

# CSRQ Center Report on Education Service Providers

APRIL 2006



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# About the CSRQ Center

The Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center is funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, through a Comprehensive School Reform Quality Initiative Grant, S332B030012, and is operated by the American Institutes for Research (AIR).

Since 1946, AIR—one of the nation's largest nonprofit behavioral and social science research organizations—has engaged in thousands of research, evaluation, technical assistance, consulting, and communication projects that help to make research relevant to policy-makers and practitioners. AIR's overriding goal is to use the best science available to bring the most effective ideas and approaches to enhancing everyday life. The organization's work spans a wide range of substantive areas: education, student assessment, international education, individual and organizational performance, health research and communication, human development, usability design and testing, employment equity, and statistical and research methods. AIR conducts its work within a culture and philosophy of strict independence, objectivity, and nonpartisanship. Given the variety of work that AIR conducts, rigorous institutional safeguards have been established to guarantee that any potential conflict of interest is avoided. For additional information about AIR, visit <http://www.air.org>.

The mission of the CSRQ Center is to provide timely and reliable tools and technical assistance to support urban and rural educators and education decision makers in choosing the highest quality comprehensive school reform program to meet locally defined needs. The CSRQ Center promises to help raise student achievement and improve other important student outcomes for millions of America's children by helping

education decision makers identify and apply “what works” in the area of comprehensive school reform.

To meet its mission, the CSRQ Center produces reports and makes them widely available; develops partnerships with communities and education and policy organizations; and provides technical assistance to selected states, districts, and schools. The CSRQ Center has several reports and services available on its Web site (<http://www.csrq.org>), including:

- *CSRQ Center Report on Elementary School CSR Models*. This report offers a scientifically based, consumer-friendly review of the effectiveness and quality of 22 widely adopted elementary school comprehensive school reform models.
- *Works in Progress: A Report on Middle and High School Improvement Programs*. This report provides information on nearly 100 programmatic approaches that help to address 12 key issues facing middle and high schools, such as literacy and reading, English language learners, violence and bullying, and transition.
- *Moving Forward: A Guide for Implementing CSR and Improvement Strategies*. This guide and accompanying workshop leads readers through an effective step-by-step process for adopting and implementing school reform and improvement strategies.
- *CSR Model Registry*. Readers can search this online database to find a comprehensive school reform model that may meet their local needs. The database also allows model providers, including those not reviewed in the CSRQ Center's reports, to submit nonevaluative information about their model.

<http://www.csrq.org>

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# Introduction

*This consumer guide for the first time ever, provides comparative ratings on the effectiveness and quality of seven widely adopted Education Service Providers (ESPs)—nonprofit or for-profit organizations that contract with new or existing public, charter, or private schools and/or school districts to provide comprehensive services. This report continues the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center’s efforts to issue reports that help education decision makers sort through their options for whole school and district improvement. (Previous reports are available at <http://www.csrq.org>.<sup>1</sup>)*

## Why Is This Report Needed?

In December 2000, a blue ribbon panel of leaders from more than a dozen national education organizations completed an intensive 9-month process to develop a practical tool that educators and parents could use to judge nationally available education assistance providers. The process resulted in *Tool Kit for Engaging a Design-Based Assistance Provider: Guidelines for Ensuring the Quality of National Design-Based Assistance Providers* (New American Schools, 2000). For the first time, these guidelines provided a framework that decision makers could use to measure and compare the quality and performance of externally developed education programs that claimed to provide benefits for schools and students. The blue ribbon panel observed that “schools and districts need a way to differentiate among the various providers and identify which design best fits the needs of their school” (New American Schools, 2000, p. 2).

In recent years, the opportunity and imperative for effective and flexible school improvement options have grown. For example, the charter school movement has

grown significantly during the past 10 years, offering new ways to govern public schools and spur innovation. Charter schools, which operate from public funds, are established independent of the school district. Thus, charter schools have greater flexibility in day-to-day operations. Charters are usually held by groups of parents and/or teachers, academic institutions, or nonprofit organizations. Today, about 3,500 charter schools operate in more than 40 states (WestEd, n.d. a). (For more information on charter schools, see “About Charter Schools” on page 2).

The growth of charter schools has been spurred by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001, which heralded an unprecedented effort to improve schooling in America. NCLB focuses on reform based on evidence and on accountability based on results. Each year since NCLB was enacted, a significant number of schools have failed to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) goals. In both the 2003–2004 and 2004–2005 school years, approximately 25% of U.S. schools (or about 20,000 schools) did not meet AYP (Olson, 2005). Approximately the same number of schools is predicted to not meet AYP in 2005–2006. Having not met AYP, schools are put on notice that they must do much better. Additionally, increasing numbers of schools are beginning to enter their 5th year of not meeting AYP, triggering an NCLB requirement that the school enter a restructuring phase. For example, in California, 404 schools entered this phase in 2005–2006, representing a nearly 50% increase from the previous year (Center on Education Policy, 2006). Decision makers are likely to consider transforming these schools into new charter schools and/or contracting with whole school improvement models, such as ESPs, to manage the newly restructured schools.

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<sup>1</sup>Unless noted otherwise, all Web addresses displayed in this report were active as of the publishing date, April 2006.

## About Charter Schools

### Overview

In the 1970s, educators began to suggest that local school boards provide contracts or charters to implement new instructional approaches. Years later, Albert Shanker, the president of the American Federation of Teachers, built upon this reform solution by recommending that entire schools be chartered to groups of educators, community organizations, or parents. In the late 1980s, Philadelphia implemented the idea by opening the first schools within schools, calling them “charter schools.” Minnesota soon followed and by 1991 had passed the first law that allowed the creation of charter schools. Since 1991, 40 states and the District of Columbia have passed similar legislation. Each state’s charter school law establishes a legal definition of charter schools; the process for developing a charter school; and parameters for funding, staffing, instruction, accountability, and admissions (WestEd, n.d. b).

The U.S. Department of Education defines charter schools as “public schools that operate with freedom from many of the local and state regulations that apply to traditional public schools” (n.d. a). In practice, each state’s charter school law outlines the state’s approach to charter schools. Charter schools operate under a contract between the school’s founders and a sponsor—usually a university, local school board, district, or state. The charter outlines the school’s mission, educational program, and methods for evaluating the school’s performance. To maintain accountability, the charter’s sponsor monitors a school’s adherence to the charter and holds the school accountable for students’ academic achievements and the school’s financial stability.

During the past 10 years, charter schools have increasingly turned to vendors, including Education Service Providers, also known as ESPs, for educational services (e.g., professional development for faculty and curricular programs) and management services (e.g., personnel recruitment, payroll, and facilities management) (U.S. General Accounting Office, 2002).

### Additional Resources

- **U.S. Charter Schools** (<http://www.uscharterschools.org>) is run by a consortium of organizations: National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (<http://www.publiccharters.org>), National Association of State Directors of Special Education (<http://www.nasdse.org>), and WestEd (<http://www.wested.org>). According to its Web site, the consortium’s goal is to provide “accurate information and promising practices about and for charter schools” (WestEd, n.d. c).
- **National Association of Charter School Authorizers** (<http://www.charterauthorizers.org>) is a “nonprofit membership association of educational agencies across the country that authorize and oversee public charter schools” (National Association of Charter School Authorizers, n.d.). Its Web site offers information and services to authorizers and others who are interested in the charter school movement.
- **U.S. Department of Education’s Public Charter Schools Program** (<http://www.ed.gov/programs/charter/index.html>) “supports the planning, development, and initial implementation of charter schools” (U.S. Department of Education, n.d. b).

People who are responsible for improving these schools seek to implement improvement approaches supported by scientifically based research. But education decision makers face an increasing number of whole school improvement options that claim to offer research-based,

research-proven services. These options include ESPs, the subject of this consumer guide.

For the purposes of this report, the CSRQ Center defines ESPs as nonprofit or for-profit organizations

that contract with new or existing public, charter, or private schools and/or school districts to provide comprehensive services to schools, including, but not limited to, educational programming and administrative services. Educational programming includes curriculum design, professional development, and student assessment tools. Administrative services include, but are not limited to, operation management services (student enrollment, school marketing), financial management services (payroll assistance, budget oversight), facilities management services (maintenance and use of facilities), and human resources management (hiring and training staff, staff benefits). Many of the comprehensive services provided by ESPs are comparable to those offered by other whole school improvement providers, such as comprehensive school reform (CSR) models

According to *Profiles of For-Profit Education Management Organizations 2004–2005, Seventh Annual Report* (Molnar, Garcia, Sullivan, McEvoy, & Joanou, 2005), 59 for-profit education service providers manage 535 schools in 24 states and the District of Columbia. Of these schools, 86% are charter schools. The seven ESPs reviewed in this report currently work in more than 350 public schools—including many charter schools.

The growth of ESPs as an option for whole school improvement, when added to the choices available through the hundreds of comprehensive school reform model providers, means that decision makers face a bewildering set of choices, with little guidance to help sort through options. Consumers still have too few independent and credible sources to turn to when making important adoption decisions (Shaul, 2002).

