



Evaluation of the East EPO

Year Two

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Chapter 1

Background and Introduction

In the spring of 2016, WestEd was contracted to conduct an external evaluation of the East Educational Partnership Organization (EPO). This report documents the Year 2 evaluation activities, findings, and recommendations. The report first provides a summary of Year 1 findings, gives some background and context on East High School and the EPO Plan, and then describes the evaluation methods for Year 2. The report next presents findings about the progress made in many of the major initiatives and programs of the EPO in the 2016–17 school year. For each initiative, the report describes and discusses findings about the implementation in Year 2 of the EPO. Following the section on the findings for the key initiatives, the report presents quantitative data to examine student academic progress. The report concludes with recommendations and suggested evaluation activities for Year 3.

Summary of Year 1

The ambitious undertaking by the University of Rochester (UR) to turn around East High School was by all accounts an extraordinary endeavor. Teachers and leaders described the first year of implementation as a “learning year,” and the findings set forth in the Year 1 evaluation report revealed that the “all-in” attitude at East Upper and Lower School prevailed to keep the initiative moving forward. The work of Year 1 of the EPO focused on dramatic changes in curriculum, instructional practices, leadership practices, and student expectations academically and behaviorally to stop the decline and to set the conditions for improvement. Through extensive curricular work, de-privatizing teacher practice, supporting changes in instructional practices, and strengthening academic and socio-emotional supports for students, conditions for improvement were firmly put in place. Considerable reflection on the first-year findings among teachers and leaders at East led to adjustments, revisions, and even re-inventions of key components in preparation for Year 2. Evaluators encouraged EPO leaders to continue to focus on: school climate, enhanced classroom instruction and higher expectations, curriculum development and professional learning, parent/family connections, community partnerships, restorative culture, increased data use, student-centered learning, and student accountability for outcomes. Some specific areas of concern or areas that evaluators suggested might benefit from additional investigation based on Year 1 evaluation findings included: the effectiveness of alternative programs; ensuring the needs of special education and English New Language (ENL) students; resolving the issue of 6th grade; continuing to improve family engagement; continued work building trust and transparency with all staff; supporting

the professional expertise of teachers while also holding them accountable, and building their capacity to implement expected curricular and teaching practices; and observing impacts on student outcomes.

Start of Year 2

The start of Year 2 (2016–17 school year) showed a very visible shift in school climate with more orderly hallways and increased student willingness to engage in Family Group and other activities implemented to improve their sense of belonging at school. Teachers returned with renewed commitment to improve classroom instruction, and administrators have come together to align their efforts to support improved practices for teachers and improved learning and supports for students. Teachers see that many of their suggestions for changes in implementation practices, for example, of support, have been considered and implemented by school leaders. Year 2 began with optimism on the part of school leaders, teachers, and staff with the hard work of Year 1 accomplished and the groundwork for improvement complete. Many are eager to see results at the end of Year 2 and hope they show evidence of improvement.

EPO Plan

Under the original EPO plan, the school added 6th grade and separated the former East High into two schools, East Upper School for grades 9–12 and East Lower School for grades 6–8. At each school, a longer school day consisting of 7.5 hours with staggered starting and ending times was implemented. A new leadership team was proposed, which included a Superintendent, a principal, and several vice principals for each of the schools, as well as several positions that support both the Upper and Lower Schools, including a chief academic officer, or CAO, a director of special programs, and a vice principal for data and accountability. The unique structure of the leadership team is discussed in more detail below. These new structural components were believed to be critical by the EPO designers to implement the key programs and initiatives to spur dramatic school improvement academically and culturally. In addition to proposed changes in school structures, the plan involved a major emphasis on curriculum and instruction, including a complete curricular overhaul.

Other planned changes focused on strengthening supports for students academically and behaviorally, including plans to work with external organizations to implement alternative programs to address the needs of students who were significantly behind their peers, at risk of dropping out, or in need of re-engagement with school. A longer school day permitted the addition of a support period and to accommodate a robust set of career and technical education as well as elective offerings to address student interests. At the Lower School, double periods for English with a focus on literacy and mathematics were implemented. At the Upper School, a freshman academy model was proposed to support new 9th graders.

The hiring of additional social workers and counselors was proposed to support students behaviorally. Family Group, a daily initiative to ensure that each student is connected with one or more caring adults who knows that student well, was also designed. In addition, the EPO planned to take a restorative approach to student conduct and discipline.

Leveraging the university's expertise as well as that of community partners was another key component of the EPO plan. Faculty and staff from the university contributed to the proposal development and

implementation process in many ways, ranging from communications to curriculum and leadership roles.

Methods

Evaluators collaboratively developed a comprehensive data collection plan for Year 2 with members of the EPO Oversight Committee. The data collection plan involved qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. Some of the data collection activities were designed to allow year-to-year comparisons. Data from all relevant data sources were analyzed for each section of the report. In the remainder of this section, we provide details on the data collected for the evaluation of the 2016–17 school year.

Focus Groups and Interviews

For focus groups and interviews, evaluators created customized instruments for each population. Focus groups and interviews asked about implementation of specific initiatives, evidence of impact, challenges, and anticipated changes. Many focus groups and numerous interviews were conducted, with most being conducted in the spring of 2017. Table 1 summarizes the focus groups conducted.

Table 1. Summary of Year 2 focus groups conducted

Population	Date	Number of focus groups (Number of participants)
Students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper School • Lower School • Quest • Big Picture • Freedom School 	December 2016 – January 2017 May 2017 (Freedom School only)	16 (143 participants)
Parents of Freedom School students	May 2017	1 (5 participants)
Teachers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper School, including Quest, CTE • Lower School • Big Picture 	April 2017	10 (25 participants)
Teacher leaders	April 2017	1 (14 participants)
Counselors	April 2017	1 (5 participants)
Social workers	April 2017	1 (4 participants)
Assistant principals	September 2016 and April 2017	2 (8 participants)
Partners (FACE Committee)	April 2017	1 (5 participants)
Paraprofessionals	April 2017	1 (8 participants)

Population	Date	Number of focus groups (Number of participants)
School security officers	April 2017	

Interviews were conducted with:

- EPO Oversight Committee – 6 members
- School administrators, including the superintendent, CAO, principals, Freshman Academy director, director of special programs, vice principal of data and accountability, special assistant to the superintendent, family group coaches, special education director, attendance specialist

In addition, brief 5-minute conversations were held with about a dozen parents at the parent-teacher conference night in April 2017.

Observations

Classroom Observations

During April 26–28, 2017, WestEd staff visited East to conduct systematic classroom observations focused on teacher practices. Across the three days, a total of 57 classrooms were observed. Of all of the classrooms observed, 37 percent, or 20 classrooms, were in the Lower School; 61 percent were in the Upper School. Many of the classrooms at the Upper School were mixed-grade classrooms. An effort was made to observe classrooms across all subjects. The subject areas of the observed classrooms included:

- 24% math (13 classrooms) (Algebra, Geometry, Pre-calculus, Bilingual Math)
- 20% English language arts (11 classrooms) (ELA/ENL, Literacy Workshop)
- 20% unified arts/specials (11 classrooms) (Spanish, Personal Finance, Physical Education, Studio Arts)
- 18% history/SS (10 classrooms) (Global, Global Review, US History)
- 16% science (9 classrooms) Earth Science, Chemistry, Living Environment, Physics)

Collaborative Planning Time Observations

Evaluators observed 12 content area collaborative planning time observations (CPTs) in 2017. CPTs were observed in the Upper and Lower Schools, and were focused on math and English/literacy. A CPT observation protocol was used to document each observation (see Appendix A).

Observations of Family Group

Evaluators observed 18 Family Groups across the Upper and Lower Schools. Observations occurred in the fall of 2016 and spring of 2017. Evaluators used a Family Group observation protocol to document each observation (see Appendix A).

Observations of Support Rooms

A total of 12 support room periods were observed by the evaluation team during spring 2017. One hundred two students and 33 adults were present across these sessions. Evaluators completed Support Period Note-taker forms which were reviewed to capture general information about how many students and adults were present at each session, the grade level, whether an ESOL staff was present, and the start and end time of the observation.

Findings

Surveys

Surveys were created to address the implementation of specific initiatives at East. Surveys were conducted with teachers and certificated staff (e.g., staff that are members of the Rochester Teachers Associations [RTA], like social workers, counselors), school administrators, and students.

Teacher and Staff Survey

The teacher and staff survey was conducted online using SurveyMonkey®. “Staff” refers to staff who are in the RTA. The survey was conducted on April 7, 2017, after the conclusion of the Superintendent’s Conference Day. A total of 163 teachers and staff responded to the survey. Respondents were asked to indicate their specific role and whether their responsibilities lie primarily in the Lower School, the Upper School, or in both equally (see Table 2). Throughout this report, figures and charts display the teacher/staff survey data disaggregated by whether primary responsibilities lie in the Upper or Lower School. Small cell sizes prevented us from separately reporting those whose responsibilities lie equally in both, however, their responses are included in the overall total percentages reported. In some cases, a question applies only to teachers and teacher leaders and only their responses are presented; this is always indicated in a table note.

Table 2. Primary role of respondents to Teacher/Staff survey

Response	Lower School	Upper School	In Upper and Lower School Equally
Teacher	75.6% (n=34)	81.5% (n=88)	50.0% (n=5)
Teacher leader (more than 50% of your role)	11.1% (n=5)	5.6% (n=6)	10.0% (n=1)
Other certified faculty (e.g., guidance counselor, social worker)	8.9% (n=4)	12.0% (n=13)	30.0% (n=3)

Response	Lower School	Upper School	In Upper and Lower School Equally
Other	4.4% (n=2)	0.9% (n=1)	10.0% (n=1)

Respondents were also asked what year they joined the East team, to ascertain whether the respondent pool includes those who were at East before and since the EPO. Table 3 below indicates that it varies by Upper and Lower School, but that the respondents include a mix of teachers and staff who were at East prior to the EPO and after the implementation of the EPO.

Table 3. Year joined East team

Response	Lower School	Upper School	In Upper and Lower School Equally
This school year (2016–17)	6.5% (n=3)	9.3% (n=10)	20.0% (n=2)
Last school year (2015–16)	63.0% (n=29)	44.4% (n=48)	40.0% (n=4)
2014–15 school year or earlier	30.43% (n=14)	46.30% (n=50)	40.00% (n=4)

Administrator Survey

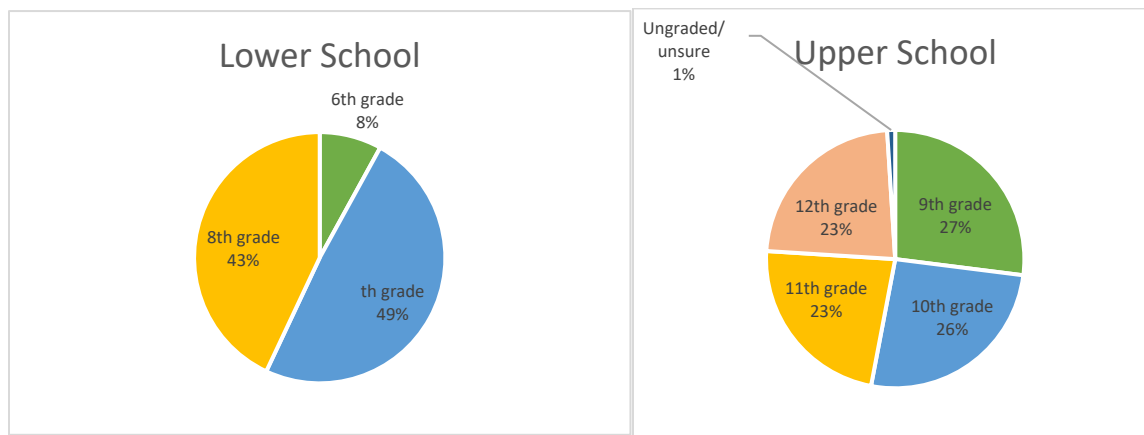
The survey for administrators was also conducted on April 7 after the Superintendent’s Conference. Administrators included principals, vice principals, and director level staff, such as director of special programs, director of special education, Quest director, Big Picture director, and Freedom School director. There were 11 respondents out of a possible 16 for a response rate of 69 percent. Of the administrators, 3 reported their responsibilities lie primarily in the Upper School, 3 in the Lower School, 4 whose responsibilities are equally in the Upper and Lower Schools, and 1 whose responsibilities lie primarily with Alternative Programs. Because of the small number of respondents, when data from the administrator survey are displayed in this report, they are reported as one group and not broken out by area of responsibility.

Student Surveys

Two versions of the survey were created, one for Upper School students and one for Lower School students. The surveys were administered during Family Group sessions during April 26–28, 2017. The surveys asked about specific programs and supports, including the things they liked most and least about East. The student surveys were completed using pencil and paper and were entered into SurveyMonkey® software for analysis.

At the Lower School, 255 students responded to the survey, with 7.6 percent being in the 6th grade, 49 percent in the 7th grade, and 43.4 percent in the 8th grade (see Figure 1). At the Upper School, 390 students responded to the survey. The respondents were fairly evenly distributed across 9th–12th grades, with 3 students responding they were ungraded or unsure of their grade (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Student survey respondents, by grade



Quantitative Data

[Insert description after receive Year 2 data in August.]

Organization of the Report

This report is organized into four chapters. Chapters 2 and 3 contain a summary of data collected and findings related to major EPO initiatives and student outcomes. Conclusions and recommendations, including recommendations for specific programs and recommendations for ongoing evaluation, are presented in Chapter 4.

A Note about Language

Throughout the report we use the following terms:

- **EPO leadership** — Refers to members of the EPO Oversight Committee, which includes the dean of the Warner School at the University of Rochester, the East EPO project director, the East EPO superintendent, and others.
- **Administrators** — Refers to school-based administrators, including the principals, vice principals and vice principal-level administrators, and program directors.
- **Teachers and staff** — Refers to all teachers and certificated staff, which includes any staff member who is certificated and covered by the RTA agreement, such as counselors and social workers.

Chapter 2

Progress of Major Initiatives

This section of the report addresses the following major EPO initiatives:

- Leadership
- Professional learning, including collaborative planning time and professional development
- Learning Targets
- Teacher leaders
- Assessment
- Teacher practices
- Curriculum
- Support Room Model
- Freshman Academy
- Family Group
- Restorative Practices
- Alternative programs
- Family and community engagement

For each of these initiatives, a description of implementation for Year 2 is provided, along with challenges, impacts and/or benefits, and, in some cases, plans for Year 3. Evidence is provided in the use of quotations from focus groups, interviews, and open-ended survey items. Where applicable, survey data are also used to support findings.

Leadership

EPO Leadership

The leadership structures of East Upper and Lower Schools, through the EPO, have remained consistent from Year 1 to Year 2; however, what has changed are some of the leadership practices. The EPO has a leadership structure that includes a project director, Dr. Steve Uebbing, and a superintendent, Dr. Shaun Nelms. There is also a university-based EPO Oversight Committee that oversees and directs the EPO in general and to which the superintendent reports. This committee is comprised of the EPO project director, superintendent, the chief academic officer (CAO), and Warner School leaders and faculty/staff. In Year 1, the EPO Oversight Committee was described as being actively involved in the school. In Year 2,

a number of respondents among the school leadership and staff reported that the Oversight Committee has stepped back and is less involved in the day-to-day operation of the school. This is seen as a vote of confidence for the school-based leadership team. It was also described, by EPO leaders, as an explicit decision to oversee and provide guidance but not to be involved in day-to-day decisions.

Teachers also reported a high level of confidence in the organization and the benefit of the EPO leadership model at East. Eighty percent of the respondents to the teacher/staff survey reported agreeing or strongly agreeing that *“The organization of the leadership team supports effective progress toward school improvement and achievement of EPO goals.”* A high percentage also reported understanding the EPO leadership, with more than 85 percent of respondents indicating they did so to some or a great extent.

School-level Leadership

By the start of Year 2 in September 2016, only two of the original nine individuals who served in a principal or vice-principal role remained in the role that they had at the beginning of Year 1. A new principal was hired for the Lower School. Several new vice principals were also hired. In addition, several leaders changed roles; for example, the vice principal of the Freshman Academy for 2015-16 became a vice principal at the Lower School. In recognition of some of the challenges in Year 1 and with a full administrative team in place for Year 2, efforts were made in the fall of 2016 to clarify roles and responsibilities. For example, a new matrix of responsibilities was developed that listed all administrators and their formal, as well as some informal, responsibilities. Teachers and other leaders were also optimistic that having a fully staffed leadership team will address the leadership challenges experienced by the Lower School in Year 1.

Communication was a challenge leadership faced in Year 1, and efforts were undertaken to address it in Year 2. By all accounts much improvement was made. In the survey, 84 percent of teachers and staff agreed or strongly agreed that *“communication from the school leadership is clear.”* The survey was not conducted in Year 1, but based upon feedback from teachers and staff at the end of Year 1 compared to the overall positive survey and focus group feedback from teachers in spring 2017, it is clear that communication and consistency of message has improved.

Many teachers and leaders see the role of the chief academic officer as indispensable to the model, though it does not necessarily have to be based at the university. This role allows a leadership position whose sole focus is instruction. This frees up the principals and vice principals to be the first responders they are expected to be in the often-chaotic experience of urban schools.

Distributed Leadership

In addition to the formal leadership structure at the school, the superintendent had a goal to implement a distributed leadership model where teachers and staff are empowered to take action and where leadership practices are not dictated. In Year 1, both teachers and leaders struggled to some extent with what was sometimes perceived as a lack of specific directions. Year 2 has seen progress in a distributed leadership model taking hold among school leaders and teachers. For example, leaders realize they have the freedom to make day-to-day decisions within the framework of the EPO and existing structures.

Teacher leaders serving as informal leaders are seen as a key part of the model and frequently as a bridge between teachers/the classroom and leadership. The most commonly cited example of distributed teacher leadership in action is the restructuring of the Upper School support rooms and support periods that were teacher led at the end of Year 1 and were implemented in Year 2. During the spring/summer 2016, a group of special education teachers, who were also support room teachers, established the Upper School Support Room Advisory Committee which proposed changes to improve the operation of the support model. The changes addressed management and logistics challenges, student attendance, and effectiveness on student outcomes. The changes to the Support Room model in Upper School are described as “*completely teacher driven and teacher led.*”

A distributed leadership model is identified with the promising practice of “Motivating Teachers to Maintain Commitment to Transforming the School” to sustain rapid school turnaround (Hitt & Myers, 2017). Some leaders and teachers desire clearer responsibilities that are associated with a leadership model. Some shared that the model works well if you are a “go getter and a self-starter” but that for others this lack of clarity and the onus on self-motivation can be discouraging. There were some differences in the extent to which teachers and staff at the Upper and Lower Schools believe there is a distributive leadership model at the school. See Figure 2 below, which indicates that 83 percent of the Upper School teachers believe to some or a great extent that there is a distributive leadership model at the school compared to 65 percent at the Lower School. Similarly, when asked about the extent to which teachers are empowered to take actions to improve things at East, 85 percent of teachers/staff at the Upper School reported “to some or a great extent,” compared to 76 percent for the Lower School (see Figure 3). The superintendent and other school leaders are not unaware of these challenges but believe that distributed leadership is key to the EPO model and allows the leaders and teachers to “focus on the principles that drive our purpose here: build coherence, empower others, hold ourselves and others accountable, autonomy, and a safe environment for teachers to experience and fail.”

Figure 2. Extent teachers/staff believe distributive leadership model exists at Upper and Lower Schools

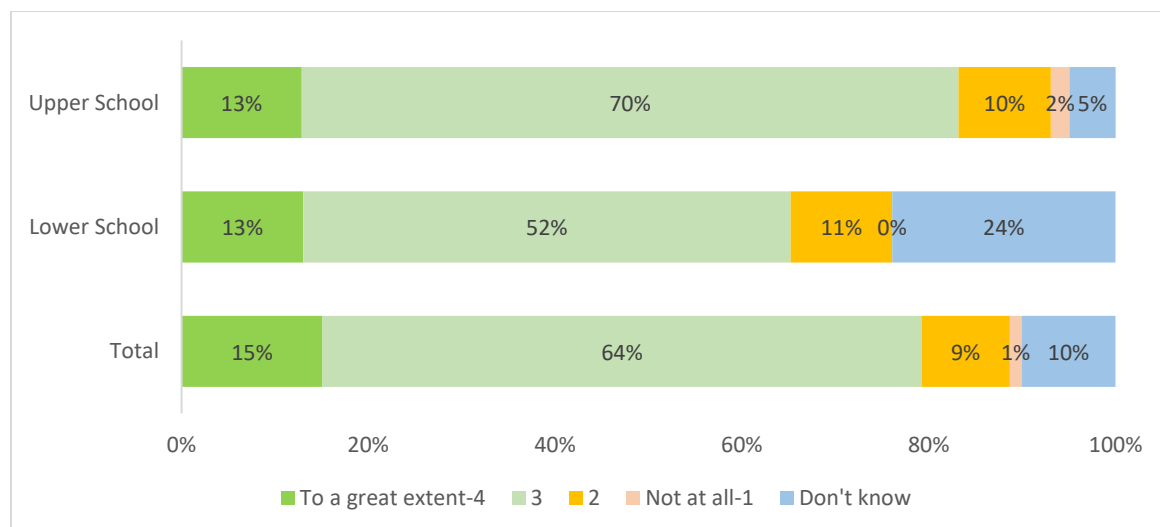
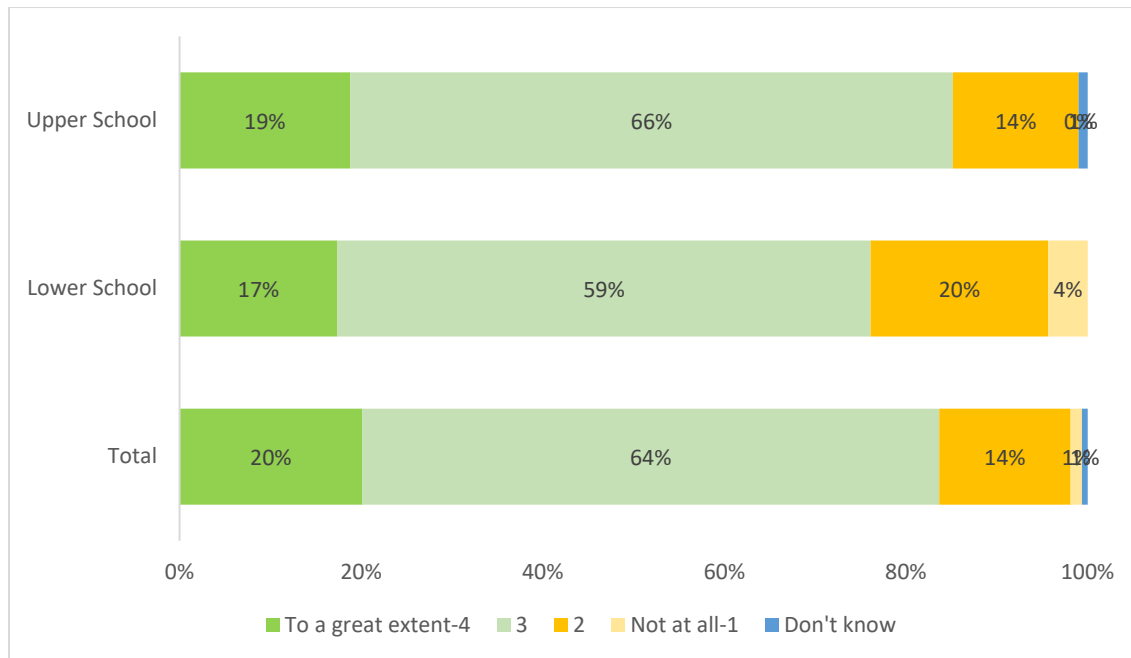


Figure 3. Extent teachers/staff feel empowered to take actions to improve things at East Upper and Lower Schools



University Role

The university holds the EPO, and several university faculty members have leadership roles in the EPO. Many other university faculty and staff, especially from the Warner School, provide support for leadership and teacher development, curriculum development, and more. Warner School faculty and staff, including curriculum and teaching experts from the Center for Professional Development and Education Reform, were involved in the development of the EPO plan, and many continue to be involved in the school providing consulting or advising to support curriculum implementation and professional development.

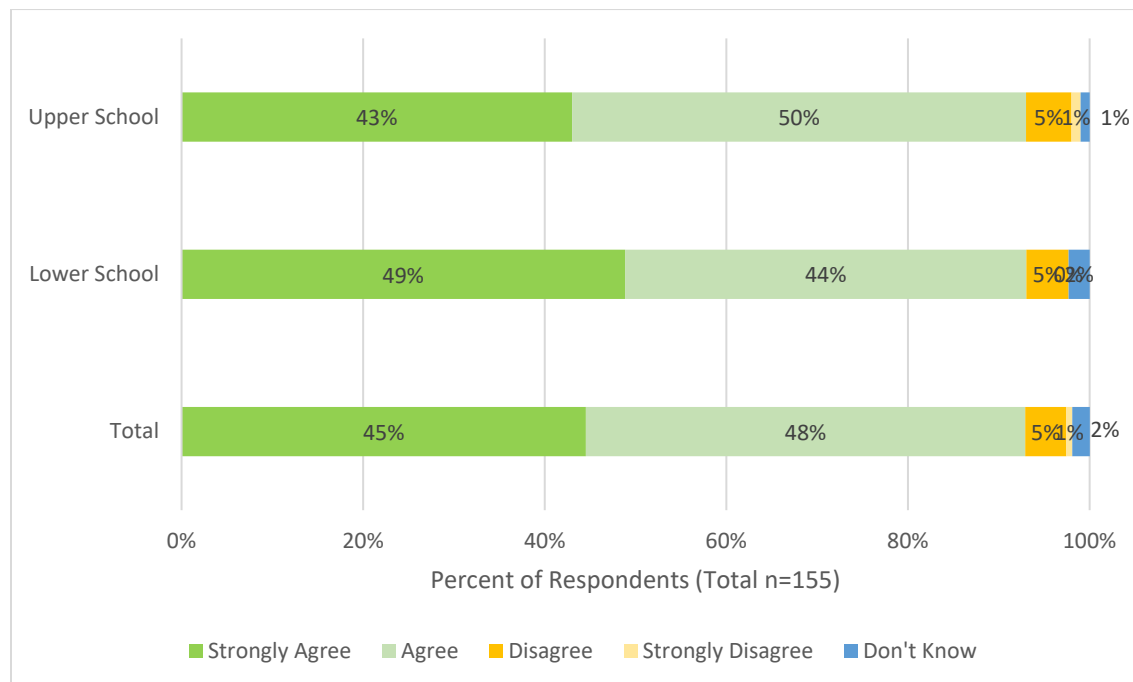
When asked to describe the university role and its importance, teachers/staff and leaders at East consistently emphasized two key points: (1) leadership roles of superintendent and chief academic officer and (2) extensive professional development for curriculum and instruction provided by the faculty associated with the university. In focus groups, teacher opinions of the university’s involvement in East were mixed, but teacher surveys, which represent a larger proportion of the teacher population, were strongly positive, with a sense that UR brings resources for students and research-based practices for teachers, and an improved reputation of East in the community.

While it is unusual to have a chief academic officer at the school level, leaders and teachers shared that they believe the existence of this role — and a highly qualified individual in it — allows for a coherent

and consistent focus on teaching and learning. The principals are still involved in teaching and learning, but in the often-chaotic environment of an urban high school, it is impossible for it to be their primary focus. The CAO position allows a laser-like focus on instruction.

In terms of professional development, using the framework of the EPO plan, the school’s Professional Development Committee, which consists of university faculty and school-based teachers and leaders, developed a five-year professional development plan that is currently being implemented, and will be discussed in more detail below. One school leader emphasized the role the university, the Warner School, and the Center for Professional Development and Education Reform play in professional development at the school: “We get a significant amount of professional development from the university. It’s the highest quality I’ve ever seen in a school; it’s very sustained, and they have a long-term plan for developing staff, and we wouldn’t have that without the university.” According to the results of the teacher/staff survey, there is overwhelming agreement (93%) that the University of Rochester helps to support effective teaching at East (see Figure 4). In focus groups, some teachers shared their perspective that everything has to be done the “UR way,” and that it devalues their professional experience. However, other teachers shared that the UR brings research to practice and believes there are rich experiences from collaborating with UR.

Figure 4. Extent teachers/staff believe the University of Rochester helps support effective teaching at East



The vast majority of teachers/staff at East believe that the university’s involvement is an overall benefit. Fully 97 percent at the Lower School and 95 percent at the Upper School agree or strongly agree with

that statement (see Figure 5). In general, they also believe that the university’s involvement in East increases opportunities for students and supports student learning (see Figures 6 and 7).

Figure 5. Extent teachers/staff believe that University of Rochester involvement is an overall benefit to East

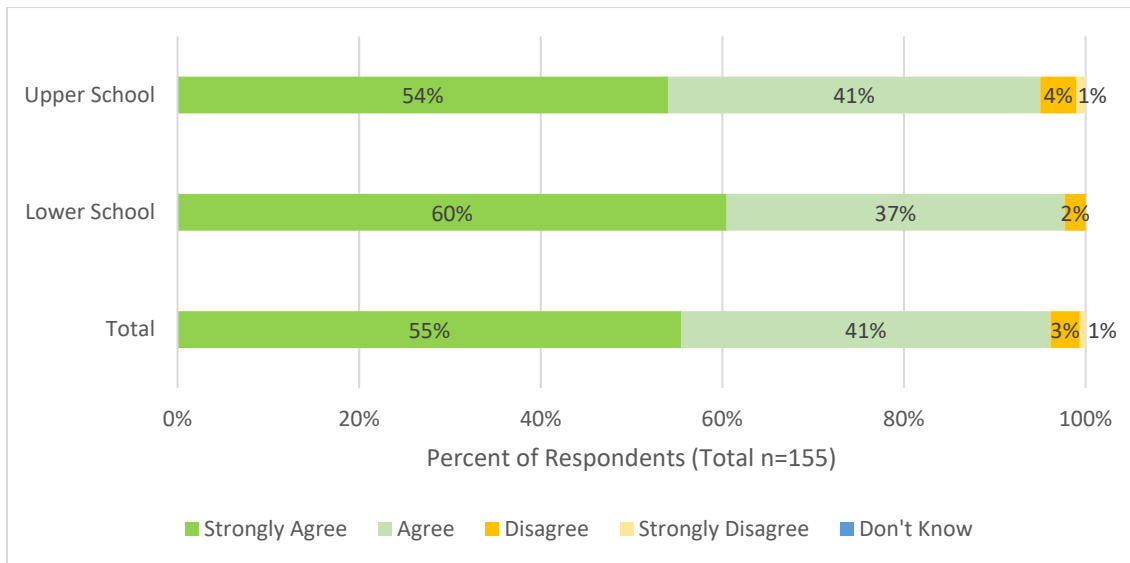


Figure 6. Extent teachers/staff believe that University of Rochester involvement supports student learning at East

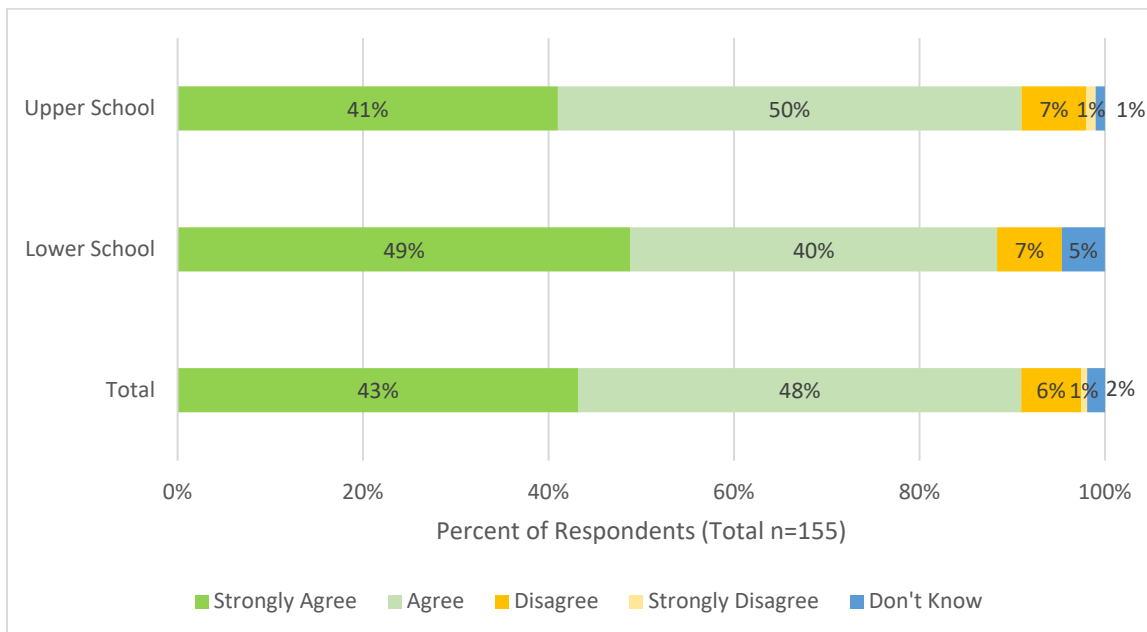
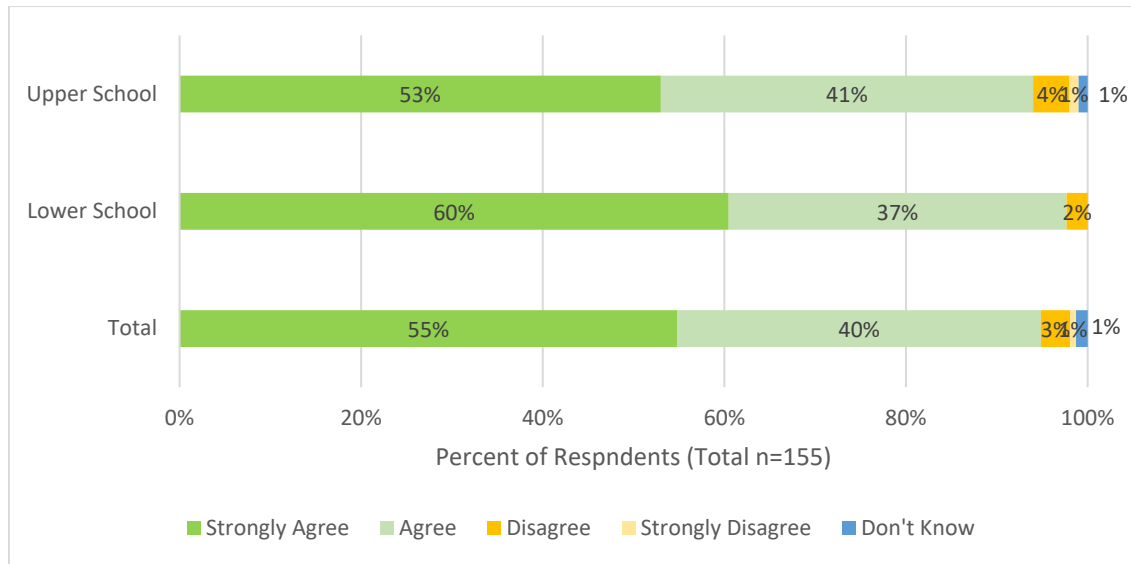


Figure 7. Extent teachers/staff believe that University of Rochester involvement increases opportunities for students at East



Professional Learning

This section on professional learning addresses collaborative planning time and other professional development opportunities. The role of teacher leaders, while a professional learning support, is discussed in a separate section below.

Collaborative Planning Time

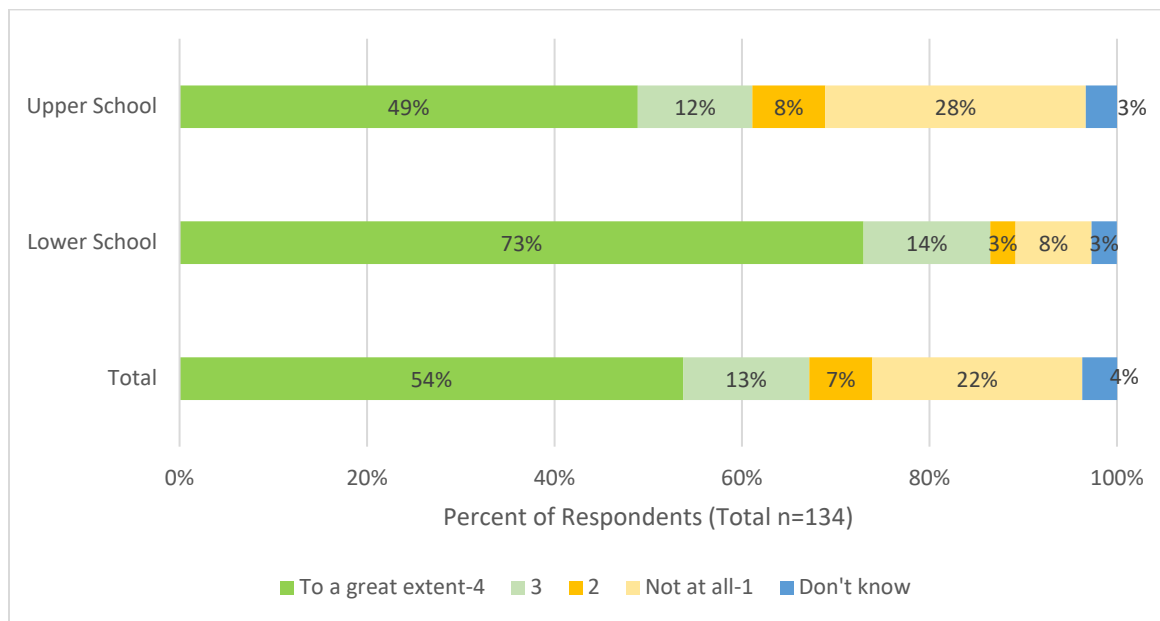
There are two types of collaborative planning time at East — one content- or subject-specific that happens across grades, known more generally as CPT, and one that is grade-level-specific but occurs across subjects, known as inter-departmental or IDCPT. Each meets at least once a week, depending on the school schedule. Teacher leaders support the content CPTs, and an administrator, such as a vice principal, supports the grade-level IDCPTs.

