watching TV versus doing homework



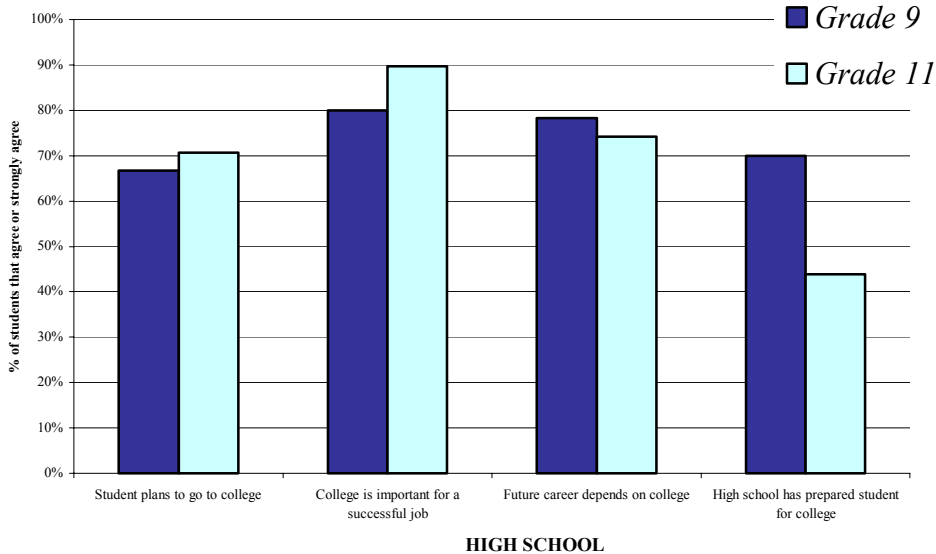
According to the student College Awareness Survey, college was the overwhelming interest for both 9th and 11th grade students when asked about post-high school plans. Over 69% of the students indicated an interest in attending a two-year or four-year college, while 12% planned to get a job and work after high school, and 8% planned to enlist in the military (see Figure 2).

Figure 2 - College Awareness Survey
Post-high school plans and expectations



Students in the 9th and 11th grades indicated that college was important for a successful job (80 and 90% respectively) and their future career depended on college (78 and 74% respectively). The majority of students in the 9th and 11th grades planned to attend college (67 and 71% respectively), and more freshmen than seniors believed their high school had prepared them for college (70 and 44% respectively) (see Figure 3).

Figure 3 - College Awareness Survey
Students' Perceptions About College



Coordination Between Schools

As highlighted in the previous report, the high school principal and evaluation coordinator have effectively coordinated with _____ Middle School. Taking advantage of the close proximity created from sharing the same building, the middle school principal meets with the high school principal one time a month to coordinate the activities. They are coordinating not only on the *CollegeEd* curriculum but also on other curricular and scheduling issues. Coordination of improvement efforts have been enhanced by the middle school principal and two middle school teacher representatives serving on the high school steering committee.

_____ Middle School began the school year teaching a one-quarter (45 days) College Awareness course to all eighth graders. In January, five middle school staff members attended the College Board training. When the *CollegeEd* materials became available, some of these materials were integrated into the existing course. Several people feel the College Awareness course that was already in place is better than the *CollegeEd* curriculum, but that *CollegeEd* serves as good “supplementary material.” All eighth graders take the class for one quarter except band students. Band students take a six-lesson “crash course” in their language arts block instead, due to scheduling conflicts. Many feel eighth grade is the best grade level for building college awareness because of how it flows into the ninth grade Gold Nine class designed to build college and career awareness.

Administrators and teachers felt the *CollegeEd* curriculum was limited, but that many of the materials served as a good supplement to the existing College Awareness course. Although some parents voiced a concern that middle school is too early to be talking to students about college, most felt it was a valuable class. Parents liked that it was an expectation to learn about college and that the class was taught in such a “hands-on” way. Parents reported that the class motivated their children, and that they were happy their students were listening to the teacher. One parent said, “I’ve been talking to my daughter about this for years, but she doesn’t listen to me. She comes home and tells me what she learned and I think, ‘I’ve been saying the same thing for years.’” Another parent said, “I see a difference in my son already. He was going to join the Marines after high school; now he’s planning to go to college first. He said if he goes to college then he can ‘enter the Marines as an officer.’” Parents did express a concern that they did not want _____ to become a “college prep high school.” One person said, “I wish they would stress more career and vocational.”