This report serves as a consumer guide that will help decision makers sort through claims about which approaches could truly meet the needs of students. It is the first comprehensive review of ESPs ever issued. To prepare this report, the CSRQ Center screened nearly 940 documents and reviewed about 40 studies on seven widely implemented ESP models. We used

rigorous standards that are aligned with the requirements for scientifically based research established by NCLB. Each model is rated on a number of dimensions, including evidence of raising student achievement. The reviews of the individual models are written to provide education decision makers with profiles of each model and the evidence that they need to make decisions to meet locally defined needs.

## What Is Whole School Improvement and Why Does It Matter?

For more than two decades, the school-level adoption and effective implementation of externally developed and research-based whole school improvement models have been used increasingly to raise student achievement. These models have been tried in hundreds of schools nationwide, most of which are high poverty and low performing. This trend is driven by the recognition that school improvement efforts are complex and require a coordinated, systematic approach that addresses every aspect of a school, including curriculum, instruction, governance, scheduling, professional development, assessment, and family and community involvement. Rather than use individual, piecemeal programs or approaches, effective whole school improvement models integrate research-based practices into one unified effort to raise student achievement and achieve other important outcomes, such as reduced dropout rates or improved behavior.

Many schools that adopt the whole school improvement approach choose an external model to provide a research-based, replicable set of practices. These external models, which are offered by a variety of service providers, are meant to be blueprints to help a school make improvements in a number of areas. Although their foci, philosophies, and methods vary, these models are designed based on research and are intended to help the school raise student achievement. To support implementation, whole school improvement



models typically provide schools with materials, professional development, and technical assistance. Other schools that adopt a whole school improvement approach may choose to develop their own improvement models, putting together research-based elements.

The whole school improvement approach has evolved from more than two decades of systematic improvement efforts based on the adoption of external schoolwide improvement models. This trend accelerated in the early 1990s, when, after decades of concentrating on programs targeted at individual students at risk of academic failure, a new idea based on a comprehensive approach to school improvement was conceived. The RAND Corporation published *Federal Policy Options for Improving the Education of Low-Income Students, Volume I, Findings and Recommendations* in 1993. This report suggested to the federal government that to reap the biggest impact, funds from Title I (previously called Chapter I) would be best spent on schoolwide improvement (Rotberg & Harvey, 1993). These ideas were soon incorporated into the Title I program. At about the same time, New American Schools began to operate as an advocate for whole school improvement and a supporter of the development of high-quality whole school improvement models (Stringfield, Ross, & Smith, 1996).

The whole school improvement approach gained further momentum with the 1997 passage of the federal Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration program. Through this program, Congress provided dedicated funding to support the adoption of whole school improvement strategies throughout the country. The 2001 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, also known as NCLB, gave further momentum to the whole school improvement approach by changing it from a demonstration project to a full-fledged federal program called the Comprehensive School Reform Program. According to NCLB, whole school improvement models must be scientifically based. This means that a model or approach must demonstrate strong research evidence that it can improve students' academic

achievement. Today, regardless of the funding source, the use of schoolwide improvement models is likely to remain an important strategy for improving schools, particularly those that fail to make AYP.

Whole school improvement models are of great interest to decision makers because of claims from the model provider that their models are research-based and provide the training and other supports needed to encourage a coordinated approach to achieve student success. The research evidence to date indicates that some whole school models are more effective than others and those results vary greatly—even for effective models—depending on the quality of implementation (see Desimone, 2000).

## How Can Educators Meet the Challenge of Evidence-Based Decision Making?

Critics often claim that decisions in the education field are driven by whims and fads, thoughtlessly adopted and easily abandoned. Although this is an exaggeration, it is nevertheless true that despite billions of dollars and countless hours of well-intentioned efforts, educators and policymakers still cannot say, with confidence, how best to bring about the many desired improvements. Better research and evidence, when combined with sound professional judgment, can help guide the way toward solid and sustained improvement. However, educators, policymakers, and the public cannot be expected to *do what works* until they actually *know what works*.

The education community increasingly turns to research to help sort through its school improvement options. This reliance on research helps to satisfy NCLB's requirement that school improvement efforts be driven by scientifically based research. More importantly, however, it helps to meet the urgently felt need on the part of educators and policymakers to ensure that their efforts improve the lives of children.

Researcher Tom Corcoran (2003) points out some of the challenges in transforming education into an evidence-based field. In a study conducted in three districts, he found that

School district leaders want to make evidence-based decisions and they are making efforts to build evidence-based cultures in their central offices and schools. But, significant progress is being hampered by the inadequacy and confusion of the existing research, its availability to school and district-level staff, and reliance by staff on decision-making patterns that focus on philosophy rather than effects. (p. 1)

In addition to the challenges confronted by districts, education stakeholders—including teachers, administrators, policymakers, and state- and district-based evaluators—are hard pressed to keep up with the volume of approaches and initiatives that must be studied. One recent nationwide review of education program evaluation efforts at the state level (Raymond, Bortnik, & Gould, 2004) found that

Most states infrequently evaluate their programs, if at all . . . [A]bout a third of states do practically none, another third does a little, and a third does a noticeable number of evaluation studies . . . [L]ess than 10% of all the studies purporting to be impact evaluations used random assignment or quasi-experimental designs. (pp. viii–ix)

In short, few evaluation studies are conducted, and even fewer studies are rigorous enough to provide reliable findings. In addition, the researchers found that even the results of these infrequent and flawed evaluations were disseminated only sporadically, thus providing little guidance to decision makers.

A further impediment to building evidence-based practice and policy in education is the lack of research studies and findings that provide practical guidance. Many studies in education do not focus on questions that are critical to decision makers, such as what works, under what circumstances, and for which students. Also, some of the research that could potentially act as a guide is very hard to access or understand. Thus, solid research evidence is often undervalued or ignored (Huang, Reiser, Parker, Muniac, & Salvucci, 2003; Sutton & Thompson, 2001). As a result, when educators seek and demand evidence to help answer their questions, they are left either disappointed by the lack of relevant research or are challenged to make meaning out of the findings.

Even when educators and decision makers have committed to the adoption of models that have track records of effectiveness, they are often challenged to find, interpret, and apply relevant research. The selection process is also challenging, because interpretations of findings across evaluation studies of the same or similar models are difficult to make due to variations in implementation, characteristics of participating students, rigor of the research design, and other factors.

Fortunately, a number of efforts are underway to improve the value of research for education decision makers. Many of these efforts are sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education and seek to (a) improve the quantity and quality of education research, (b) make it more relevant to educators, and (c) ensure that it is available in a timely manner and in easily accessible formats and language. For example, the U.S. Department of Education and others have issued guidance on judging the quality and relevance of research findings (see “Resources for Judging Research in Education” on page 6).<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC)—sponsored and managed by the Institute of Education Sciences of the U.S. Department of Education—provides educators, policymakers,

<sup>2</sup>The CSRQ Center provides further guidance on this topic on pages 6–8 of *Works in Progress: A Report on Middle and High School Improvement Programs* (CSRQ Center, 2005).

### Resources for Judging Research in Education

**Fashola, O. S. (2004).** *Being an informed consumer of quantitative educational research.* *Phi Delta Kappa*, *85*, 532–538.

This article includes a user-friendly description of the nature of scientific research. Specific guidelines are offered on how to evaluate the quality of an evaluation study and how to relate findings to the educator's own school or district context.

**Fleischman, S. (2005).** *Research matters: Moving to evidence-based practice.* *Educational Leadership*, *63*, 87–90.

This column outlines concerns that educators have expressed regarding access to research and their ability to apply this research. It also provides resources that can help educators bridge the gap between research and practice.

**Lauer, P. A. (2004).** *A policymaker's primer on education research: How to understand, evaluate and use it.* Aurora, CO: Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning, Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States. Retrieved December 1, 2004, from <http://www.ecs.org/html/educationIssues/Research/primer/foreword.asp>

This primer addresses how to determine the trustworthiness of research and whether research warrants policy changes. It also includes a statistics tutorial and a glossary.

**Slavin, R. E. (2003).** *A reader's guide to scientifically based research.* *Educational Leadership*, *60*, 12–16.

This article presents a review of criteria to use when selecting scientific research to review and how to evaluate the quality of the research.

**Stringfield, S. (1998, Fall).** *Choosing success.* *American Educator*. Retrieved December 1, 2004, from [http://www.aft.org/pubs-reports/american\\_educator/fall98/ChoosingSuccess.pdf](http://www.aft.org/pubs-reports/american_educator/fall98/ChoosingSuccess.pdf)

This is a practical guide on how to select a model using such criteria such as model goals, research base, and associated costs.

**U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. (2003).** *Identifying and implementing educational practices supported by rigorous evidence: A user friendly guide.* Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved December 1, 2004, from [http://www.excelgov.org/usermedia/images/uploads/PDFs/User-Friendly\\_Guide\\_12.2.03.pdf](http://www.excelgov.org/usermedia/images/uploads/PDFs/User-Friendly_Guide_12.2.03.pdf)

This publication points out the importance of using rigorous evidence and provides guidance when applying it to make decisions about program and model adoption.