Responding to challenges identified with CPT in Year 1, school leaders and others identified areas for improvement for CPT in Year 2 to improve its effectiveness in supporting teacher practice. The role of administrators in CPT was clarified to specify that they are expected to lead grade-level IDCPT and are invited to participate in content CPT as well. Coaches/teacher leaders are expected to run content in a more structured way, with an agenda, and with a portion of each CPT focused on common school-wide work, such as learning targets or Common Formative Assessments. Below we discuss IDCPT and CPT in more detail.

IDCPT

The expectation is that teachers and administrators meet in grade-level teams at least once a week. These meetings bring together teachers from different disciplines and are an opportunity to monitor the progress of students in a particular grade, identify students for support, and discuss other issues specific to the grade. Responses to the teacher survey indicate differences in the regularity of IDCPT, with a majority (73%) of Lower School teachers reporting they regularly engage in IDCPT meetings to a great extent compared to only 49 percent of Upper School teachers (see Figure 8).

Figure 8. Teachers’ reported engagement in regular (at least weekly) IDCPT meetings



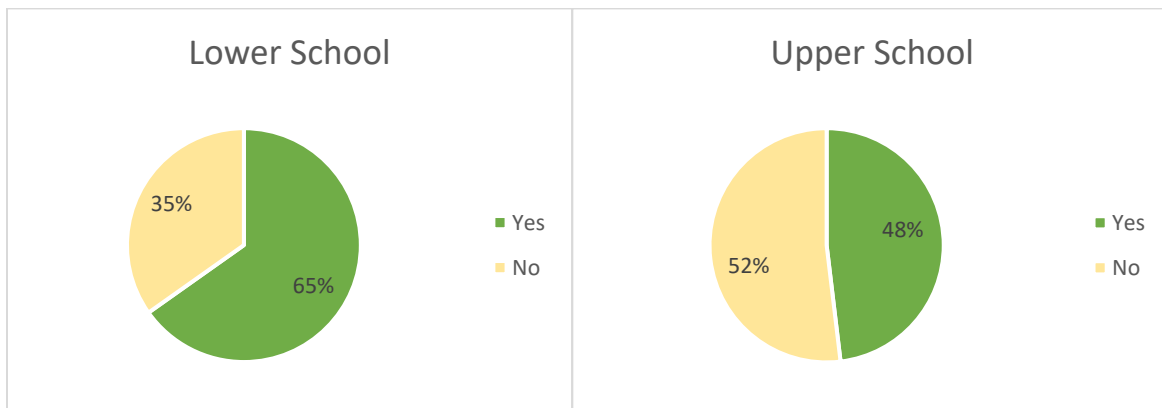
Note: Includes responses of teachers and teacher leaders only.

Evaluators observed, and heard from teachers and administrators in focus groups, that IDCPT operates quite differently across the school. For example, some teachers in the Lower School reported that they look at student data in their IDCPT, including looking at data on individual students to see who is passing or failing and to identify students for intervention. Quest teachers also shared that their CPT is focused on identifying students for intervention, but that it is based more on teacher observation. Figure 9 below shows the percentage of teachers in the Upper and Lower Schools that report using student data in their IDCPTs. We see that 65 percent of teachers at the Lower School report using data compared to teachers in the Upper School (48%). In the Upper School, teachers’ responses varied widely, from those who shared the feeling that IDCPT is a waste of time and others sharing that any time to get together with colleagues is valuable. These mixed opinions about the usefulness of IDCPT are evident in the results of the teacher/staff survey responses depicted in Figure 10 that show a relatively small percentage of teachers and teacher leaders who responded to the survey believe that IDCPT enhances teaching. At both the Upper (52%) and Lower Schools (61%), a majority responded negatively

(selecting 1 [not at all] or 2) to the question of the extent to which participation in IDCPT enhanced their teaching. Quotations from teachers about IDCPT also tended to be negative, as this example illustrates:

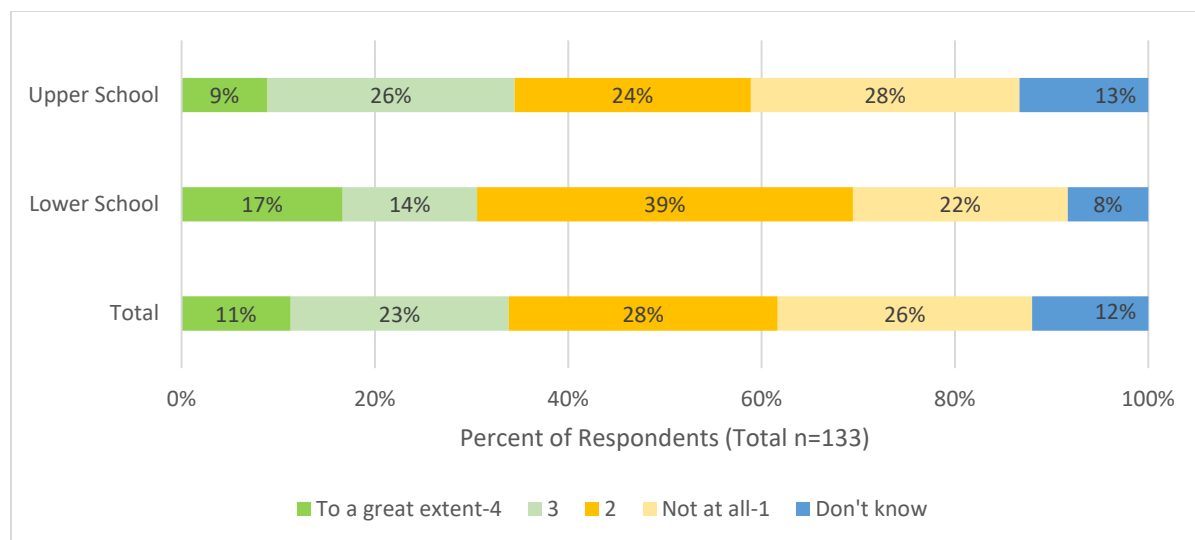
“IDCPT has been very disappointing. Our meetings are not well planned and it appears as though our administrator does not think purposefully about how to use this time and has no long-term vision. ... There is a very negative atmosphere in our IDCPT and little is accomplished.”

Figure 9. Extent teachers reported using student data in IDCPT



Note: Includes responses of teachers and teacher leaders only.

Figure 10. Extent teachers believe participation in IDCPT enhanced teaching

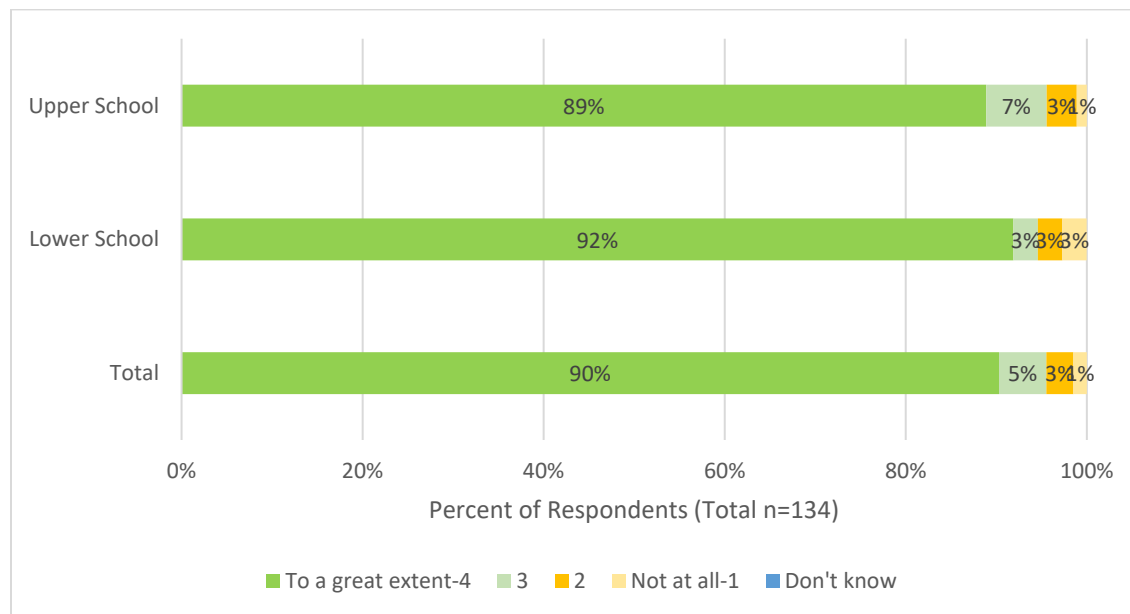


Note: Responses include only teachers and teacher leaders.

Content Area CPT

In addition to IDCPT there is a content area CPT for each subject that is led by a teacher leader or coach. Benefits of CPT reported in Year 1 include having regular time and space to engage in professional conversations about practices and student work. Some of the challenges in Year 1 included wide variability in the quality of CPTs, with not all teachers regularly participating. At the end of Year 2, the vast majority of teachers at both the Lower (92%) and Upper Schools (89%) reported participating in CPT at least weekly (see Figure 11).

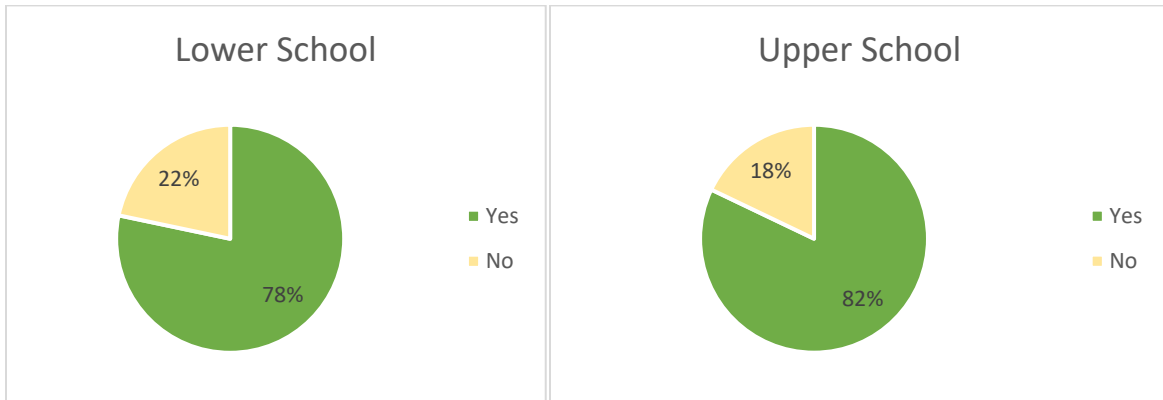
Figure 11. Extent of teachers engaging in CPT at least weekly at end of Year 2



Note: Includes responses of teachers and teacher leaders only.

Administrators clarified and increased the expectations for CPTs for Year 2, including having a coach run the meeting and having similar expectations about how they operate. In Year 2, it became explicit that coaches use their CPT with teachers to reinforce and extend content from professional learning. For example, each monthly staff meeting focused on one of the six criteria of good learning targets. In the CPT following each of these staff meetings, coaches reinforced the message and worked with teachers to deepen understanding and practice of the content. Another expectation for CPT is that student data and student work are used. A high percentage of teachers at both the Lower (78%) and Upper (82%) Schools reported using student data in their CPT (see Figure 12).

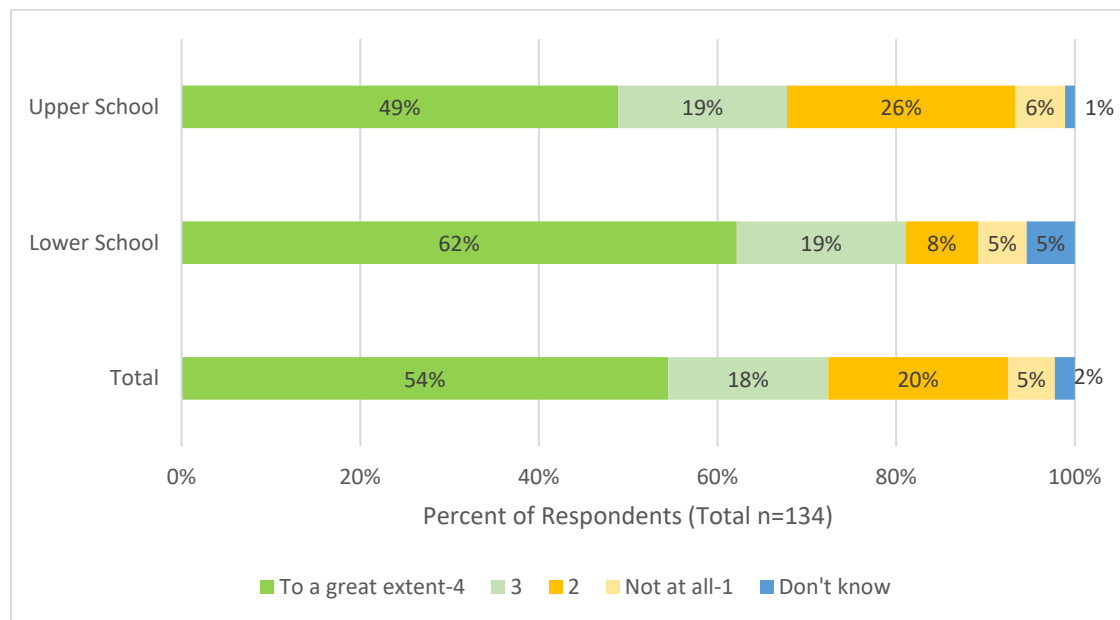
Figure 12. Extent of teachers’ reported use of student data in content area CPT



Note: Includes responses of teachers and teacher leaders only.

According to the survey, teachers and teacher leaders report that participation in content area CPT meetings enhanced their teaching (see Figure 13), though there were some differences at the Upper and Lower Schools. At the Lower School, 81 percent of the teachers and teacher leaders reported that participation in the content area CPT enhanced their teaching to some or a great extent, compared to 68 percent at the Upper School.

Figure 13. Extent teachers believe participation in content area CPTs enhanced their teaching



Note: Includes responses of teachers and teacher leaders only.

While a majority of teachers' survey responses indicate that CPT is helpful in enhancing their teaching, in focus groups, teachers shared a wide variety of opinions on the operation and usefulness of CPTs. Some teachers reported that their content CPTs are useful and others shared that their content CPT could be more effective.

Coaches and building administrators shared that they believe CPT in Year 2 allows for a consistent messaging about instructional expectations. Coaches also shared that their role in CPT is clearer this year. However, some teachers perceive CPT to be top down or directive, with more direction from coaches than teacher collaboration. Teachers shared these varying opinions about CPT in focus groups and on the survey, as the following quotations illustrate:

"Some teachers get annoyed because CPT is so action packed; but with really productive activities. Some teachers get frustrated because some are big idea planning and some teachers want time to plan for their classes or co-plan. I agree we could have a little more of that, but I think the things we do are so valuable we shouldn't stop them."

"Literacy CPT is great because it's focused on instruction and looking at data. Our coach facilitates super effectively and there's always a clear-cut objective and agenda, and she's flexible and responsive to our needs."

"Our content CPT is thoughtfully planned and aligned to school goals/initiatives, as well as curriculum goals/initiatives. We benefit from having outside consultants who regularly meet with our instructional coach and provide individual coaching to teachers on our team. We always receive agendas ahead of time and use time wisely in meetings. Our activities benefit our daily instruction and help inform our long-term planning. We also have engaged in meaningful data analysis and learning about instructional practices that are specific to our department."

"CPT is not as effective as it can be. It could be fabulous but we struggle still. There's no accountability in CPT."

Evaluators observed 12 content area CPTs in 2017, across all grade levels. Evaluators observed that most CPTs (75%) used an agenda and followed a similar format for the use of time, with a section on discussing and reinforcing learning targets. The use of student data or student work were only observed in 37 percent of the CPTs. While not every minute of every CPT was used well, discussions tended to focus on relevant issues, with planning for instruction observed in three CPTs and discussing instructional strategies in six classrooms.

Professional Development

Extensive professional development for teachers, staff, and administrators is a central part of the EPO plan. The ongoing schedule of embedded and supplemental professional development continued in Year 2 with the implementation of the 5-Year Professional Learning Plan developed by the school's Professional Learning Committee. Professional learning at East is clearly thought out and coherent, and designed to support changes in teacher practices and to support implementation of expected practices.

Ongoing embedded professional learning is most immediately carried out by coaches/teacher leaders through Collaborative Planning Time (discussed in a separate section), but also through the University of Rochester's Center for Professional Development and Education Reform, the engagement of consultants from EL Learning, and others. Leaders and administrators at East and consultants and staff from the Center for Professional Development and Education Reform also provide periodic professional learning opportunities such as through superintendent conference days, monthly staff meetings, and summer professional learning. In the summer of 2016, prior to the start of Year 2, extensive professional learning was required of all new and returning staff, including a full week of curriculum development work and more.

The 5-Year Professional Learning Plan is described as a work in progress but a useful document that maps out how all of the necessary professional development across content and practices are sequenced over time to support effective implementation. Administrators shared that it is helpful to see how all of the different initiatives are going to be implemented. Teachers and administrators sometimes expressed frustration that implementation of some initiatives is being done in stages, but that the professional learning plan helps them to realize that it would be impossible to fully implement learning targets, Understanding by Design (UbD), new curricula, Restorative Practices, and more all at once. The plan maps out "how and when" professional learning will be conducted and reinforced over time, to ensure a thoughtful implementation.

Teachers and teacher leaders provided some feedback about professional learning at East in focus groups and on the survey. In general, the professional learning is viewed as high quality. Teachers and leaders report that the occasional consultant is not particularly effective. Teachers shared that the auditorium, a common place for whole-staff professional learning, is not conducive to effective professional development because the room does not allow for collaboration and the darkness of the room is not conducive to professional learning. There are differing opinions on whether half-day professional learning is productive or not. Some teachers and staff reported a desire to have opportunities for self-selected or differentiated professional learning. A few teachers noted that professional learning at East does not always take into consideration the specific needs of special education or English learner students. Nonetheless, teachers, teacher leaders, and administrators all shared that the professional learning at East since the EPO implementation is the most, and most intensive, professional learning opportunities they have had.

The teacher/staff survey allowed for open-ended responses to a number of questions about a variety of topics, such as what has contributed most to the progress of East and what are the most important challenges to address. Professional learning was mentioned numerous times, mostly in positive ways. A sample of some of the comments (including suggestions for improvement) from the teacher survey are provided below:

"Staff members have access to very high quality professional development both on- and off-site which helps us improve our practice."

"The ability to always have something new to implement, the professional developments I have attended have helped me grow and build on what I already knew."

“Great PD opportunities to grow into best practices.”

“Special education is not supported and is an afterthought for professional learning, collaboration, and building a solid program for students.”

“Professional development should be differentiated. More needs to be done to ensure that teaching and curriculum is culturally relevant for students.”

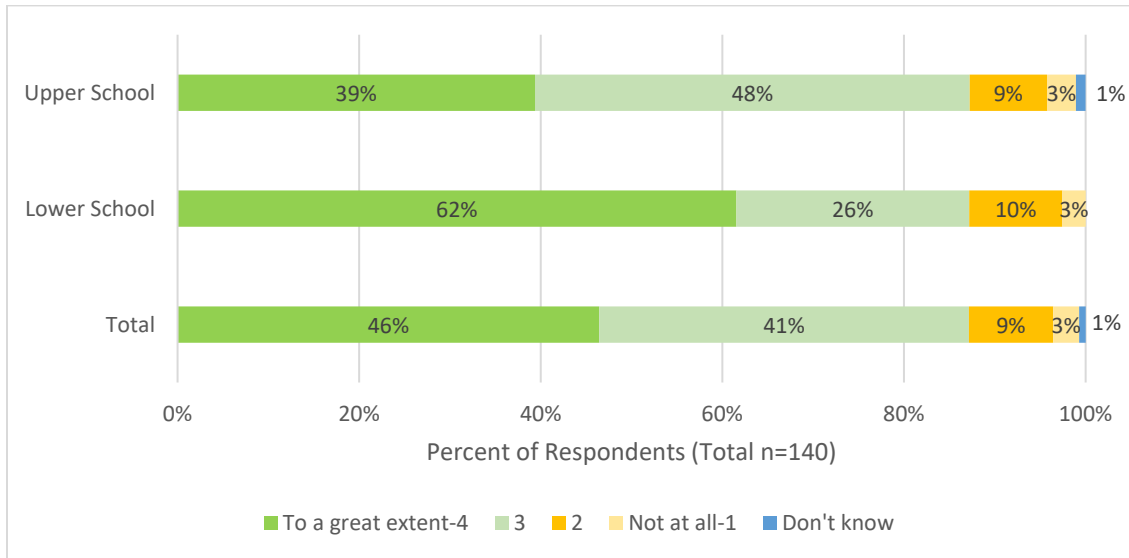
Learning Targets

The requirement for all teachers to use daily learning targets at East has been consistent from Year 1. The purpose of using learning targets is that instruction is explicit and intentional, and that the goals of the lesson are crystal clear. Observation data from the evaluators, as well as from school administrators themselves, indicated that a small majority of teachers used learning targets in Year 1 but that these were not necessarily high quality. They often were not written in language that was easy for scholars to understand and were not often written in a way that was assessable by teachers in the lesson. In Year 2, expectations and professional development efforts to support strong learning targets were redoubled. Learning targets were addressed in mini-lessons at seven monthly staff meetings, with each of these meetings focused on one of seven expected criteria of good learning targets. Then one or two content CPTs following these monthly staff meetings focused on applying and more deeply understanding the specific criterion.

Also supporting the message that learning targets are important and expected is that teachers’ use of learning targets became part of what is looked for in instructional walkthroughs that were being conducted more regularly in Year 2 by the vice principals, principals, CAO, and superintendent. One administrator believes there is more buy-in for learning targets partly because teachers see that they are not going away.

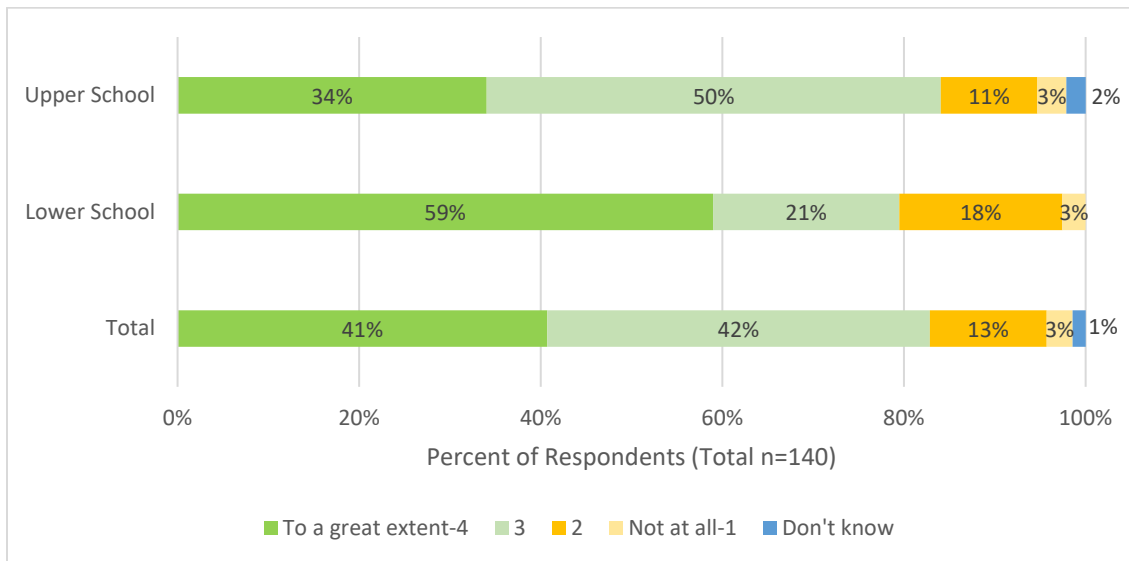
In focus groups and surveys, teachers shared how they are coming to understand that good learning targets can be tools for enhancing student learning. For example, one teacher shared, *“This year I realize the potential of learning targets and the usefulness of assessing them through the lesson and making sure they match.”* Other teachers shared that if they went to UR, they know learning targets and sometimes the professional learning focus on them is too much. According to survey data, 87 percent of teachers and teacher leaders in the Upper and Lower Schools believe learning targets enhanced their teaching to some or a great extent (Figure 14). A majority of teachers at the Upper (84%) and Lower (79%) Schools also believe that use of daily learning targets enhanced student learning (see Figure 15).

Figure 14. Extent teachers believe the use of daily learning targets enhanced their teaching



Note: Includes responses of teachers and teacher leaders only.

Figure 15. Extent teachers believe the use of daily learning targets enhanced student learning



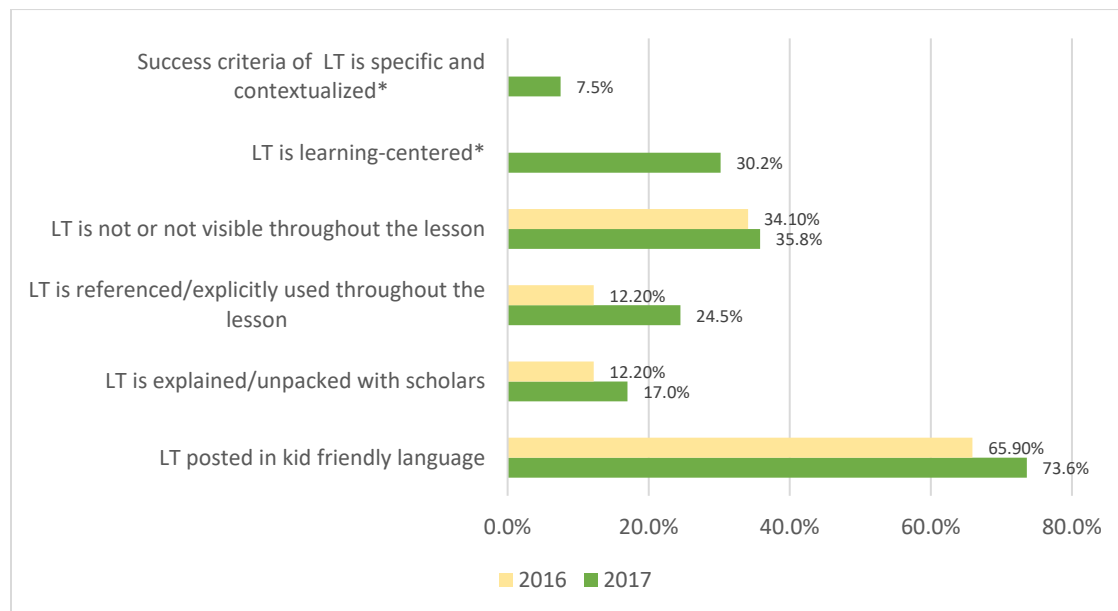
Note: Includes responses of teachers and teacher leaders only.

During Year 2 classroom observations, evaluators observed a more consistent use of learning targets, and school administrators concur with that observation. One administrator noted, *“I think we have made tremendous progress with learning targets being posted uniformly throughout the school. I think it’s actually very rare for there not to be a learning target.”* Higher quality learning targets are a work in progress, as evidenced in Figure 16 below which compares the characteristics of learning targets

observed by evaluators during systematic classroom observations in the spring of 2016 and spring of 2017. This year, learning targets were observed in almost 74 percent of classrooms, compared to almost 66 percent last year. The use of learning targets that meet the criteria for high-quality targets is still a work in progress, but progress is evident. The administrator went on to say, *“I think this year the focus has become deeper — to have a specific and contextualized learning target that can be assessed in that chunk of time and that is based on what students are learning instead of what they are doing.... I feel that teachers are really starting to understand that over a sequence of time this should reflect a total unit of understanding.... We’re not there but we’re making progress toward assessment of daily learning targets.”*

Comparing the characteristics of learning targets observed last spring to this spring (Figure 16), the data indicate a similar percentage of “no learning target posted or observed” in 34 percent of classrooms visited last year and 36 percent this year. Evaluators infrequently saw teachers “unpacking” the learning target with students, either in 2016 (12%) or in 2017 (17%). And while still not frequent, teachers making reference to the learning target throughout the lesson was observed more frequently in 2017 (24%) compared to 2016 (12%). In addition, evaluators noted that this year in 13 classrooms the teachers also referenced or explicitly used the learning target during the lesson. Explicit success criteria for the learning target was observed in only four classrooms. One evaluator noted that when asked, the students were able to explain the lesson objective. Evaluators observed learning targets not only posted on chart paper and SMART Boards, but also visible on student handouts and assessments.

Figure 16. Extent characteristics of learning targets were observed, spring 2016 and spring 2017



Notes: Not on observation protocol in 2016.

*** Includes responses of teachers and teacher leaders only.**

In systematic classroom observations, evaluators also looked for the highest *planned* level of Bloom’s taxonomy indicated by the learning target, as well as the highest observed level. Of the 39 classrooms where evaluators observed learning targets posted, 10 of the targets were written or planned at the “remembering or understanding” level, 10 were at the “applying” level, and 14 were at the “analyzing” level; seven fell between the “evaluating” and “creating” levels. Most of the targets fell between “applying” (18%) and “analyzing” (26%). Compared to last year, targets were written at a higher Bloom’s taxonomy level. Last year just seven targets were between “analyzing” and “creating,” and only two classes displayed targets at the “creating” level.

The highest level of Bloom’s taxonomy evaluators observed in the classrooms was “applying,” found in 38 percent of the classrooms. Thirteen percent of the students were engaged in “analytical” thinking, six percent in “evaluating,” and six percent in “creating.” In three classrooms, the observer was unable to determine what level of Bloom’s taxonomy was being used. Overall, this is an improvement from last year, when only six classrooms were observed in which students were being actually engaged in “analytical” thinking and just two were engaged in “creative” thinking.

Teacher Leaders

Teacher leaders are described by administrators and EPO leaders as integral to the East EPO model. One administrator noted: *“Well, I think they [teacher leaders] are one of the essential pieces to the success of the EPO.”* It is through teacher leaders that professional development is sustained and embedded in teachers’ work. Teacher leaders continue, reinforce, and support messages and expectations about teacher practices in CPT and in teacher coaching. Teacher leaders *“get the hay to the horses”* and reach into the classroom more than administrators or consultants can. They develop relationships with teachers; sometimes they model or co-teach; and they are seen as a resource to teachers. Indeed, one administrator shared:

“CPT is essential to the work we’re trying to do – and like with anything – some are more successful than others – we can’t give our teachers all the professional learning they need to have without CPT – we can’t move instruction and curriculum forward without it. I supervise [subject] in the Lower School; in CPT we are deciding what is most important in use of that time – how to move the agenda forward, what supports do the teachers need; and I just can’t imagine not having that and still trying to do the work. CPT sets us apart from any other building in the district.”

Teacher leaders have a similar understanding of their role as evidenced by the following quotations from various coaches:

“We are the drivers of everything instructional in the building across the board.”

“All of the instructional initiatives — we’re like tentacles reaching into the classrooms.”

Overall, it appears that teacher leaders are well respected and valued by teachers. Teachers shared that they value the support from their coaches, including opportunities for modeling, co-teaching, and co-planning. There are differing opinions, however, with some teachers sharing that their coaches do not

have enough time to devote attention to each teacher, or sharing that they feel their coaches are just there to bring messages from the administration and less there to support what teachers need as individuals.

Significant changes were made to the schedule and to expectations for coaches to address challenges raised after the first year of implementation. The number of teacher leaders increased this year, with every department having at least one. Teacher leaders have reduced teaching loads to provide more time for coaching cycles with teachers. Teacher leaders participate in walkthroughs of teachers they are supporting. Teacher leaders are now expected to facilitate content CPT meetings. Coaches also have their own CPT led by the CAO. This is a significant change that permits coaches to be on the same page and to have a common plan for supporting teachers. This CPT for coaches allows them to get support for their practice, but is also used as a venue to disseminate information, including information that coaches are expected to bring to teachers. The model is that coaches learn together in the coaches CPT and then they facilitate learning and follow-up with teachers in the content CPT. For example, in a coaches CPT observed by the evaluators, the focus was assessing the learning target in a lesson; and then later that week, evaluators observed content CPTs that had assessing learning targets as an agenda item. Administrators shared that the refined teacher leadership model builds distributed leadership, builds the capacity of teachers, and builds a culture of coaching in the school.

Evaluators observed many of the strengths and improvements of the teacher leadership model described above. They also observed and heard about a number of ongoing or new challenges with the model. One of the key challenges may be that there are many expectations of coaches, not just to coach and support teachers, but to bring messages, support testing, support implementation of specific initiatives such as Managing the Active Classroom, and develop new courses. These are all important, and coaches shared that they do not know whether these would happen if not with the coaches, but the coaches are definitely squeezed for time with all of these expectations, and there is some concern that time spent coaching teachers could be jeopardized. On a related note, teachers shared that there is a tension between administrators' views of their roles and that of the UR coach leader, with administrators having broad expectations and the UR coach leader believing that the coaches' sole focus should be coaching cycles and that CPT should be focused on the coaching cycle.

Additional challenges about the teacher leader model include that while all content areas have coaches, there is no coach for special education teachers or for English New Language teachers. Another tension is understanding or clarifying the expectations between teacher leaders and administrators, especially related to teacher performance. Coaches are non-evaluative supports for teachers, and administrators are evaluative supports. Some coaches shared that administrators will occasionally ask for their opinion about issues they may observe in their teacher evaluations. Finally, as mentioned above, there is some variability in the perceived quality of coaches.

From the evaluators' perspective, the coach role is integral to the East EPO model and important for ensuring consistency and ongoing support for all of the professional development initiatives. Evaluators observed increased use of common language, greater consistency in content area CPT meetings, and that teachers generally value the coaches' support. The teacher leader is the piece of the model that administrators would say is critical to replication.

“The teacher leader model is critical and replicable. And directly related to schedule. People don’t get the power of schedules relative to impact.”

“Teacher leaders that are officially assigned as teacher leaders and coaches have really done a stupendous job of running our CPTs and also sharing some professional learning on a routine basis with those groups. I think they’ve been instrumental in pushing the mission forward.”

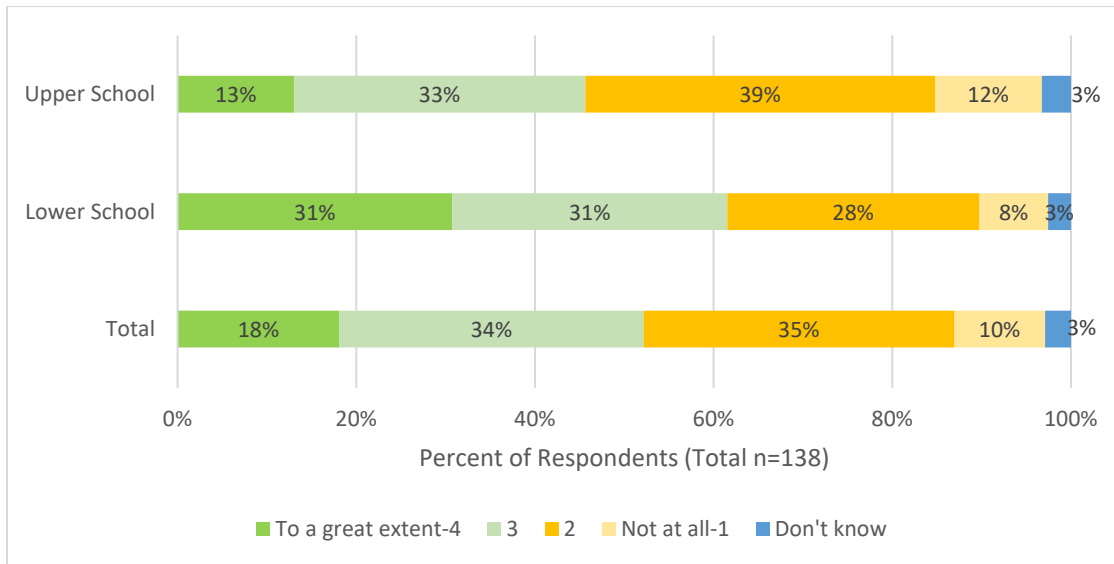
Assessment: Common Formative Assessments and Embedded Performance Assessments

Assessment has also been a focus of professional development and practice this year. Specifically, Year 2 focused on the development and use of Common Formative Assessments (CFAs) and embedded performance assessments in all grades and disciplines. To many, CFAs and performance assessments felt like something new and an add-on to teachers, who were not quite sure if these additional assessments were worth the effort.