Role of Technical Assistance

_____ High School faculty and administration have found technical assistance to be very helpful. They benefited from the information sharing at the periodic Achiever meetings in Seattle and felt their school coach was playing a key role in moving the reinvention plans forward. One person described their school coach as “a godsend.” Others expressed similar enthusiasm: “She has helped get us started in the process.” “It was her idea that we form the Planning Committee.” “She is very skilled.” Another person said, “She really understands process.” Many faculty members felt the way the school coach began working with them was good. She spent time attending the Steering Committee meetings and observing in classrooms in an attempt to “get to know the school.” She then began providing ideas about change and eventually began leading the Planning Committee.

Summary

The faculty at _____ High School is moving forward in their plan to reinvent their high school. Because of the small size of the school, efforts are being directed at the changes that are needed in teaching and learning. Support for scholarships is high, and plans for reinvention are beginning to become clearer. A clear strategy for developing teacher awareness around reinvention was carried out by visiting schools around the country. Almost all teachers participated in the visitations, and the information gathered from these trips was organized into several topics. Advisories and Assessment have been chosen as the main focus of professional development efforts, and many felt some sort of advisory program would be implemented in the 2002 – 2003 school year. The school coach has been welcomed, and technical assistance has been very helpful during the reinvention planning.

Currently faculty members are working to improve the *common focus*, *high expectations* and *time to collaborate* attributes. Although some teachers are aware of the classroom strategies of *active inquiry*, *in-depth learning* and *performance assessment*, these concepts have not penetrated the organization in practice.

The high school principal and evaluation coordinator have effectively coordinated with their feeder middle school. The *CollegeEd* curriculum has been implemented as an eighth grade exploratory class for all eighth grades and is serving as a supplement to the existing college awareness class. Parents, teachers and administrators are very positive about the college awareness program.

Recommendations

Explore options to provide collaboration time within the school day. Teachers indicated that they were excited about the progress they were making with the reinvention activities. They also mentioned, however, that they feared teacher burnout if they had to be working late into the evening and/or on Saturdays too often.

Attempt to gain clarity as to what preparing all students for a 4-year college means operationally to the _____ community. No one advocated that THS become a college-prep *only* school. Rather, most talked about the school needing to meet a range of post high school options.

Begin to cultivate leadership within the high school to effectively lead the Planning Committee. At this time the school coach has assumed primary leadership for this important professional development committee. It will be important to have someone on staff assume this leadership role since coaching support is offered for a finite amount of time as a part of the Achievers grant.

Explore effective means of communications with parents and community as reinvention plans develop. Many identified a decade of educational successes as being in jeopardy if the community does not understand why or how the changes are affecting the community. A key complaint from the past had been community members upset that students were out in the community, skipping school. There is a concern that providing off-campus learning experiences may not be met favorably in the community if it is perceived students are “not in school.”

Review the information contained in this report with your school coach to determine if elements of the evaluation can be used to help further the reinvention process. Student College Awareness Survey data show a very small percentage of students interested in going to work and even fewer going into the military upon completion of high school. A majority of students indicated an interest in attending two-year or four-year college. These data might be contrasted with faculty perception regarding students' post high school plans as noted in the preliminary report.

Appendix F. Achievers High Schools Collaboration Time Schedule

**Achievers High Schools
Professional Development Days
2001 - 2002**

High School	Professional Development Days	Professional Development Day Details
A. C. Davis	18 days	2-hour late arrival starting January 2002
Cleveland	15 days	ATLAS days, no pattern
Clover Park	0 days	No early release / late arrival days provided
Foster	6 days	2-hour late arrival
Harry S. Truman	Intercessions	2 – 3 days during intercessions
Henry M. Foss	20 days	2 hour late arrival
Kent-Meridian	0 days	No early release / late arrival days provided
Kittitas	8 days	2-hour early release
Lincoln	20 days	2-hour late arrival
Mabton	30 days	3-hour late arrival
Mariner	21 days	2-hour late arrival
Mount Tahoma	20 days	2-hour late arrival
Stevenson	0 days	No early release / late arrival days provided
Tonasket	0 days	No early release / late arrival days provided
West Valley	5 days	2-hour late arrival
Yelm	16 days	10 late arrival/6 early release