**U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. (2003).** *Random assignment in program evaluation and intervention research: Questions and answers.* Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved October 10, 2005, from <http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/resources/randomqa.html>

This brochure explains the nuts and bolts of why and how random assignment evaluations are conducted and answers some frequently asked questions.

researchers, and the public with a central, trusted source of scientific evidence of what works in education. WWC systematically searches for, evaluates, and reports on the evidence of effectiveness of programs, products, practices, and policies that claim to improve student outcomes. Throughout the coming years, WWC will review many topics of interest to education decision makers, including programs to raise math

and reading achievement, reduce dropout rates, and improve character education. WWC's reports are available at <http://www.whatworks.ed.gov>.

Sorting through and making sense of research is hard work, even for research scientists with years of training and experience. Despite substantial advances in developing standards and processes for judging and

### The CSRQ Center's Model Registry

Reports from the CSRQ Center can review only a limited number of whole school improvement models. Some education decision makers may be interested in additional models, including new or smaller ones that have not yet been reviewed in reports by the CSRQ Center. Thus, the CSRQ Center launched a Model Registry in fall 2005 so that service providers have the opportunity to share nonevaluative information about models not included in reports from the CSRQ Center.

The Model Registry is nonevaluative, and any provider who wishes to register information on a CSR or ESP model may do so. Users should be aware that each model provider has supplied the information in this Registry. The CSRQ Center will conduct a minimal amount of fact checking for each model. The Model Registry provides basic background information for each whole school improvement model:

- Focus and mission of the model
- Grade levels that the model serves
- Subject areas that the model covers
- Descriptions and citations of research that demonstrates the model's effectiveness on student achievement and other outcomes
- Descriptions of the link between research and the model's design
- Description of the model's services and supports to schools
- Cost of the model

Providers that would like to submit information about their models can register on the CSRQ Center's Web site:

<http://www.csrq.org/CSRProgramRegistry.asp>.

adding up the evidence in education, researchers often disagree. Although procedures exist for reviewing and comparing a large number of studies, the process is often complex and painstaking. Therefore, education decision makers often turn to others to sort through the evidence and report it as actionable information.

## How Can Education Decision Makers Use This Report?

This report provides education stakeholders with a decision-making tool to help them sort out options from ESPs that are available to meet local needs. The ratings that are applied to the seven models in this

report are intended to clarify options, not to point to or endorse best buys. Together, these models represent a significant portion of the total number of ESPs being used by schools. Each model included in this report serves more than 20 schools in at least three states and is available for adoption in almost all states. (For a detailed discussion about this report, see "About This Report" and "Methodology.")

Although this report reviews evidence on widely adopted models, it does not represent an evaluation of the ESP improvement strategy as a whole. To satisfy the interest expressed by many stakeholders in knowing about as many whole school improvement models as possible, the CSRQ Center's Web site provides a Model

Registry that allows any whole school improvement model provider to enter information about its model (see “The CSRQ Center’s Model Registry” on page 7). In addition, we believe that the review framework described in “About This Report” can be used by education consumers to ask probing questions of each model being considered, even if the model is not included in one of our reports. For example, consumers can ask model providers to provide them with rigorous research evidence on effectiveness and to demonstrate how this evidence aligns with the standards set by the CSRQ Center.

Finally, readers should be aware that a variety of organizations provides publications, tools, and guidance to help educators and others who are considering the adoption and effective implementation of whole school improvement models. The CSRQ Center’s Web site (<http://www.csrq.org>) provides a list of helpful organizations and resources.

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## About This Report

This section provides readers with general information on how the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center reviewed models on five categories of quality and effectiveness, including a description of the process to establish the rating system, an overview of the rating process, and an explanation of the ratings. In keeping with the consumer orientation of the report, we have tried to limit our use of technical jargon and to provide clear, straightforward discussions of methodological issues involved in conducting the reviews. “Methodology,” which follows, reviews the scientific procedures that were followed to produce this report.

### **H**ow Are Models Rated by This Report?

This CSRQ Center report provides a series of reviews of seven widely adopted models from Education Service Providers (ESPs). As a group, they operate in about 350 schools, likely representing 60–65% of all the schools currently being served by ESPs. (For more information on ESPs, see “What Is an Education Service Provider?”)

Although summaries of overall evidence of effectiveness and quality are crucial to solid decision making, they can also be misleading. For example, researchers have frequently noted that most models vary in their effectiveness from school to school. That is, in some schools they work well and in others hardly at all (Borman, Hewes, Overman, & Brown, 2002). Often these variations in model effectiveness are about as large as the variation in effectiveness from one model to another. Thus, decision makers should keep in mind that even those models that received lower ratings in this report may be good options in certain circumstances. For instance, because implementation is such an important variable in ensuring good results, it may be better for a school or district to adopt a model that

#### **What Is an Education Service Provider?**

For the purposes of this report, *ESP* is defined as a nonprofit or for-profit organization that contracts with new or existing public, charter, or private schools and/or school districts to provide comprehensive services to schools, including, but not limited to, educational programming and administrative services. Educational programming includes curriculum design, professional development, and student assessment tools. Administrative services include, but are not limited to, operation management services (student enrollment, school marketing), financial management services (payroll assistance, budget oversight), facilities management services (maintenance and use of facilities), and human resources management (hiring and training staff, staff benefits). The comprehensive services provided by ESPs are comparable to services provided by other whole school improvement models.

might meet the needs of the local leadership and school community, despite a lower rating. Alternatively, if a district or school commits to doing the needed work to ensure that its chosen model is implemented properly, it may wish to adopt a higher rated model even if it may encounter some resistance.

As with all consumer choices, decision makers must weigh the pros and cons of their model selection. This report is not intended to dictate decisions or pick winners and losers, but rather it aims to clarify choices by providing the most rigorous evidence and user-friendly information to date on the available options to meet local school improvement needs.

Each review first offers basic information on the ESP model, including the model’s mission and focus, year introduced in schools, grade levels served, number of

schools served, and costs. In particular, we tried to gather as much detailed information as possible about the costs of adopting and implementing each model, because this is a key consideration for schools and districts. Unfortunately, models do not uniformly report this information, and costs vary widely. Ideally, for each model, we would have provided an estimated total cost of implementation, which would have included the services and materials provided by the model and any additional labor or materials expenses (e.g., new textbooks or software or release time for teacher professional development or common planning). Each review provides as much information as we were able to gather from the provider and from publicly available sources. As consumers, schools and districts are in a strong position to (a) require each model to specify all of its expected costs in comparable formats and (b) estimate the budgetary impact of local changes that might have to be made to successfully implement the model. We urge consumers to engage the models in this discussion early in the adoption process.

The *Tool Kit for Engaging a Design-Based Assistance Provider: Guidelines for Ensuring the Quality of National Design-Based Assistance Providers*, issued in 2000 by a blue ribbon panel of education stakeholders, established a set of standards to which all model developers should be held (New American Schools, 2000). The CSRQ Center, including our advisory committee, used these standards and its experience working in the whole school reform field for the past decade to develop a set of measures to rate the quality and effectiveness of ESP models. Without a doubt, academic outcomes are a critical measure of a model's performance. Educators, administrators, policymakers, and the public all want to know: Will the model we are considering for our school improve our students' academic performance? In addition, decision makers want evidence in other critical areas that assures them that a model will provide not only help to improve student achievement but also deliver services that are considered important, such as providing support for model implementation

or for effective parental and community involvement. Therefore, this report evaluates evidence on five categories for each model.

### Category 1: Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement

A school or district considering implementing a model should conduct a self-assessment to identify its own strengths and weaknesses and to seek a model that will help it address these areas. As part of this process, consumers need to know whether a service provider can help their schools raise achievement levels of specific student groups and whether a model can demonstrate positive impacts on student achievement in specific subject areas. Category 1 examines the extent to which a model can demonstrate, using research of reasonable quality, a positive impact on student achievement. This category is comprised of three subcategories.

**Subcategory 1a focuses on a model's evidence of positive overall effects on student achievement.** The rubrics in this subcategory establish standards by which research on a model's overall impact on student outcomes is evaluated. This may be the only subcategory that matters for many consumers. However, decision makers should consider that our review of nearly 40 studies on these models revealed only an emerging evidence base on the effectiveness of individual ESPs. Thus, some models in our review may have received a relatively low rating based on the current small research base of studies demonstrating effectiveness. This means that while many models may be able to consistently improve student outcomes, such capacity may not yet be based on rigorous research evidence. In time, many models may and should be able to provide greater evidence of positive impact on student achievement. We recommend that consumers decide which models they will consider based on (a) the CSRQ Center's ratings in all categories and (b) a careful review of the detailed profile provided for each model.



**Subcategory 1b examines whether a model can demonstrate evidence of positive effects for diverse student populations.** Readers should note that many schools implementing the seven models reviewed in this report are high-poverty schools. Although we were not able to gather the information on the percentage of Title I students served by these models, federally funded whole school reform models on average serve school populations with a poverty rate of about 70% (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, n.d.). Therefore, even when a model does not break out its results by specific subpopulations, it can be assumed that overall these studies measure impact in highly challenging circumstances. The models that reported outcomes for specific student populations should be commended for their efforts to provide consumers with this additional disaggregated information, which is rarely available. Therefore, even in instances in which a model provided evidence that was rated on the low end of our rating scale, readers should consider that other models have not reported this evidence and therefore provide less information on which to make a decision.