The CFAs were developed by grade-level content teams, so that all classes of the same content and grade level gave the same formative assessment. The same CFA was given every eight weeks to monitor the progress of students. Teachers collaboratively developed the assessments and the rubrics, with superintendent conference days and CPT time devoted to CFA and performance assessments. Some teachers reported frustration with CFAs as they felt like they were constantly revising them. This may be because administrators and teacher leaders were learning how to do CFAs at the same time as teachers. Another concern with CFAs is that some special education teachers shared they felt special education students were not considered in developing the CFAs. Another teacher shared that CFAs do not add value when a teacher practices continuous formative assessment. Other teachers worried about the amount of time it takes for students to take the CFA; since most of them involve significant writing, these teachers felt like they were losing instructional time. A few others shared that the CFA data is useful to see student growth over time and to validate a teacher’s “feeling” about how a student is doing, and to post CFAs so students can see their own growth.

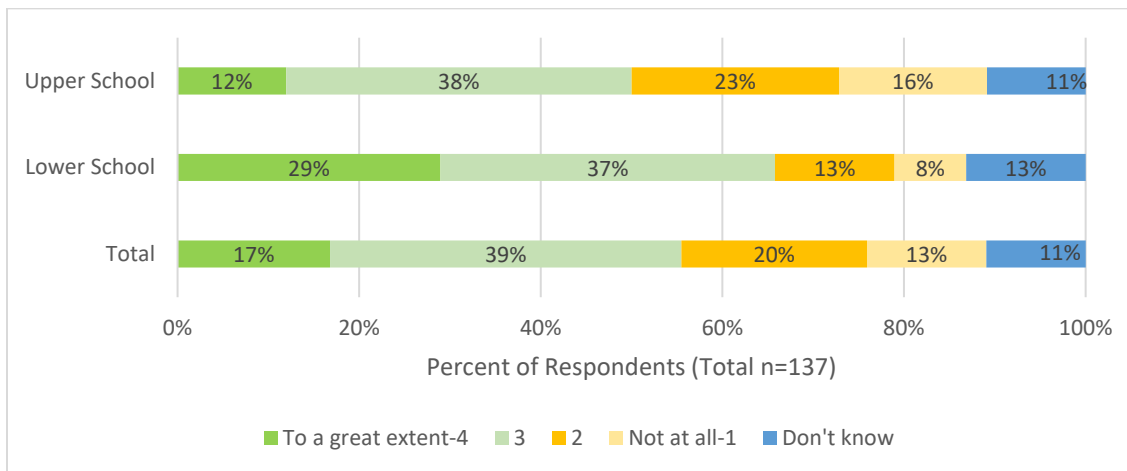
Teachers were also asked about CFAs and the embedded performance assessments in the teacher/staff survey. The survey data indicate mixed results about the usefulness of the CFAs for influencing teacher practice. Figure 17 shows that 62 percent of Lower and 46 percent of Upper School teachers said information from the CFAs influenced their teaching “to some or a great extent.” With regard to the embedded performance assessments, the perceived usefulness of that data for informing teacher practice was varied between the Upper and Lower schools, with 50 percent of teachers at the Upper School and 66 percent of those at the Lower School reporting that information from the assessment influences their teaching to some or a great extent (see Figure 18).

Figure 17. Extent teachers believe information from the Common Formative Assessments influenced their teaching



Note: Includes responses of teachers and teacher leaders only.

Figure 18. Extent teachers believe data from the embedded performance assessment influenced their teaching



Note: Includes responses of teachers and teacher leaders only.

The use of CFAs and performance assessments across all grades and subjects was new this year. It will be interesting to see how the assessments and their use change over time. Teachers can get frustrated when it feels like they are not sure of the destination and perhaps wish that someone would just tell them how to do it. However, administrators see great value in the journey and struggle of CFA development in informing teachers’ teaching and assessment practices. For example, by working

together to develop the assessment and the grading rubric, teachers and teacher leaders are engaging in deep conversations and debate about the standards, how to measure the achievement of them, what the scale of a rubric means, and how to define rigor.

Teacher Practices

One of the main goals of the EPO is to transform teaching and thus accelerate student learning. To support the transformation of teaching, extensive professional learning has been provided to teachers, and includes CPT and professional learning throughout the school year. Additionally, administrators are conducting more frequent walkthroughs of classrooms and providing immediate feedback via a Google form on what was observed. Administrators are starting to see changes in teacher practices in general. One noted, *“Teaching practices from start of year to now, what I’ve seen are teachers in general – the majority – are very willing to work with coaches and administrators to improve their practice.”*

Evaluators conducted systematic classroom observations of a sample of classrooms in the Upper and Lower Schools in May 2016 and again in 2017 to observe teacher practices and assess change over time. Evaluators worked with an observation tool developed specifically for this evaluation (see Appendix A) to measure and assess some of the key teacher practices that administrators and school leaders are focusing on to improve practices. Across three days in April 2017, a total of 54 classrooms were observed. Thirty-seven percent of the classrooms observed were grades 6–8 and 61 percent of the classrooms observed were at the Upper School. The reason classroom grades were reported as “mixed” was because many of the Upper School classes that were observed contained mixed grade levels.

Evaluators were asked to indicate the Understanding by Design (UbD) levels observed. Observers could check multiple boxes (acquisition, meaning making, transfer). In only two classrooms, students were being asked to “transfer,” the highest level, their understanding to something new and different. In 34 classrooms, students were being asked to “make meaning” of their learning, and in 16 classrooms, students were acquiring new knowledge. In 2016, evaluators observed seven classrooms where students were being asked to “transfer” their learning, and in 18 classrooms, they were “making meaning.” While this comparison notes that there were fewer students being asked to “transfer” their understanding, there was a significant increase in the number of students “making meaning” this year.

Evaluators were also asked to note what type of content instruction was observed. Content instruction was observed in 48 out of 54 classrooms. In 62 percent of the classrooms (30), the content was being connected to previous learning, an increase of about 10 percent from 2016.

In 56 percent of the classrooms, students were being asked to make connections between different ideas, concepts, or topics. In 54 percent of the classrooms, students were acquiring knowledge or skills through practice or exercise, organizing knowledge, or deep processing. In the previous year, just 30 percent of the classrooms were observed engaging students in deep processing.

In 41 percent of the classrooms, students were making meaning of the content processes by making inferences, generalizing, categorizing, drawing conclusions, developing hypotheses, citing evidence, or analyzing perspectives. And lastly, in 10 percent of the classrooms students were observed transferring

understanding to new situations. This is a new category and therefore cannot be compared to the previous year.

As in Year 1, evaluators noted at least six times that no content instruction was observed during their classroom visit. In two instances, observers noted that students were simply following step-by-step instructions with no questions being asked, no higher order thinking being needed, and no student discourse on a topic being observed. In addition, while content instruction may have been observed, observers noted on several occasions that the content was not differentiated, and no scaffolds or supports were offered to help English learner or students with disabilities access the content.

Evaluators also collected data on whether there was evidence of teachers using the technique of gradual release of responsibility, which includes modeling, guided practice, and/or independent practice. In 68 percent of the classrooms, evaluators indicated that a gradual model of release was being used (Y/N question). They were also asked to identify what phase of the model they observed. The most frequent phase that was observed was the teacher providing guided practice to the whole class (31 classrooms). The next highest was independent practice (24 classrooms), engagement in guided practice with student collaboration (21 classrooms), and lastly, the teacher modeling for the whole class (18 classrooms).

Upon closer examination of the data, it appears that many classrooms were not actually engaged in a gradual release of responsibility. The data indicates that teachers were largely presenting to the students (teacher modeling or providing guided practice to the whole class) and then expecting students to attempt to do the work independently. This is supported by additional data that showed that in 76 percent of the classrooms, students were participating in teacher-directed questions and answers (teacher modeling and teacher providing guided practice), but that in 46 percent of the classrooms, students engaged only in discourse with other students on the related topic (guided practice with student collaboration). Other activities that were observed include:

- Pursuing an inquiry or researching a question with a range of options for direction to pursue (24%)
- Reading or writing complex text (46%)
- Asking or being asked questions beyond the literal level (22%)
- Engaging in appropriate debate, argument, or disagreement with peers and/or teacher (24%)
- Using higher-order thinking and then applying it to a problem, finding a solution, or solving a problem (32%)

These observations are similar to data collected in the previous year. It appears that scholars have few opportunities to have the concept modeled and even fewer opportunities to work collaboratively. Very little guided practice is being offered, as teachers were observed mostly explaining the concept (or giving instructions) and then asking students to move immediately to independent practice.

In the qualitative data collected, effective practices for deliberate instruction that were observed included: using a “hook” to engage the students in their learning; a deliberate focus on vocabulary;

evidence of questions being asked by the teacher at different levels of Bloom’s taxonomy; and multiple uses of protocols, such as fishbowl, carousel, and “moment of silence.”

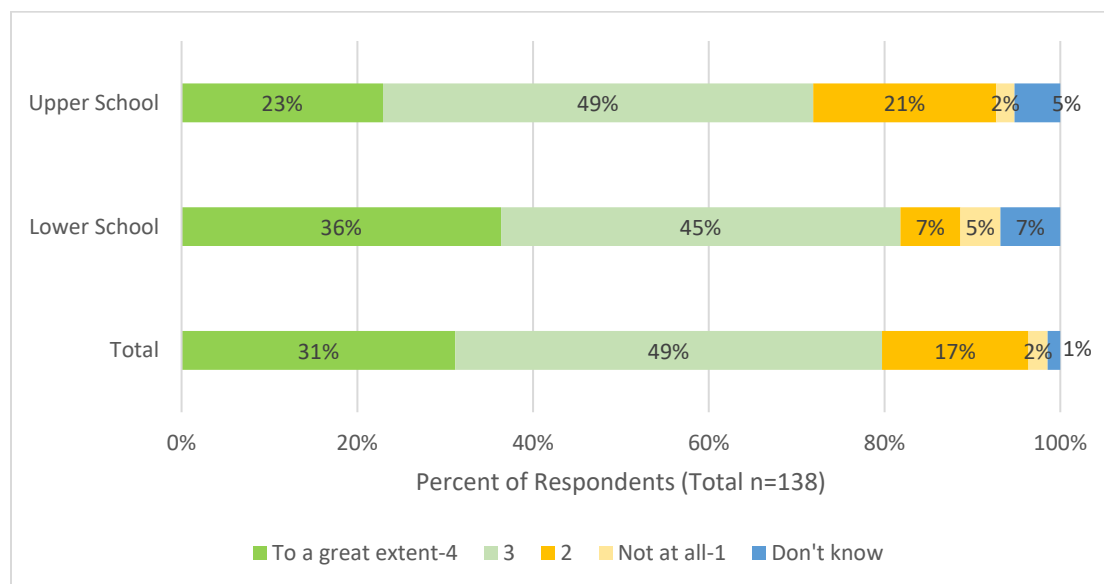
Qualitative data also supports minimal use of a gradual release-of-responsibility model. Evaluators noted students engaged in making meaning of their learning, but found few examples where students were deliberately told to engage as a group or pair to discuss the related topic. Teachers were observed modeling concepts or tasks, but not asking questions or providing guided practice.

Curriculum

Year 1 and the summer before Year 2 involved significant curriculum-writing work, with every teacher having five days of summer professional learning time to work with their department on curriculum development. A goal of the curriculum work was the development of a rigorous, coherent, and standards-based curriculum. School administrators are interested in the extent of curriculum implementation. Evaluators asked teachers, teacher leaders, and administrators about curriculum in interviews and focus groups; additionally, some of the survey items also asked about the curriculum. Evaluators observed for teaching practices but did not observe for curriculum implementation.

Teachers and teacher leaders were asked on the survey to indicate the extent to which they are implementing the curriculum as designed. While a majority of teachers at the Lower School (81%) and Upper School (72%) indicated that they are implementing the curriculum as designed “to some or a great extent,” administrators may desire these percentages to be higher (see Figure 19). These findings suggest that administrators may want to ascertain what is keeping teachers from implementing the curriculum with greater fidelity to see what can be done to strengthen implementation.

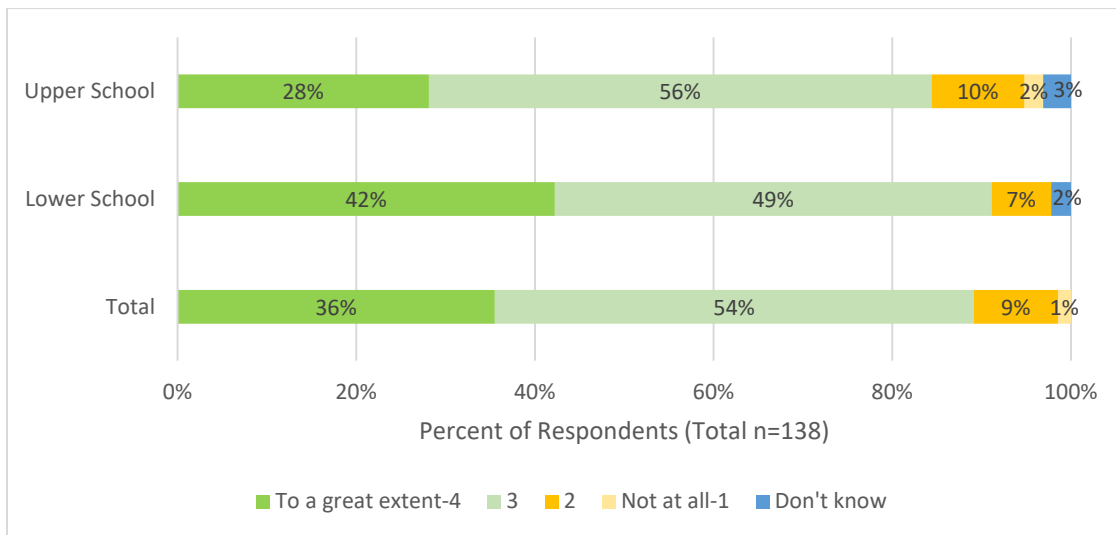
Figure 19. Extent to which you implement the curriculum as designed



Note: Includes responses of teachers and teacher leaders only.

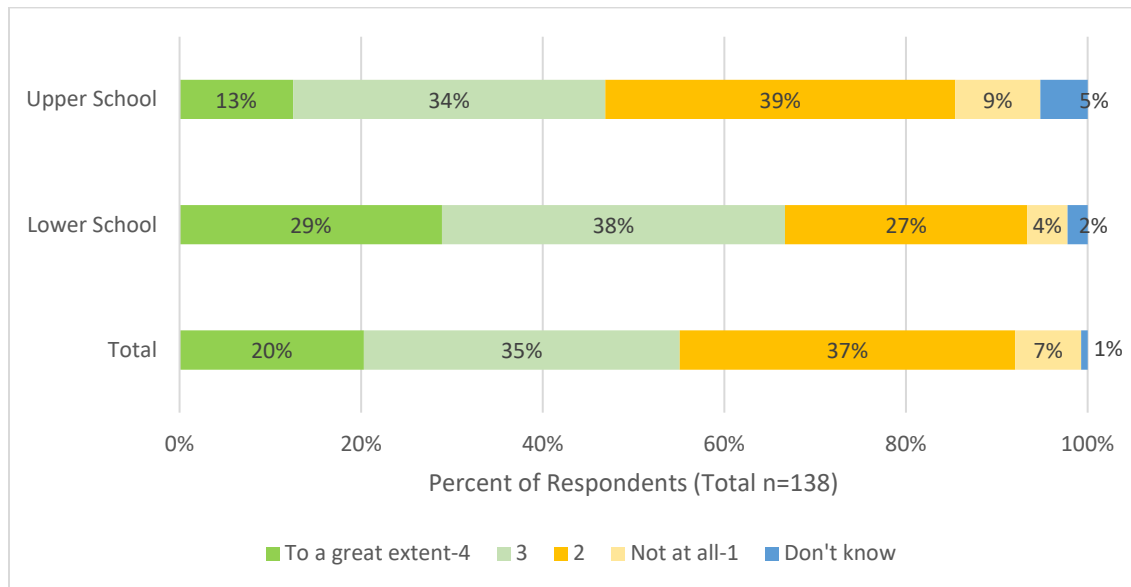
Teachers and teacher leaders were also asked the extent to which they perceive the curriculum to be rigorous (see Figure 20) and culturally relevant (see Figure 21). The vast majority of teachers at the Lower School (91%) and Upper School (84%) who responded to the survey believe the curriculum is rigorous “to some or a great extent.” Statements from teachers during the focus groups generally align with the survey results, though a few reported the curriculum to be less rigorous than the surrounding suburban districts. A higher percentage of teachers at the Lower School (67%) indicated to some or a great extent that the curriculum is culturally relevant to students, whereas only 47 percent of teachers at the Upper School did so.

Figure 20. Extent teachers believe the curriculum is rigorous



Note: Includes responses of teachers and teacher leaders only.

Figure 21. Extent teachers believe the curriculum is culturally relevant to students



Note: Includes responses of teachers and teacher leaders only.

Support Room Model

The EPO’s Support Room model provides a dedicated class period for students to receive assistance and to make up work. All students at the Upper School are scheduled into Support, and at the Lower School students are scheduled in as needed. Support is viewed by East staff and EPO leaders as critical to the success of the turnaround efforts. During the first year of implementation, early roadblocks or challenges included inconsistent student attendance, unclear roles and responsibilities for Support Room teachers, and lack of coordination between Support Room teachers and content teachers about student work. By the end of Year 1, a group of special education teachers who had worked in the Upper School Support Rooms proposed revisions to the Support Room model to enhance its efficiency and effectiveness, including moving the Support Rooms so that they are grouped together, appointing a Support Room coordinator, and developing a system for tracking student work. All of these changes and more were implemented for Year 2 beginning in September 2016, and data collected from teachers, teacher leaders, principals, and administrators show progress has been made, especially in Upper School Support Rooms.

A Lower School Support Room Committee also addressed some challenges in Year 2, and is currently designing further improvements to be implemented in September 2017. As one leader noted, the effectiveness of Support Rooms varies:

“Some [support rooms] are really great – and some are not. We need to help people understand how the model works – what it looks like – and it changes every period – it’s a model we believe in, and with continued use, it will be successful.”

Findings about Support Rooms are based on interviews with school leaders; focus groups with teachers, counselors, social workers, and students; observations by evaluators; and responses from student and staff surveys.

Benefits of Support Room Model

Teachers, counselors, administrators, and even students shared the perspective that Support is beneficial to students in general. It helps students catch up on work and provides opportunities to learn material they might be struggling with. Some administrators believe Support is especially beneficial to ENL and special education students to provide them with small group or individualized attention, though not all teachers shared the perspective that ENL and special education students were well served in Support. Upper School Support was described as well-functioning in ways that benefit students because content teachers and Support teachers are communicating and sharing information to make student time in Support be productive. The Support Room managers at the Upper School keep things running smoothly. There is more coordination of student material at the Lower School as well. Teachers and administrators remarked that most students appear to be taking Support seriously and most are working when in Support. Support is also another area where positive adult-student relationships can be formed because the Support teachers are seen as helpful and the time is less structured, so there is more informal interaction between teachers and students.

Eighty teachers responded to an open-ended question on the teacher/staff survey asking what was most effective about Support Rooms this year. Of those who answered, 68 provided positive comments. Teachers described improvements made to Support Rooms beginning in September 2017 that had enhanced the model, especially in Upper School, such as:

- Managers of each Support Room [at the Upper School] work with classroom content teachers to ensure teachers and students have work to do together in Support.
- The availability and accessibility of content teachers and assignments for students have increased in Support Rooms.
- Enhancements have been made in tracking scholar progress and providing what students need in Support Rooms.
- The Support Room atmosphere is helpful in building relationships and a sense of community among teachers and students.
- The Support Room is more than just help with homework this year.

In focus groups, teachers shared the following evidence about the benefits of Support:

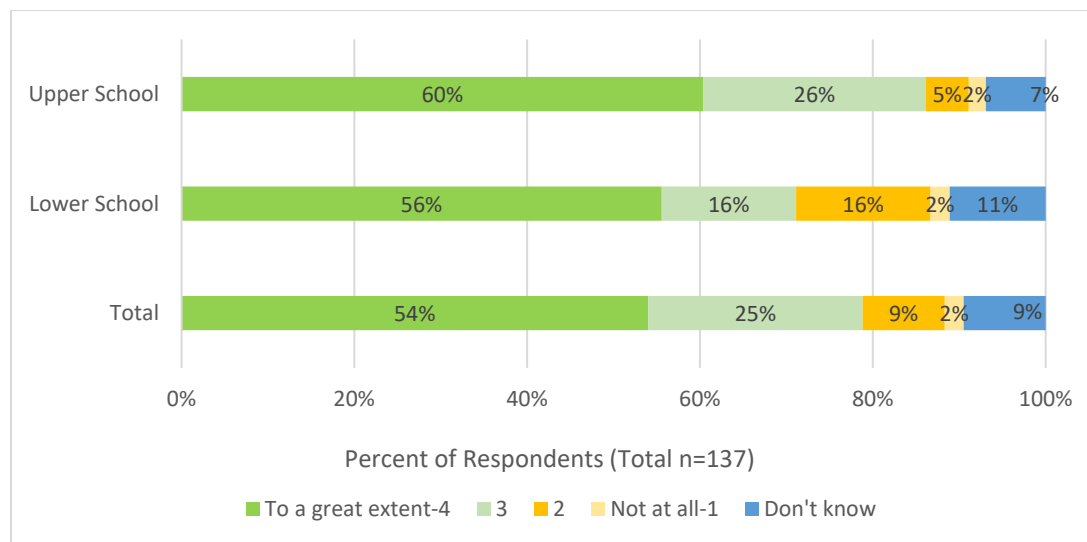
“Students who use the time to complete work, study and/or [get] assistance of content area staff are truly benefitting from the Support Model.”

“I’ve gotten to work very extensively with a small group of students which has strengthened our relationships and definitely helped their academic success as well.”

“Support is amazing and the organizational changes made this year to streamline it at the Upper School have made a huge difference. Alignment between Content teachers and Support Room teachers has improved this year.”

Counselors mentioned during a focus group that students are more willing than last year to go to Support Room for extra help. *“Scholars have settled down, they have started to see the benefit, and some are asking for it now.”* Counselors also noted *“a real synergy”* among Support Room teachers and classroom teachers, describing a strategy and a system that has developed which has students asking to go in to Support to catch up and make up. On the teacher/staff survey, a majority of teachers at both the Lower School (72%) and Upper School (86%) agree to some or a great extent that *“Support Period has the potential to positively impact student outcomes”* (see Figure 22). However, a lower percentage of teachers agree to some or a great extent that *“most students are able to strengthen and/or acquire needed skills through Support,”* with only 32 percent of Lower School teachers and 65 percent of Upper School teachers agreeing (see Figure 23).

Figure 22. Extent teachers believe Support Period has the potential to positively impact student outcomes



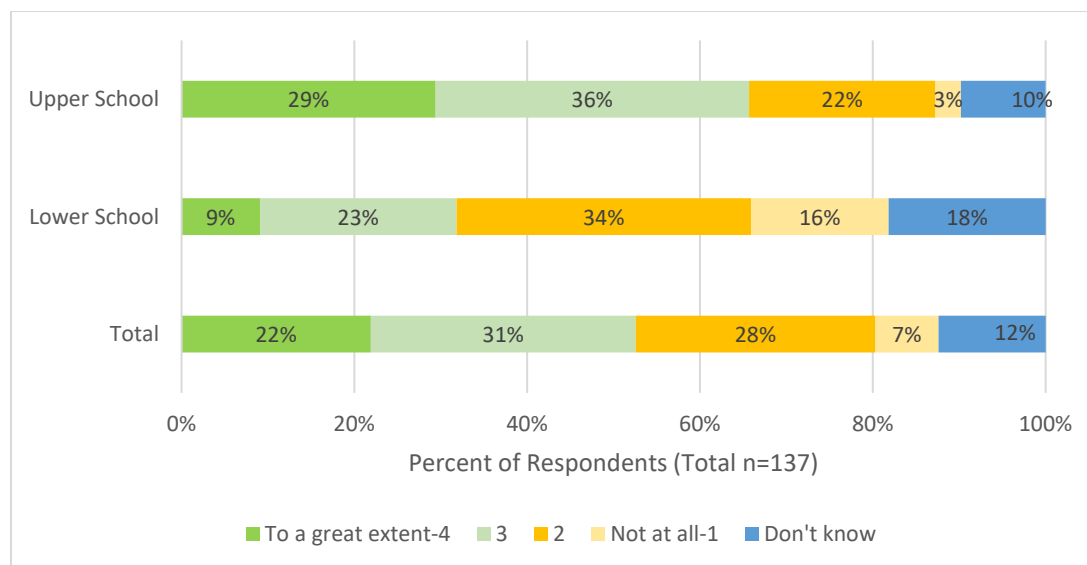
Note: Includes responses of teachers and teacher leaders only.

In interviews, administrators verified the progress made, especially in Upper School Support Rooms. One administrator noted: *“Support is far, far better than last year. We’ve started tracking students and now we’re differentiating those supports to look at what kids in what rooms have what exams coming up.”* Students are being grouped with content teachers based on upcoming assessments, and the focus is much more targeted to the support those students need. In addition, during a focus group, vice principals noted Support is being used for small-group instruction and keeping students on track with their grades. *“Whenever I do Support Room walkthroughs, I see kids asking where they are [and] what they need to do to be successful. I see them taking more advantage of instruction in there this year than*

they did last year.” By using the results of Regents exams, Support Room teachers are focusing on small groups to prep them for the next set of exams. One school leader shared that teachers and students have been held more accountable for their roles in Support this year, and stressed that improvements have been teacher led.

According to one Lower School administrator, most special education and English learner students are scheduled into Support period: *“In support rooms, there are special education teachers specifically assigned that can support students in their IEP goals.”* The Lower School also provides a bilingual Support Room that is staffed with a bilingual teacher or paraprofessional. ENL teachers and special education teachers work in Support Rooms and use modifications as needed. Typically, those modifications are not only in the interest of those students but can be used for all students.

Figure 23. Extent teachers believe students are able to strengthen and/or acquire needed skills through Support period



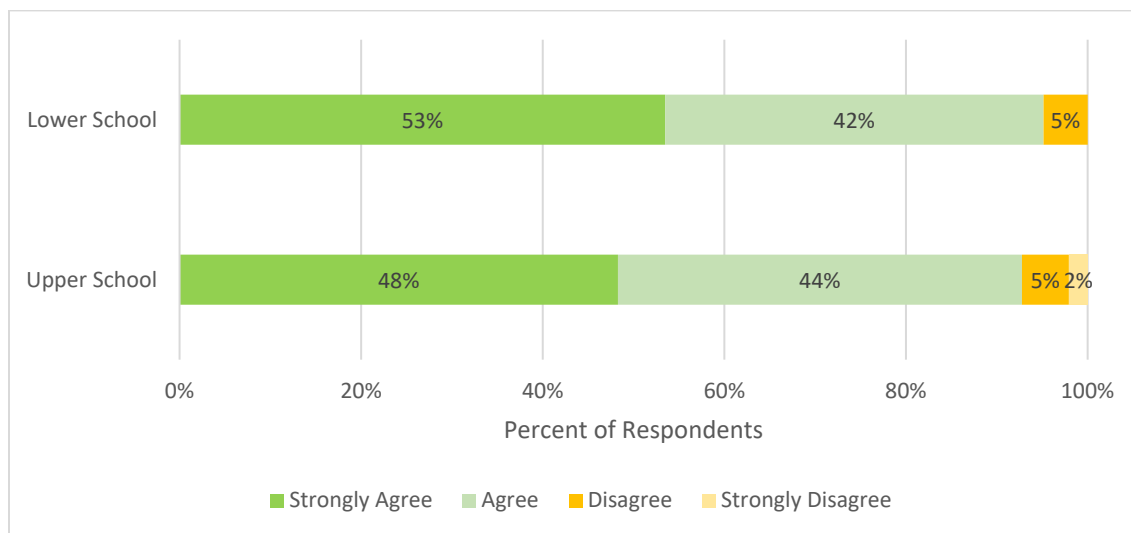
Note: Includes responses of teachers and teacher leaders only.

Upper School student feedback indicates attendance at Support has risen this year as more students are buying into the model and understanding the value of extra support as they work to successfully graduate from high school. Students in Support, at both the Upper and Lower Schools, value Support and see it as important to their success. On the Upper School student survey, 86 percent of the students (296) indicated that they were scheduled in Support. Of those Upper School students scheduled in Support, 92 percent agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: “Support period helps me do better in my classes,” and only 7 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement (see Figure 24). The vast majority of Upper School students in Support (89%) also agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: “Support helps to keep me on track to graduation”, whereas 11% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Upper School students in focus groups shared benefits as well. In a Quest focus group, students acknowledged having Support Room or getting extra help during lunch or staying after school:

“You can do your homework in there or any work that you’re missing. It helps us get our work done.”

Lower School students were also asked about Support on their student survey, with 94 percent of the respondents indicating they were scheduled in Support this year. Figure 24 shows that 95 percent of the Lower School students in Support indicated they agree or strongly agree with the statement “Support period helps me do better in my classes.”

Figure 24. Extent students believe support period helps them do better in their classes.



Challenges with Support

Teachers, students, and administrators shared some challenges with the implementation of Support that could limit its impact. The challenges were predominantly in reference to Support at the Lower School. The challenges identified include:

- Student behaviors, including students using Support for homework, inconsistent attendance, and cell phone use
- Communication about both student and teacher expectations in Support
- Need for systems and processes at the Lower School to track progress,
- Need for support for ENL and special education students
- Paraprofessional preparation for Support
- Need for Support coordinator at the Lower School

In focus groups and on the survey, teachers indicated that some students use Support predominantly for homework catch-up rather than support for their content area weaknesses. Other teachers, however, believe that completing homework helps students with content. Teachers also noted that students are

still often distracted by cell phone use in Support, and others shared that attendance, while improved from last year, is inconsistent. The following quotations from teacher focus groups and open-ended survey responses illustrate some of these challenges related to student behavior:

“For some students, Support continues to be a free period and the problem is the constant use of phone.”

“Most students saw the time as homework time and were refusing services, such as language dives and specific content area work.”

“Scholars think Support is for homework and not for strengthening skills.”

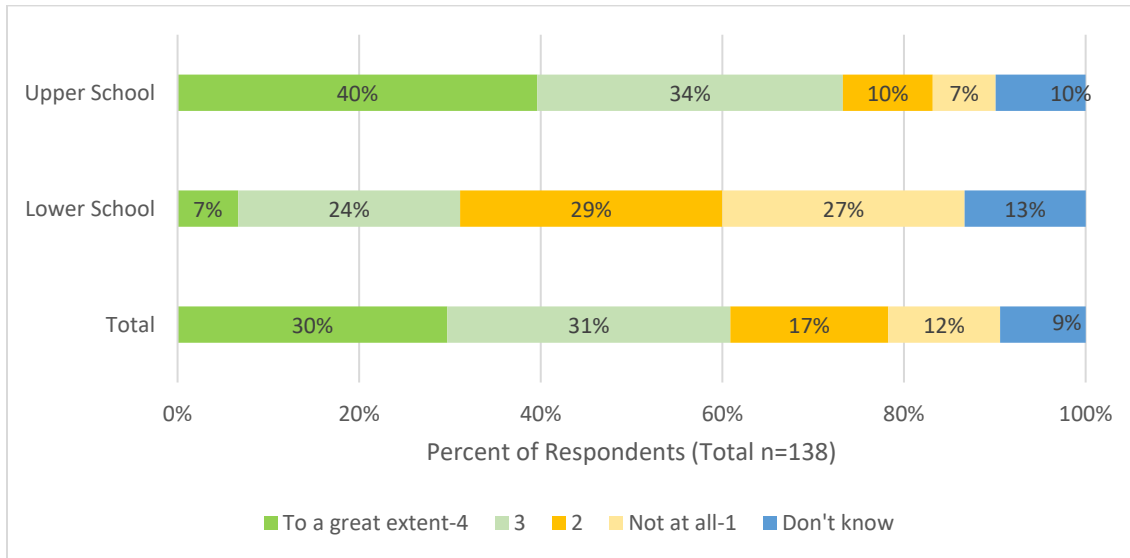
Most challenges mentioned relate to Lower School Support Rooms. Lower School administrators shared that Support is still considered a work in progress, and further adjustments are planned for next year. Teachers mentioned that communications about the purposes and expectations for Support have not been consistent from administrators. They also shared the need for improved systems and processes at the Lower School. One administrator noted about the Lower School:

“We are also looking at how we support intervention for Literacy in Support Rooms so students can get that because it definitely is adding to the value. [We’ve] made a lot of changes because we’re still trying to figure out what will work ... empowering teachers to figure it out. Support looks different across different support periods.”

That the role of Support teachers is unclear at the Lower School and that there needs to be more coordination between content area teachers and Support Room teachers is evident in results from the teacher/staff survey as well as focus groups and interviews. Figure 25 shows that only 31 percent of Lower School teachers agreed to some or a great extent that the role of Support Room teachers is clear, with 56 percent agreeing that their role is somewhat or not at all clear, compared to 74 percent of Upper School teachers agreeing to some or a great extent that the role of Support Room teachers is clear. There were no Support Room managers at Lower School Support Rooms this year, and the need for those became evident. Figure 26 shows that Lower School teachers rated the collaboration of and coordination between content teachers and Support teachers low. Only 27 percent of Lower School teachers rated that coordination and collaboration “happened to some or a great extent,” compared to 60 percent of the Upper School teachers. Next year the plans include having two teachers — one for grades 6 and 7 and one for grade 8, assigned as the go-to person in the Support Room.

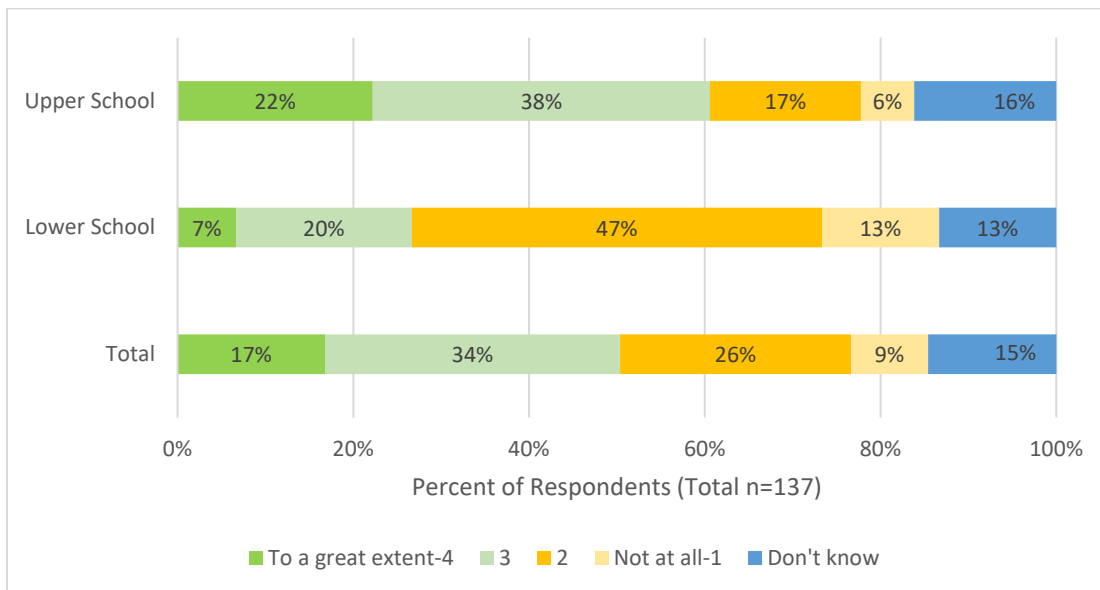
In a focus group with paraprofessionals, they shared that while the changes to Support in Year 2 included many improvements, it brought the new challenge of how they support students in Support Room. They shared that some paraprofessionals are now scheduled only in Support Rooms and are never in content rooms. This is a challenge because they do not hear how a teacher explains or wants something done, and this can impede their efforts to provide high-quality support to students.

Figure 25. Extent teachers believe the role of Support Room teachers is clear



Note: Includes responses of teachers and teacher leaders only.

Figure 26. Extent teachers believe content teachers and Support Room teachers collaborate and coordinate Support Room efforts



Note: Includes responses of teachers and teacher leaders only.