**Subcategory 1c examines whether a model can demonstrate evidence of positive effects for specific subject areas.** Similar to subcategory 1b, few models provided evidence of their impact in specific subject areas. When we were able to find this evidence for specific subjects, the most common content areas were reading or math. Therefore, even in instances in which a model provided evidence that was rated on the low end of our rating scale, consumers should consider that other models have not reported this evidence and therefore provide less information on which to make a decision.

### Category 2: Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes

Category 2 was developed to provide consumers with information about a model's effects beyond student achievement. Although student achievement is usually the outcome of primary concern to those seeking tools

to improve their schools, consumers also want to know whether a model can help a school improve additional nonachievement outcomes, such as student discipline, student attendance, school climate, retention/promotion rates, and teacher satisfaction. However, our attempts to rate models in these areas faced two key challenges. First, the amount of available evidence in these areas is insufficient to adequately judge the quality of most models. Second, currently available measurement tools for these areas are much less reliable and sound than the CSRQ Center would prefer. For example, although steps are now being taken to remedy this situation, student attendance is measured differently across schools and districts. The additional outcomes covered in Category 2 are the outcomes that were most commonly examined in the research literature across models.

Consumers must make a distinction between models that specifically claim to help schools improve in the areas outside of student achievement and those that do not. For example, some models include components that are designed specifically to help improve student discipline, while other models do not. Improvement in student discipline may be a side effect of implementing a given model—even if that model does not claim, or was not developed, to improve that particular outcome. However, if a model promises that it can help a school to improve student discipline, then that model should be able to demonstrate that it can deliver on its promise. Consumers should proceed with caution if a model was developed to help schools improve in a specific area but cannot provide solid evidence of effectiveness.

### Category 3: Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement

The CSRQ Center's audiences have indicated that consumers also want to know whether a model can help a school improve its level of family and community involvement. Research also suggests that high performing schools may benefit from having strong family and

community involvement. Moreover, citizens in every community have a right and a responsibility to be engaged in improving schools for their children and for society at large. Family and community involvement in reform efforts can spur and may help sustain long-term improvements. Based on this information, the CSRQ Center developed rubrics to determine whether a model can demonstrate that it helps schools improve family and community involvement. Consumers should keep in mind that some models, while acknowledging the desirability of parental involvement in schooling, do not count on parental involvement to deliver improved student achievement. Decision makers should note this as they review models that may have higher ratings on student outcomes and lower ones on family and community involvement. Some ESPs have decided to focus on strengthening elements other than community involvement to achieve their stated outcomes.

For Categories 1 (student achievement), 2 (other educational outcomes), and 3 (family and community outcomes), we synthesized quantitative evidence gathered through the review of existing research articles on the models reviewed. Whenever possible, we have provided information on model results for specific student groups or specific types of school settings.

#### Category 4: Evidence of a Link Between Research and the Model's Design

As schools and districts increasingly heed the national call to implement scientifically based reform, consumers will need to know whether a model can clearly demonstrate links between research and the components of its design.

Clear explanations from ESPs on model design can help school staff understand the model and accept changes that they will be required to make. In addition, consumers who may be considering a newer model with lower evidence of effectiveness must consider

whether the model's design is based on solid research. A newer model may not have had sufficient time to conduct enough research on its effectiveness, but that model should be able to clearly demonstrate that it can work; that is, that the model's design is based on solid evidence of *what works*. Of course, over time a model must demonstrate that it does work. The ratings for Category 4 measure how clearly and explicitly the materials reviewed by the CSRQ Center demonstrate links between research and the model's design. Through phone conversations with the model's director, conversations with a group of randomly selected districts or charter authorizers for each model, and a review of model materials, we rated whether the model has linked its components—such as organization and governance, professional development, and technology—to a literature base. Consumers should be aware that it was beyond the scope of this report to review whether the research cited by the models is itself highly rigorous. Other researchers and organizations, such as the What Works Clearinghouse, help address this issue.

#### Category 5: Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation

Even the most well-designed, well-researched models can fail to produce positive results if implemented poorly. Implementing any model requires schools and districts to expend significant amounts of money, time, and effort over a long period of time. If consumers are going to make this kind of investment, they need to feel confident that the model provider can offer adequate, high-quality services and supports to help school staff fully and faithfully implement the model. The CSRQ Center created Category 5 to rate two subcategories: a model's readiness to be implemented successfully and the quality of professional development and technical assistance that the model provides to schools.

**Subcategory 5a reviews the model’s evidence of readiness for successful implementation.** Under this subcategory, we assessed the following dimensions:

- Provider tracks and supports full implementation in schools.
- Provider helps schools allocate resources needed to fully implement the ESP model.

**Subcategory 5b reviews the model’s evidence of professional development/technical assistance for successful implementation.** Under this subcategory, we assessed the following dimensions:

- Provider offers comprehensive training opportunities and supporting materials.
- Provider ensures that professional development effectively supports full model implementation.
- Provider develops a school’s internal capacity to provide professional development.

For Categories 4 (link between research and the model’s design) and 5 (professional development and technical assistance), we synthesized and reported qualitative data gathered through phone conversations with model directors and up to three districts or charter authorizers and reviewed publicly available documentation on the models under review. These two categories rate the effectiveness of the ESP’s delivery of services to schools.

Decision makers and consumers need to know that the model they adopt is effective and that its services will be delivered effectively. As readers will note, many of the models reviewed in this report take from 3 to 5 years to fully implement and demonstrate results. Consumers must have confidence that the ESPs which they engage are financially sound organizations that will be able to deliver high-quality services over the life of the contract. To date, no one has reviewed this type of critical consumer information. The CSRQ Center has worked with financial and organizational

experts to develop a set of standards that will permit consumers to make more informed and confident long-term commitments.

## How Was the Rating System Developed and Applied?

The production of this report was guided by the CSRQ Center’s Quality Review Tool (QRT). The QRT provides the criteria for independent, fair, and credible model reviews. (Greater detail regarding the methods used in this study is available in “Methodology.”) To ensure that the QRT is valid, reliable, credible, and useful, the QRT development process involved several steps. First, staff developed review frameworks in consultation with some of the nation’s most respected education researchers, model evaluators, and school improvement experts. Then, the QRT was reviewed and revised with the help of the CSRQ Center’s Advisory Committee, a nationally respected panel of experts that includes leading education practitioners, methodologists, and researchers from a variety of fields, including education, sociology, psychology, and economics (see Table 1). Finally, the QRT drew on prior and current efforts to conduct rigorous research reviews—including Herman et al. (1999) and Borman et al. (2002)—and standards set by the What Works Clearinghouse.

The forms, rubrics, and evaluation criteria that are part of the QRT have been carefully designed to guide the CSRQ Center’s reviews of reform models. The tools are intended to make the review process clear, transparent, and rigorous. The QRT review process is divided into three parts. Each part guides a distinct phase of the review process. Figure 1 depicts the QRT research review and reporting process.

**QRT Part 1** is an information cataloguing system that allowed the research team to acquire as much information as possible about all models being reviewed. It consisted of a multifaceted process for collecting and

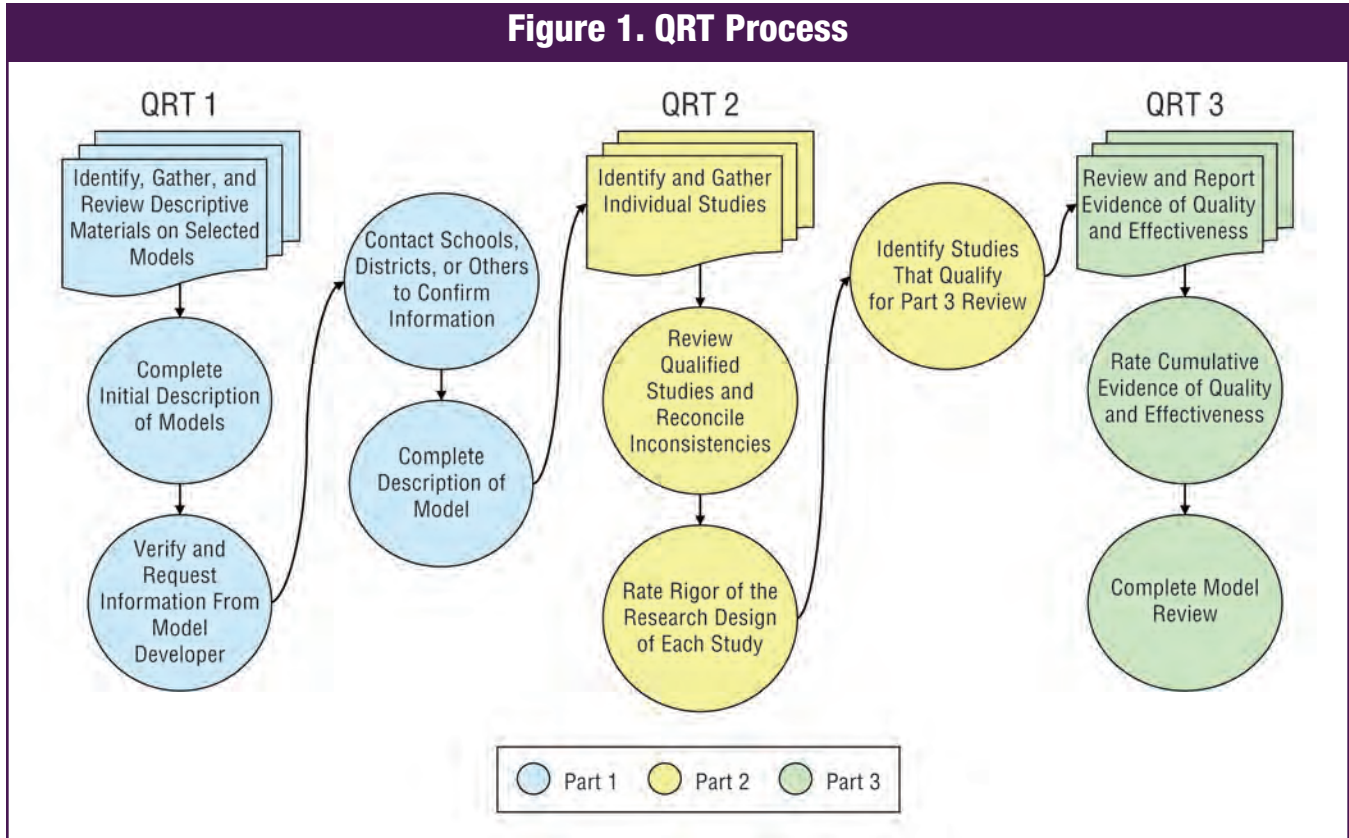
**Table 1. The CSRQ Center’s Advisors**

Anthony Amato	Former Superintendent	New Orleans Public Schools
Dan Goldhaber, Ph.D.	Research Associate Professor	University of Washington, Evans School of Public Affairs
David Francis, Ph.D.	Professor	University of Houston, Department of Psychology
Frances Harris-Burke, Ed.D.	President	Bell School Reform Network
Jeff Valentine, Ph.D.	Professor	Duke University, Department of Psychology
Jon Supovitz, Ed.D.	Research Assistant Professor	University of Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Education and Senior Researcher, Consortium for Policy Research in Education
Katrina Kelley	Director, Council of Urban Boards of Education	National School Boards Association
Kenneth Wong, Ph.D.	Professor of Education Policy and Director, Urban Education Policy Master’s Program	Brown University, Education Department
Laura Desimone, Ph.D.	Assistant Professor of Public Policy and Education	Vanderbilt University, Peabody College of Education
Margaret Raymond, Ph.D.	Research Fellow, Hoover Institution and Director, Center for Research on Education Outcomes	Stanford University, Center for Research on Education Outcomes
Matt Hornbeck, J.D.	Principal	Hempstead Elementary School, Baltimore, Maryland
Sam Stringfield, Ph.D.	Distinguished University Scholar	University of Louisville, College of Education and Human Development
Scott Joftus, Ph.D.	President	Cross and Joftus, LLC
Will Jordan, Ph.D.	Associate Professor	Temple University, College of Education

verifying information from literature reviews, contacts with model staff, and conversations with districts implementing the model or charter authorizers that review and approve the charters. QRT Part 1 included

- Gathering publicly available materials about the ESP models from academic and educational journals, the Internet, and the model developers themselves;
- Reviewing the materials to develop an initial description of the ESP model;
- Contacting the ESP to confirm the description and to request the following information: studies of the model’s implementation and effectiveness, model benchmarks, and the research base for the model’s design; and
- Holding conversations with three districts or charter authorizers for each model (chosen at random) to verify the descriptive information and better understand the implementation process.

Figure 1. QRT Process



**QRT Part 2** helped to analyze the model’s evidence of effectiveness and research base. It examined the rigor of the research design of each individual study on an ESP model’s effectiveness. QRT Part 2 did not examine the strength of an ESP model’s impact. Instead, it judged the quality of the research design supporting its evidence of impact. QRT Part 2 included

- Determining which studies met the CSRQ Center’s standards for causal validity of the outcome measures, collecting contextual and statistical information about each study; and
- Rating the rigor of the research design and identifying the studies of sufficient quality to be included in Part 3 of the review.

**QRT Part 3** applied rubrics that established standards against which evidence of a model’s impact could be

examined and rated. If the CSRQ Center’s reviewers deemed the rigor of a study’s research design to be strong or *conclusive* using QRT Part 2, then the study proceeded to QRT Part 3. Using QRT Part 3, reviewers looked across studies on an ESP model and rated the cumulative evidence as either very strong, moderately strong, moderate, limited, zero, or no rating. Using research and evidence that met the CSRQ Center’s standards set forth in QRT Parts 1 and 2, these rubrics helped evaluate the extent to which a model can demonstrate positive impact in the five categories that were described previously:

- Evidence of positive effects on student achievement
- Evidence of positive effects on additional outcomes
- Evidence of positive effects on parent, family, and community involvement

- Evidence of a link between research and the model’s design
- Evidence of services and support to schools to enable successful implementation

## How Does the Rating System Work?

Our rating process is complex and is based on the assumption that to make timely decisions, education consumers need a relatively small number of straight-forward ratings developed through reliable methods. Our system combines two elements to provide a single rating for each of the categories and subcategories:

- **The strength of the evidence based upon the causal validity of the research design (e.g., how reliable and credible is it).** Strength of evidence depends on several elements: (a) the rigor of the research design and the reliability of the evidence produced, (b) the quantity of the research evidence provided by a model, and (c) the consistency of the evidence pointing to positive outcomes.

- **The strength of the reported impact or effect (e.g., does the model raise student achievement a little or a lot).** To measure the impact of the model, we calculated effect sizes—a measure of standardized differences between groups that allows researchers to compare impact on different outcomes (e.g., reading achievement on different tests). We then established a range of effect sizes that would be used to categorize the strength of impact and contribute to the overall rating. (For information on effect sizes, see “About Effect Sizes.”)

“Methodology” describes the rating process in detail.

The CSRQ Center applied separate rubrics for each category to arrive at its ratings. Ratings are expressed by a common set of symbols. In general, the rubrics we used resulted in the following ratings:

- **Very Strong** ●. This is the highest rating provided by the CSRQ Center. It means that the model demonstrates very strong (highly credible) evidence of a very strong (large) impact in a reviewed category.
- **Moderately Strong** ◐. This is the second highest rating. It indicates that the combination of strength

### About Effect Sizes

Effect sizes (ESs) are a way to standardize measures to show gains and losses on achievement or other outcomes, where differences between experimental and control groups are expressed as standard deviation (SD). For example, an ES of 1.00 indicates that students using an ESP model scored one full SD higher than comparison students not using that model. This is equivalent to an estimated increase of 100 points on the SAT, 21 NCEs (normal curve equivalent ranks), 15 points of IQ, or enough to move a student from the 20th percentile to above the 50th percentile (Slavin & Fashola, 1998).

ESs appear throughout this report to serve two purposes. First, we report ESs when describing results within individual studies. The range of outcomes in these studies varies greatly. Second, and most importantly, we report average ESs that indicate the effects of an ESP model across studies on various outcomes. ESs are used by the CSRQ Center as one component to rate models on their evidence of effectiveness. Based on a review of existing literature on ESs for ESP models and in consultation with experts, we set ranges for very strong (+0.25 and above), moderately strong (+0.20 to +0.24), and moderate (+0.15 to +0.19) as components of our model rating rubrics. Because of differences among study designs and assessments, our determination of ESs for each model can be considered only a rough estimate of impact, allowing for comparison among the various models.

of evidence and strength of impact is moderately strong, because for either or both, the evidence base is not sufficiently rigorous or the overall impact is not as large as for very strong models.






- **Moderate** . This rating results when either or both the strength of evidence or the strength of the impact do not meet the higher standards described above. Models receiving this rating may still have notable evidence because of rigor or impact.
- **Limited** . This rating indicates that although the CSRQ Center found some evidence of effectiveness, more rigorous research needs to be conducted on the model to fully support its effectiveness on the category reviewed.
- **Zero** . This rating means that none of the studies were of sufficient quality to be counted as reliable evidence.
- **Negative** . This rating indicates that the CSRQ Center found strong evidence of detrimental effects in a given category or subcategory. In practice, we did not find any evidence of this kind for any model.
- **No Rating** . This rating indicates that the model has no studies (i.e., no evidence) available for review in a category or subcategory.

Table 2 illustrates how a set of fictitious ESP models (A–F) might have been rated based on their evidence of effectiveness (impact) and the strength of their evidence. As noted above and detailed in “Methodology,” models vary in cumulative effect sizes. The higher the positive effect size, the greater the estimated positive impact on the category under analysis. (Whenever possible, effect sizes were calculated for Categories 1, 2, and 3.) Our rating, as noted previously, is a compound of several elements. Because a model can vary in the quantity of these two components, several models may receive the same rating for different reasons.

Several conclusions can be drawn from Table 2:

- Model A and Model B are rated limited. In Model A’s case, we would have found that we had fairly high confidence based on its research evidence that the model has limited impacts. Although Model B seemed to have moderate impact, we had little confidence that this was indeed the case given the research that suggested this effect (e.g., research designs with relatively lower rigor were used).
- Models C and D would have received a moderate rating but for different reasons. Model C has moderately strong evidence but a limited impact; Model D has a stronger effect but weaker evidence (e.g., only a few studies).
- Models E and F have strong effect size results (impact), but Model F has stronger evidence (e.g., a larger number of highly rigorous studies were conducted, leading to greater confidence) supporting a rating of very strong versus moderately strong (for Model E).