Efforts are being made to address challenges, and these were verified through observations and feedback. An evaluator observed a CPT session where teachers were working on improving the status of 8th grade Support Rooms by assigning room managers and creating a rotating schedule. The following

quotations from teachers indicate some of the challenges, and include some suggestions for improvements from focus groups and survey responses:

“The Support Room has the potential to be effective but it is not right now. It is different at every grade level, there is no consistency, and the expectations were not clear in the beginning of the year and have changed several times over the course of the year. Literacy teachers should not be assigned to a Support Room if Literacy intervention is the intent. It needs to be done in small groups, in a separate room.”

“Not all teachers are actively involved in teaching Support. Many teachers use their time in Support to plan for their classes, and do their individual work rather than engaging with students. There are also teachers who will not work with students they do not teach.”

“Support at the 8th grade level has not been effective this year. The lack of teacher ownership over Support has been a huge barrier. Teachers started the year with no communication about expectations for Support from administrators. Effective systems were not set up at the beginning of the school year and beneficial routines were not established. This killed Support before it even had a chance to be successful. In order to be successful, Support should mirror the Upper School Support Rooms and there needs to be full-time dedicated teachers who are responsible for coordinating the activities in the rooms.”

Freshman Academy

Freshman Academy (FA) is East’s specialized academic program — designed with a range of special features, socio-emotional supports, and its own dedicated physical space — to support first-time 9th graders’ successful transition from middle school to high school. Led by an Academy director and vice principal (under the supervision of the Upper School principal), the Academy’s special features include FA-specific support staff (two guidance counselors and a social worker), personal advocates for every 9th grade scholar (HOMES advocates, provided in collaboration with the local community organization Hillside), IDCPT and academic and socio-emotional wellness progress monitoring in the form of regular academic performance, intervention, and attendance meetings.

Year 1 of implementation saw Freshman Academy achieve a series of successes. The development of a culture of inclusion and support was attributed to the decision to separate 9th graders from upperclassmen, low student-to-adult ratios throughout FA, the cohesive team staff built through grade-wide IDCPT meetings, additional weekly opportunities to discuss student needs, and HOMES advocates’ tireless support of freshman scholars. Year 1 academic successes included an 85% daily attendance rate for new 9th graders, increased credits earned, and an increased promotion rate.

Freshman Academy also experienced its share of challenges in Year 1. Ninth grade scholars’ attendance was often the lowest in the building. Chaotic hallways and poor behavior on the part of some scholars presented a frequent obstacle. While FA’s separate physical space and activities were intended to

provide an intimate “school within a school” atmosphere, some freshmen felt isolated from upperclassmen. Teachers and administrators identified a need to improve student progress tracking, follow-up with regard to students’ non-academic needs, and communication amongst all of the adults working to support a scholar. Leadership continuity also proved elusive, as the Academy’s founding director transitioned out of the school during the spring semester, and the Upper School at large underwent a leadership transition midway through Year 1.

The refinements that were planned to address some of these challenges in Year 2 extended beyond Freshman Academy. For example, a school-wide code of conduct/behavior policy was adopted, and faculty and administrators were hopeful this policy would help quell some of the hallway hubbub and behavior issues. A modification in the way Family Group was organized (discussed elsewhere in this report) partially addressed 9th grade isolation from upperclassmen by integrating freshmen into upperclassmen Family Groups. Changes and refinements more specific to FA included:

- New leadership in both the director and vice principal roles
- Increased efforts to analyze attendance by period and use of the resulting information to enhance the Freshman Academy learning environment
- Streamlined efforts to make student data more accessible and user friendly for scholars, their families, and teachers

Freshman Academy Modifications

Freshman Academy focused on a set of three central goals for 9th grade scholars around which most staff efforts revolved. Those goals — that at least 80 percent of 9th graders would earn 5.5 credits and pass two Regents exams, at least 80 percent of 9th graders would be promoted to the 10th grade, and 9th graders would achieve an average daily attendance rate of 85 percent or higher — informed refinements to FA’s Year 2 approach.

In Year 1, Freshman Academy met every other day for full staff meetings (IDCPT) whose purpose was to contribute to the scholar intervention process, academic progress monitoring with a data wall (based on data refreshed every three weeks), socio-emotional wellness, and professional learning for faculty. In addition, FA administrators attended weekly attendance meetings that included FA’s guidance counselors, social worker, and HOMES advocates. In addition, FA administrators attended a weekly culture and climate meeting meant to support the development of a warm, positive, collegial, and student-empowering Academy culture.

In Year 2, FA meetings were streamlined. IDCPT meeting frequency was reduced to once every four days, resulting in one meeting per week on average, and discussion alternated between instructional practices and individual student data analysis. The year-long focus of the instructional practice meetings was to examine the way information is transitioned and to share best practices, from 8th to 9th grade and from 9th to 10th grade, in order to find ways to smooth the process. Year 2 also saw an increase in the frequency of the progress monitoring that informs the weekly individual student data analysis meetings — with student data currently refreshed every two weeks instead of every three weeks as was formerly the case.

Proceeding with the push to both streamline access to student data and improve follow-up, FA created a Google database to track classroom-level interventions for attendance and other academic progress monitoring. The database is regularly updated by teachers during CPT for use by FA administrators who rely on the information to inform intervention discussions with the social worker, counselors, HOMES advocates, and special education teachers that support 9th grade scholars.

Mirroring a new support put in place for seniors, FA implemented an “Adopt-a-Freshman” initiative that saw each teacher adopt five 9th grade scholars in order to “give them an extra push.” Through this effort, teachers met with their adoptees on a weekly basis to provide an extra layer of support, checking in on their progress toward established goals with an eye toward meeting the central goals that drive FA as a whole. An additional goal to expose freshmen to five or more college campuses over the course of the school year contributed to FA’s efforts to, in the words of one administrator, “*build a college-going atmosphere and get kids focused on life.*”

Overall Impact of Freshman Academy

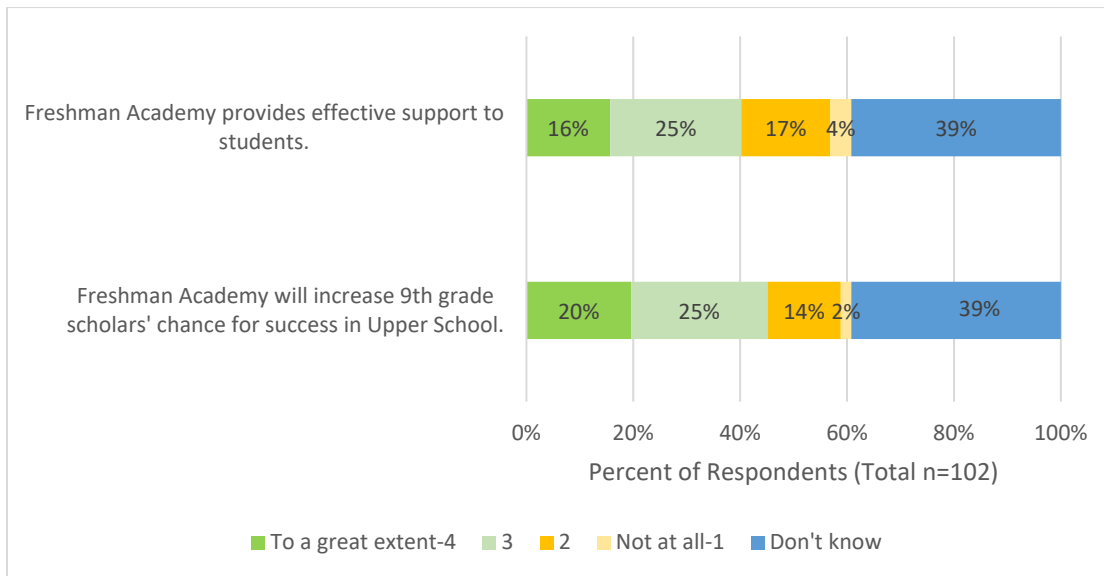
Freshman Academy was developed and implemented by the East EPO because of the prevailing research that underscores how critical success is during the first year in high school to students’ high school graduation. After two years of implementation, nearly three-quarters (73%) of administrators at East believe that FA will increase 9th grade scholars’ chance for Upper School success, according to responses on the administrator survey, while an overwhelming majority of administrators (91%) believe that FA provides effective support to students and is generally well-organized. Administrators pointed to socio-emotional and academic gains when gauging Freshman Academy’s effectiveness to date. Most recent academic projections shared by EPO administrators indicate that 70–80 percent of 9th graders are on track for promotion next year, with another administrator sharing that FA had not yet reached its goals for credit accrual and Regents pass rates by spring of 2017, “*but we’re close — and it’s really exciting.*” An Upper School administrator summed up her sense of Freshman Academy’s impact after two years of implementation:

“I think it’s made it less easy for a child to fall through the cracks — and often that’s what happens in that freshman year. I think the amount of support staff we have dedicated to that... We have a Care Room connected to the Freshman Academy, as well as to the Upper School and Lower School in general, that has become much more functional in addressing student needs. I think the mediations that we do have been instrumental in getting kids to understand what the real purpose in coming here to East is for. I think having 2 administrators directly assigned to the Freshman Academy indicates the level of support the EPO has committed to giving them a strong, fresh start as 9th graders.”

Teachers’ impressions of FA success were lower, as shown in Figure 27. Responding via survey, 45 percent of Upper School teachers and staff responded that they believe FA will increase scholars’ Upper School success “to some or a great extent,” and 39 percent “did not know” (see Figure 27). Similarly, 41 percent of Upper School teachers believed that FA provided effective support to students

“to some or a great extent,” and 39 percent were unsure whether FA provided effective support to students.

Figure 27. Extent of Upper School teachers’ beliefs that Freshman Academy will increase 9th graders’ success in Upper School, N=102



Note: Includes responses of Upper School teachers and teacher leaders only.

Planned Changes for Year 3

Some changes or enhancements are being considered for Freshman Academy going forward. There is a goal to better coordinate planning of college trips and other field trips to minimize the time FA scholars spend out of class. FA leaders received feedback from teachers that felt concern about the amount of time scholars spent out of class during Year 2. The timing of both planned exposures (i.e., college trips and other field trips) and unforeseen events (including tragic losses of members of the scholar community and historic storm events) compounded to result in scholars spending less time in class than is conducive to support progress toward academic objectives. Moving forward, FA administrators plan to evaluate exposures to ensure that they are not consistently held on the same calendar days or repeatedly tap the same group of students for participation.

There is planned continued use of tools to track how students are using certain socio-emotional supports in order to better understand and document their impact. FA administrators specifically lauded the Academy social worker, counselors, and other support staff for their efforts to capture the number of referrals and amount of time scholars spend utilizing supports like the FA Care Room, counseling, and related resources. Administrators report seeing promising gains, as measured by reduced suspensions, more time in class, increased class participation, and improved course passing rates for some students who heavily relied upon FA support services during Year 2. FA staff continue to look for ways beyond changes in recidivism rates to quantify progress along socio-emotional dimensions.

Planning to meet the needs of trauma-impacted FA scholars is a goal for Year 3. Ninth grade social workers and counselors administered a survey to all FA students. Analyzing the results and comparing them to national data, support staff proceeded to lead a three-part series for FA teachers and staff to explore just how much impact trauma has on East’s 9th graders. Subsequently, counselors and social workers grouped scholars by survey results and similar experiences and offered counseling groups to them for extra support. Scholar participation is entirely voluntary. After conversations between students and a social worker or counselor to gauge interest and willingness to participate, students are given the opportunity to meet weekly with the social worker or counselor, or to independently to start addressing trauma issues. The support group topics include grief and loss, victims of gun violence, and survival of sexual assault. Counselors and social workers strived to build a culture of support amongst participating 9th graders so they did not feel isolated throughout the year. In conjunction with these efforts, the entire Upper School and Lower School campus read the trauma-focused publication, “Reaching and Teaching Children Who Hurt.” All of these strategies were meant to better assist teachers as they work with students on a daily basis and are poised to continue into next year.

Challenges

Freshman Academy faces both new and ongoing challenges. Identified challenges include:

- Attendance
- Better serving English learners and special education students
- Monitoring the progress of students enrolled in other programs but for whom East is responsible

A major ongoing challenge is student attendance, which is not as high as desired. One staff member shared a concern that FA students with low attendance were being counseled into alternative programs, which makes overall FA attendance better.

Another concern shared was that while the FA ENL teacher showed extraordinary leadership to assess and group ENL students, there remains concern on the part of some teachers that there is not enough time or enough support for ENL students. Teachers also raised concerns about meeting the needs of special education scholars in Freshman Academy, though that was more often expressed as challenges with co-teaching. There is a need for increased communication between special education and content classroom teachers, and more support to ensure co-teaching reaches its full potential.

Administrators noted that there are scholars from East’s 2016 cohort who are not educated onsite, but for whom East is responsible. Offsite placements can include one of the alternative programs within East’s academic portfolio, home or hospital confinements, or juvenile justice facilities. In an effort to ensure that those students get and remain on a successful academic track with regard to attendance and credit accrual, FA administrators have worked to collaborate and coordinate with the support staff of those sites. FA administrators continue to strengthen those systems. One administrator elaborated on those efforts, saying:

“We have built systems with the school social workers and the counselors at the other locations so that, if scholars are checking in with counselors, those counselors will report back to us weekly on scholar attendance and grade progress. If needed, we coordinate with the other site to see who may need a home visit or talk to a parent... Just because they’re out of sight doesn’t mean they’re out of mind. They’re still our kids.”

Family Group

Family Group — a school-wide structure meant to cultivate beneficial behaviors and supportive relationships — realized a measure of success by the end of Year 1. By emerging as a primary vehicle by which relationships across East were cultivated, Family Group contributed significantly to the forging of bonds between and among scholars and staff and across common schoolhouse divides like grade, language, background, and staff role, in a building with a multitude of new faces. However, as anticipated, there was room for refinement, and Family Group continued to evolve during Year 2 of implementation.

While the general structure of the model underwent very little change from Year 1 to Year 2, substantive modifications were made to increase Family Group’s effectiveness by addressing the most consistent challenges that surfaced in Year 1. Chief among these challenges were poor student attendance, student engagement difficulties, student assignment issues, and curriculum implementation. The Year 2 adjustments implemented to address these challenges include:

- Changing the time Family Group takes place in the Upper School schedule
- Assigning “co-parents” to facilitate each Family Group
- Increasing the number of school-wide activities held during Family Group
- Looping Family Group assignments for consecutive school years
- Shifting to a weekly Family Group lesson plan approach
- Developing a student transfer process
- Creating customized Family Groups to meet specific student needs

As implementation challenges are frequently interconnected, many of these solutions present the opportunity to address multiple challenges at once. Each of these solutions is further discussed below and, as elsewhere in this report, we use data collected from focus groups conducted with teachers, students, administrators, and other staff; interviews; surveys; and direct observation to assess the status of implementation, identifying the strengths and impact (when available) of each solution as well as noting ongoing or newly surfaced challenges.

Challenges, Solutions and Impact of Family Group

Student Attendance

To address the challenge of poor student attendance at Family Group, the placement of Family Group in the Upper School schedule shifted. Originally positioned near the midday lunch periods, Upper School Family Group was moved to between first and second periods to discourage skipping. Additionally, Freshman Academy scholars were transitioned out of separate 9th grade–only Family Groups into Family Groups with the rest of Upper School students — reducing the original schedule of three separate, daily Family Group periods (one each for Upper School, Lower School, and 9th graders) down to two. This change freed up the availability of some staff members, enabling every Family Group to have at least two carents — a staffing challenge presented by the original model. By most accounts, both the new morning placement and introduction of co-carents improved Family Group. Better attendance was one result, as Upper School scholars were no longer able to extend their lunch period by skipping Family Group, and some staff who were no longer facilitating 9th grade Family Groups were newly available to sweep students into Family Group and out of hallways. Increased connection was another result, as students had the opportunity to forge relationships with an additional adult in the building while reducing a degree of isolation from upperclassmen that some freshmen reported feeling.

The results of this schedule shift were mentioned by many stakeholders in the East community, both positively and negatively. In focus groups, students sometimes remarked that they were not fond of the schedule change but also noted that skipping Family Group had been a problem in Year 1 and that the change had increased their personal Family Group attendance:

“I don’t like the fact that they moved Family Group.” “They moved it because everybody used to skip.” “I’m going to tell you the truth — I never went last year.” — exchange in Upper School student focus group

“They slayed us with our Family Group. Family Group [is now] right after our first period. You [have] no choice but to go.” — Upper School student

In responding to the survey query, “What has been particularly effective about Family Group this year?” several teachers offered comments on the schedule change, such as *“The timing has improved attendance as it no longer revolves around the lunch periods”* and *“The rescheduling of Upper School family group to earlier in the day has significantly improved participation.”* Similarly, one staff member explained:

“[A] welcome change was severing [Family Group] from lunch — which simply invited half the building to take on a double lunch. I think more kids are getting something out of it and fewer kids are in the hallway during Family Group time. That in itself is a benefit.”

An administrator noted:

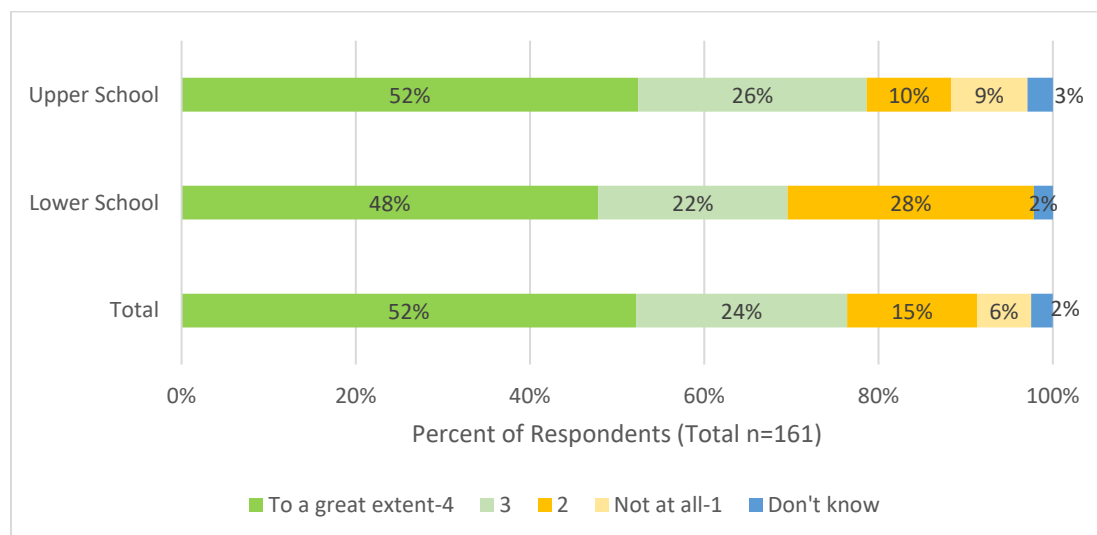
“I don’t have an Upper School Family Group so I’m able to clear the hallways and help kids get into Family Group during the Upper School one. I see fewer kids skipping or in the hallways at that time.”

A school safety officer (SSO) also noted the positive impact of the schedule change, sharing, *“Our change [in Upper School Family Group] from after lunch to second period [made] a big difference. In Upper School, [there’s been a] big positive change in Family Group participation since the schedule change.”*

Student Engagement

Another challenge in Year 1 was student disengagement in Family Group. The introduction of co-parents to facilitate each Family Group, increasing the number of school-wide activities held during Family Group, and Family Group looping were all strategies implemented to address student disengagement. Teachers and administrators alike believed that student engagement would need to increase for Family Group to reach its full potential for impact. Co-parenting was one way to approach the student engagement challenge, as it would increase scholars’ chances of connecting with a caring adult. As mentioned, one result of the change to the Upper School Family Group schedule was the opportunity to have each Family Group facilitated by co-parents, in contrast to the solo parenting common in Year 1. In addition to having two co-parents, each co-parent pair would be comprised of a male and female co-parent. While few students who participated in focus groups specifically commented on these changes, teachers and administrators (in interviews and focus groups) were vocal in expressing their belief that the co-parent arrangement had made a real difference. These benefits pertained to building relationships with scholars, overall Family Group operation, and modeling positive behaviors for students. A majority of respondents to the teacher/staff survey at both the Lower School (70%) and Upper School (78%) believe that co-parenting has improved Family Group this year to a some or a great extent (Figure 28).

Figure 28. Extent teachers and staff believe co-parenting has improved Family Group



When asked on the survey what they found to be “particularly effective about Family Group this year,” teacher respondents cited the presence of a co-parent more frequently than any other single factor (13% of responses). Representative statements included:

“Having two co-parents has helped us model a positive social relationship with each other that extends to our relationships with students and their relationships between one another.”

“This is my first year with co-parents. This is a huge benefit, as different personalities allow for different connections for the students.”

“Co-parenting has made a huge difference in creating the family culture in Family Group.”

“It has been helpful to have a co-parent to work with, both in balancing interactions with students and in managing Family Group duties.”

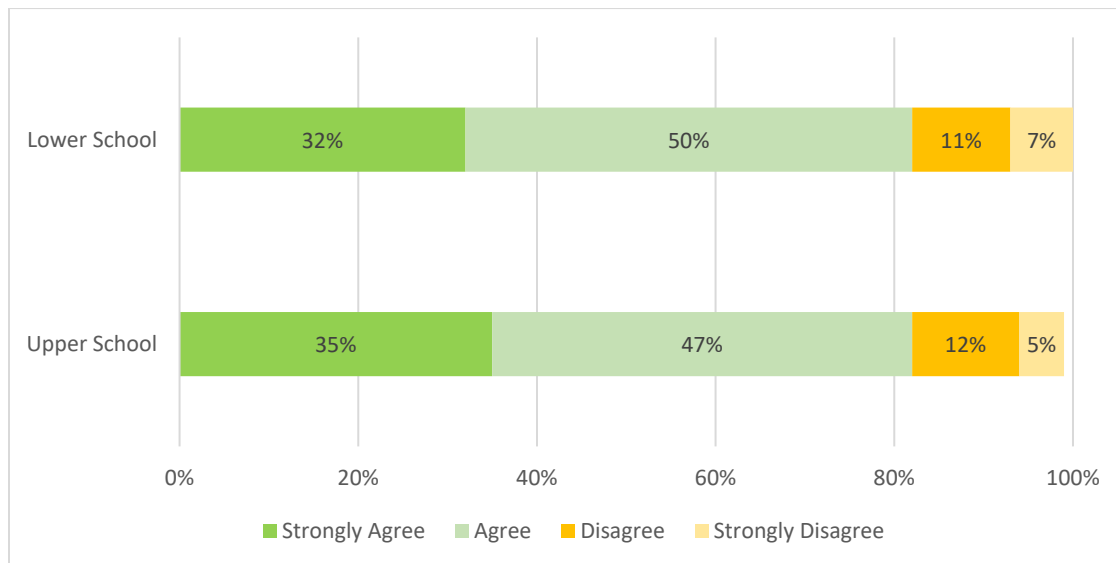
“Co-parenting has been huge in building relationships because students may connect better with one or the other.”

Most (64%) of administrators also believe co-parenting has improved Family Group to “some or a great extent,” according to responses on the administrator survey. In interviews, administrators echoed teacher sentiments, saying:

“The schedule change has been a real plus and having 2 parents in every room has been a real plus,” and *“The Family Group redesign with co-parents has been great. Kids have options for connecting.”*

Students also overwhelmingly believe that Family Group helps them to build relationships with adults at East (see Figure 29). On the student survey, 82 percent of Lower School students and 92percent of Upper School students reported they agree or strongly agree with the statement: Family Groups helps me to build relationships with teachers and administrators at East.

Figure 29. Extent students believe Family Group helps them build relationships with teachers and administrators



More school-wide activities, like sports tournaments, school beautification efforts, and block party activities, were incorporated during Year 2 of Family Group implementation in an effort to cultivate student participation and buy-in. In student focus groups, these school-wide efforts were often attributed to the Upper School principal, and were favorably mentioned several times in comments such as, *“I like how the Principal makes up activities that can be played during Family Group — basketball tournament, volleyball tournament.”* On the survey, some teachers also identified these activities as being among the most effective aspects of Family Group in Year 2, indicating, *“Those students involved in the athletic tournaments enjoyed them thoroughly,”* and *“School-wide tournaments and block parties to keep the students engaged and wanting to come to Family Group [are particularly effective].”* One teacher further elaborated, *“Initiatives such as the Rock the Test door decorating contest, Leader in Me poster-making to beautify the school, Trick or Treating in blocks; ... unifying strands like showing the Eagle Eye on Mondays, ... big events like [the] basketball tournament and picture with the drone on Black Lives Matter day were dramatic and bonding.”*

All Lower School and approximately half of Upper School Family Groups looped (i.e., maintained the same set of scholars and parent participants) from Year 1 to Year 2. This effort to preserve Family Groups was made so as not to disrupt the bonds that had formed during Year 1 of implementation. Administrators hope to loop more Upper School Family Groups in the 2017–18 school year.

Student Assignment

In Year 1, it was believed that some students did not participate in Family Group because of the parent or other students in the group. Also, the policy at the time was not to transfer students who requested a transfer from one to another Family Group. To address the challenge of participation, a student transfer process was developed, and customized Family Groups were created to meet the needs of special

student populations. During Year 1, no formal provision was made for student transfer from one Family Group to another. The original intention of this no-transfer policy was to further encourage the development of relationships between and among scholars and staff who might not otherwise cross paths. However, some teachers believed this approach lacked a necessary sensitivity with regard to student placement, as well as amounting to a missed opportunity to meet the needs of students in special circumstances, such as bilingual and ENL students who were not always placed with parents who could speak their native tongues or who had long-term attendance issues.

A formal student transfer process was implemented at the start of Year 2, consisting of the completion of a special Family Group transfer form by the scholar desiring transfer and a discussion of the completed form in a follow-up meeting with the scholar's parent(s). In the Lower School, administrators offer the scholar an opportunity to participate in a restorative circle in an attempt to encourage and assist the scholar in persisting in his or her original Family Group. All adults involved endeavor to ensure that the scholar's voice is heard in these transfer proceedings. In the Upper School, if the transfer involves a safety issue of some kind, it triggers an automatic Family Group change within 24 hours. Otherwise, the process proceeds as it does at the Lower School level.

Special Family Groups meant to meet the needs of bilingual and ENL students were also formed in Year 2 and are co-parented by ESOL and non-ESOL teachers or administrators. Additional customized Family Groups created in Year 2 that strive to address the specific needs of particular East student populations include one for students with severe attendance issues (co-parented by a social worker and special education teacher) and a Family Group for over-age seniors (facilitated by an administrator and guidance counselor). As one teacher commented on these changes, *"We are trying to look at individual situations. Our ultimate goal is connection."* Staff have noticed the difference these developments have made.

A teacher focus group participant expressed that *"[Family Group] is way better this year after administrators listened to bilingual students' need for more support."* Teacher survey participants also particularly noted the difference the adjusted student assignment policy has made for bilingual and ENL scholars:

"Family Group has been a community-building experience for multi-cultural ELL groups."

"Having students from the same ethnic/linguistic background together has been very effective. My Nepali students (and our African friends as well, actually!) see Family Group as a safe place, a place that belongs to them, where they can feel comfortable talking and sharing and expressing themselves."

Family Group Curriculum Implementation

In Year 1, many parents complained that daily Family Group lesson plans presented too much structure. Teachers grappled with prescribed daily lesson plans that left less room for adaptation than many desired. This year, Family Group coaches are providing weekly lesson plans. Weekly plans also increase parents' ability to respond to scholars' needs and interests in real time. Students who benefited from this flexibility responded well to the variety of activities they were now offered. As one Upper School

student commented, *“I don’t know about other Family Groups, but ours is very outgoing. We do lots of activities — we went ice skating, on a haunted hayride, we do birthday parties....”* Some teachers identified *“movement away from last year’s rigidity in delivery of mandatory lesson plans, daily circles, etc.,” “weekly lesson plans with more flexibility,”* and *“freedom to do what you think is best for your family group, while still being encouraged to utilize family group lesson plans”* as “particularly effective” elements of Family Group this year. Other staff seconded this assessment:

“The [Family Group] activities are different [this year], I noticed. The activities are more intriguing for them to go to.” — School Security Officer

“Family group is less rigid than last year — the general understanding that there is some flexibility as to how it’s delivered each day was a welcome change.” — Counselor

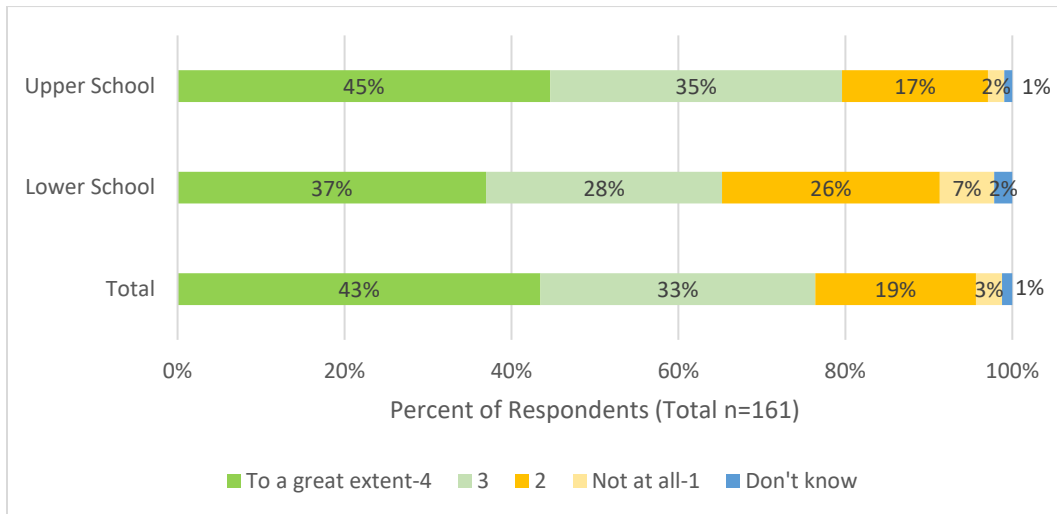
Overall Impact

It is too soon to know, and perhaps will be too difficult to isolate, the specific impact Family Group will ultimately have on East Upper and Lower School. However, when teachers and administrators were asked in interviews and focus groups to identify the East EPO initiative that has had the most impact on East’s culture and climate, Family Group was most often cited. All administrators, responding by survey, believe that Family Group has contributed to a positive culture and climate at East overall to some or a great extent — with 55 percent believing that contribution has been made “to a great extent.” One administrator added that Family Group has contributed to *“Seeing kids build tolerance for others that they would not have interacted with in a typical high school setting.”* In an interview, when asked what the main drivers of the culture and climate shift at East currently are, an administrator opined:

“I would [credit Family Group] — and I’d say it works two ways. Kids have an adult that they know advocates for them and that they can go to. The other part of that is kids being surrounded daily by kids they wouldn’t normally interact with has taught tolerance and respect for all. I feel when kids see one another in the hall or in the cafeteria, it may not be people they hang out with, but as a direct result of connecting with them every day for 30 minutes, there’s a different sense of unity ... that brings East together. I know that it’s been instrumental for kids in dealing with tragedies.”

As demonstrated by Figure 30 below, 65 percent of teachers and staff at the Lower School and 80 percent of those at the Upper School concur. Teacher survey respondents also believe a particularly effective aspect of Family Group is that it “supports students’ academic and emotional needs.” One teacher shared: *“Family group is a great structure for students and staff to build a culture of trust and closeness that only furthers the academic goals of the school. It’s one of my favorite things about East.”*

Figure 30. Extent teachers and staff believe Family Group has contributed to a positive climate and culture at East



Teachers and administrators at East report seeing additional impacts of Family Group involvement related to students’ social skill development (Figure 31), an increase in self-advocacy and self-empowerment (Figure 32), and continued relationship building (Figure 33). Via survey, teachers and staff noted:

“We do small projects together [in Family Group] and the kids build interpersonal skills from them.”

“We have used Family Group to teach active listening, responsibility, respect, advocacy, and other skills necessary for life outside of high school.”

“Family group has been a very positive experience for our students, including several students who have ‘come out of their shells’ and even encourage others to do the same.”

Figure 31. Extent teachers and staff believe Family Group has positively impacted students' development of social skills

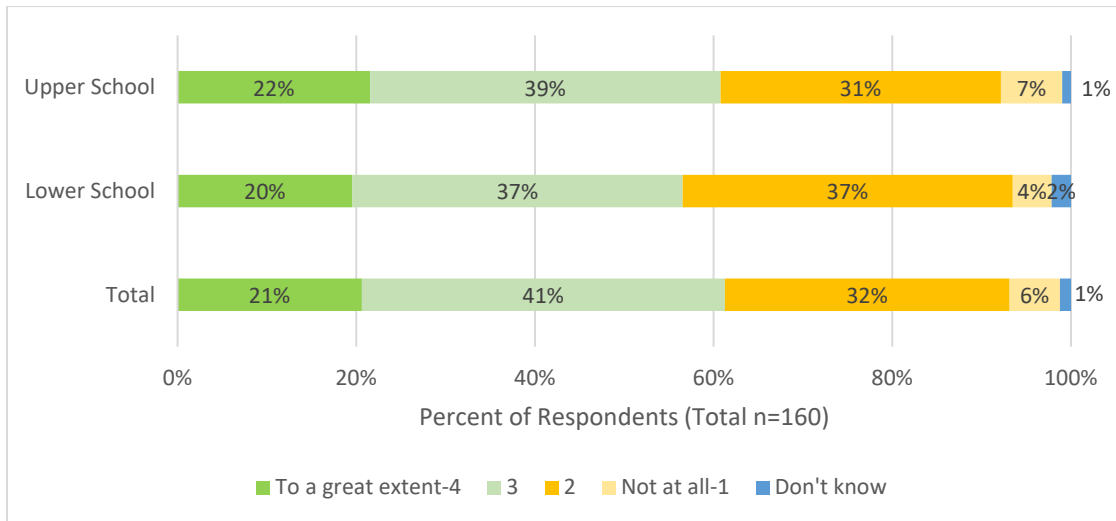
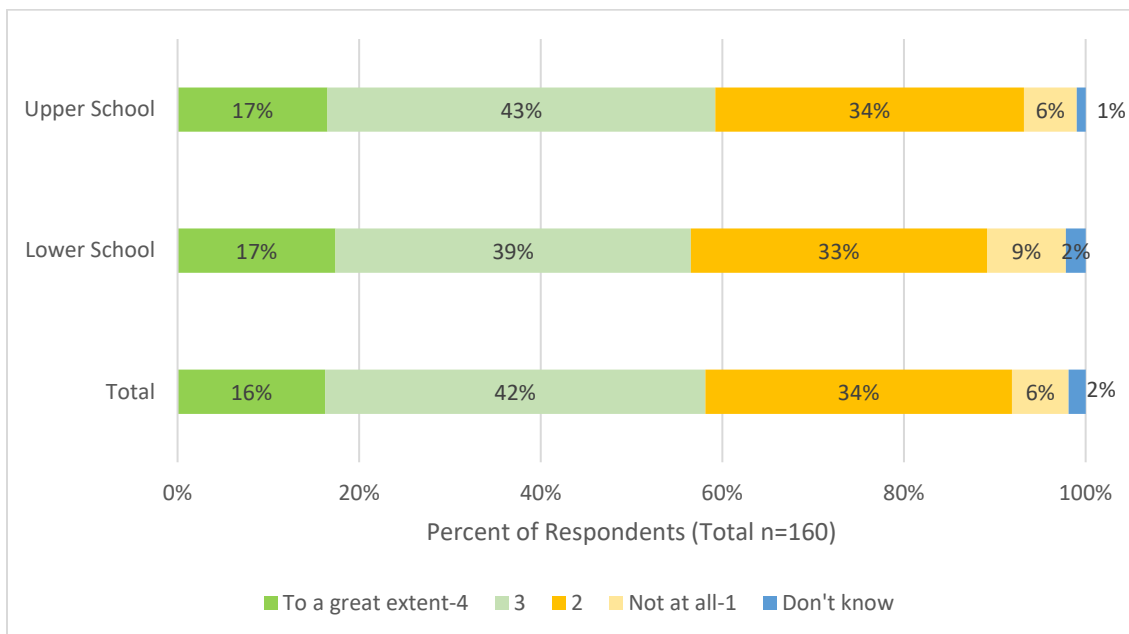


Figure 32. Extent teachers and staff believe Family Group has positively impacted student self-advocacy and self-empowerment



Students commented on their own self-advocacy gains in student focus group conversations:

“I like my Family Group. We play games. We talk — but we talk about things that we want to talk about.”

“Our parents are different — [they] care about us. Anything we want — we bring it to their attention.”

“For Lower School, [Family Group] is kinda special because we have parents, teachers who act as our parent.... We have these 7 habits [we focus on] and we usually have activities that revolve around them. Like ‘be tenacious, advocate for self and others’....And we talk about our day and what [we’re up to].”