In practice, the seven ESP models we reviewed might have been arrayed in a similar fashion because they demonstrated a large range in effect sizes and in the level of confidence we could place on their research findings.

Similarly, the rating system for Categories 4 and 5 was complex and depended on several elements: (a) evidence of explicit links between research and the model’s design, (b) evidence that the model provider offers services and supports to schools to enable successful implementation, and (c) evidence that the model provider offers professional development and technical assistance to enable successful implementation.

To determine evidence of services and supports, the following areas were examined: (a) provider tracks and supports full implementation in all schools and (b) provider helps schools to allocate resources needed to fully implement the model. For evidence of

**Table 2. The CSRQ Center’s Rating System for Categories 1–3**

		<u>Impact</u>				
		← Weak	Strength of Effect			Very Strong →
Strength of Evidence	High ↑	Limited	Moderate	Moderately Strong	Very Strong	Very Strong
	Confidence in Evidence	Limited <i>Model A</i>	Moderate	Moderately Strong	Moderately Strong	Very Strong <i>Model F</i>
		Limited	Moderate <i>Model C</i>	Moderately Strong	Moderately Strong	Moderately Strong <i>Model E</i>
		Limited	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate <i>Model D</i>	Moderate
		Low ↓	Limited	Limited	Limited <i>Model B</i>	Limited

professional development and technical assistance, the following areas were examined: (a) provider offers extensive training opportunities and supporting materials to support its core components and (b) provider supports schools in the development of its internal capacity to provide professional development.





The same rating scale and symbols were used to rate Categories 4 and 5 as were used to rate Categories 1–3. But the meanings of the ratings are different so that they match the category:

- **Very Strong** ●. This is the highest rating provided by the CSRQ Center. It means that the model provided evidence of explicit links between research

and the model’s design, comprehensive services and supports to schools to enable successful implementation, and/or comprehensive professional development and technical assistance to enable successful implementation for 100% of the model’s core components.

- **Moderately Strong** ◐. This is the second highest rating. It indicates evidence of explicit links between research and the model’s design, comprehensive services and supports to schools to enable successful implementation, and/or comprehensive professional development and technical assistance to enable successful implementation for 75% of the model’s core components.



- **Moderate** . This rating indicates evidence of explicit links between research and the model’s design, comprehensive services and supports to schools to enable successful implementation, and/or comprehensive professional development and technical assistance to enable successful implementation for 50% and at least two of the model’s core components.
- **Limited** . This rating indicates evidence of explicit links between research and the model’s design, comprehensive services and supports to schools to enable successful implementation, or comprehensive professional development and technical assistance to enable successful implementation for less than half (below 50%) and at least one of the model’s core components.
- **Zero** . This rating means that we found a non-specific research base, no evidence of services and supports, and/or evidence that does not meet the CSRQ Center’s standards of rigor and quality.
- **No Rating** . This rating indicates that the CSRQ Center was unable to conduct a conversation with the ESP or to obtain complete information to verify evidence. Thus, no rating would be given to the model.

## What Are the CSRQ Center’s Findings?

Our rating process for Categories 1, 2, and 3 is complex and combines two elements to provide a single rating:

- The strength of the evidence based on the causal validity of the research design (e.g., how reliable and credible is it)
- The strength of the reported impact or effect (e.g., does the model raise student achievement a little or a lot)

The CSRQ Center identified few rigorous studies that were relevant for rating each ESP’s overall evidence of

positive effects on student achievement. In Category 1, after screening approximately 900 studies and documents for quality, only 9 studies met the CSRQ Center’s standards. (Appendix I, Table 1 summarizes the quantitative study findings that were used to rate evidence of overall positive effects on student achievement.) These 9 studies focused on one ESP model (Edison).

For Category 1 (Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement), we rated

- One model as moderate (Edison),
- Four models as zero (Leona, Mosaica, NHA, and White Hat), and
- Two models as no rating (Imagine and SABIS).

In reviewing our findings for Category 1, readers should keep in mind that many of the models in the report serve high-poverty students in low-performing schools. Thus, the evidence of effectiveness that the studies present is for success in educating students in highly challenging conditions.

The research base on which to rate models in Categories 2 (Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes) and 3 (Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement) is sparse. There were no studies that met the CSRQ Center’s standards in these categories.

Category 4 rated evidence of link between research and the model’s design. The rating system for Category 5 (Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation) depended on two subcategories: (a) evidence of readiness for successful implementation and (b) evidence that the model provider offers professional development and technical assistance to enable successful implementation. The same rating scale and symbols were used to rate Categories 4 and 5 as were used to rate Categories 1–3; however, the meanings of the ratings are category specific. The CSRQ Center contacted each ESP to conduct a conversation

with the provider to verify information to complete ratings in Categories 4 and 5. However, four models (Imagine, Mosaica, SABIS, and White Hat) did not engage in conversations with the CSRQ Center, and three of those models (Imagine, Mosaica, and White Hat) did not provide any information. Thus, given the limited amount of publicly available information in these categories, we assigned no rating to these ESPs for Categories 4 and 5.

For Category 4, we rated

- One model as very strong (Edison),
- One model as limited (Leona), and
- One model as zero (NHA).

For Category 5a (evidence of readiness for successful implementation), one model (Edison) was rated very strong and two models (Leona and NHA) were rated moderate. For Category 5b (evidence that the ESP offers professional development and technical assistance to enable successful implementation), one model (Edison) was rated very strong and two models (Leona and NHA) were rated moderately strong.

Given the importance of implementation to the success of any whole school reform, consumers who select models that have low rankings in evidence of effects on student outcomes may still experience success if they implement the models faithfully. Appendix I, Table 2 summarizes basic model information and model ratings for Categories 1–5.

## **W**hat Are the Limitations of This Report?

Although this report builds on the strong prior work of others (e.g., Borman et al., 2002; Herman et al., 1999) and the best thinking of the education research community regarding how to conduct consumer-friendly evidence reviews, it falls short of the ideal in a number of areas. We hope that over time—with the feedback

of education consumers, researchers, and model providers—we will be able to issue future reports that are increasingly accurate and useful.

Relying on existing evidence in providing ratings was a major limitation of this report. Our descriptive information was based on a review of publicly available information that is often provided by the models themselves. This report on ESPs was particularly challenging because only some providers engaged with the CSRQ Center in the review process. Although all ESPs were given the opportunity to engage in a conversation with the CSRQ Center to discuss their model and to provide additional materials and research to be considered for this report, only a few chose to do so. Thus, in most instances, the CSRQ Center relied entirely on publicly available information, making it difficult to assign some ratings.

Given limited resources, verifying the claims made by all ESPs was impossible. We did attempt to gather independent information through conversations with a small group of randomly selected districts or charter authorizers served by the models reviewed. However, these were informal conversations that were conducted with only a very small number of individuals. Given our limitations, other participants and stakeholders involved in whole school reform—such as teachers, students, parents, and school board members—could not be reached. We encourage consumers to probe more deeply during the ESP adoption process for further information to support their final choice of a model. For example, schools and districts can and should request detailed cost, operational, and evaluation information from an ESP as part of a contracting process.

Likewise, our quantitative information was limited to a review of available prior research that had been conducted on the seven models. Although we searched extensively to uncover all sources of existing evidence, we were not able to conduct original research or to apply common evaluation measures across all models to ease comparability. Also, because models are evolving and

refining their designs, we cannot be certain whether the high or low ratings given to a model are truly representative of the current version of that model. Many models may be “new and improved” but may not yet have rigorous evidence to demonstrate such a claim.

As Professor Larry Hedges notes,

Evidence-based social policy formation requires a base of evidence that key actors . . . view as sufficiently valid to warrant its active application in policy formation. The evidence must at least meet minimum standards of internal validity (freedom from bias) and external validity (generalizability to other settings than the one studied). It is not always easy to specify exactly what evidence meets these standards. (2000, p. 193)

The CSRQ Center undertook this review with the full knowledge of an ongoing scientific debate on such questions as how to appropriately weigh evidence from different types of research designs, add up research findings, and report results. We confronted a number of these questions in our review, and each time consulted our expert technical advisors to arrive at a workable answer that allowed us to reach our goal: a consumer-friendly report that is based on the best available evidence and scientific thinking. However, to do so, we had to resolve such issues as (a) how to present a composite measure that included rigor of research design with strength of impact and (b) how to set cut points to determine how large of an effect size was needed to gain a rating of very strong, moderately strong, or moderate on our rating of overall effects. We have made our assumptions and our work as transparent as possible so that others can help improve our thinking and methods for future reports.

Finally, we knew that to be usable, this report had to strike a balance between brevity and depth. Too little information risked falling short of our goal to provide consumers with an effective decision-making tool. Too

much information risked confusing decision makers with an overwhelming set of details. In practice, we erred on the side of providing less numbers and technical information in our analyses, leaving that for “Methodology” and the appendixes. However, we also erred on the side of providing as detailed a description of the models as possible, hoping that consumers will get a clear understanding of the distinctive elements of each, and thus be able to make the wisest decision possible. We hope that we made the right sacrifices to meet the evidence needs of end users of this report, while upholding the highest standards of scientific research.

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# Methodology

This report is the first systematic attempt to characterize the evidence on the effectiveness and quality of seven widely used Education Service Providers (ESPs).

Although this report is intended for a general readership, cutting edge scientific concepts and processes have been used to produce the reviews in this report. In this section, we detail the research methods used to support these reviews. This section highlights some of the challenges posed in conducting systematic reviews of evidence and gives our technical readers the background needed to judge the quality of our scientific efforts.

The Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center's researchers recognize that student achievement is critical to education consumers. However, education consumers also rely on thorough descriptions of whole school improvement models, such as ESPs, and they want to know how their schools may change if they implement a specific model. Educators also seek information about the experiences of other schools that implement whole school improvement models. To meet this need, the CSRQ Center combined qualitative and quantitative research techniques to report on (a) the impact that ESP models have on student achievement and (b) the experiences of schools that implement these models. This approach aligns with Creswell's five purposes for the use of multimethods (1994, p. 175):

1. Triangulation, in seeking convergence of results
2. Complementary, in that overlapping and different facets of a phenomenon may emerge
3. Developmentally, wherein the first method is used sequentially to help inform the second method
4. Initiation, wherein contradictions and fresh perspective emerge
5. Expansion, wherein the mixed methods add scope and breadth to a study

Through the use of multimethods, the CSRQ Center reviewed available evidence on ESP models to determine their effects on student achievement and to expand and fully describe the components of each ESP model and the services that they offer to schools.

As described in the introduction, the CSRQ Center developed the Quality Review Tool (QRT), a three-part, multimethod tool to collect and analyze qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate ESPs for the education consumer.

1. **QRT Part 1** is the *qualitative data collection* phase. The purpose of QRT Part 1 is to gather (a) supporting information on each ESP from publicly available sources, ESP directors, and three districts or charter authorizers and (b) descriptive information about the ESP, such as professional development, technical assistance, and research-based design.
2. **QRT Part 2** is the *quantitative data collection* phase. The purpose of QRT Part 2 is to conduct a systematic review of the literature on the effectiveness of an ESP on student achievement, other outcomes—such as attendance and graduation rates—and family and community involvement.
3. **QRT Part 3** is the *data analysis* phase, in which the qualitative and quantitative data are synthesized to generate effectiveness ratings of the ESP. These ratings (Very Strong, Moderately Strong, Moderate, Limited, Zero, and No Rating) are developed for several categories, including evidence of positive effects on student achievement, additional outcomes, and parent, family, and community outcomes; evidence of a link between research and the model's design; and evidence of the model's ability to provide

services and support (e.g., readiness and professional development/technical assistance) to schools to enable successful implementation.

## **S**ample of Education Service Provider Models

For the purposes of this report, *ESP* is defined as a nonprofit or for-profit organization that contracts with new or existing public, charter, or private schools and/or school districts to provide comprehensive services, including, but not limited to, educational programming and administrative services. Educational programming included curriculum design, professional development, and student assessment tools. Administrative services included, but were not limited to, operation management services (student enrollment, school marketing), financial management services (payroll assistance, budget oversight), facilities management services (maintenance and use of facilities), and human resources management (hiring and training staff, staff benefits). The comprehensive services provided by ESPs are comparable to services provided by whole school improvement models.

The CSRQ Center gathered an initial list of 54 ESPs by consulting databases, including Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's (NWREL's) *Catalog of School Reform Models*; the Center for Education Reform; and reports, including *Education Management Organizations: Growing a For-Profit Education Industry With Choice, Competition, and Innovation* (Hentschke, Oschman, & Snell, 2002), *Calculating the Benefits and Costs of For-Profit Public Education* (Molnar, 2001), and *Profiles of For-Profit Education Management Companies, Sixth Annual Report, 2003–2004* (Molnar, Wilson, & Allen, 2004). From this list, a final sample was selected by

1. Exploring the replicability of the ESP, as determined by the total number of states implementing the ESP;
2. Determining market share, as defined by the total number of schools implementing the ESP; and
3. Investigating the comprehensiveness of the ESP's design.

During each step of the information gathering process, researchers consulted previous reports, databases, Web sites of the ESPs, and four recognized researchers in school management organizations.

For step 1, (replicability), the CSRQ Center's researchers consulted the Web sites of the initial 54 ESPs to determine whether they operated in three or more states. This step narrowed the initial list from 54 to 15 ESPs.

For step 2 (market share), the CSRQ Center's researchers searched the Web sites of the remaining 15 ESPs for information on the total number of schools that used the respective ESPs. The CSRQ Center defined the selection criterion for market share as ESP models that operated in 20 or more schools. This step narrowed the list from 15 to 13 ESPs.

For step 3 (comprehensiveness), the CSRQ Center's researchers examined whether the ESP's design features met the following components identified by the U.S. Department of Education: governance, administrative services, technical assistance, classroom practices, professional development, leadership development, benchmarks/assessments, and curriculum (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). For coding purposes, components were defined as follows:

- **Governance** was defined as operations and management conducted in schools. Key words associated with governance were operations, structure, management, scheduling, committees, blocks, and administration.
- **Administrative services (AS)** was defined as central office tasks, such as budgets, payroll, and student recruitment. AS included, but were not limited to, operation management services (student

enrollment, school marketing), financial management services (payroll assistance, budget oversight), facilities management services (maintenance and use of facilities), and human resources management (hiring and training staff, staff benefits). Key words associated with AS were payroll, budget, personnel management, recruitment, facility management, maintenance, and transportation management. Researchers should note that this component only applies to the CSRQ Center's report on ESPs.

- **Technical assistance (TA)** was defined as classroom operational or management assistance through mentoring, coaching, or other services provided to teachers. Key words associated with TA were troubleshooting, coaching, and mentoring.
- **Classroom practices (CP)** was defined as pedagogical, structural, and behavioral management practices that a teacher enacts in a classroom. Key words associated with CP were pedagogy, classroom management, classroom structure, teaching strategies, and philosophy of instruction.
- **Professional development (PD)** was defined as teacher training on a specific topic. This training typically occurs in a workshop or conference environment. Key words associated with PD were training (on specific topics), conferences, and workshops.
- **Leadership development (LD)** was defined as administrative training or development for school personnel in leadership positions (principals, grade-level chairs, and lead teachers). Key words associated with LD were leadership training and/or development.
- **Benchmarks/assessments** was defined as tests and evaluations used to measure students' skills and understanding and academic progress. Key words associated with benchmarks/assessment were

measurable goals, formative evaluation, and benchmarks of progress.

- **Curriculum** was defined as the scope and sequence of learning objectives and indicators, as well as materials provided for lessons to instruct such objectives. Key words associated with curriculum were materials, scope and sequence, standards, and learning objectives.

Each ESP was given a point for each component or criterion that the model met based on information found on the model's Web site and additional resources, including, but not limited to, *Education Management Organizations: Growing a For-Profit Education Industry With Choice, Competition, and Innovation* (Hentschke, et al., 2002); *Calculating the Benefits and Costs of For-Profit Public Education* (Molnar, 2001); *Profiles of For-Profit Education Management Companies, Sixth Annual Report, 2003–2004* (Molnar et al., 2004); and Web sites of the U.S. Department of Education (<http://www.ed.gov>) and NWREL (<http://www.nwrel.org>). Each ESP that had five or more components in its design was included in the final sample. This step narrowed the list from 13 to 7 ESPs, resulting in the final sample for the review.

## **Q** RT Part 1: Qualitative Data Collection Phase

QRT Part 1 was the qualitative data collection phase. It included guidelines for (a) conversations with model directors, school districts, or charter authorizers and (b) the collection of artifacts from the ESPs and additional information about the model from publicly available resources (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Creswell, 1994, 1998).

QRT Part 1, including the guidelines for phone conversations, conversation questions, and artifact lists, was pilot tested with a model provider reviewed in the *CSRQ Center Report on Elementary School Comprehensive*

*School Reform Models* (released November 2005). Based on feedback from the pilot conversations, researchers at the CSRQ Center modified the qualitative data collection process. An experienced and trained qualitative researcher at the American Institutes for Research (AIR) provided training on information gathering techniques, coding artifacts, and synthesizing qualitative data to develop a complete description of each ESP in the sample. The qualitative researchers met weekly to ensure consistency across the qualitative data collection efforts.