Administrators, teacher survey respondents, and focus group participants outlined other self-advocacy and empowerment benefits that have accrued to East students as a result of Family Group participation:

“Students have taken accountability for reminding each other to attend FG as well as feel comfortable discussing issues that are impacting them.” – Teacher staff survey

“I think kids in East High School are more aware than they ever were of what they need and how to advocate for it. Family Group has helped with that.” – Teacher focus group

“Family Group gives students a voice in a safe setting.” – Administrator survey

Lower School students in particular touched upon the relationships they’ve developed in Family Group, declaring, *“I like the way the parents treat us”* or *“I like that we have our own little group of people that we can connect with.”* The relationship-building aspect of Family Group is evident in student survey responses (see Figure 33). A majority of Lower School students (82%) and Upper School students (81%) agree or strongly agree that “Family Group helps them build relationships with other scholars.” Similarly, 82 percent of Lower School students and 83 percent of Upper School students agree or strongly agree that “Family Group helps build relationships with other adults.” Both in interviews and in teacher survey responses, when asked “What has been particularly effective about Family Group this year?” teachers highlighted the relationship-building benefits of Family Group participation. In the teacher/staff survey, 78 percent of those at the Lower School and 89 percent of those at the Upper School agree to some or a great extent that Family Group has facilitated the development of supportive relationships between students and staff (see Figure 34). Teachers and staff shared the following thoughts about the relationship-building impact of Family Group in focus groups:

“There [have] been more genuine connections between teachers and students. Students feel comfortable sharing.”

“My family group has collaborated with other neighboring family groups, calling each other cousins.”

“The opportunity to build relationships through Family Group is exceptional.”

“Building relationships with students that allow them to see you as a caring adult who they can reach out to during a time of need.”

“Family Group has been really beneficial. It’s definitely helped [scholars] feel like they are connected at school and across grade levels. It’s fun to watch kids who wouldn’t interact in the hallway or be friends having positive relationships with one another. And learning

from one another — 6th graders who are a little immature with 8th graders giving them the teacher look – and them self-correcting.”

Figure 33. Extent students believe Family Group helps them to build relationships with other scholars

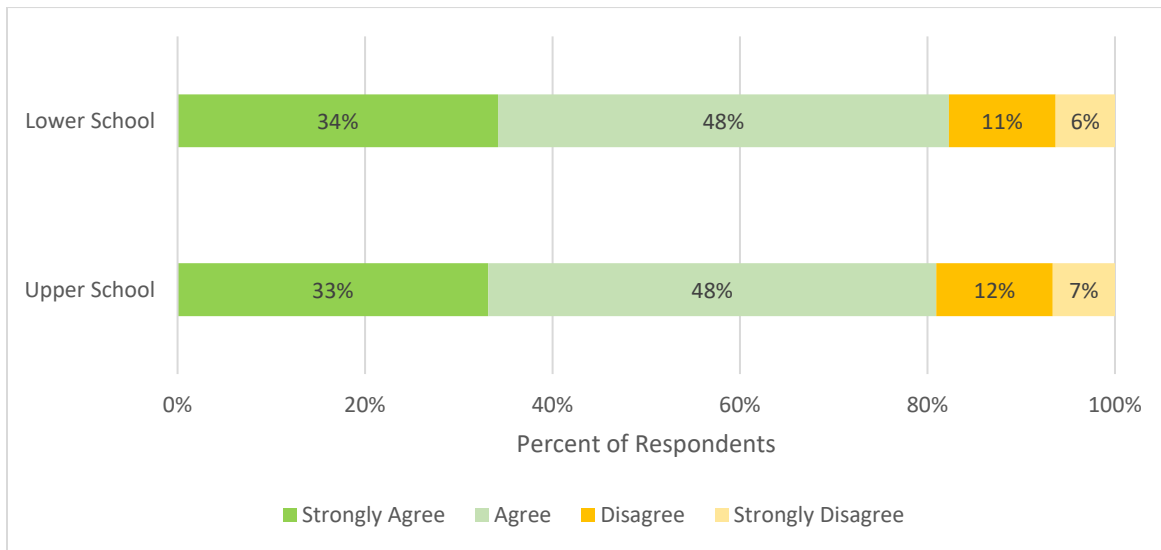
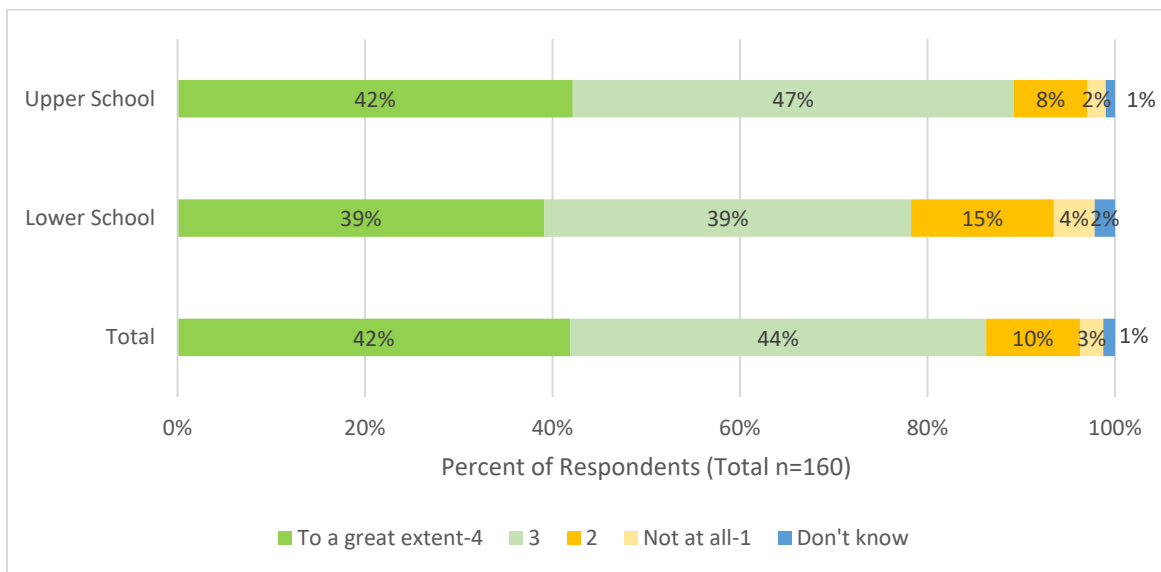


Figure 34. Extent teachers and staff believe Family Group has positively impacted relationship building at East



Impact on Academics

Students alluded to the academic benefits that came with participation in some Family Groups. An Upper School student focus group participant explained:

“When it comes to your grades, [our parents are] very serious. On Wednesdays, we go over progress reports and they help us get work done. I know it’s only a half hour — it’s not a lot of time for it, we have 10 kids in our family group — but they really care about us.”

Some teachers observed, *“Students are holding themselves to higher academic expectations overall and are more willing to have conversations about the importance of academic success and obstacles [as a result of Family Group]”* and *“[the most effective part of Family Group is] keeping students on track academically by reviewing progress reports.”*

At least one administrator, participating in a focus group, noted that Family Group was playing a role in academically reconnecting some students who had become disengaged from schooling:

“We had some kids who hardly came to school at all last year in my Family Group and one of them went to [our principal to say] he wants to make sure he graduates and asked what needs to be done, so I am seeing a culture shift.”

New and Ongoing Challenges

Though both improvements and new successes have been realized, new and ongoing challenges also remain, including the use of Family Group time, development of student trust, parent buy-in, and student engagement.

Family Group is supposed to be “structured play,” with an intended blend of 80 percent fun and 20 percent work. Both students and staff have remarked (in focus groups, surveys, and, in one case, Family Group observation) that Family Group time has repeatedly been co-opted this year “to get other work done,” as the quotations from students and teachers demonstrate:

“I don’t like how we have to do work in family group. [We didn’t have to do work last year.] [Now] we have to do books. [Work] took over our whole family group. Last year we had donut parties.” — Lower School student

“A lot of initiatives have been pushed through family group this year — lots of projects. Sometimes, it’s too many. Sometimes you just need to be together as a group.” — Teacher

“With the 7 habits, there are way too many ‘objectives’ for Family Group.” — Teacher/staff survey

“Maybe Family Group doesn’t always fit for all kids.... They say it should be 80 percent fun but maybe it’s not what kids think is fun. We need to try better to incorporate their voice.” — Teacher

Trust in Family Group is still under-developed for some scholars. This is evident in the following focus group exchange with students:

“Teachers try to know your whole life. I don’t trust telling teachers my business — they’re annoying.” “They pry, then violate your trust.” “Teachers tell your business to other teachers and your classmates.” “For me, no. It’s like she said — you can’t trust the Carents.”

Some teachers are still uncomfortable with/resistant to the parent role, or feel they do not have the professional training to address the multitude of personal issues that students often bring. A few teachers shared this concern:

“Family Group needs to be about community building. It could use more support. It seems to be most successful when playing games, etc., and less successful with social/emotional support. Not sure why — we’re not social workers. Maybe make it a club time.... It’s hard for teachers to dive into the issues that kids have. Clubs might help them get engaged in a more positive way... — we don’t need to be armchair psychologists.”

“My co-Parent has not been open to doing more activities with our group to build relationships. It has made FG awkward and useless to both of us as co-Parents and the students.”

Some scholars complain of continued Family Group disengagement (i.e., boredom, indifference). For some, this boredom is because of the activities, for others it’s the differences in Family Groups, with some perceived to be more fun than others. Some student comments that illustrate the engagement challenge include:

“I don’t really like Family Group. It’s boring. I just sit there and watch videos all the time [Interviewer: On your own device?] Yeah. [Interviewer: Is that because everything that’s going on isn’t relevant to you?] I don’t know...I’m just not into it.”

“We don’t do [anything] but talk in Family Group. Every. Day. And make cards — we just do the most boring stuff. It’s boring.”

Changes for Year 3

Interviews with administrators and Family Group coaches suggested some possible changes that are being considered for Family Group next year. These include:

- Lower School Family Group may also move to a morning time slot.
- Family Group will have a heightened focus on academics, college, and careers.
- There will be more collaboration between Family Group coaches and parents.
- More connections will be made between Family Groups and the HOMES partner.
- Family Group rubric will be revised to provide more meaningful feedback.

- Family Group may have a community service component.

Restorative Practices

Restorative Practices were included in the EPO Plan to help meet the goals of reducing the number of suspensions, improving student behavior, and improving the general culture and climate of the school. At the end of Year 1, stakeholders described the implementation of Restorative Practices with both optimism and some concern. Despite successes such as circles in Family Group and during class time, the concept of Restorative Practices was very new for both teachers and students last year, and its implementation led to some misunderstandings and miscommunication. Students initially believed there would not be consequences for misbehavior, and teachers struggled with balancing discipline and Restorative Practices. All school security officers had not been trained, resulting in some inconsistent implementation. During the summer of 2016 and during Year 2 as well, further professional learning was provided for teachers and staff, and clarification of procedures was developed, as well as the use of an online tracking procedure for behavior and other student referrals.

One of the changes with Restorative Practices this year is that more of the responsibility has shifted to the social workers. During a focus group with all seven social workers on the East team, evaluators learned that four social workers are on the Restorative Practices Committee and have trained East staff in Restorative Practices through restorative workshops. Social workers reported they *“all facilitate or conduct restorative practices daily, whether it’s a full-blown peace circle with parents and RPD, or a hallway conversation to repair [the dynamic] between teacher and scholar to get them back in the classroom, or between two adults who need to circle up so they can repair their relationship and co-teach.”* Both teachers and scholars are initiating the mediations, and social workers pointed to the power of these interactions, noting, *“When you sit down with student and teacher, with everyone as an equal participant and no sense of authority in the room at that moment, to try to understand one another and repair, it’s a very powerful thing. It’s successful if people are being genuine. Especially when there’s been a harm done, [but] you have to give people time.”* That was a misconception at the beginning of the year — some were too quick to insist on a mediation or circle when all parties were not necessarily ready. *“Well, if the actors aren’t ready, are still very upset ... we need to respect how they feel and give them time so circles are effective ... when we have those moments, the majority of time they’re successful.”* And another shared:

“One difference from last year is all voices are heard — people are listening to kids more instead of just responding and reacting. Instead of ‘I don’t care what happened, I don’t want to hear your side,’ kids have a voice.”

School administrators, EPO leaders, teachers, staff, counselors, and social workers all credit Restorative Practices with being a key contributor to changing the culture and climate at the school, including generally improved student behavior. The use of Restorative Practices gives students a voice, and they have been learning and practicing skills to cope with conflict. Adults and students in the school are seeing Restorative Practices in action more and more, but there are some who have not experienced Restorative Practices. Additionally, there are some teachers who believe the implementation and impact

of Restorative Practices could be increased school wide if the school leadership at the highest levels were more involved or present with Restorative Practices.

In the remainder of this section, we share the benefits and challenges of Restorative Practices that emerged from interviews with school administrators, focus groups with teachers, counselors, social workers, and school security officers, as well as the teacher/staff and the student surveys.

Benefits of Restorative Practices

Students, teachers, administrators, and leaders gave feedback about the benefits of implementing Restorative Practices at East during focus groups, interviews, and on surveys. Across all constituents, a number of benefits were consistently mentioned. These include:

- A significant reduction in student suspensions
- A noticeable reduction in physical confrontations between students
- An increase in student voice, self-confidence, and self-respect
- Improved relationships between teachers and students
- Students resolving their issues and encouraging each other to resolve problems peacefully rather than instigating or championing violence
- A palpable shift in the school’s culture and climate attributed to restorative conversations taking place in Family Groups
- Restorative circles and conversations being initiated by both students and staff
- Restorative circles and conversations being conducted student to student, staff to staff, and student to staff

Open-ended comments from teachers on the survey about benefits for students from implementation of Restorative Practices were numerous and focused mainly on an increase in student voice, self-confidence, and self-respect. They noted that students have become proactive, initiating a conference or circle themselves to resolve an issue and avoid further consequences. Teachers described students as being more confident and tending to feel more *“in control of their own lives.”* Teachers also shared how Restorative Practices are impacting their classrooms for the better. For example, one teacher shared:

“This practice has been effective for conflicts that have risen in my classes with students through miscommunications mainly. I have initiated conversations and students have initiated conferences as well. I have also used [restorative practices] to celebrate student success.”

Survey results also support some of the benefits of Restorative Practices identified in focus groups. For example, 87 percent of teachers and teacher leaders in the Lower School report using Restorative Practices in their classrooms with their students; a smaller majority of teachers (66%) at the Upper School also report using Restorative Practices in their classrooms (see Figure 35). A majority of teachers, teacher leaders, counselors, and social workers who work primarily in the Lower School have observed the use of Restorative Practices to help effectively resolve student conflicts, with 70 percent responding

to “some or a great extent.” Among those who work primarily at the Upper School, only 43 percent reported to “some or a great extent” that they have seen the use of Restorative Practices helping to effectively resolve student conflicts (see Figure 36). Teachers, teacher leaders, counselors, and social workers who work primarily in the Lower School generally agreed that Restorative Practices contribute to a positive culture at East, with 72 percent agreeing with that statement to “some or a great extent.” At the Upper School, only 56 percent agreed to “some or a great extent” that Restorative Practices contributes to a positive culture and climate at East (see Figure 37).

Figure 35. Extent teachers/staff have used Restorative Practices in their classroom with their students

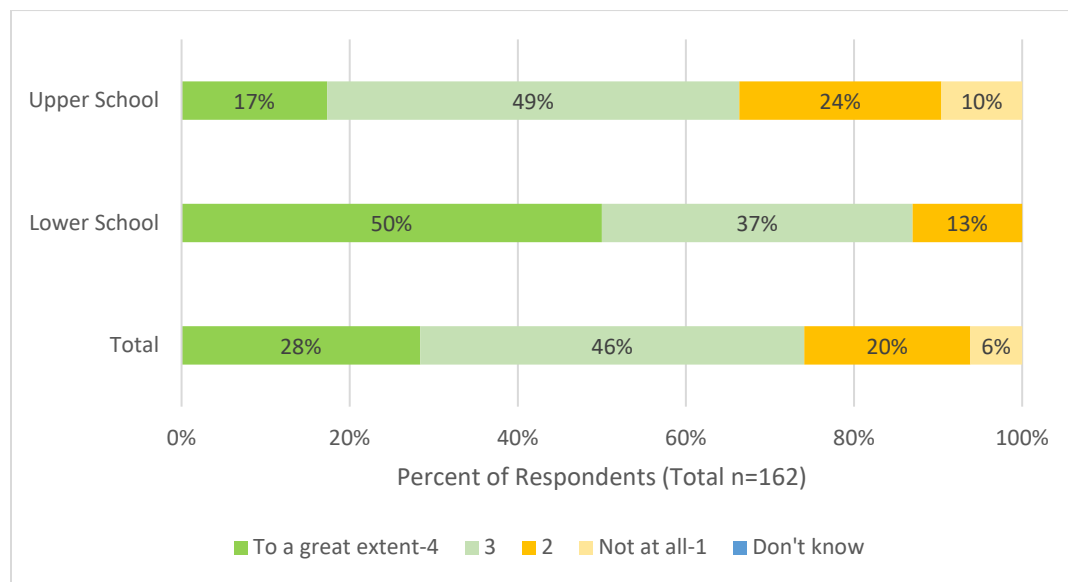


Figure 36. Extent teachers/staff observed the use of Restorative Practices effectively helping to resolve student conflicts

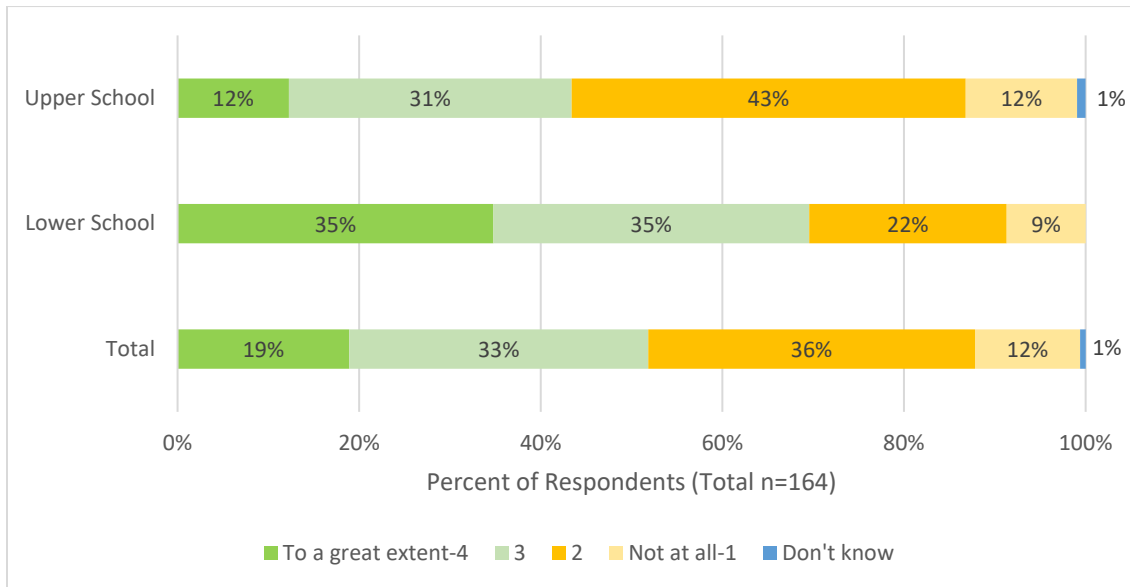
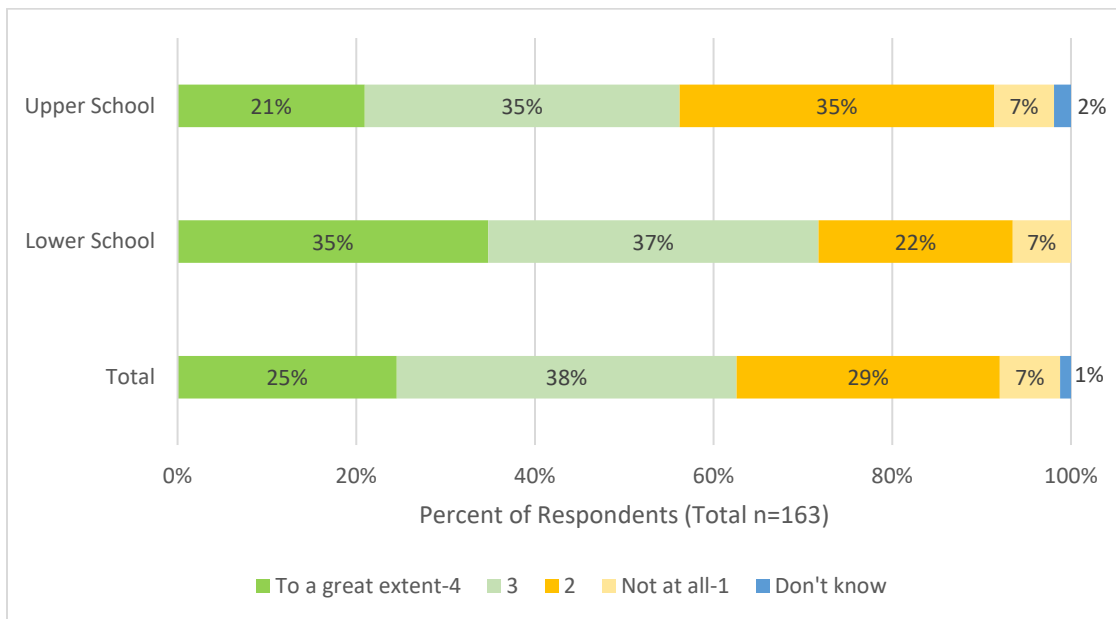


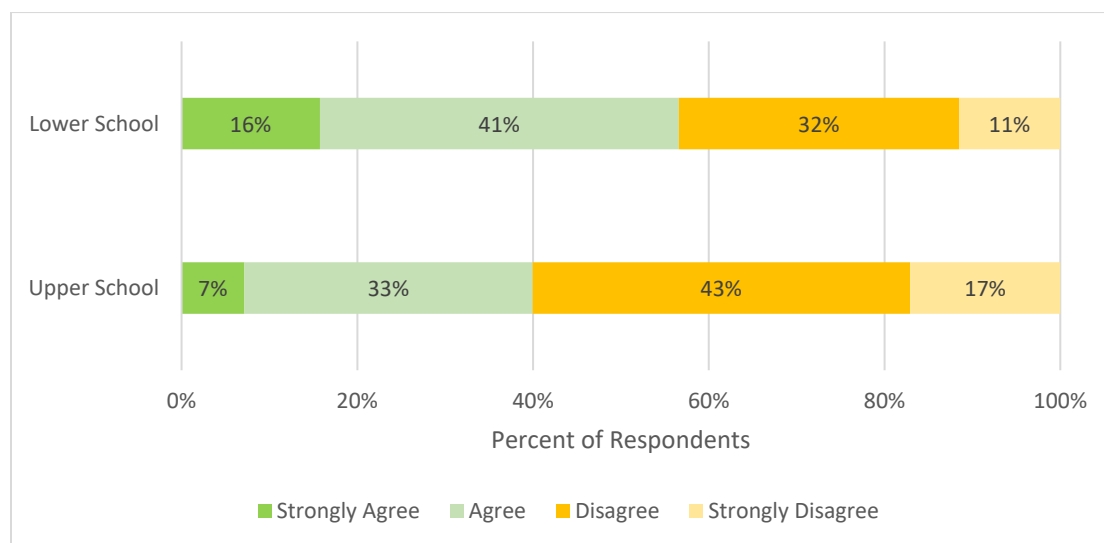
Figure 37. Extent teachers/staff believe Restorative Practices contribute to a positive culture and climate at East



On surveys, students were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements pertaining to Restorative Practices. Nearly half (47%) of Upper School respondents indicated they disagreed with the statement, “I understand what Restorative Practice is.” Sixty percent of these respondents also indicated they disagreed with the statements, “I have participated in a Restorative Circle to address a problem I was having,” and “I have participated in a Restorative Circle to address a problem someone else was having.” Sixty-five percent indicated they believe “Restorative Practices helps build a positive environment at East.” Whether punishments are fair and reasonable and whether all students receive the same punishments or consequences for the same misbehaviors are areas that may need further exploration, as 44 percent and 40 percent, respectively, disagreed with these statements.

More Lower School students indicated they understand what Restorative Practice is (62%) as compared with Upper School students, and 69 percent believe Restorative Practices help build a positive environment at East. A higher percentage of Lower School students (60%) “agreed or strongly agreed” with the statement that they had participated in a restorative circle to address a problem they were having, compared to 41 percent of Upper School students (see Figure 38). A higher percentage of Lower School students (69%) compared to Upper School students (54%) “agreed or strongly agreed” with the statement “Restorative Practices helps build a positive environment at East.” Whether punishments are fair and reasonable and whether all students receive the same punishments or consequences for the same misbehaviors were rated slightly better by Lower School students, but might need further exploration, as 38% and 39%, respectively, disagreed with these statements.

Figure 38. Percentage of students who have participated in a restorative circle to address a problem they were having



Ten student focus groups were conducted during spring 2017. In three, Restorative Practices were mentioned specifically, and in two they were referred to indirectly. Those who did bring up Restorative Practices had varying opinions. Some quotations from the student focus groups illustrate these opinions:

“I don’t like peace circles because they don’t work. People say all these promises and they never do it.”

“Peace circles can be a waste of time. If it’s a big class that’s having a conflict, it’s a waste of time. But if it’s two people that got into a fight or argument, it might work.”

“Most valuable thing is mediation when there are conflicts.”

“Talk it out. Figure out what the real problem is by talking it out.”

Feedback from administrator and leader interviews pointed out the progress being achieved with restorative strategies, especially circles, and they mentioned that circles involve students to students, staff to staff (professional conflict/discord), and staff to students (to get to the root cause of misbehavior in class). A principal noted that students are beginning to better understand what restorative practice strategies are available to them and what the goal is because they often “circle up” for reasons other than a fight or disagreement, which in her opinion shows a change in behavior. *“They sometimes are requesting restorative circles and peace circles even prior to an incident. They are trying to ward off those things that typically escalate to suspension, which means less time in school. Now I often hear kids say, ‘I’m not going to get suspended, Miss. I’m not going to do it. I need help. You need to bring us together. We need to get this settled.’”* In addition, an administrator shared that there have been two instances where another student has had a similar experience as the students circling up and was asked to join the circle. The administrator sharing that experience said, *“That would be another goal for us — to have a group of scholars trained to lead circles peer-to-peer.”*

Feedback received from nearly all constituents reveals there has been a *“palpable change in culture,”* and one leader stated, *“Everyone deserves credit for it including students, families, leaders, teachers. We’ve gone from a punitive culture with over 3,000 suspensions, and those are only the ones that are recorded, to a culture/climate that is restorative — clearly demonstrated by the dramatic reduction in suspensions, fights, reportable instances — dramatic decreases.”* Another benefit mentioned was a rapid reduction of employee grievances compared to last year. One administrator shared how changing the culture can affect teaching and learning:

“[Now] people are more willing to trust each other and express their voice. Those two pieces changed the conditions for learning and teaching. And we’re not done — it’s not perfect — but improvements in foundational issues show we’ve gone from an adversarial culture to one that’s collaborative. Data demonstrates that point — we’re showing progress — with behavior, discipline, and employee grievances.”

Challenges to the Implementation of Restorative Practices

Data from interviews, focus groups, surveys, and observations indicate there continues to be challenges to the implementation of Restorative Practices at East. The ones most often mentioned by constituents are:

- All teachers have not yet seen Restorative Practices in action.
- Some teachers see the impact as short-lived.
- Teachers desire more opportunities for practice and training in Restorative Practices.
- Staff are concerned about the lack of fidelity and consistency of implementation.
- Teachers still see a lack of student accountability and inconsistent resolutions.
- Teachers consider the amount of time and logistics of setting up a circle or other Restorative Practices strategy to be burdensome.
- Teachers are not always included in the restorative process or its resolution.
- Students are not fully invested in the restorative approach.
- The frequency of parental involvement in restorative strategies is low.
- The restorative approach is a delegated activity rather than leadership driven.

There were a few teachers who explained they had not yet seen Restorative Practices in action and a few who thought it was not being used to its capacity. Some teacher leaders noted during a focus group being frustrated with the fidelity of the implementation, fearing it was not being practiced appropriately. Teachers at the Upper School report not having received adequate support to implement Restorative Practices this year, with only 38 percent responding that to “some or a great extent” they received adequate support (see Figure 39). Teachers and teacher leaders also remarked about the amount of time it takes to set up and do and are concerned with a lack of follow-through or consequences. Some examples of teacher comments about Restorative Practices include:

“I feel that restorative practices is an integral part of the EPO and success of East, but I have not received nearly enough training to implement it with fidelity. I wish this was covered more.”

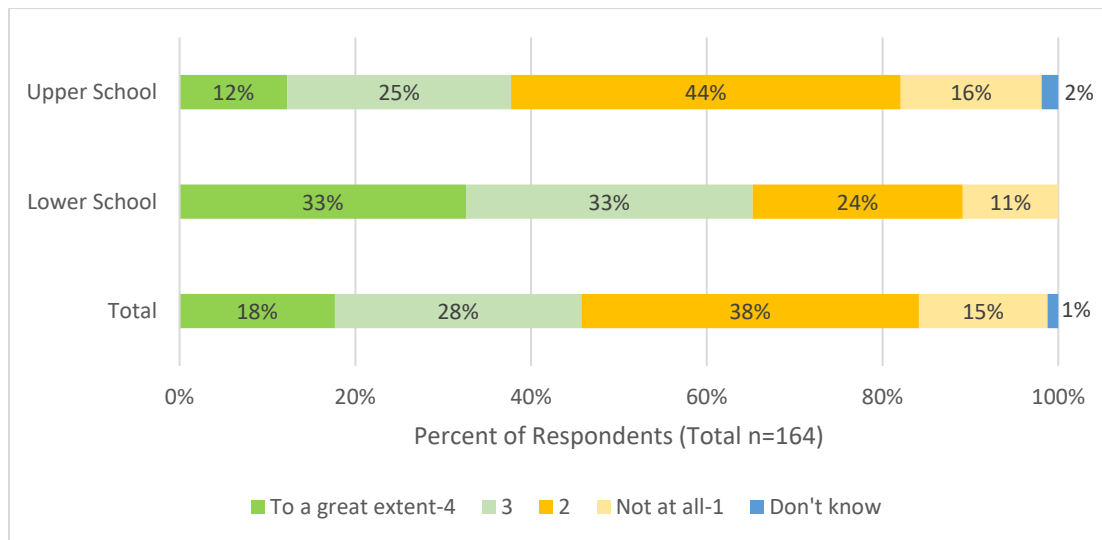
“It’s a process – becoming restorative – it’s better than last year but [we have] a ways to go.”

“Have not seen this used fully. Teachers are not included in the restoration process and the process is often ‘sped up’ just to get students back in the classroom so an alternative placement isn’t needed in that period.”

“The initial meeting seems important; however, if the students fail to comply with the outcome of the meeting, there is no follow through or consequence.”

“I have seen student conflicts settle down after use of restorative practices; however, it seems to only last 4–6 weeks.”

Figure 39. Extent teachers/staff believe they have received the support they needed to effectively implement Restorative Practices this year



Alternative Programs

In an effort to meet the needs of all scholars in its school community, East developed four alternative programs in Year 1 to meet the needs of its most underserved students, with two implemented on-site and two off-site. These four programs — Quest, East Evening, East Big Picture, and East Freedom School — constituted the primary way East intended to meet the needs of students who might be more successful in an alternative academic setting. In Year 2 of implementation, three of these programs moved forward, with East leadership choosing not to implement the on-site East Evening program as a result of under-enrollment and other challenges encountered in Year 1.

Over the course of two years of intensive implementation, East’s alternative programs enjoyed their share of successes and experienced challenges as well, while implementing modifications to better meet student needs and bolster program effectiveness. Successes, challenges, and modifications of each of East’s three remaining alternative academic programs are discussed below, with data from teacher and student focus groups, administrator interviews, and teacher/staff and administrator surveys providing insight and suggesting some changes.

Quest

Quest is an on-site, accelerated credit recovery program serving students who are over-age and have a 0.0 GPA and less than one earned credit, or students entering their third year of high school with no credits earned. Designed by East’s CAO in partnership with the external partner Encompass as a co-taught curriculum meant to be delivered in double blocks, Quest successfully supported some participants in accruing credits and re-engaged others who thrived in the program’s special setting. Almost half of the students in Quest in Year 1 earned enough credits to advance to the 10th grade. Many

Year 1 participants who were meant to “graduate” out of Quest and into East Upper School’s general education program after completing one year of intensive coursework built such strong relationships with Quest faculty staff that they wanted to continue. Quest 2.0 was created to accommodate the preference of these scholars. The original program retained its initial purpose and was given the name Quest 1.0 to distinguish its newer students from Quest 2.0 veterans.

Challenges arose in Year 1 pertaining to both Quest program design/structure and broader challenges present at East. Quest was designed to start nearly 90 minutes later than the rest of Upper School to enable students to reach class on time; however, an unexpected effect of that schedule difference was that Quest students proved disruptive in the hallways while the remaining Upper School students attended block 1 classes. The original program was meant to have a project-based learning component that was not implemented with fidelity, and its core curriculum was different from that used elsewhere within East. A student population with a higher percentage of special education needs than originally anticipated was enrolled without a corresponding increase in special education staff. In addition, changes in school leadership resulted in changes in program supervision.

Several programmatic changes were made in Year 2 to resolve these challenges:

- Changes to the daily schedule
- Curricular changes, including those designed to meet the needs of special education students
- Leadership changes, including less involvement of Encompass in curriculum

The Quest daily schedule start time was adjusted in Year 2 to align with that of the Upper School to eliminate the problem of Quest students roaming the halls during Upper School block 1. However, this change simultaneously resulted in Quest 2.0 students’ need to arrive nearly 90 minutes earlier than they were accustomed to, a challenging adjustment for some scholars, illustrated in the quotations below. Additionally, the original double-block structure of the Quest school day was changed to mirror Upper School’s more standard block schedule.

“When Quest was introduced last year, I liked it because of the hours we were given. School didn’t start until 9:30. It gave me enough time to wake up and get prepared to make sure that I’m on-time to school.” — Student focus group

“It was a little hard because we [were] so used to waking up around 8 and being here around 9:30. Then the hours switched and we had to change our whole way of working — waking up earlier...” — Student focus group

One teacher described Quest’s Year 1 curriculum as more closely resembling a “topic list” than a curriculum developed using backward design principles. Given enough autonomy in their work, some Quest teachers adapted the Engage NY curriculum used elsewhere in East, where possible. Further, project-based learning is not as much of a focus this year, and another change has been to add a Support period to students’ schedules.

In Year 2, Quest came under the supervision and oversight of the new Freshman Academy director at East Upper School. This was mostly seen as beneficial and supported the better integration of students and staff.

Impact of Quest

Quest’s dedicated staff continues to earn kudos for their efforts on behalf of Quest scholars. As Year 1 drew to a close, Quest staff and East’s Encompass partner were poised to renew their focus on scholar attendance. However, information shared in a recent East staff focus group indicates that the Encompass role has expanded to include a “basic needs provider” component — with program staff working to obtain school supplies, warm winter jackets, and any other materials whose absence may stand between Quest students and school attendance, as East’s “kids’ basic needs are at an all-time high.”

With regard to academics, students shared that they often found Quest coursework challenging, in both the level of difficulty and the amount of material covered, with the block schedule format presenting its own obstacle to staying on top of work. However, most students reported rising to the challenge through personal determination and the support of Quest staff, as the following student focus group exchange illustrates:

“It’s like you [have to] complete a lot of stuff. If you miss a day? You [are going to] miss some stuff.” [Meaning, a lot is covered on each day so one absence amounts to a lot of missed material.] Every day they got you doing new stuff.”

“All the classes could be challenging. You’ve just got to pay attention and give it your all and you’re going to understand it.”

“Sometimes it’s overwhelming. Sometimes they try to teach you a lot. Sometimes you’re really frustrated and you feel like walking out of the class.”

“Sometimes it’s too fast. We learn a new topic every day. Not in all the Quest classes but in a few Quest classes.”

“[Quest teachers try] to throw too much at you. Sometimes it’s easy and I get through it like this [snaps fingers]. Everybody’s got their up days and down days. It’s all about staying focused.”

Students speak highly of the opportunity Quest affords them to catch up on their credit accrual and the sense that the Quest program successfully prepares them to pass tests that stand between them and graduation:

“[Quest] gives us another opportunity to go back where we are supposed to be.”

“I like [Quest] because they help you catch up on your credits. When I first started Quest... I had zero credits. Now I’ve got almost ten. So it helps me a lot with our credits. That’s what I REALLY like Quest for.”

“I feel like [Quest] only teach[es] us what we really need to know for the test. Certain regular classes teach you stuff that’s really not going to be on the test. Stuff you don’t need.”

Students also shared an unexpected outcome of their participation in Quest — increased maturity. They spoke of taking more responsibility and maturing as a result of their participation in Quest.

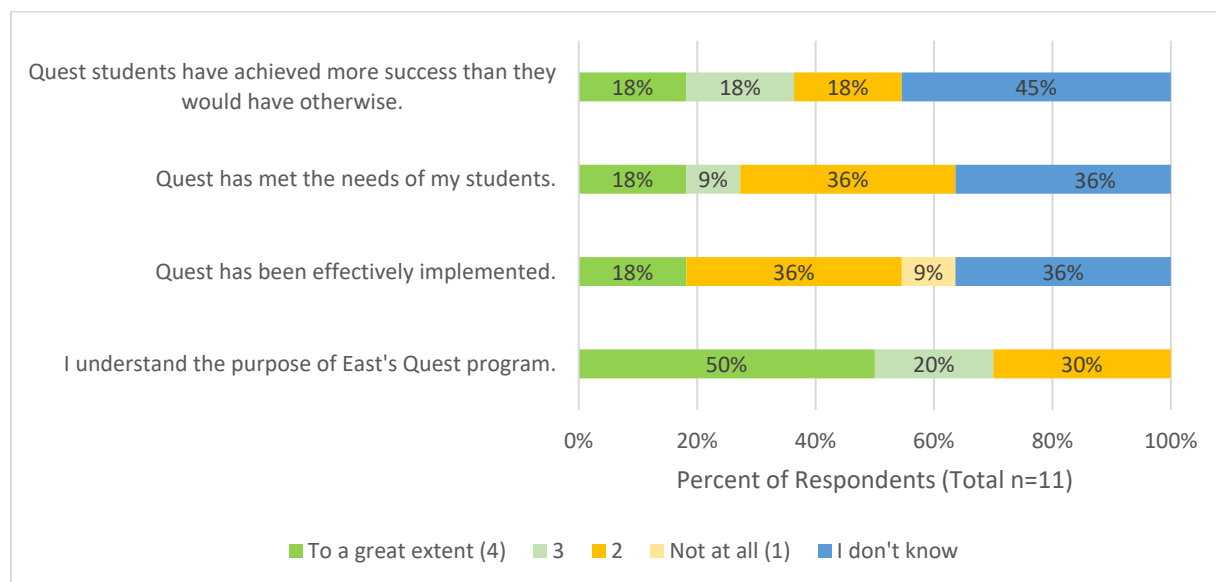
New and/or Ongoing Challenges

Quest was not a topic frequently mentioned in interviews or focus groups with teachers, though based upon student focus groups, interviews, and survey data a few new and ongoing challenges emerged.

Administrators shared that student participation in Quest is entirely voluntary, with students opting in if they deem it a good fit for their academic goals. However, other East staff and students indicated that many students are assigned — or, as was more commonly stated, “put into” — the program. This discrepancy in the description of the student enrollment process existed across all three alternative programs.

There is a general lack of understanding or knowledge even among administrators about the effectiveness and impact of Quest. Results from the administrator survey (see Figure 40), for example, indicate that of the 11 administrators who responded to the survey, 4 of them (36%) do not know if Quest has met the needs of students, and about 3 (27%) think it has met student needs to some or a great extent.

Figure 40. Extent of administrator awareness of Quest alternative academic program



Big Picture

East Big Picture (EBP), housed off-site and developed under contract with the national school redesign organization, was intended to enroll students who had failed 9th grade during the 2014–15 school year. Designed with special features, including twice-daily advisory periods and an internship component, EBP enrolled 50 students from East and an additional 15 students from other Rochester City School District schools through a special partnership. EBP was meant to deliver the same 9th grade curriculum used on the main East campus in six 48-minute periods, four days each week. The fifth day was reserved for internship activities. Year 1 yielded a number of promising early results. East administrators reported that EBP students exhibited a higher degree of engagement at East Big Picture than they had while attending classes on the main East campus. Program staff were proud of the respectful and inclusive culture they had established in Year 1, which reportedly informed all aspects of school function, including student discipline. Teachers were excited to have a fair amount of input in how instruction was delivered and shared that the learning environment was dynamic, as they were encouraged to implement programmatic modifications of benefit to the EBP community.

The most pressing challenges during EBP's first year centered on poor student attendance, concerns about academic rigor, enrollment of a higher number of special education students than the program was staffed to serve, general staffing shortages, limited student internship placements, a persistent lack of resources, and issues with the program's physical space. Efforts undertaken to reduce some of these challenges included:

- Addition of a full-time guidance counselor to EBP's staff
- Efforts to improve attendance
- Increased alignment between academic programs at East Upper School and EBP
- Efforts to improve internship placement

There was reportedly mixed success with these efforts. EBP teachers in focus groups mentioned being observed by various staff from East's main site, as one example. Some kinks arose in those efforts, as the East observers weren't always able to observe the Big Picture lessons from the beginning, and EBP teachers weren't afforded the opportunity of post-observation conferences with their East observers, reducing the benefit teachers were able to gain from them. Teachers shared that with these alignment efforts, they had less latitude to implement the curriculum. Also, while EBP teachers were supposed to use the same curriculum used at Big East but delivering it within a different schedule structure, some EBP teachers indicated that they did not have access to the same curriculum. Additionally, EBP continued to struggle with internship placements.

Impact

Students' EBP experiences have been varied. In focus groups, scholars mentioned that they were faring better academically in EBP's smaller environment. Some students further noted that certain classes were challenging for them while others were concerned that their classes overall were too easy and they felt ill-prepared for upcoming Regents exams. Students also mentioned being concerned that EBP may not offer the classes they would need in order to remain in the program until graduation. Most

considered the environment safe and relatively friendly. Students were divided on the value of the internship component of the program. In focus groups, students shared comments about their EBP experiences:

“[EBP] is a smaller environment. Teachers care more and you’re not as distracted as you used to be.” [WestEd: Did you have the same experience of getting better grades here than at your old school?] “I was getting straight F’s. I’m getting better grades here — A’s and B’s here.”

“I can’t skip classes I don’t like anymore... They just [stay] on top of you.”

“I went to [another school] — there wasn’t as much help [as there is] here. They really helped me get my grades up [here]. Independent Work Time — you go to your teachers if you need extra help, extra work and they’ll help you out. Here they help you bring your grade up and they actually put you back on track.”

“They give you a lot more support here.”

“There’s more room to focus here and do your work and stuff.”

“They also try to help you find an internship for your career. You could work there in the future.”

Challenges

New and ongoing challenges were identified with East Big Picture. The challenges identified include:

- The enrollment process
- Questions about the rigor
- Staffing and professional development
- Adequate internships
- Lack of clarity around the purpose and target population for EBP
- Operational and resources challenges such as no access to RCSD internet and data systems and lack of a dedicated telephone to EBP

East staff and administrators seem unclear on the purpose of the EBP program, and there are different explanations from administrators and students about student placement in EBP. Administrators shared that students can choose to come to EBP, and some may be counseled into the program. In focus groups, teachers and students shared that attending EBP is not always presented as a choice. The following quotations illustrate these different understandings.

“I was really, really, really terrible at East. I was so bad. And then, for a whole year, I didn’t go to school. So they said, ‘Either you come here [EBP] or you don’t go to school...’. They said I can’t go back to East.” — Student focus group

“It was supposed to be — we were told — that it was supposed to be by interest only. And an application process” — Teacher focus group

“I’ve heard of cases where kids were threatened with Big Picture. ‘If you mess up 3 more times, you’re going to Big Picture.’... It just makes it harder for us — a lot of our kids already have huge trust issues and that just starts them off on the wrong foot.” — Teacher focus group

While some students feel the level of academic challenge is appropriate, others believe the rigor and degree of Regents preparation at EBP is lacking. The following quotations show some of the variation in opinion on the rigor and preparation:

“...This work we have is too easy. Then we get to the Regents and don’t know what to do. It’s hard to study on your own because you really don’t know what’s going to be on that test.”

“They take time out of their day to help us get through school.” [“Right.”]. “They care about us. They want us to pass.”

EBP teachers described their professional learning experiences as centered on structural components of the Big Picture program, while not including enough time on content area or instructional practices. EBP teachers and staff also worried about vacancies in staffing, which they feel negatively affects the operation and quality of the program.

“The PD here — which we have on Wednesday afternoons — in my opinion is all about advisory/internship. We’re very rarely allowed to concentrate on anything regarding the academics or curriculum even though we want rigor.”

Teachers, students, and administrators mentioned challenges with the internship component of the Big Picture program. Teachers and students were concerned about the position of the internship in the middle of the week. Administrators and teachers were also concerned about the difficulty of getting enough appropriate internships for students. They shared some thoughts on this subject in focus groups:

“I don’t like the Wednesday internships. I’m in this school because obviously something wasn’t going right at my school. So you’re going to give us an extra thing we’ve got to do when that Wednesday we could actually be doing school work? I’m here because I wasn’t doing good at my other school with my academics. Now I’m here and I have 4 days of learning while other people have 5? That’s not fair.” — Student focus group

“Another challenging thing is the process of getting an internship. It took mad long to get an internship.” — Student focus group

Anticipated Changes to Big Picture for Year 3

The owner of the building in which EBP is currently located has sold the property, requiring EBP to relocate. Plans to move to a new site remain unfinalized. One administrator shared EBP will be brought

back to the East campus for the next school year and that the program will be phased out after the 2017–18 school year with a new program developed to better meet the needs of the target students. The primary reason for this change is dissatisfaction with the Big Picture contract and assessment that the program is not really meeting the needs of students and the school.

East Freedom School

East Freedom School (EFS) is a pre-GED program, created in collaboration with local development organization North East Area Development, Inc. (NEAD,) which aims to prepare EFS students for success in the GED program of their choice. Most of EFS’s coursework is completed with the aid of one-on-one support reinforced with independent practice. There were approximately 30 registered students during the 2015–16 school year. EFS has historically enrolled the most disenfranchised scholars in the East community, including those who have been disengaged or out of school for long periods of time. These students are taking advantage of a path forward that has not always been available to them. An East administrator asserted:

“We’ve started to increase enrollment [in Freedom School] which means that kids that would have normally just dropped out and given up see that this is a viable option for them. I think that has made a tremendous difference. We all know that they can complete the TASC and go to Monroe Community College (MCC) or any college, just like a kid who graduates from [Big East] does. I think [Freedom School] offers elements to kids that [have] previously not been pushed enough.”

Challenges

As with the other alternative programs, the absence of a formal process for student enrollment has proven challenging for East Freedom School, as has spotty attendance on the part of some enrollees. Having adequate materials and resources has also been challenging for the program.

Overall Impact/Successes of East Freedom School

Several East Upper School administrators have voiced the sentiment, “If even one student earns his or her TASC credential as a result of Freedom School participation, we have been successful.” EFS has been successful several times over by that simple measure, as three students have met that threshold. EFS has enjoyed success along a number of other dimensions. Program staff noted students’ incremental gains in decision-making, personal accountability and ability to do higher level coursework. On average, students’ EFS attendance is higher than their attendance while at “Big East,” though still not high. Students’ special needs, such as the need for childcare, are accommodated to the extent possible at EFS so that unnecessary absences are avoided. Students and their parents rave about the program, in contrast to what they have to say about East’s main academic program, which, in most cases, was experienced pre-EPO. Furthermore, students and their families have forged a strong relationship with program staff, speaking highly of the seemingly round-the-clock support the main instructor provides, as the following quotations illustrate:

“I got a family out of Freedom School — we help one another.” — Student focus group

“Freedom School works with you in whatever your individual struggle area is.” — Student focus group

“Freedom School environment is quiet, not too loud or too much fuss like a normal high school.” — Student focus group

“[At Freedom School] I could bring my [child] on days I didn’t have childcare.” — Student focus group

“I see a big change in my [scholar] since she started at Freedom School. She opens up more when you talk to her — she’ll come to me if she is having a problem. She has a real bond with [FS program teacher/admin]. When she doesn’t have a ride [to school], [FS will provide one]. East is not going to go that extra mile.” — Freedom School parent focus group

“Freedom School is here to listen and to help. East doesn’t pay attention.” — Freedom School parent focus group

“Freedom School has been so helpful — help with finding jobs ... small field trips [that] opened up my son’s mind to different options.”

Family and Community Engagement

The original EPO plan included strategies to increase parent/family participation at East given the longstanding struggle to bring parents and families into the school. On the other hand, community organizations and agencies have long partnered with East High School to provide assistance to students, teachers, and families. The EPO plan intended to continue and expand these partnerships that had proven to be making valuable contributions, and to involve new partners to support specific initiatives at East. Soon after the beginning of the EPO at East, the EPO merged East’s Community Engagement Team with its Families and Community Engagement Committee (FACE). FACE meets regularly and includes representation from stakeholders and partner organizations such as the Rochester Teachers’ Association; parents; Lower School, Upper School, and Freshman Academy principals; representatives of various community agencies; as well as the Mayor’s office. Since FACE appears to work closely with partners and families, we have combined these two areas for the purpose of this report.

The involvement of community partners in the East EPO is a multifaceted aspect with many moving parts. Some partner organizations have a presence in the school, such as the AmeriCorps volunteers, Ibero personnel, and the staff of the Student Support Center. Other partners are situated in the neighborhood or in nearby communities. The extent to which partner organizations collaborate and coordinate to meet the needs of the East EPO constituents is impressive. One school leader noted the FACE committee is making efforts to minimize the burden of coordinating and streamlining partner and family engagement activities: *“We’re trying to organize how we do family and community engagement so it’s not person dependent ... creating documents and guidelines showing how it’s supposed to be done.”* Two committee members have created a communication plan that will be on the school website.

Findings about parent engagement and partner involvement are based on interviews with school leaders and administrators; focus groups with partners, counselors, and social workers; and responses from student and teacher/staff surveys. Data were gathered from administrators, teachers, students, and partners themselves in an effort to understand and assess the impact of partnerships on the progress of the EPO. The data suggest that community partners are a vital component of the turnaround efforts and also verify that collaboration and coordination of partners with the roles and efforts of East staff have become stronger and clearer to the teachers, students, and families they serve.

The FACE Committee

The FACE committee has been working well and has made strategic decisions this year to enable a more process-oriented structure. The committee created a manual that identifies processes and procedures, such as ensuring meeting notices are sent well in advance, and that thank-you cards go out when someone attends an event. Efforts are also being made to advertise the activities for parents so that they are more visible. More parent workshops are planned for the summer months and next year, and these will include topics requested by parents rather than being staff-directed, such as bringing in grandparents who need to know the stages of development for kids, as there are many households headed by grandparents in Rochester. Workshops that help parents prepare their taxes and learn how to apply for college and financial aid will continue. The school also added a Spanish language dedicated phone line to increase accessibility to all parents.

Parent Engagement

Teachers, school leaders, counselors, and social workers, as well as community partners, all value parent engagement, but acknowledge that it is an ongoing struggle at East. According to teacher/staff survey data, over half the respondents did not think there was a clear plan for engaging families at East, nor do they think the strategies being used have been effective (see Table 4). However, 8 of 12 administrators reported looking at data with parents/guardians of students, and 10 of 12 administrators agreed parents were made aware of expectations for student behavior this year.

Table 4. Teacher and staff perspectives on parent engagement

	Lower School					Upper School				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Parents are seen as key partners in our school improvement efforts.	13.3% (n=6)	60.0% (n=27)	15.6% (n=7)	6.7% (n=3)	4.4% (n=2)	15.8% (n=16)	41.6% (n=42)	25.7% (n=26)	10.9% (n=11)	5.9% (n=6)
Most teachers value parent involvement at East.	33.3% (n=15)	62.2% (n=28)	4.4% (n=2)	0.0% (n=0)	0.0% (n=0)	28.7% (n=29)	60.4% (n=51)	5.9% (n=6)	4.0% (n=4)	1.0% (n=1)
East leadership values parent involvement.	37.8% (n=17)	55.6% (n=25)	2.2% (n=1)	0.0% (n=0)	4.4% (n=2)	35.0% (n=35)	56.0% (n=56)	6.0% (n=6)	2.0% (n=2)	1.0% (n=1)
There is a clear plan for engaging families at East.	4.4% (n=2)	40.0% (n=18)	35.6% (n=16)	0.0% (n=0)	20.0% (n=9)	6.9% (n=7)	28.7% (n=29)	38.6% (n=39)	14.9% (n=15)	10.9% (n=11)
Strategies for involving parents are effective.	6.7% (n=3)	28.9% (n=13)	46.7% (n=21)	6.7% (n=3)	11.1% (n=5)	2.0% (n=2)	13.0% (n=13)	49.0% (n=49)	25.0% (n=25)	11.0% (n=11)

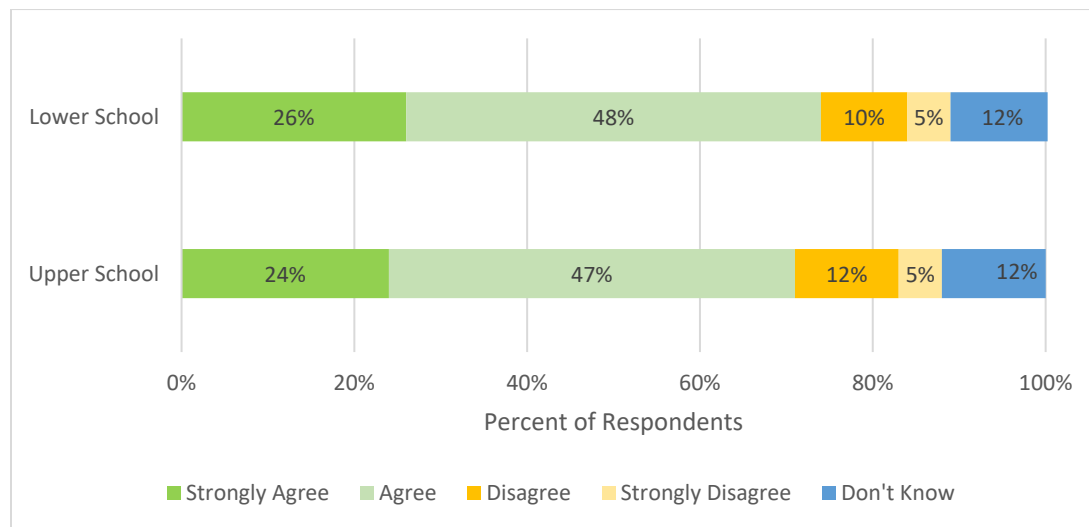
Fifty-two teachers and staff responded to an open-ended survey question asking for suggestions/ideas to improve/increase parent engagement at East. In addition to continuing to schedule family fun nights, provide food, and plan social/sporting events, they suggested considering:

- Providing transportation and child care
- More translation of letters home and more translators on-site at events
- More home visits
- Encouraging co-parents to be in touch with parents
- More diverse schedule/change arrangements for parent/teacher conferences
- Including parents in Restorative Practices and re-entry meetings
- Not mailing student grades, requiring parents to come in
- More scholar showcase nights and more student-led conferences
- Engaging parents of 6th graders early on

Students were asked about whether the school keeps parents informed about what is going on at school. Students at the Lower and Upper School responded similarly: 74 percent of Lower School

students and 71 percent of Upper School students either agreed or strongly agreed with that statement (see Figure 41).

Figure 41. Extent students believe the school keeps parent/guardian informed about what is going on at school, such as events



At Lower School, efforts have been intensified this year to improve parent participation and engagement, and the progress has been documented. One administrator shared:

“We’ve been very intentional in what we do for families and how we include them. We have the State coming Thursday to do that piece of our review, so we’ve been collecting a lot of data and evidence on what we’ve done differently this year. We pair all of our events so parents come in about once a month for multiple things – a concert, parent/teacher conference, award ceremony all on the same night – a few draws to get them in here. We did at least 181 home visits at Lower School alone.”

A Newcomers’ Academy was held this year during the February break and received rave reviews from parents. The Spanish and bilingual (ENL) students were taken into the community to different Rochester landmarks such as the Eastman and Susan B. Anthony museums. They did a project after that and made claims about who was the best Rochester historian; they then did a presentation and used all the language of the Regents. “It was fantastic, and parents were super happy about the kids coming to that.”

Another activity that was well-received and well-attended was for those parents who were new to this country. East collaborated with Ibero, a community-based organization, for a parent evening conducted in Spanish where graduation requirements and how the system works were articulated and explained. An administrator noted: “I saw each of those parents at the school-wide open house the next week – a very direct impact.” A community fair was held earlier in the year so parents could network with community agencies and it was considered very successful. An East FACE committee member stated:

“We are putting ourselves out there for the neighborhood to see us as a place to come and visit and be known – and also provide organizations with the opportunity to network with each other.”

One school leader emphasized that parents can show support in ways other than attending school events:

“I think what is often a myth or a fallacy to the outside is [parent] attendance at events – that if you don’t have great attendance at a PPD meeting or basketball game, you don’t have parent support. In reality, parents can support in multiple ways. I think you’d hear the vast majority of staff say, ‘Any time we call for a parent, they’re willing to help us.’ We both want the same thing – success for their child. I would caution that the real value of parent involvement is not attending an event. The real value is working in partnership with us whenever we call – and even when we don’t call.”

The following quotation from an administrator sums up a common sentiment about parent engagement at East:

“I think we’ve made some strides – definitely an area of need and concern but we have some bright spots ... and it’s getting better.”

Benefits of Working with Community Partners

In addition to coordinating parent engagement, FACE also coordinates community partners. Most teachers understand the role of key partners at East, and consider partnerships very valuable to the EPO efforts; and most believe partners have enhanced family/school connections and have helped to meet specific needs of students or families (see Table 5). Nearly all administrators “agreed or strongly agreed” that key partners are highly valued at East, have enhanced family/school connections this year, and have helped to meet specific needs of students or families. Teachers/staff also indicated there are many supports in the building provided by community agencies and partners to which they are able to refer scholars. They describe partners as very approachable and willing to help with challenges. In some instances, it is the outside agencies that have added academic and emotional support for students. For example, the Student Support Center can help students with housing, clothing, emotional support, and trauma. Hillside does tutoring, as does Reinvesting in Youth. Administrators identified some of the benefits to having vibrant community partnerships:

“Community connections give scholars a sense of the importance of their education beyond the walls of East.”

“There are lots of programs and external partners each with their own unique niche that allows East to narrow in on and meet the specific needs a student or family might be struggling with.”

Table 5. Teacher/staff perspectives on community partners

	Lower School					Upper School				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Community partners are valued at East.	24.4% (n=11)	62.2% (n=28)	2.2% (n=1)	0.0% (n=0)	11.1% (n=5)	23.8% (n=24)	57.4% (n=58)	7.9% (n=8)	1.0% (n=1)	9.9% (n=10)
Community partners have enhanced family/school connections this year.	20.0% (n=9)	55.6% (n=25)	4.4% (n=2)	0.0% (n=0)	20.0% (n=9)	23.8% (n=24)	52.5% (n=53)	5.9% (n=5)	1.0% (n=1)	16.8% (n=17)
Partnerships with external organizations have helped to meet specific needs of students or families.	13.3% (n=6)	57.8% (n=26)	6.7% (n=3)	0.0% (n=0)	22.2% (n=2)	24.8% (n=25)	50.5% (n=51)	8.9% (n=9)	1.0% (n=1)	14.9% (n=15)

Some of the ways that partners have served students this year are (1) Lower School students enjoyed visits from the Smilemobile – a mobile dental lab provided by Eastman Dental School for students to have their teeth cleaned and cavities filled, (2) a new partnership through the University of Rochester’s Health Department has provided breakfast for Lower School students in their classrooms, (3) an additional social worker has been added for Lower School students who have experienced severe trauma, and (4) a new partnership with SOAR was initiated through the City of Rochester wherein a health educator has talked to students about health as well as emotional and sexual relationships.

Also new this year is the Attendance Initiative, which provides the assistance of specific partners to assist in tracking down and connecting with absent students and their families. An administrator stated: *“We meet all together weekly -- partners, social workers, and counselors and our attendance clerk. The reason [this] is more effective is because now we can coordinate who’s working with who – identify the students with attendance issues and make a referral immediately to the agency to support them ... the coordination is much better than last year.”*

Students also shared the importance of partnerships. In the student surveys, the majority of respondents indicated awareness of the community partners. One student shared:

“Student Support Center, that’s like my safe place ... the place I always go when I have a problem. I’ve known the counselors since I was about 12. They work with the Center for Youth so there’s different things they can help you with ... like if you need housing or you

need to leave your house for a while ... or anything; they're always there, they're SO supportive as long as you're doing what you've got to do. Like, if you don't have food in your house, they have food there. They have clothing, they have things there, so it's a really good place. If they were ever taken out, I would cry." —Student

Challenges of Parent and Community Engagement

Very few challenges were noted by stakeholders with respect to working with partner organizations. In fact, it was frequently noted that the roles of partners have been clarified, making it easier for school staff to access the appropriate ones to service a student or family in need. Partners, during a focus group, did mention that sometimes communication is a challenge, such as late notices of events they could attend or assist with. Sometimes an agency has open slots to accept families or students for services, but the lengthy response time from East can eliminate an opportunity. Another partner shared that it is difficult to coordinate and adequately record parents who attend an event at the school because they sometimes use an entrance other than where the registration desk is located. Often more than one event is scheduled so this situation is exacerbated when numerous doors are open and not monitored.

One member of FACE shared a lesson learned through working closely with the EPO parent/community engagement tenet: *"I think it has to be a more coordinated effort in Year 1 ... to have engaged parents at the earliest possible moment ... from the time you open that door ... or else you're constantly playing catch up to bring them to the table."*

East in the Community

In addition to efforts to bring the community and community partners into East, East is also pushing out into the community. East's superintendent continues to be actively involved in the community to further the idea of the Community School model and to create a support system beyond academics that meets other needs of students and families, such as poverty relief, internships, and jobs. One leader stated: *"He has developed incredible relationships with a lot of the players in the community that definitely indicates progress."* The superintendent and Lower School administrators are working to build partnerships with other schools that feed students to East. Teachers also noted that the negative view of East is changing as a result of this outreach, as well as from publicity from the University of Rochester.

Chapter 3

Student Outcomes

This section of the report presents an analysis of quantitative student level data for the 2016-17 school year from data provided by the Rochester City School District. First descriptive data on East students in are presented. Then data comparing East 7th graders to those in other RCSD schools is presented. This section ends with a comparison of first-time 9th grade students at East to those in other RCSD schools.

East Lower and Upper Schools 2016-17 Student Outcomes

There are a few important things to note about the sample used for the analysis of student outcomes for East Lower and Upper Schools. We used student level data for all students enrolled in East Lower or Upper School with a few exceptions. The sample definition, including the exceptions, is the same used in the Year 1 report that looked at data for the 2015-16 school year. First, any student who became inactive (e.g. stopped attending school) before December 31, 2016, is *excluded* from this analysis. The rationale is that we want to know about the progress of students who spent a majority of their time at East. If a student left early in the school year, they did not have much exposure to the East's programming, curriculum, and instruction. Similarly, students in special programs at the Upper School, Quest and Freedom School, are also excluded for the same reason. Finally, students who are assigned to East for accountability purposes but who do not spend their time at East are also excluded. These include students who are in the following programs: All City High, Rochester International Academy (for students who enter RCSD but do not speak English), and YMIH (program for young mother and pregnant students). Also, any student coded as "census" which includes any student assigned to East but who cannot be located, has been excluded. This analysis includes 305 students enrolled in East Lower School and 763 students in East Upper School.

Students who are assigned to East but who attend other RCSD programs or who are missing (coded as census) are counted in the school's accountability status according to NYSED rules. However, it did not make sense to include them in this analysis, which is looking at how students who attend East under the EPO are doing.

Characteristics of Students at East Lower and Upper Schools

This section presents a summary of the characteristics of students at East Lower School and Upper School. The information presented includes student gender, race/ethnicity, English learner status, and poverty status.

Figure 42. Gender of students at East Lower School (left) and East Upper School (right), 2016-17 Females and Males (n=1,041)

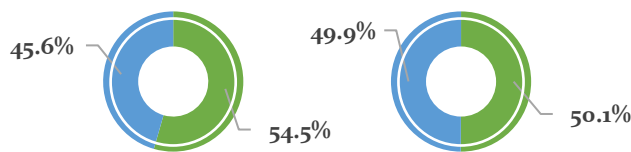
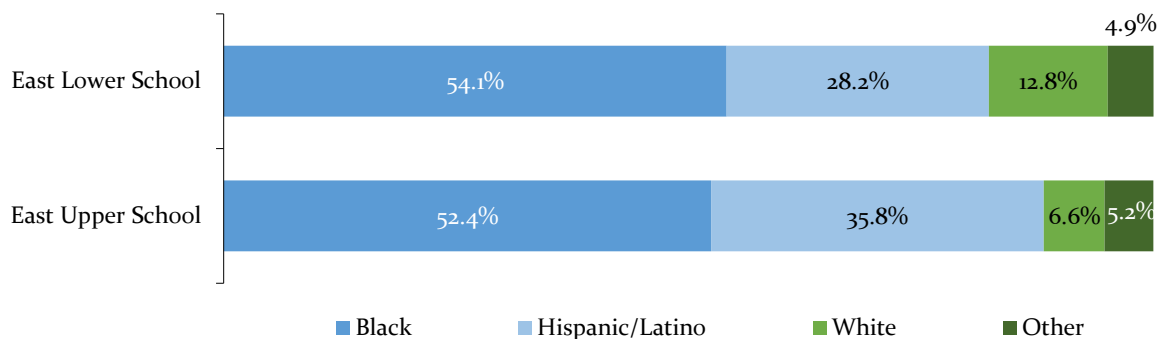


Figure 42 shows the breakdown of students by gender in the Lower and Upper Schools for the 2016-17 school year. The Lower School enrolls a higher percentage of males (54.5%) than females (45.6%). The Upper School enrolls a similar percentage of males (50.1%) and females (49.9%).

Figure 43. Race/Ethnicity of students at East Lower (n=305) and East Upper (n=763) Schools, 2016-17



Enrollment by race and ethnicity looks a little different at the Lower and Upper Schools (see Figure 43). The Lower School’s population is 54.1% Black, 28.2% Hispanic, 12.8% are white, and 4.9% are other. At the Upper School, the racial/ethnic breakdown is: 52.4% Black, 35.8% Hispanic, 6.6% White, and 5.2% other.

Figure 44. Student characteristics at East Lower (n=305) and East Upper (n=763) Schools, 2016-17

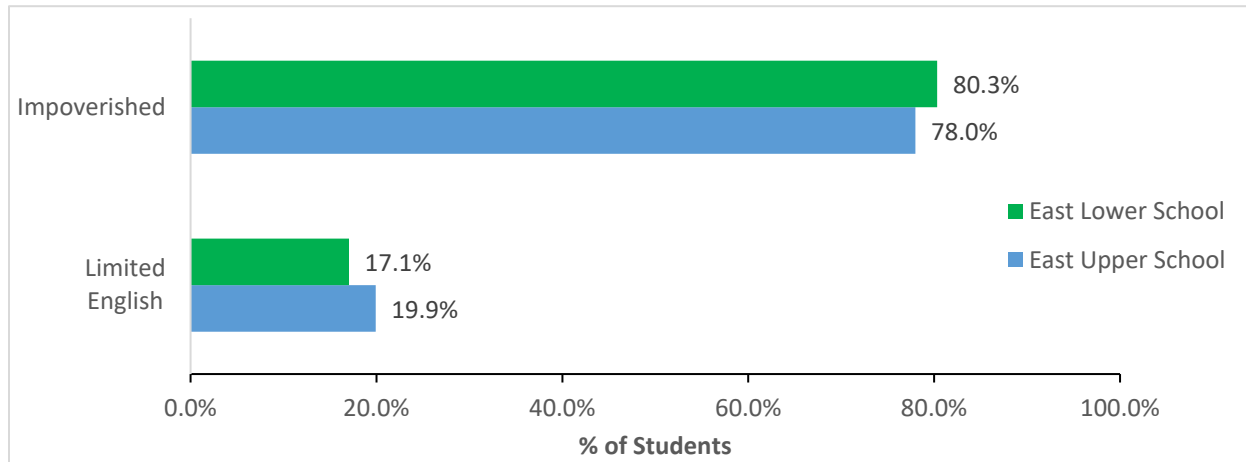


Figure 44 illustrates students' poverty status and limited English proficiency status. We see that a slightly higher percentage of students at the Lower School are determined to be impoverished (80.3%) compared to the Upper School (78.0%). The Lower School has a slightly smaller percentage of students who are limited English proficient (17.1%) compared to the Upper School (19.9%).

Indicators of Student Progress and Outcomes

This section presents some indicators of student progress and success. These include suspension data, attendance data, as well as New York state assessment results for the Lower School and Regents assessment results for the Upper School. The analyses use student level data for all students enrolled in East Lower or Upper School with the exceptions noted in the above introduction to this section.

Table 6 indicates the number and percentage of students (unduplicated counts) who received at least one in-school suspension, at least one out-of-school suspension, and at least one long term suspension. The Lower School saw a higher percentage of in school suspensions with 27.2 percent of Lower School students receiving at least one in-school suspension compared to 13.8 percent of Upper School students. The percentage of Lower School students receiving at least one long-term suspension was less than Upper School students with 0.7 percent of Lower School students receiving at least one long-term suspension compared to 2.6 percent of Upper School students. However, Lower school students had more out of school suspensions (7.2%) compared to Upper school students (3.3%).

Table 6. Student suspensions at East Lower and Upper Schools, 2016-17

	N	Percentage of students receiving one or more
<i>East Lower School</i>		
<i>In-school suspensions</i>	83	27.2%
<i>Long-term suspensions</i>	2	0.7%
<i>Out of school suspensions</i>	22	7.2%
<i>East Upper School</i>		
<i>In-school suspensions</i>	105	13.8%
<i>Long-term suspensions</i>	20	2.6%
<i>Out of school suspensions</i>	25	3.3%

Student attendance continues to be a challenge at East. State law requires a minimum of 180 days of school each year, and the average and median number of days East students are present at school is well below this number, as documented in Table 7. On average, a Lower School student attends school for 158 days (Table 7) for an average attendance rate of 89.9 percent. The median Lower School attendance rate was 93.8, which means that half of the students had an attendance rate higher than 93.8 percent and half lower than that (see Table 8); this is a notable improvement over last year when the median was 79.7. This suggests that more students at the Lower School are attending school more often. At the Upper School, the mean number of days present is 121 days (see Table 8). The average attendance rate at the Upper School is 75.3 percent (see Table 8) and the median 85.4 which are both lower than in 2015-16, when the mean for the upper school was 93.6 and the median was 88.7.

Table 7. Student attendance at East Lower and Upper Schools, 2016-17

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
<i>East Lower School</i>				
<i>Days present</i>	305	0	177	158
<i>East Upper School</i>				
<i>Days present</i>	751	0	165	121

Table 8. Student attendance rate at East Lower and Upper Schools, 2016-17

	N	Mean	Median
<i>East Lower School</i>			
<i>Attendance rate</i>	305	89.9	93.8
<i>East Upper School</i>			
<i>Attendance rate</i>	751	75.3	85.4

Table 9 describes the credits earned by grade for the 2016-17 school year. By the end of 12th grade, the average student has sufficient credits to meet the 22 earned credit requirement for a Regents' Diploma. Table 9 also describes students' grade point average, by grade. At the end of year, 9 percent of first time 9th graders had earned zero credits, though more than half had earned at least 8.5 credits.

Table 9. Credits earned and GPA, East Upper School, 2016-17

Grade	Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Median
<i>9th grade (First-time)</i>	<i>Credits earned</i>	153	0.0	13.5	7.3	8.5
	<i>GPA</i>	153	0.00	4.16	1.74	1.61
<i>9th grade (Repeat)</i>	<i>Credits earned</i>	62	0.0	11.5	3.1	3.0
	<i>GPA</i>	62	0.00	1.28	0.32	0.26
<i>10th grade</i>	<i>Credits earned</i>	204	5.0	23.0	13.6	14.3
	<i>GPA</i>	204	0.31	4.37	1.72	1.54
<i>11th grade</i>	<i>Credits earned</i>	134	11.0	29.5	19.9	20.8
	<i>GPA</i>	134	0.44	4.11	2.09	1.99
<i>12th grade</i>	<i>Credits earned</i>	198	12.0	41.5	24.8	25
	<i>GPA</i>	198	0.58	4.31	2.08	2.0

Student achievement on standardized tests at the Lower and Upper School continue to show a struggling school. Table 10 shows the results for East Lower School on the state standardized ELA and math exams by grade for 2016-17. It shows the percentage of students who scored in each performance level and the median scale score. Students must score at level 3 to be considered proficient for both the ELA and math exams. Among 6th graders, 7.1 percent of students scored at level 3 on the ELA assessment and only 14.3 percent of students scored at level 3 on the math assessment. Among 7th graders, 4.7 percent of students scored level 3 on ELA and 3.2 percent scored at level 3, and another 1.6 percent scored at level 4, on the math assessment. Five percent of 8th grade students scored at a level 3 in ELA, 2.5 percent scored at a level 3 in math and 24.8 percent scored at level 3 in science. These data indicate that the school still has significant growth to make for a majority of students to reach proficiency at the Lower School.

Table 10. NY State Assessment, East Lower School, 2016-17

Grade 6	Variable	%	Median Scale Score
ELA (N=14)	Level 1	85.7	250
	Level 2	7.1	
	Level 3	7.1	
Math (N=14)	Level 1	71.4	265
	Level 2	14.3	
	Level 3	14.3	

Grade 7	Variable	%	Median Scale Score
ELA (N=127)	Level 1	66.1	274
	Level 2	29.1	
	Level 3	4.7	
Math (N=126)	Level 1	71.4	277
	Level 2	23.8	
	Level 3	3.2	
	Level 4	1.6	

Grade 8	Variable	%	Median Scale Score
<i>ELA</i> (N=121)	<i>Level 1</i>	67.8	264
	<i>Level 2</i>	27.3	
	<i>Level 3</i>	5.0	
<i>Math</i> (N=121)	<i>Level 1</i>	82.6	262
	<i>Level 2</i>	14.9	
	<i>Level 3</i>	2.5	
<i>Science</i> (N=133)	<i>Level 1</i>	30.1	55
	<i>Level 2</i>	42.9	
	<i>Level 3</i>	24.8	
	<i>Level 4</i>	2.3	

Table 11 shows student results on the various NY State Regents exams taken by students at East during the 2016-17 school year, as well as from the previous school year for comparison. The table shows the results for all Upper School students who took the exam. The table shows the number of students who took each exam, the median score on the exam, as well as the percentage of students who scored about the passing score of 65. For this school year, we see a higher percentage of students passing and higher median scores on most of the Regents exams. Specifically, we see a majority of students were passing the Common Core Algebra 1 Regents, the Common Core ELA Regents, the US History Regents, and the Living Environments Regents exams.

Table 11. Regents assessment outcomes, East Upper School, 2015-16 and 2016-17

Assessment	Variable	2015-16	2016-17
NY State Exam Geometry (Regents)	# of students who took the exam	42	109
	Median Score	44.5	49
	% of students scoring over 65	4.76%	15.6%
NY State Exam Common Core Algebra I (Regents)	# of students who took the exam	337	670
	Median Score	58	65
	% of students scoring over 65	31.45%	50.0%
NY State Exam Common Core Algebra II (Regents)	# of students who took the exam	46	64
	Median Score	54	56
	% of students scoring over 65	13.04%	29.7%
Common Core ELA Exam	# of students who took the exam	220	376
	Median Score	67	68
	% of students scoring over 65	50.68%	60.1%
NY State Exam US History (Regents)	# of students who took the exam	196	353
	Median Score	59	67
	% of students scoring over 65	36.73%	57.8%
NY State Exam Global History (Regents)	# of students who took the exam	386	501
	Median Score	55	60
	% of students scoring over 65	22.02%	39.1%
NY State Exam Living Environment (Regents)	# of students who took the exam	315	623
	Median Score	58	66
	% of students scoring over 65	28.89%	57.1%
NY State Exam Physics (Regents)	# of students who took the exam	22	26
	Median Score	52	47
	% of students scoring over 65	27.27%	19.2%
NY State Exam Chemistry (Regents)	# of students who took the exam	84	128
	Median Score	49.5	50
	% of students scoring over 65	3.57%	11.7%
NY State Exam Common Core Geometry (Regents)	# of students who took the exam	217	344
	Median Score	47	48
	% of students scoring over 65	7.37%	10.7%
NY State Exam Earth Science (Regents)	# of students who took the exam	106	221
	Median Score	49	57
	% of students scoring over 65	14.02%	32.6%

East- Rochester City School District Comparative Student Outcomes – 7th Grade Students

This section provides descriptive statistics comparing 7th graders at East to 7th graders in other RCSD schools for the 2016/17 school year, the first full year of operation of the EPO. It first shows student characteristics to examine whether the population of 7th graders at East is similar to or different from those attending other RCSD schools. It then presents some indicators of success and outcome variables, including discipline, attendance, and state assessment results.

There are a few important things to note about the students included in this analysis. We used student level data for 7th grade students enrolled at East and 7th graders enrolled in all other RCSD schools except for World of Inquiry and School of the Arts. Students at these schools were excluded because these two schools are special admissions schools, thus their student populations are not representative of the average student in RCSD. Additionally, any student, at East or in RCSD, who became inactive (e.g. stopped attending school) before December 31, 2016 is also excluded from this analysis. The final sample included 141 students in 7th grade at East and 1,274 students from 16 other RCSD schools.

Student Characteristics

This section provides a summary of the characteristics of 7th grade students at East Lower School to 7th grade students enrolled in other RCSD schools. Specifically, it presents data on the racial/ethnic backgrounds of students, as well as their poverty and English proficiency status.

East Lower School had a lower percentage of 7th grade students in poverty compared to other RCSD schools with, 80.8 percent at East and 87.2 percent at RCSD (see Figure 45). In terms of the enrollment of limited English proficient students, East had 14.2 percent and RCSD had 17.4 percent. (see Figure 45).

Figure 45. Student characteristics for 7th grade students at East Lower School (n=141) and other RCSD Schools (n=1,274), 2016/17

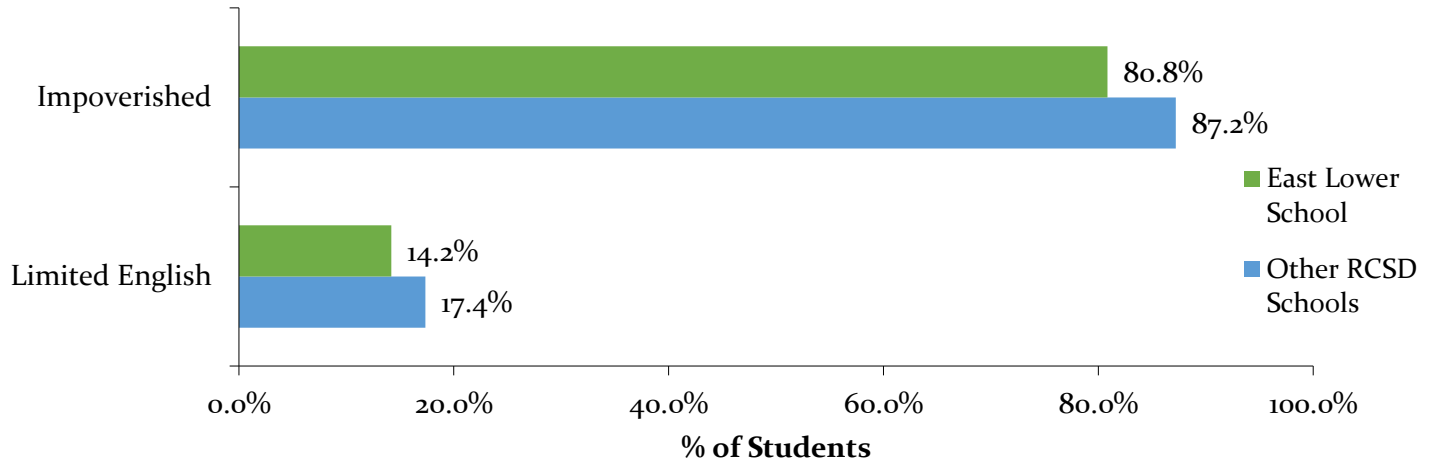
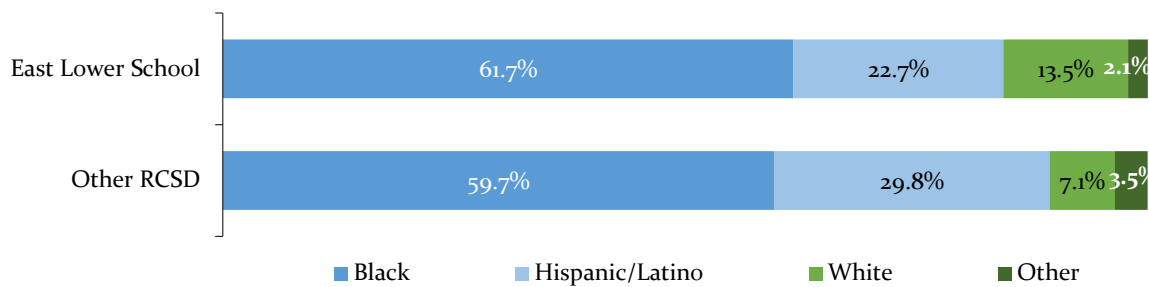


Figure 46 shows the racial/ethnic composition of 7th graders at East Lower School and RCSD. The majority of 7th grade students at both East (61.7%) and RCSD (59.7%) are Black. RCSD has a slightly higher percentage of 7th graders who are Hispanic or Latino (29.8%) compared to East (22.7%).

Figure 46. Race/Ethnic distributions of 7th grade students at East Lower School (n=141) and other RCSD schools (n=1,274), 2016/17



The majority of 7th grade students at both East and RCSD school did not receive any in-school suspensions in 2016/17 (see Table 12). Among 7th graders at East, 66.7 percent of those at East did not receive an in-school suspension, compared to 78.2 percent of 7th graders at RCSD. A smaller percentage of students at East received out-of-school suspensions (9.2%) compared to RCSD (16.4%).

Table 12. 7th grade students with in-school and out-of-school suspensions at East Lower School (n=141) and other RCSD schools (n=1,1,274), 2016/17

<i>East Lower School</i>		
<i>In-school suspensions</i>	47	33.3%
<i>Out-of-school suspensions</i>	13	9.2%
<i>Other RCSD Schools</i>		
<i>In-school suspensions</i>	278	21.8%
<i>Out-of-school suspensions</i>	209	16.4%

Indicators of Student Progress and Outcomes

Table 13 and Figure 47 present selected indicators of student progress and outcomes including attendance and achievement on the New York State assessments.

Table 13 displays attendance statistics for 7th graders at East and other RCSD schools. Seventh grade students at East are present for an average of 159 days, which is similar to the average 157 days of students in other RCSD schools. The median number of days present is similar at both East and RCSD, with half of all 7th grade students at East attending more than 165 days and half attending less, compared to a median of 167 days at other RCSD schools. Seventh grade students at East had a similar average attendance rate as those other RCSD schools, 90.6 percent compared to 89.8 percent.

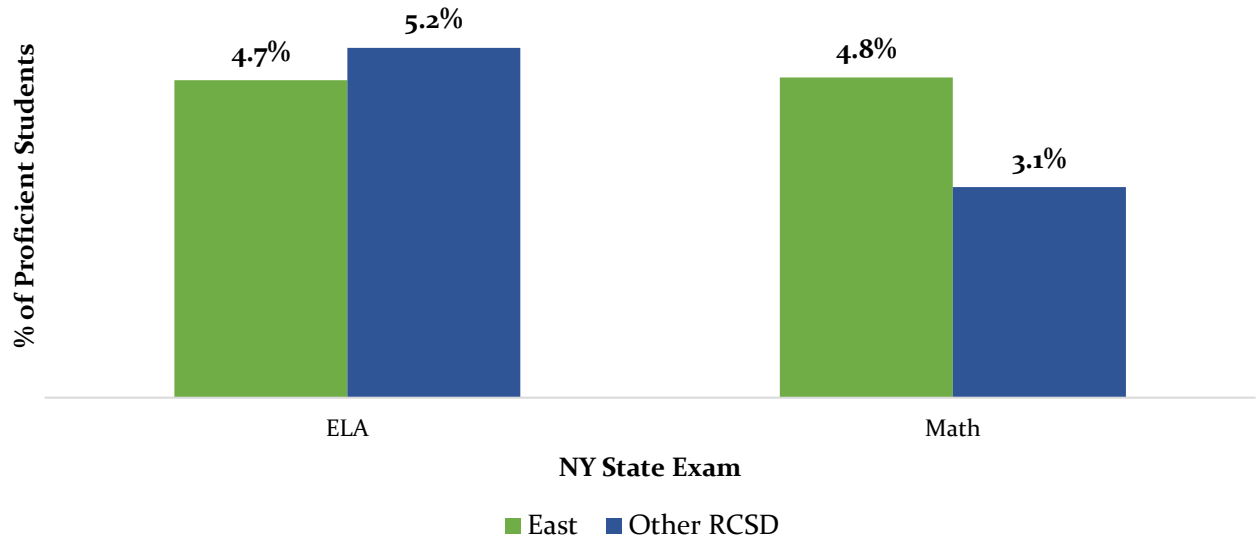
Table 13. 7th grade attendance, East and other RCSD schools, 2016-17

Variable	School	Variable
Average days present*	East	159
	Other RCSD school	157
Median days present	East	165
	Other RCSD school	167
Average attendance rate*	East	90.6%
	Other RCSD school	89.8%

*Difference is statistically significant.

Figure 47 shows the percentage of 7th grade students at East and other RCSD schools who scored proficient on the NY State ELA and math assessments. A very small percentage of students achieved proficiency, or scored at level 3, at either East or other RCSD schools. Only 4.72 percent of 7th graders at East scored proficient on the ELA assessment and only 4.76 percent score proficient on the math assessment. The percentage of students scoring proficient at East in ELA increased slightly, from 2.3 percent in 2015-16, but decreased slightly in math from 5.4 percent. The results for 7th graders in other RCSD schools were similar, with 5.2 percent scoring proficient on the ELA assessment and 3.13 percent scoring proficient in math.

Figure 47. Percentage of 7th grade students scoring proficient on the New York State ELA and math assessment scores at East and other RCSD schools, 2016-17



East – Rochester City School District Comparative Student Outcomes – First-time 9th Grade Students

This section focuses on first-time 9th grade students at East and enrolled in all other RCSD schools. We first present demographic and student characteristic data. Then we present some indicators of success and outcome variables, including discipline, attendance, credits earned, GPA, and Regents' outcomes.

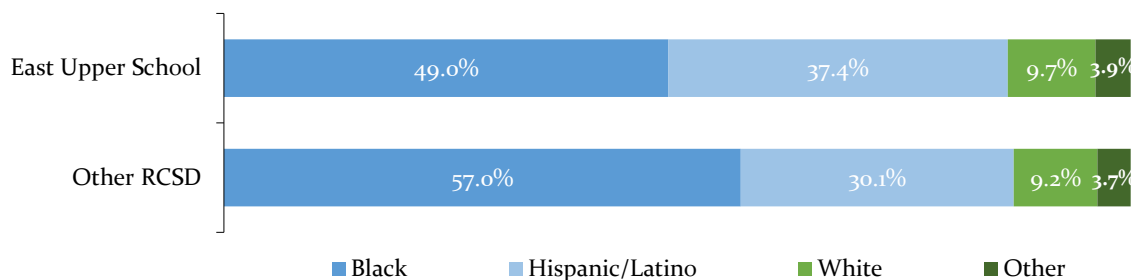
There are a few important things to note about the students included in this analysis. The analysis uses student level data on *first-time* 9th grade students. It excludes students at Wilson Magnet, World of Inquiry and School of the Arts. Students at these schools were excluded

because they are special admissions schools, thus their student populations are not representative of the average student in RCSD. It also excludes students enrolled in special programs at East and RCSD. This includes students who are in the following programs: Quest, Freedom School, All City High, Rochester International Academy and YMIH (program for young mother and pregnant students). Additionally, students who were inactive (e.g., stopped attending school) before December 31, 2016 are also excluded from this analysis. The final sample includes 155 first-time 9th grade students at East and 1,170 first-time 9th grade students at other RCSD schools.

Student Characteristics

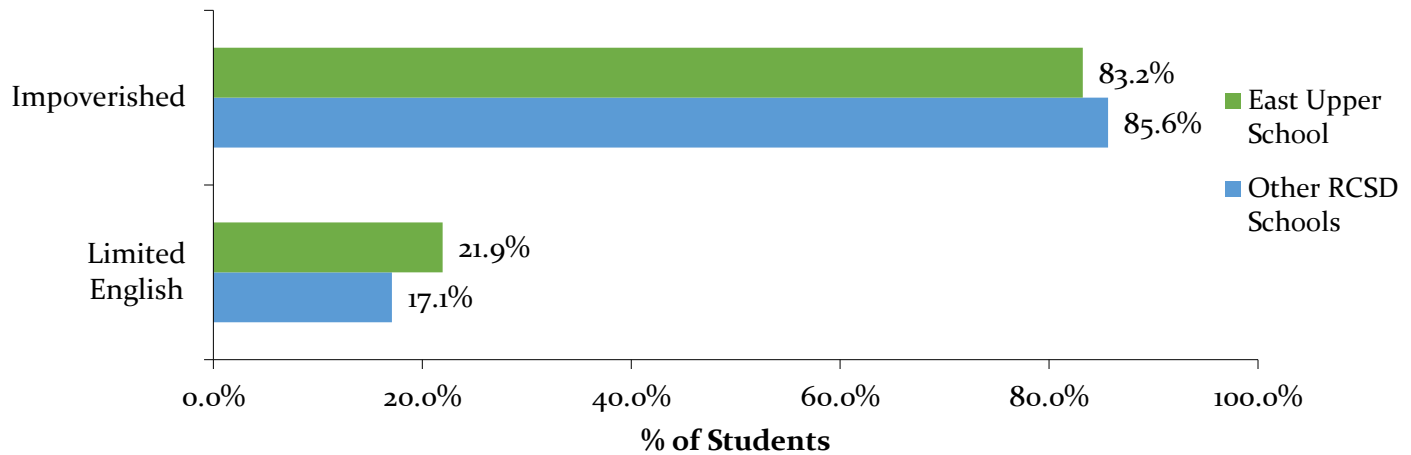
This section provides a summary of the characteristics of 9th grade students at East Upper School to 9th grade students enrolled in other RCSD schools. Looking first at the racial/ethnic distribution of students, we see some variation among first-time 9th graders between East and RCSD as indicated in Figure 48. Forty-nine percent of first-time 9th graders at East are Black, 37.4 percent are Hispanic or Latino, 9.7 percent are white, and 3.9 percent are other. Among first-time 9th graders at RCSD, 57.0 percent are Black, 30.1 percent are Hispanic or Latino, 9.2 percent are white, and 3.7 percent are other.

Figure 48. Race/Ethnic distribution of First-time 9th Graders at East (n=155) and RCSD (1,170), 2016-17



The percentage of impoverished first-time 9th graders at East is similar to those at other RCSD schools, with 83.2 percent of those at East in poverty compared to 85.6 percent at other RCSD schools (see Figure 49). East had a slightly higher percentage of first-time 9th graders who are limited English proficient (21.9%) compared to RCSD (17.1%).

Figure 49. Characteristics of first-time 9th graders at East (n=155) and other RCSD schools (n=1,170), 2016-17



Indicators of Progress and Outcomes

Table 14 shows that first time 9th graders at East were more likely to have at least one in-school suspension (23.9%) than first time 9th graders at RCSD schools (20.8%). First time 9th graders at RCSD schools were similarly likely to have received a long-term suspension (4.0%) compared to East (4.5%), but more likely to receive an out of school suspension (15.8%) than first time 9th graders at East (3.9%).

Table 14. First-time 9th grade students with at least one suspension at East (n=155) and other RCSD schools, (n=1,170), 2016-17

	N	Mean
<i>East Upper School</i>		
<i>In-school suspensions</i>	37	23.9%
<i>Long-term suspensions</i>	7	4.5%
<i>Out of school suspensions</i>	6	3.9%
<i>Other RCSD Schools</i>		
<i>In-school suspensions</i>	243	20.8%
<i>Long-term suspensions</i>	47	4.0%
<i>Out of school suspensions</i>	185	15.8%

Attendance patterns for first-time 9th graders at East and other RCSD schools were similar (see Table 15). The data indicate that a core group of students have good attendance, with a median attendance rate of 91.7 percent at East and 91.3 in other RCSD schools, which means that half of all students attend school more than 91 percent of the time. But that also indicates that half of the students attend less than that. Poor attendance by these students brings the mean attendance rate down to about 83 percent for both East and other RCSD schools.

Table 15. Student attendance rate for first-time 9th graders at East and other RCSD schools, 2016-17

	N	Mean	Median
<i>East Upper</i>			
<i>Attendance rate</i>	155	81.5%	89.1%
<i>Other RCSD Schools</i>			
<i>Attendance rate</i>	1,170	82.1%	89.7%

First-time 9th graders at East earned more credits on average (5.90) at the end of the 2016/17 school year compared to those at other RCSD schools (4.40) (see Table 16). The median number of credits earned by first-time 9th graders at East is 7.5, meaning that half earned more than 7.5 credits and half earned less. This is higher than the median number of credits (5) for first-time 9th graders in other RCSD schools.

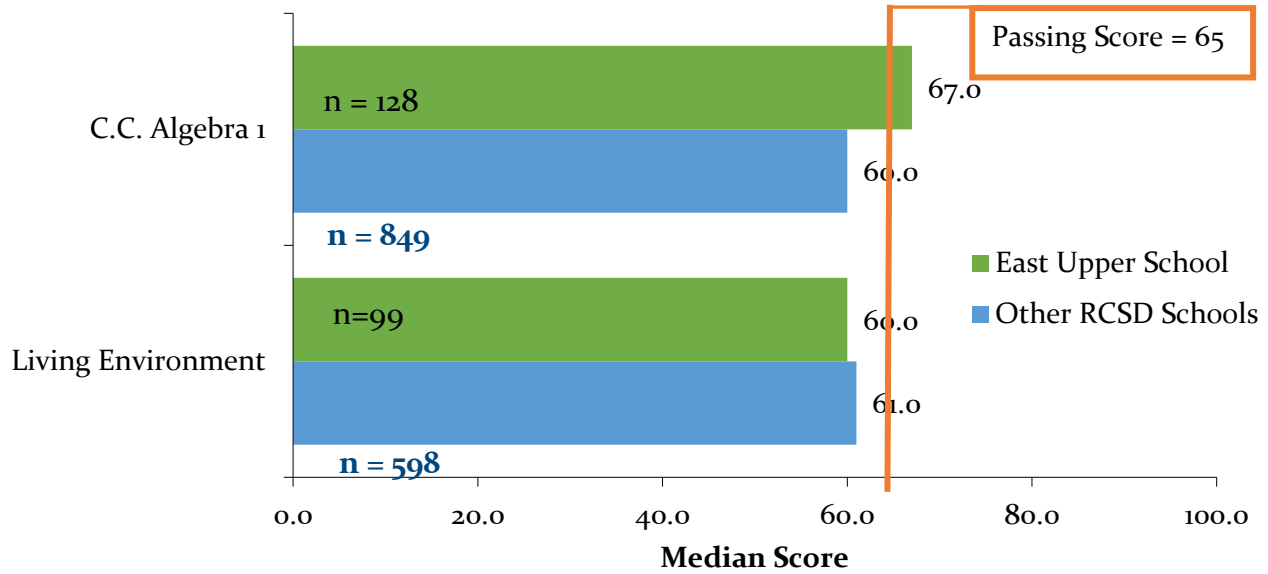
Table 16. Credits earned by first-time 9th graders at East and other RCSD schools, 2016-17

	N	Mean	Median
<i>East Upper</i>			
<i>Credits earned</i>	155	5.9	7.5
<i>Other RCSD Schools</i>			
<i>Credits earned</i>	1,170	4.4	5.0

Figure 50 shows the results of first-time 9th graders at East and RCSD on the Regent's Common Core Algebra 1 exam and the Living Environment Regent's exam. The median score of the first-

time 9th graders on the Algebra 1 exam at East was 67, which is higher than the passing grade of 65 and significantly higher than those in other RCSD schools, whose median score was 60. The median scores of first-time 9th graders at East and RCSD on the Living Environment exam were similar, 60 for East and 61 for RCSD.

Figure 50. Median scores for first-time 9th Grader at East and RCSD on Regents exams, 2016-17



Chapter 4

Conclusions/Recommendations/Reflections

Year 2 brought continued adjustment and progress, as well as some challenges to the implementation of the East EPO. The evidence presented in this report suggests that East is making progress toward its goals of school improvement. It is sometimes frustrating to stakeholders that quantitative outcome data lag behind the efforts that teachers, staff, administrators, and partners are making. One area of focus that could potentially have a positive impact on the outcome data is to dramatically increase attendance. There is only one attendance officer, yet one of the most common refrains shared by teachers, and some administrators, is that the students cannot learn and cannot pass the Regents if they are not in class. Though this year saw additional efforts to assess strategies being used to lower absenteeism, more is needed in order for the extensive efforts to transform teaching and raise curriculum rigor to fully impact student success.

It can be easy to lose sight of the accomplishments when living the day-to-day challenges of implementation. Below we summarize the key accomplishments and challenges discussed in greater detail throughout the report.

Leadership

- In Year 2, the EPO Oversight Committee has stepped back into more of an oversight role and is less involved in the day-to-day operation of the school. This shows confidence in the school-based administrative team.
- Teachers also reported a high level of confidence in the organization of the EPO and school leadership structure. This may be because efforts were made in Year 2 to clarify the school-level leadership roles and responsibilities and to improve communication. Communication is still a work in progress, however, and more improvement in communication from the highest levels to the classroom is indicated.
- The distributed leadership model is growing, with more teachers and teacher leaders stepping up for informal leadership. Some teachers and administrators, however, view distributed leadership with mixed feelings, believing it only benefits those who are willing to speak up or who are go-getters.
- The leadership role of the Chief Academic Officer was viewed as indispensable to the school because it allows a laser-like focus on instruction.
- The involvement of the University of Rochester is perceived as bringing many resources, particularly to support professional learning and instruction. The involvement of UR has also contributed to helping to improve the general reputation of East.

Professional Learning

- Extensive professional learning is provided for teachers, and most of it is viewed positively. Professional learning is described as intense, and if CPT participation is included, occurs daily. Collaborative Planning Time is important to the EPO model. Teachers and administrators see the benefit of getting together daily for teachers to engage in professional conversations and/or to look at data. There is room for improvement in the model to ensure it is effective and impactful across the board, as teachers described great variability in the quality of their CPTs. For example, Content CPT is seen as more relevant to most teachers, while IDCPT serves the purpose of information sharing and tracking students. Teachers at the Lower School appear to value CPT more than Upper School teachers. Evaluators observed higher quality CPTs in Year 2 compared to Year 1, noting CPTs were more organized, focused on instruction, used common language, and were led by coaches. Some teachers desire less coach-driven and more actual teacher-teacher collaboration in CPT. The EPO and school leaders might also consider ways to improve the value of IDCPT to teachers. They may want to consider enabling staff to observe more effective IDCPTs, or documenting the practices of especially effective IDCPTs.

Learning Targets

- Improvements were observed in the number and quality of Learning Targets being developed or used this year. Teachers are beginning to see the potential power and impact of Learning Targets to enhance teaching and support learning.
- Given the extensive professional learning focused on Learning Targets in Year 2, the school should expect to see even better and more usable ones next year.

Teacher Leaders

- Teacher leaders are described as integral to the work of transforming teaching and supporting teachers. Teachers described some variability in the quality and effectiveness of their coaches, but overall, teachers respect coaches and value what they do. Teacher leaders help sustain what is taught in professional learning to build teacher capacity.
- Through teacher leader efforts this year and the clarification of their roles, the effectiveness of CPT appears to be enhanced this year.

Assessment

- The common formative assessments (CFAs) and embedded performance assessments were received with mixed reviews and success. There were challenges to implementation, and teachers felt like they were constantly reinventing the wheel with their CFA rubrics.
- At the end of Year 2, teachers, in general, were not convinced of the value of CFAs and performance assessments.

Teacher Practices

- There has been much effort to transform teaching. Evaluators observed more content instruction in classes, though most instruction is teacher directed with little opportunity for students to work collaboratively. Students were observed engaged in making meaning of their learning, but there was little engagement with other students around making meaning.

Curriculum

- Survey results show a high level of self-reported fidelity of implementation of the curriculum, though it was reported to not be universal. It is important to further explore what is keeping teachers from implementing with higher fidelity.

Support

- The Support period is such a key component of the East EPO, although it has been implemented with varying degrees of success at the Upper and Lower Schools this year.
- The Upper School re-envisioned Support this year. Through a newly organized leadership structure, greater clarity around roles and responsibilities, and better coordination with classroom teachers, greater success in Support Rooms was evident.
- At the Lower School, Support is viewed as a mixed success, with some seeing it as helpful, but others seeing it as a study hall.
- Those students who are scheduled in Support, at both the Upper and Lower Schools, overwhelmingly believe it is important to their success.

Freshman Academy

- Freshman Academy was viewed as a successful initiative after Year 1 with little need for change. Some suggested changes included increased student tracking and progress monitoring and increased exposure of students to colleges and other off-campus opportunities.
- Freshman Academy still experienced challenges with attendance and is not yet meeting its goals for credit accrual and Regents pass rates.

Family Group

- Significant changes were made to Family Group this year and are widely considered beneficial.
- There remain some teachers who do not feel that facilitating Family Group is part of their role as teachers, and some are concerned they may not have the right qualifications to best meet the needs of all students in Family Group. Some also questioned whether Family Group was really structured to meet the 80 percent play, 20 percent work guidelines.

- Students, teachers, staff, and administrators all report better relationships between students and adults in the school as a result of Family Group. Having co-parents also made a difference, as did school-wide activities and groupings to address the specific needs of certain student populations. Family Group is seen as supporting students' needs academically and socially.
- Recommendations for improving Family Group include:
 - Increasing the degree to which Family Group is student-led to increase student engagement and buy-in.
 - Finding ways to continue to inject flexibility into the Family Group curriculum, or support parents in exploring the flexibility that already exists, to spur student engagement where it is lacking.
 - Examining whether Family Group lesson plans are developmentally and age-appropriate for scholars; assisting parents in modifying as appropriate.

Restorative Practices

- Restorative Practices are also central to the East EPO model. In general, teachers, staff, and administrators believe Restorative Practices are important, but there are mixed experiences and perspectives on the usefulness and success to date.
- In general, however, most teachers, staff, and administrators would credit Restorative Practices with being an overall benefit to the school, supporting a more positive culture and climate.
- Restorative Practices are becoming more ingrained in the ways teachers and students work.
- Teachers and staff could use more training on Restorative Practices and would like to see it used at all levels in the school, not just with students.

Alternative Programs

- The EPO includes different programs to meet the varied needs of students who were either disengaged, out of school, over-aged, and/or under credit.
- Teachers in general and some administrators had limited awareness of each alternative program's purpose and student eligibility criteria, which has resulted in the assignment of students who aren't always a best fit for the program. It also contributes to the viewing of these programs by some staff as a place where "kids who don't want to learn" — or who present other attendance or engagement challenges — can be deposited.
- Quest is seen as successful, with evidence of students catching up on credits. It has expanded in Year 2. Quest is the program most integrated into East, and this may have something to do with its success.

- Freedom School, which addresses the toughest population of students formerly out of school, operates quite independently from East. Progress at Freedom School comes in small steps that are hard to quantify.
- East Big Picture has not been as successful as the other programs. The challenges included concerns that the students enrolled were not necessarily a good fit, concerns about the facility/location, and concerns about the program model itself.
- There were differing views on whether the alternative programs presented rigorous curricula that prepared students for the Regents exams.
- The EPO may want to consider additional focus groups with students in alternative programs, and their parents, to ensure programs are meeting their needs and designed in ways that entice attendance, and that take into consideration the complexities of their lives, in addition to meeting their academic needs.

Parent Engagement

- Parent engagement by traditional measures continues to be challenging for East.
- Despite parents not coming to events, teachers and administrators report parents respond to calls and are generally supportive.
- Teachers, staff, and administrators value parents and see them as partners in the school community.

Community Partners

- There is extensive community partner involvement in East. They provide many additional services and resources for students and their families. The involvement of partners is strategic to meet specific needs.
- This year saw increased coordination and collaboration with partners.

East in the Community

- In addition to partners coming into the school, East is out in the community. The Superintendent serves on the board of several community organizations, is frequently asked to serve on committees, and attends many events as the face of East. This helps to build the reputation of East, and also brings attention to the school's improvement efforts.

Reflections on Year 2

The East EPO turnaround effort is ambitious and complex. The first year of implementation was described by many as a sometimes difficult “learning year.” Year 2 has focused on adjustments made to address the challenges of Year 1, and deepening and solidifying improvements in curriculum, teaching practices, and culture and climate. In many ways EPO leaders and administrators engage in continuous improvement, seeking to address challenges and improve outcomes. Year 2 saw a very visible shift in

school climate with generally more orderly hallways and increased student engagement in Family Group, and a pervasive sense of “all-in” by teachers, staff, and administrators. In addition, teachers and school administrators are committed to improving classroom instruction.

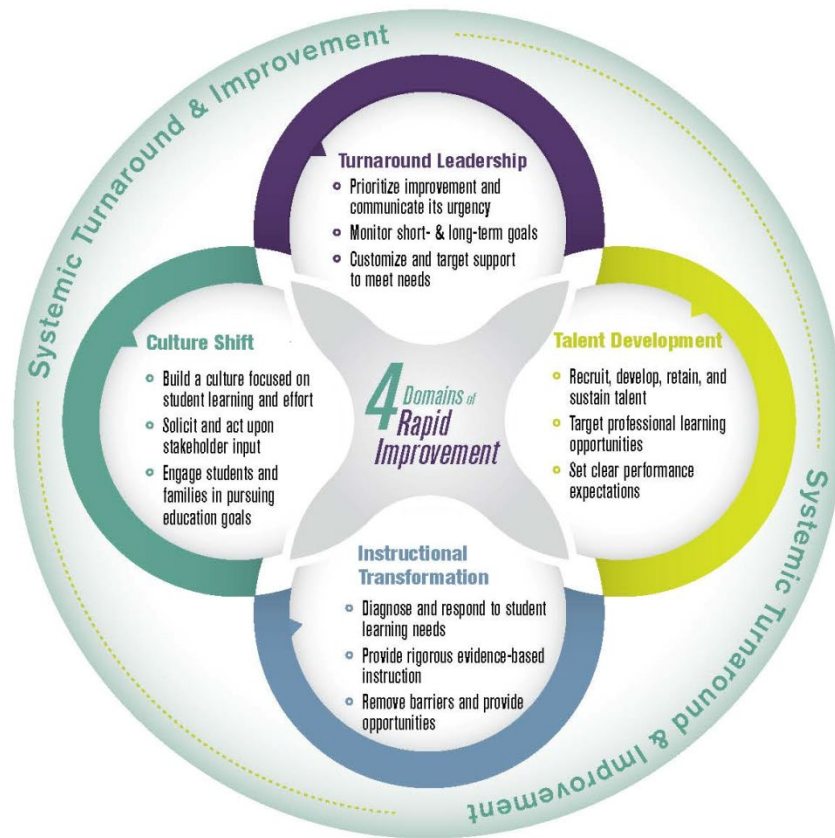
There are a number of ways to look at and understand school improvement. In their study of leading school turnaround, Leithwood, Harris, and Strauss (2010) identify three stages of school turnaround:

- Stage 1: Stopping the decline and creating conditions for early improvement
- Stage 2: Ensuring survival and realizing early performance improvements
- Stage 3: Achieving satisfactory performance and aspiring to much more

Years 1 and 2 at East could be described as stage 1 turnaround. As Year 2 comes to a close, the school appears to be entering stage 2, with a long-term plan for professional development to solidify curriculum implementation and teaching practices, new and clarified course sequences, rethinking of alternative programs, and a focus on passing the Regents exams that will hopefully lead to visible and measurable improvements in student outcomes. One continuing challenge includes improving student attendance, which is not optimal, to increase student outcomes for the school as a whole. If students are not in class, they are not learning content, which will make passing the Regents exams that much more difficult. Another issue is that the pace of change and work for teachers remains intense, and more teachers may begin to feel burned out. These are challenges to be addressed.

Other ways to look at the progress of the EPO is the Center on School Turnaround’s 2017 framework of the four domains of rapid improvement (see Figure 51) and see where East stands. The four domains and our assessment of where East stands at the end of Year 2 are shown in Table 17.

Figure 51. Four domains of rapid improvement



Source: The Center on School Turnaround. (2017). *Four domains for rapid school improvement: A systems framework*. San Francisco, CA: WestEd.

Table 17. East and the four domains of rapid improvement

Domains	Assessment of East’s progress	Recommendations to address challenges
<p>Turnaround leadership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EPO has prioritized improvement and communicated urgency. • The EPO is monitoring progress. • Support is more school-wide than customized. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to strengthen distributive leadership. • Plan for leadership transitions. • Much responsibility and knowledge about curriculum and instruction resides with CAO.
<p>Talent development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EPO recruited all new staff and engages in extensive staff development. Some fear burn-out that may threaten the sustainment of talented teachers/staff. • The EPO provides extensive professional learning opportunities, many of which are required. Professional learning is targeted on EPO’s priorities but may not be targeted toward individual teacher needs. • The EPO has set clear expectations for teacher performance and has been enforcing them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider how IDCPT can be made more effective, for example through clearer expectations or the use of protocols. • Consider how teacher leaders can spend more time coaching individual and groups of teachers to more fully realize potential.
<p>Instructional transformation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EPO is making progress in diagnosing and responding to student learning needs. The extent of student needs was surprising to EPO leaders in Year 1. Challenges are especially evident in staffing for supporting the needs of English learner students. • The EPO is continuing its multi-year process of developing rigorous curriculum with all subjects and grades involved in curriculum writing or refinement to ensure a strong alignment to standards. • The EPO is assessing literacy levels in students and providing supplemental literacy interventions when needed. It is unclear whether barriers to learning and opportunities for enhanced learning are present in the school. • The EPO is engaging in strategic partnerships to help meet student needs that may otherwise be barriers to student learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support increased fidelity of curriculum implementation. • Strengthen the Lower School Support model. • Strengthen the academic rigor of alternative programs. • Consider ways to increase student engagement in the classroom and with academic content. • Continue to support teachers in implementing research-based practices, such as higher order thinking skills, and the transfer of new information.

Domains	Assessment of East's progress	Recommendations to address challenges
Culture shift	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 2 has seen more effort on explicitly building a culture focused on learning through adherence to the mission and vision, through tracking progress and grades in Family Group, and through other data tracking efforts. Students appear to be taking more ownership of their learning, but it is not evident across the board in terms of effort. • School leaders solicit input from stakeholders via various surveys throughout the year and through the "Let's Talk" anonymous question submission system on the school's website. • School leaders continue to struggle with engaging parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address chronic absenteeism and tardiness. • Support teachers and staff who may be reluctant to embrace the parent role. • Consider ways that Restorative Practices can be modeled at all levels of the school.

Replication of the East EPO model

The EPO leadership at the University of Rochester is interested in understanding what are the essential pieces of the East model that need to be in place if this model of school improvement were to be replicated. While it is still too early to measure impact on student outcomes, certain elements of the EPO are emerging as key and should be considered in any replication of the model:

- A leadership structure with a position that has exclusive responsibility for curriculum and instruction to ensure that the goal of transforming teaching remains the focus.
- The ability to recruit and hire teachers and staff who are committed to the mission, vision, and hard work of implementing a school turnaround.
- The implementation of a research-based curriculum with evidence of success with similar populations as that served by the school.
- Time for guided teacher collaboration to ensure that time is well-spent and focused on instruction.
- Time for students to get extra support in order to meet the higher expectations of a rigorous, standards-based curriculum.
- A focus on transforming the school culture and climate, including:
 - A consistent message about behavioral expectations for students
 - A restorative approach to addressing conflict and discipline issues
 - A consistent message about higher expectations for students academically, and providing support for them to take ownership of their learning, including an expectation to attend school regularly
 - A way for students to establish positive relationships with adults in the building, such as Family Group

- Creative ways to engage and inform parents about academic and behavior expectations for students.
- Strategic engagement of community partners to meet the non-academic needs of students and their families that will facilitate students going to school. It will also help to build the school's reputation.
- Outreach to the community by the school, to forge connections and take advantage of opportunities that may further support students and the school.

Recommendations for Ongoing Evaluation

The East EPO may want to consider ongoing evaluation. Ongoing evaluation would allow the school to engage in a practice of continuous improvement. It would also provide a way for stakeholders, from students to teachers, staff, family, and the community, to provide input and feedback. The EPO might establish a small evaluation committee with diverse stakeholders to inform the questions and methods for the evaluation. Another good practice would be to create an evaluation calendar that lays out a schedule of data collection and reporting activities to be transparent about expectations. Based on our experiences, we would also recommend:

- Teacher/staff focus groups every other year
- Yearly teacher/staff survey
- Student focus groups every other year
- Yearly student survey
- Yearly external observations of classrooms
- Tracking of leading and lagging indicators of student progress and achievement, such as attendance, passing rates, and credits

It would be wise to consider parent and family input. The evaluators unsuccessfully attempted to conduct focus groups with parents, and the East parent survey did not receive a usable response rate. One way to get parent input might be to have parents complete a short, five-question paper survey at sporting or other school events.

Appendix A. Observation Tools and Protocols

WestEd –East Upper and Lower School – Classroom Observation Tool

Classroom observation tool prepared for Rochester’s East Upper and Lower School

Date: _____

Observer’s Name: _____

Teacher Name: _____ Check if substitute teacher

Grade Level: 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 Mixed Unknown

Subject: _____

Period: 1 2 3 4 5

Place in period? Beginning Middle End

Number of students in the classroom: _____

Number of students consistently engaged: _____

Key Concept #1: EXPLICIT LEARNING INTENTIONS

Learning Targets: (Check all that apply)

- Learning target is posted in kid friendly language.
- Learning target is explained and/or unpacked with scholars.
- Learning target is referenced and/or explicitly used throughout the lesson.
- Learning target is learning-centered.
- The success criteria of the learning target is specific and contextualized.
- Learning target is not visible throughout the lesson.

Key Concept #1: EXPLICIT LEARNING INTENTIONS – Notes/Comments:

Key Concept #2: LEVEL OF CHALLENGE

What was the PLANNED level of Bloom's, based on the Learning Target/what was heard:

- Remembering
- Understanding
- Applying
- Analyzing
- Evaluating
- Creating
- Unclear/do not know

What was the highest LIVED level of Bloom's?

- Remembering
- Understanding
- Applying
- Analyzing
- Evaluating
- Creating
- Unclear/do not know

The highest level of observed work students were given requires students to be in:

- Acquisition
- Meaning Making
- Transfer

Content Instruction was observed that required students to: (Check all that apply)

- Make connections between different ideas, concepts, or topics
- Connect this content to previous content.
- Transfer understanding to new situations
- Make meaning of content or processes by making inferences, generalizing, categorizing, drawing conclusions, developing hypotheses, citing evidence, analyzing perspectives
- Acquiring knowledge or skills through practice or exercise, organize knowledge, deep process

Key Concept #2: LEVEL OF CHALLENGE – Notes/Comments:

Key Concept #3: ASSESSMENT

Learning Targets: (check all that apply)

- Learning targets are assessed within the lesson.
- Learning targets are assessed according to criteria shared with scholars in the lesson.
- Learning targets are self-assessed by students who will state their understanding of whether and to what extent they met the learning target prior to the end of the lesson.
- Not observed

Assessment matches the level of the Learning Target.

- Yes
- No, the level of assessment did not match the level of the learning target.
- Assessment was not observed.

Key Concept #3: ASSESSMENT – Notes/Comments:

Key Concept #4: DELIBERATE PRACTICE

Teachers were involved in what appeared to be a gradual release of responsibility: modeling, guided practice, and/or independent practice based on the gradual release model:

- Yes
- No

Which phase(s) of the gradual release model did you observe: *(Mark yes or no for each)*

- Modeling for whole class
- Teacher providing guided practice to whole class
- Guided practice with student collaboration
- Independent practice

Students were observed engaged in the following activities *(Check all that apply)*

For each note how many students were observed: A few, most or almost all:

- Teacher directed question and answers:
- Discourse with other students on the related topic:
- Pursuing an inquiry or researching a question with a range of options for direction to pursue:
- Reading or writing a complex text:
- Asking or being asked questions beyond the literal level:
- Engaging in appropriate debate, argument or disagreement with peers and/or teacher:
- Using higher order thinking and then applying it to a problem, finding a solution, or solving a problem:

Key Concept #4: DELIBERATE PRACTICE – Notes/Comments. Be sure to make note of any of the following: Whether teacher uses a “hook” that activates prior knowledge, whether student discourse shows deep engagement with content, whether teacher observed working to ensure vocabulary stays in student memory, whether teacher asks questions at various levels of Blooms, whether teacher was using a protocol.

Key Concept #5: FEEDBACK

Feedback: (Check all that apply)

- Teacher feedback is provided to scholars relative to the learning target before class is over, and while there is still time to do something about it.
- Peer feedback is provided to scholars relative to the learning target before class is over, and while there is still time to do something about it.
- Teacher receives feedback from students on their progress toward learning target before class is over, and in time to do something about it.

What percent of students received feedback?

- All or almost all: 80-100% of students
- Most: 60-79% of students
- Half: 40-59% of students
- Some: 20-39% of students
- Few or none: 0-19% of students

Key Concept #5: FEEDBACK – Notes/Comments

Key Concept #6: REFLECTION, COLLABORATION

Were scholars provided opportunity for reflection related to the stated Learning Target or assessment criteria?

- Yes, with the teacher.
- Yes, with peers.
- Yes, independently.
- Not observed.

Key Concept #6: REFLECTION, COLLABORATION – Notes/Comments

Context

Notes & General Observations:

East Upper and Lower School CPT Observation Form

Observer's Name:

Date:

Period:

Content Area or Department:

Grade Level(s):

Observation Start Time:

Who is present for the CPT? Specify if any admins present.

Does the team use an agenda? (Obtain a copy if possible)

Yes

No

Check all roles that are observed in use during the team meeting:

Check all that apply.

Facilitator

Note taker

Time keeper

Other

Does the team take meeting notes or minutes?

Yes

No

Unsure

Were student (or other) data used during the meeting? If yes, please describe

Please check all activities observed during the meeting.

Check all that apply.

Planning for instruction (e.g., lesson planning, WHAT to teach)

Examining educational data (e.g., assessment results, student work)

Discussing issues or questions related to specific students Discussing instructional strategies (e.g., ideas for HOW to teach)

Housekeeping

Use the space below to document what was observed during the CPT meeting.

If possible, note who is speaking, examples of discussion, and materials used.

Observer Meeting Notes (Continue on reverse if needed)

Observation End Time:

Family Group Observation protocol

Date:	Block/Period:	Obs. Start Time:	Obs. End Time:
<hr/>			
Student Info	# of students:	<input type="checkbox"/> Lower School	<input type="checkbox"/> Mixed Grades
	ENL students present?: Y / N	<input type="checkbox"/> Upper School	<input type="checkbox"/> Single Grade (specify):
Carent Info	# present: <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify):	Bilingual? <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher (specify subject/grade):	Additional Carent Info:	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Admin <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify):		
Family Group Agenda/Topic of Discussion			
Evidence of Family Group Mission in Action	<input type="checkbox"/> General sense of belonging perceived <input type="checkbox"/> Positive relationships modeled/evident <input type="checkbox"/> Student empowerment encouraged <input type="checkbox"/> Student voice heard/cultivated		
Elements of "Official" Daily Protocol Observed	<input type="checkbox"/> Greeting <input type="checkbox"/> Supplemental Activities (specify) <input type="checkbox"/> Opening/Check-In <input type="checkbox"/> Theme Round <input type="checkbox"/> Closing <input type="checkbox"/> Connections Round <input type="checkbox"/> Family Group Breakaway		
Family Group Best Practices Observed	<input type="checkbox"/> Scholar attendance taken <input type="checkbox"/> Activities began with a circle <input type="checkbox"/> Activities ended with a circle <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson plan used <input type="checkbox"/> Leader In Me materials used <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of rituals, norms, and/or routines in use <input type="checkbox"/> Peace Circle observed (note: Recommended 2–3 times per week, not daily)		

- Peace Circle Components
- Circle Center
 - Talking Piece
 - Other:

General Notes

Appendix B. Interview Protocols

School and EPO Leaders

1. Thinking about the past year, what progress has been made toward achieving the goals of the EPO [LIST THEM]? graduation, passing regents, attendance, culture and climate and transforming teaching and learning
2. Which goal do you believe the EPO has made the most significant progress toward? Graduation rate, passing regents, attendance, culture and climate and transforming teaching and learning.
3. [If not discussed above] What has had the most impact on:
 - Student success—attendance, grades, credits
 - Climate and culture – student discipline code?
 - Teaching practices

and why?

4. What have been the most significant challenges with the EPO this past year?

12. Involvement of UR & working with RCSD

- In what ways has the University been involved this year? What does the university bring that wouldn't be available otherwise?
- What are the challenges of university involvement?
- In what ways has RCSD been involved in the EPO implementation?

5. What have been some lessons learned about what to do and what not to in a university-led school turnaround?

I want to ask about some specific initiatives and areas of work the EPO focused on.

6. **Leadership capacity development.** There were some significant leadership changes between Year 1 and 2, and the superintendent shared his goal to develop (a) the capacity of leaders and (b) empower teachers to be leaders through a distributed leadership model.

- Tell me about the efforts and progress this year in leadership development. OR Tell me in what ways has the school-wide capacity for leadership been strengthened or improved?
- What evidence do you have that a distributed leadership model is implemented/taking root at East? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the distributive leadership model?

7. **Communication.** At the end of Year 1, teachers and some leaders reported significant communication challenges. Efforts were being made at the beginning of Year 2 to address those concerns. What were the strategies used? What improvements have been made? What challenges still exist?

8. Transforming Teaching. Transforming teaching to positively impact student learning has been a major focus of efforts of the EPO. In your perspective has teaching been transformed at East? If so, what has had the most influence on that? What evidence is there?

I'd like to ask about some specific initiatives:

- Teacher leaders- What is the importance of teacher leaders in achieving EPO goals? What impacts have they had and how do you know?
- CPT-What is going well with CPT this year? What needs to be changed? What is the importance of CPT in achieving EPO goals? What impact have they have and how do you know?
- Curriculum work- What is the importance of the curriculum work in transforming teaching? What's going well with it and what have been the challenges?
- Learning Targets- What is the importance of the use of learning targets in transforming teaching? What impact have they had and how do you know? Any challenges with LT this year?
- Any other curricular or teaching initiatives or issues you'd like to discuss? Either things that have gone well or been challenges?

Related is professional learning.

- Professional learning is also seen as key to transforming teaching at East. What has gone well with professional learning this year? What have been challenges?
- To what extent have you been able to implement the professional learning plan?
- To what extent is the professional learning at East aligned to the goals?

9. Supports for Students. The EPO plan included significant supports for students academically and socially/emotionally.

***Support period.** Significant changes were made to support period this year.

- How has support gone this year (at the Upper and Lower School)?
- To what extent is support period having the intended impact on students (passing classes)?
- What evidence do you have that support is effective/impactful?
- Is support something important to continue?
- ***Special education students/ELLs** – we have heard some staff express concern that these students are not getting the supports they need ... being left behind/forgotten. What steps are being taken/have been taken to address the needs of SPED/ELLs?

Freshman academy. Freshman academy underwent changes in leadership this year.

- How was Freshman Academy different this year?
- What has been the impact of Freshman Academy? How do you know/what evidence do you have?
- What are the plans/goals for Freshman Academy going forward?

***Family Group.** Family Group also underwent significant changes this year, with a model of at least 2 parents and a changes in the curriculum/support provided to parents.

- What has gone well with Family Group been this year? What have been the challenges?
- What impacts, if any, have you seen from Family Group?
- What are the plans/changes for Family Group planned?

Addition of 6th grade

- Recruitment to the 6th grade was a challenge this past year. Progress on relationship with school 33? What are the plans for 6th grade next year? For the future?
- What is the importance of 6th grade to the model?

10. **Student outcomes.** We will look at some of these data quantitatively, but we'd like to know your impression of

- Changes in student tardiness and skipping (attendance)
- Changes in students passing courses?
- Changes in students' state assessments (Regents or NYS)

11. Culture and climate.

- ****Restorative practices** were a key part of changing the culture and climate at East and we heard last year that implementation was a little rocky. Tell us about how things have gone with Restorative Practices this year?
 - Strengths/impacts? Examples/evidence?
 - Challenges/Changes going forward? Examples/evidence?
- How has student voice been incorporated this year?
- ***To what extent** are [teachers/staff/leaders] **"All in"** this year? Any changes from Year 1? If so, what?
 - If not, what is needed to improve buy-in?

13. Working with families and community.

- What steps have been taken to increase family engagement this year? To what extent have they been successful? What have been the challenges for engaging families?
- What are the goals or plans for family engagement in the near future?
- What progress has been made toward being a community school? What is the vision for East as a Community School?
- What changes have there been, if any, in the connections/relationship between East and its neighborhood?

14. Working with partners.

- Which partnerships have been particularly important to the progress/success of the EPO? To student success specifically?
- Are there any needs that you would like to have met by partners?
- Are there any partnerships that are not working out?

15. Mission and vision.

- How has the mission and vision supported the EPO? How is integrated into the school?
- To what extent does it permeate the school?

16. Anything else we should know or discuss?

Teacher Focus Group protocol

1. How have things gone for you as a teacher at East this school year? How is that as compared to last year?
2. We know there are a lot of initiatives from curriculum development to CPT to professional development on learning targets and more. What EPO supports and initiatives for teachers have been most beneficial for you ... and WHY?

Specifically ask about: CPT; coaching/teacher leaders; common formative assessments; professional learning; collaborative curriculum work

What examples/evidence can you share?

3. What changes have you made in your own instructional practices? Thinking about your teaching here what has been successful? What has been challenging?
4. How are you “using data” to support your teaching and/or help to improve student learning?
5. What opportunities do you/teachers have for leadership at East? Informal and formal?
6. What EPO supports for students do you believe to be most effective/beneficial ... and WHY?

Specifically ask about: longer day; support room; curriculum rigor/cultural relevance; family group; restorative practices; freshman academy; and more

What examples/evidence can you share?

7. To what extent and in what ways do you believe the goals of the EPO have been achieved?
8. What challenges/barriers to achieving the goals are still unresolved?
9. What do you see as the most important next step for the EPO implementation going forward?
10. What are you most hopeful about?
11. What would you like to add that I didn't ask you?

Teacher Leader Focus Group Protocol

Opening

1. Let's start by going around the room, stating your name and your roles at the school.

Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

2. What are the expectations for your work as a coach/teacher leader this year?
 - a. How are decisions made about your work? Are your roles and your responsibilities clear to others and respected by them? How are decisions made about your work?
 - b. Probe for: having additional coaching time; facilitation of subject specific CPTs; having a TL CPT led by the CAO.
3. What do you do in your role as coach/teacher leader? What's a typical day like?
 - a. How often do you work with teachers? How do you do it (in class coaching, CPT, using data, modeling, etc.)?
 - b. Do you have enough time to provide all teachers on your roster with what they need?
4. How do you use data in your work with teachers?
5. How do you use Collaborative Planning Time to support teachers? Is it an impactful?
6. How does the Coaches CPT support your work? Is it impactful?
7. How has the teacher leader/coaching work made a difference in the school and how do you know? (Probe for specificity/examples)
8. How would you describe the progress of the adoption of key instructional and curricular practices (UBD, learning targets, curriculum)? Probe for differences in the Upper or Lower Schools or in different subject matters?
9. What challenges from last year have been resolved? What challenges are ongoing? (Probe for specificity if needed) (If report resistance or that teachers aren't doing the practices, probe for WHY?)
 - a. What might need to be done to resolve or address these challenges?
10. What would you say are the strengths of the classroom teaching this year? How do you know? Ask for examples.
11. What are some weaknesses in teaching that still need to be addressed?
12. To what extent is the curriculum culturally relevant to the population you teach at EAST? Ask for examples if they have any of how it is or is not relevant.

13. What other supports do you need as a coach/TL?
 - a. What PD topics do you believe staff would most benefit from right now (during the summer) as East prepares for next year?
14. What opportunities are there for teacher leadership this year? Different from last year? How does teacher leadership help to achieve the EPO's goals or not?

Wrap up questions

1. Have there been communication challenges this year? Have these improved since September?
2. What opportunities do you have for sharing concerns and ideas?
3. What surprised you the most this year?
4. Of what are you most proud in your work this year?
5. How would you like next year to be different?

Vice Principal Level Focus Group Protocol

1. How have things been going at East from your perspective this year?
 - a. What have been some strengths at East this year?
 - b. What have been some challenges?
2. What's different, if anything about your work this year?
 - a. Working with teachers? CPT? Walkthroughs?
 - b. Using data?
3. What kinds of support do you all receive? What has been most helpful? What are the gaps?
4. Thinking about the instructional initiatives (learning targets, UBD units, CFAs), to what extent would you say they have been implemented? What has gone well? What have been challenges?
 - a. How would you describe instructional practices?
5. What supports for teachers have been the most impactful? Why? How?
6. Thinking about supports for students, to what extent are their needs being effectively met?
 - a. what has been most beneficial for students?
 - b. What ongoing challenges related to student support still exist?
7. Are there any particular groups of students that are underserved in the building or whose needs might not be met as well as they could be (examples might be bilingual/ENLs, severely overage/"not-college-bound" kids, kids in SPED)?
8. How would you describe student academic performance this year? What have been successes? Where have you seen the most progress? What have been challenges?
 - a. To what do you attribute the progress?
9. Have you seen other, non-academic outcomes for students this year? What? To what do you attribute these?
10. How would you describe the school culture this year?
 - a. Among students?
 - b. Among adults?
11. How is restorative practices going this year? Any changes?
12. Tell me about strategies/activities will related to:
 - Partners?
 - Engaging Families?
 - Solidifying community connection?

13. In what ways has school-wide “capacity for leadership” been strengthened or improved?
14. Community schools/ parent engagement
15. As you reflect on 2 years, what are some lessons learned about this work? –What not to do; what to avoid?
16. What progress has been made towards achieving the goals of the EPO? What do you believe to be most significant? What barriers is the EPO facing to achieving these goals? Where is more or different efforts needed?
17. What are the most important next steps for the EPO?
18. Anything we haven’t talked about that we should?

Counselors/Social Workers Protocol

1. Let's go around the room to introduce ourselves and our roles.
2. How would you say things have gone for counselors/social workers during this school this year?
How are things different than last year?
3. How have things gone with efforts to address:
 - Attendance/tardiness (tracking; data; alternative programs; follow-up)
 - Graduation rate (Support; tracking; data; alternative programs)
 - School climate (all in/all the time; SSOs; Restorative Practices, discipline communicated)
 - Student behavior (Restorative Practices, Family Group; SSOs; discipline communicated)
 - Student academic progress (Support; curriculum rigor; fewer students; longer day; improved classroom behavior; improved ELL supports)
 - Student engagement/enthusiasm? (improved climate; extra support; expanded CPT)
 - Socio/emotional health of the student population at East? Supports for students/referral process
 - Family participation/collaboration with East (communication; FACE; outreach)
4. Do you have the resources and supports to adequately meet the needs of students at East?
 - a. Why or why not?
5. What change(s) implemented as a result of the EPO do you believe have had the most positive impact on students?
6. To what extent and in what ways do you believe the goals of the EPO have been achieved? What successes have you seen?
7. Are there any new or still unresolved challenges/barriers to achieving the EPO goals?
8. What do you see as the most important next step for the EPO implementation going forward?
9. What would you like to add that I didn't ask you?

School Security Officers

1. I'd like each of you to introduce yourself and say how long you've been working at East. We won't record your names.
2. Can you describe your role and responsibilities at the school?
 - a. Who oversees or directs your work?
 - b. What training did you receive, if any, to do this work?
 - c. What information or training did you receive about behavior expectations, what to enforce and how?
 - d. Do you have a role in the restorative practices at school? If yes, how?
 - e. Do you have adequate resources to effectively do your job? If not, what do you need?
3. For those of you who are not new to East, can you talk a little about if anything has changed in:
 - a. your role and responsibilities over time?
 - b. Student behavior?
 - c. School culture and climate
4. What's going well in your work at the school this year?
5. What are some of the challenges to doing your work?
6. Is there anything you think we should know that we haven't already talked about?

Paraprofessionals

1. What is your role? / What do you do?
2. Who directs your work?
3. How are you involved in the different initiatives at the school (learning targets, etc.)?
4. How PD opportunities do you have?
5. Who or what provides support to you in your work?
6. To extent are students' needs being well met?
7. How would you describe the culture and climate at East?
8. How are you involved in restorative practices?
9. Is there anything else that we haven't talked about that you'd like to share?

Student Focus Group Protocol Upper School

Thank you for participating in today’s focus group. My name is —, I work for WestEd, a not-for-profit education research and service agency. WestEd is conducting the evaluation of East High School under the “Educational Partnership Organization” (EPO) agreement. Your feedback will be used to understand how things are going at the school since the EPO and to inform improvements at the school. It is important for you to know that we will be taking notes today. No one except the evaluation team will have access to our notes and you will not be identified by name in our notes. The information from all of our focus groups will be synthesized. When we report your feedback, you will be anonymous.

Confidentiality. Before we begin, there are a few things I would like to discuss with you. Please know that all of your comments will be kept confidential and reported in the aggregate (i.e. they will not “get in trouble” for sharing their opinions with us). This means we will never use your name.

Process. Second, there are no right or wrong answers; we want to know your opinions and experiences here at East, so please share with us to the best of your ability. This is an informal session. My role is to ask questions, listen, take notes and keep you on track. We want to be sure everyone has a chance to share and we don’t expect everyone to agree. We welcome all ideas, opinions and points of view.

We ask that you listen respectfully to your peers, and we are asking you to respect your peers by not repeating or sharing anything you hear in this focus group outside of this room.

Any questions before we begin?

All Students:

1. Have you spent your entire (middle or high) school experience at East High School? (Note: Asking for a show of hands can be useful here)
2. What do you like about East High school? What is the biggest challenge/problem at East?
3. How would you describe the way East High was when you first started here?
 - a. Academics (Potential prompts: Did you find classes too easy, too challenging or just right? What did you think of the variety and quality of course offerings? The learning environment?)
 - b. Discipline
 - c. Social environment
 - d. Support for students who were struggling or having a hard time [with school and/or life in general]
 - e. Communication and interaction between school and families/community
 - f. Staff attitudes and behavior toward students

4. Have you seen any changes here at East High over the past year?
 - a. Academics (See potential prompts above)
 - b. Discipline
 - c. Social environment
 - d. Support for students who were struggling or having a hard time [with school and/or life in general]
 - e. Communication and interaction between school and families/community
 - f. Staff attitudes and behavior toward students (Note: students interpreted the original query as a question about staff turnover)
5. When did you first notice the changes you've seen so far?
6. Do you think the changes have been good for East?
 - a. If so, how so?
 - b. If not, why not?
7. Do you have opportunities to share your thoughts on changes at the school with staff?
 - a. With whom do you share your thoughts?
 - b. How often?
8. Do you know of any (additional, upcoming) changes planned for East Upper School or Lower School?
 - a. How did you find out about them?
9. We have heard of a few new programs added to East Upper School this year. Two of those include Family Group and Support Periods. Do any of you participate in those programs?
 - a. Can you tell me about them? How do they work?
 - b. Do you find them helpful? (How so? Why not?)
10. Where do you see yourself after East? Are the East program and staff helping you to figure out your post-East plans?

Special Program Questions

For 6th graders: (some of these questions could be moved into the general section)

1. What made you choose East for 6th grade? What makes East different from the other schools you could have enrolled in?
2. What do you think of your experience so far?
 - a. Has your experience been what you thought it would be?
3. Do you think you will stay at East until you graduate from high school?
4. Do you think you will get the help you need at East to graduate on time?

For 9th Graders

1. Are you participating in the Freshman Academy?
2. What makes Freshman Academy special?
3. What do you like most about Freshman Academy?
4. Do you think Freshman Academy will help you be successful as an upperclassman? How so?
5. If you could change anything about Freshman Academy to make it better, what would that be?

For Upper School scholars in alternative programming

1. What makes your program (Quest, Freedom School, Big Picture, East Evening) special?
2. What do you like most about your program?
3. Is your program tailored to you? (Or is it one size fits all?) How does East figure out what your needs are?
4. Do you think your program will help you be successful as an upperclassman? How so?
5. Do you think your program is making a difference for your future? How so?

Ending Questions:

1. Do you feel that East is helping you to develop into a successful young adult? How so?
2. If you could change anything about East High school, what would those changes be?

Parent Focus Group Interview protocol

Intro: Introduce self. Thank parents for their time. Explain nature of project (using language school has already used to describe evaluation). Inform parents that comments will be kept confidential and reported in the aggregate.

1. How long has your scholar been at East? What grade(s) is your scholar(s) in?
2. What are your impressions of East overall?
 - a. Academics (rigor, variety/quality of course offerings, learning environment)
 - b. Discipline
 - c. Social environment
 - d. Support
 - e. Communication between school and families/community
 - f. Personnel (quality)
3. Are you satisfied with the quality of... (each of the above) at East?
4. How well do you think the school serves students/meets students' needs?
 - a. Describe why and how
5. Do you have opportunities to share feedback with the school?
 - a. With whom do you share your thoughts?
 - b. How often?
 - c. Do you feel your thoughts are taken seriously/respected?
6. How does the school communicate with you? Which of these methods do you find the most useful?
 - a. Do you feel you receive adequate information about your scholar?
 - b. Do you feel you receive adequate information about what is going on at the school?
7. How often do you visit East?
 - a. In general, what is the purpose of your visits? (Ex. Meeting with staff about your scholar, volunteering, attending sporting events, accessing medical center...)
8. Do you feel East promotes positive relationships/connections with its students' families?
9. Do you feel welcome to volunteer at East or participate in school events? Have you been invited to do so?
10. If you were to have the ideal relationship with East as a parent/guardian, what would that look like? What would stay the same? What would have to change?
11. When you talk about East to others, what do you mention most?

Partner focus Group protocol

1. In what ways are you currently working with students or their families?
2. What have been your organization's/agency's greatest accomplishments in working with East's students, families, counselors or teachers?
 - a. Evidence of successes?
3. How has the work of your organization contributed to the attainment of the EPO's goals or mission for East High School? (May need to enumerate them here.)
4. What challenges does your organization continue to face in your work at East or with East?
 - a. Examples?
5. Is there anything your organization needs to make your work more successful?
6. What do you see as the most important next step for the EPO implementation going forward?
7. Is there anything you'd like the EPO leadership to know about the work you are doing?
8. Is there anything you'd like to add that I didn't ask you?

If time allows: How has being a partner in a school turnaround process impacted your organization?

Appendix C. Assessment of East EPO on DTSDE Standards of Practice

Tenets and Standards of Practice	Assessment of East EPO
<p>Tenet 2 - School Leader Practices and Decisions: Visionary leaders create a school community and culture that lead to success, well-being and high academic outcomes for all students via systems of continuous and sustainable school improvement.</p>	
<p>Statement of Practice 2.2: The school leader ensures that the school community shares the Specific, Measurable, Ambitious, Results-oriented, and Timely (SMART) goals/mission and long-term vision inclusive of core values that address the priorities outlined in the School Comprehensive Educational Plan (SCEP).</p>	<p>The summer between Year 1 and 2 saw the development of a clear mission and vision that has come to permeate the school in terms of language used by scholars and teachers, staff, and administrators, and also displayed throughout the school.</p>
<p>Statement of Practice 2.3: Leaders make strategic decisions to organize programmatic, human, and fiscal capital resources</p>	<p>The evaluators did not examine fiscal decisions. School leaders collaborate with each other, and with other informal leaders who step up to make programmatic decisions, such as changes to Support and Family Group</p>
<p>Tenet 3 - Curriculum Development and Support: The school has rigorous and coherent curricula and assessments that are appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) for all students and are modified for identified subgroups in order to maximize teacher instructional practices and student-learning outcomes.</p>	
<p>Statement of Practice 3.2: The school leader ensures and supports the quality implementation of a systematic plan of rigorous and coherent curricula appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) that is monitored and adapted to meet the needs of students.</p>	<p>The school leader uses a distributed leadership model with mixed success, as not all teachers feel they can step up. There is an understanding of special student needs, but these needs are not always well met because of external challenges such as hiring. The EPO has a systematic plan to develop rigorous, standards-based curriculum.</p>
<p>Statement of Practice 3.3: Teachers develop and ensure that unit and lesson plans used include data-driven instruction (DDI) protocols that are appropriately aligned to the CCLS and NYS content standards and address student achievement needs.</p>	<p>As part of the ongoing curriculum design work, teachers are in the process of putting their units and lessons into a UBD format, which will ensure the units are standards based and differentiated to meet student needs.</p>
<p>Statement of Practice 3.4: The school leader and teachers have developed a comprehensive plan for teachers to partner within and across all grades and subjects to create interdisciplinary curricula targeting the arts, technology, and other enrichment opportunities</p>	<p>This is not something the school has undertaken.</p>

Tenets and Standards of Practice	Assessment of East EPO
<p>Statement of Practice 3.5: Teachers implement a comprehensive system for using formative and summative assessments for strategic short and long-range curriculum planning that involves student reflection, tracking of, and ownership of learning.</p>	<p>Teachers in all content areas and grades have developed an 8-week Common Formative Assessment system that essentially acts a pre- and post-test. The system was implemented for the first time in Year 2 with mixed success.</p>
<p>Tenet 4 - Teacher Practices and Decisions: Teachers engage in strategic practices and decision-making in order to address the gap between what students know and need to learn, so that all students and pertinent subgroups experience consistent high levels of engagement, thinking and achievement.</p>	
<p>Statement of Practice 4.2: School and teacher leaders ensure that instructional practices and strategies are organized around annual, unit, and daily lesson plans that address all student goals and needs.</p>	<p>Every course is working on a comprehensive course plan to ensure it is standards-based using the Understanding by Design framework. The school has also undertaken extensive professional development to ensure teacher practices are organized around the units and are research-based. Systematic observations by evaluators indicate that progress is being made in terms of teacher practices meeting expectations but that areas of needed improvement noted include student engagement, higher order questioning, and more student directed work.</p>
<p>Statement of Practice 4.3: Teachers provide coherent, and appropriately aligned Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS)-based instruction that leads to multiple points of access for all students.</p>	<p>Every course is working on a comprehensive course plan to ensure it is standards-based using the Understanding by Design framework. Teachers are supported by teacher leaders (coaches), special education teachers, and paraprofessionals to ensure all students can access the instruction. Evaluators observed pockets of outstanding ENL instruction and special education co-teaching. A challenge the school faces is not being able to hire sufficient ENL staff. Another challenge is some ongoing staff resistance to full inclusion and co-teaching. Some teachers expressed concern about whether ENL students are having their needs met to access instruction and the curriculum.</p>
<p>Statement of Practice 4.4: Teachers and students work together to implement a program/plan to create a learning environment that is responsive to students' varied experiences and tailored to the strengths and needs of all students.</p>	<p>Unable to assess overall. Some evidence of this in the support rooms and in the Quest program and Freedom School.</p>
<p>Statement of Practice 4.5: Teachers inform planning and foster student participation in their own learning process by using a variety of summative and formative data sources (e.g., screening, interim measures, and progress monitoring).</p>	<p>Unable to assess overall. The school began the use of Common Formative Assessment this year.</p>
<p>Tenet 5 - Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health: The school community identifies, promotes, and supports social and emotional development by designing systems and experiences that lead to healthy relationships and a safe, respectful environment that is conducive to learning for all constituents.</p>	

Tenets and Standards of Practice	Assessment of East EPO
<p>Statement of Practice 5.2: The school leader establishes overarching systems and understandings of how to support and sustain student social and emotional developmental health and academic success.</p>	<p>The EPO includes plans for extensive social and emotional support for students at East. Much progress has been made. School leaders found greater levels of social emotional needs and trauma among students than expected. The level of need is high at East. Overarching systems implemented include Family Group to build adult-student connections and Restorative Practices. Additional supports include increased social workers and book studies (e.g. Trauma Informed Teaching). The Lower School also used the Leader in Me curriculum, though less so in Year 2 compared to Year 1)</p>
<p>Statement of Practice 5.3: The school articulates and systematically promotes a vision for social and emotional developmental health that is aligned to a curriculum or program that provides learning experiences and a safe and healthy school environment for families, teachers, and students.</p>	<p>The school promotes a vision for social and emotional development that is rooted in connections between students and teachers through Family Group, the use of Restorative Practices school-wide, and the Leader in Me for the Lower School. Aside from the Leader in Me program, no particular curriculum or program is used.</p>
<p>Statement of Practice 5.4: All school stakeholders work together to develop a common understanding of the importance of their contributions in creating a school community that is safe, conducive to learning, and fostering of a sense of ownership for providing social and emotional developmental health supports tied to the school’s vision.</p>	<p>The school’s Family and Community Engagement Committee is active. The school collaborates with many community partners to help address community needs.</p>
<p>Statement of Practice 5.5: The school leader and student support staff work together with teachers to establish structures to support the use of data to respond to student social and emotional developmental health needs.</p>	<p>To address challenges in Year 1, a system of tracking student referrals and use of Restorative Practices has been implemented in Year 2. Lower School social workers assessed students’ social emotional needs using an assessment.</p>
<p>Tenet 6 - Family and Community Engagement: The school creates a culture of partnership where families, community members and school staff work together to share in the responsibility for student academic progress and social-emotional growth and well-being.</p>	
<p>Statement of Practice 6.2: The school leader ensures that regular communication with students and families fosters their high expectations for student academic achievement.</p>	<p>Posters with the school’s mission and vision are posted around the building, as are graduation rates, and data walls showing student progress. Teachers and staff would like clearer message from leadership to students about expectations.</p>
<p>Statement of Practice 6.3: The school engages in effective planning and reciprocal communication with family and community stakeholders so that student strength and needs are identified and used to augment learning.</p>	<p>Unable to assess.</p>
<p>Statement of Practice 6.4: The school community partners with families and community agencies to promote and provide training across all areas (academic and social and emotional developmental health) to support student success.</p>	<p>The school continued many relationships with long-term partners at East and engaged with new partners to meet the social, health, and academic needs of students, as well as to address many needs that parents/families face. Examples include advocates for students, a food pantry on site, the onsite Health Center, dental services, and more.</p>

Tenets and Standards of Practice	Assessment of East EPO
<p>Statement of Practice 6.5: The school shares data in a way that promotes dialogue among parents, students, and school community members centered on student learning and success and encourages and empowers families to understand and use data to advocate for appropriate support services for their children.</p>	<p>The school is making progress in this direction. Students look at data and evidence of learning in Family Group and Support. Student-led conferences are a step toward including parents in the dialogue.</p>

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