For QRT Part 1 (qualitative data collection), qualitative researchers performed four main steps:

1. **Complete an initial description of the ESP model by using a standardized form.** The CSRQ Center developed the Model Description Form, a comprehensive survey instrument for compiling existing information about an ESP, including mission, history, market share, costs to the school, and design of each of the ESP model's components. For example, researchers gathered information about the ESP's organization and governance, such as how the ESP provides site-based autonomy, whether additional personnel are needed, and whether the ESP requires changes to the structure of the school. For questions about professional development, researchers gathered information about which school personnel are required to attend professional development, what types of professional development are offered prior to and during implementation, and what strategies are available to help a school build capacity to provide its own professional development. In all, researchers gathered information about the ESP's organization and governance; administrative services; professional development; technical assistance; curriculum; instruction; inclusion; technology; time and scheduling; instructional grouping; student assessment; data-based decision making; and parent, family, and community involvement. The researchers also requested benchmarks and explicit citations that link the model's design to a research base. The researchers completed this form using the ESP's Web site and other publicly available information.
2. **Conduct a phone conversation with the provider of the ESP model to verify previously gathered information.** Conversations were structured around the Model Description Form (completed in step 1). On average, phone conversations lasted 90 minutes.
3. **Conduct phone conversations with three districts or charter authorizers who use or authorize the use of the ESP.** The conversations verified information gathered in steps 1 and 2. The districts or charter authorizers were randomly selected from a list provided by the ESP. The conversations were guided by the Model Description Form.
4. **Complete a final description of the ESP by using a standardized form.** The Model Description Form-Complete synthesized all sources of qualitative data gathered, such as the conversations with the model provider, the three districts, or charter authorizers and artifacts collected from the ESP. The Model Description Form-Complete was checked for quality control twice to ensure that each item had 100% agreement between the two qualitative researchers. This form was then used to organize the data through the identification of core components. Core components are considered essential to successful implementation of the model according to the CSRQ Center's standards. Additionally, these data were coded to answer several questions:
  - Is there a strong link between research and the ESP's design?
  - Does the ESP track and support full implementation in all schools?
  - Does the ESP help schools allocate resources to implement the model?

- Does the ESP provide comprehensive training opportunities and supporting materials?
- Does the ESP develop the schools' internal capacity to provide professional development?

## Q RT Part 2: Quantitative Data Collection Phase

QRT Part 2 was the quantitative data collection phase. Using systematic review methods (Borman, Hewes, Overman, & Brown, 2002; Lipsey & Wilson, 2001), QRT Part 2 included protocols to conduct systematic literature reviews and to code research studies for statistical and causal validity information.

QRT Part 2, including the protocols for literature reviews and coding instruments, was pilot tested using the same whole school improvement model provider as was used for the qualitative data collection efforts (QRT Part 1). Based on feedback from the pilot test and from the *CSRQ Center Report on Elementary Comprehensive School Reform Models*, the process for conducting the literature review was improved and the coding instruments were refined. An experienced and trained quantitative researcher at AIR conducted training on how to use the coding instruments to ensure consistency in the data collection. The training included a presentation of the definitions of different research designs, causal validity issues, and background information on effect size calculations.

For QRT Part 2, quantitative researchers completed five main steps:

1. **Conduct a thorough literature search.** For each ESP, quantitative researchers searched educational databases (e.g., JSTOR, ERIC, EBSCO, Psychinfo, Sociofile, NWREL, DAI) and Web-based repositories

(e.g., Google, Yahoo, Google Scholar). From these sources, quantitative researchers screened for *initial relevance* nearly 940 article abstracts or summaries across the 7 models in the final sample. To pass the initial screen, the studies had to meet several criteria: be published or distributed between 1980 and March 2006, examine at least one of the ESPs being investigated, use quantitative methods, and be reported as a full-text research paper (i.e., not a PowerPoint presentation or executive summary). From these articles, researchers identified 38 articles to code.<sup>1</sup> Of those, 37 were available and retrievable for coding.<sup>2</sup> Appendix I provides a summary table of the number of articles that passed through each phase of the QRT Part 2 process.

2. **Complete a Study Description Outcome Form (SDOF), the first standardized coding sheet.** The CSRQ Center's quantitative researchers used the SDOF to code and document each study's research design, outcome variables, and demographic information. The CSRQ Center assigned a lead and secondary coder for each article. The SDOF was completed by the lead coder. Then, the secondary coder verified all the information for 100% agreement. At this stage of coding, the primary focus was to screen each study for a reliable research design. Studies that *were not eligible for full review* were often evaluations of implementation theories supporting the ESP with no quantitative data on outcomes or used research designs that were not sufficiently rigorous (e.g., one group pretest-posttest research designs). Research designs that passed this stage included experimental and quasi-experimental research designs with both pre- and posttests that evaluated the ESP with a control group (Cook & Campbell, 1979; Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002) and longitudinal and cohort designs with multiple testing periods. Studies with

<sup>1</sup>Some studies reviewed by the CSRQ Center evaluated more than one ESP model.

<sup>2</sup>One study for Mosaica schools was not available in full copy.



research designs that passed this screen and included student achievement outcomes became eligible for full review. A total of 17 articles passed this step and were eligible for full coding in step 3.

3. **Complete the Quality Indicators Form (QLIF), the second standardized coding sheet.** Researchers used the QLIF to code studies that appeared to use rigorous research designs. The QLIF served two purposes: It examined the quality of the research and gathered statistical information. Researchers examined the quality of the research, such as the internal and external validity, face and psychometric validity of the outcome measures, and other quality indicators (Herman et al., 1999). Coders also collected statistical information, such as effect sizes reported by the authors or raw statistical information. For each study that was relevant for full review, two quantitative researchers independently coded one QLIF for each achievement outcome in that study.
4. **Reconcile the two QLIF coding sheets to attain 100% agreement on each coded item.** If the two quantitative researchers could not reach a consensus, a review coordinator reviewed the coding sheets to facilitate reconciliation. After the reconciliation process, a final QLIF reflected the 100% agreement.
5. **Rate each article on an overall causal validity score.** The final step was to systematically map the information from the final QLIF (the reconciled version) based on a set of rubrics designed to score each study for its causal validity (Shadish et al., 2002) as *conclusive*, *suggestive*, or *inconclusive*. Studies determined to be suggestive or conclusive met the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design.

Conclusive studies had high levels of rigor, that is, experimental and quasi-experimental designs that had zero critical threats to validity and fewer than two noncritical threats to validity. Effect sizes were reported

or calculated only from studies that had a conclusive causal validity rating (Cooper, 1998; Light & Pillemer, 1984; Shadish et al., 2002). If the researcher could not calculate an effect size because of missing data, then the researcher conducted one of the following steps: (a) contacted the author for the statistical information needed, (b) imputed missing data, particularly standard deviations and sample size using protocols established in previous meta-analysis (Borman et al., 2002), or (c) chose not to include the study in the synthesis if options a and b were not feasible.

Suggestive studies are those that had zero critical threats but more than two noncritical threats. Studies without control groups, including longitudinal and cohort research designs, were capped at suggestive, unless the analytic techniques generated higher levels of rigor.<sup>3</sup>

Inconclusive studies had critical threats to validity, such as using testing instruments with poor face validity and reliability, insufficient program fidelity, nonequivalence of treatment/control groups, lack of proper baseline, and/or timing of outcome measures (less than 1 school year after ESP implementation or less than 1 academic year between pretest and posttest). Noncritical threats to validity included historical events, disruption/novelty effects, instrumentation changes, maturation, selection bias, and statistical regression (Shadish et al., 2002).

## RT Part 3: Data Analysis Phase

QRT Part 3 synthesized the qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate each ESP in five main categories.

1. Evidence of positive effects on student achievement:
  - a. Evidence of positive overall effects
  - b. Evidence of positive effects for diverse student populations

<sup>3</sup>For example, backward-looking interrupted time series designs were considered more rigorous than longitudinal or longitudinal cohort studies that examined trends over time.

- c. Evidence of positive effects for specific subject areas
2. Evidence of positive effects on additional outcomes (e.g., student discipline, student attendance, school climate, retention/promotion rates, and teacher satisfaction)
3. Evidence of positive effects on parent, family, and community involvement
4. Evidence of a link between research and the model's design
5. Evidence of services and supports to schools to enable successful implementation:
  - a. Evidence of readiness for successful implementation
  - b. Evidence of professional development/technical assistance for successful implementation

Category 1 used the quantitative information gathered in QRT Part 2. For each ESP in the sample, the quantitative information—including the number of studies coded, the number of studies that were rated as suggestive or conclusive, the percentage of findings in the suggestive or conclusive studies that demonstrated a positive impact, and the average effect size of those significant findings—was mapped onto rubrics to determine what rating the model should receive—either very strong, moderately strong, moderate, limited, zero, or no rating—for effects on student achievement. Quantitative researchers systematically aggregated results according to the QRT 3 rubric for the overall effect by grade, subject (reading, writing, math, science, and social studies), and diverse student populations (e.g., high poverty, minority, learning disabled and other special needs, and urban and rural students).

Category 2 evaluated the positive effects of each ESP on additional outcomes, and Category 3 evaluated the evidence of positive effects of each ESP on parent,

family, and community involvement. Similar to Category 1, quantitative researchers mapped onto rubrics the information about the number of studies that evaluated these outcome variables, the number of studies that were suggestive or conclusive, the percentage of findings that demonstrated a positive impact, and the average effect size of those positive findings.

In general, the rubrics for the quantitative information for Categories 1–3 were as follows:

- **Very Strong.** If a model had at least 10 studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design, with at least 5 rated conclusive (and/or conclusive studies constitute at least 50% of the total studies coded), and 75% of the outcomes showed statistically significant positive model effects ( $p \leq .05$ ), with an overall mean model achievement effect size for positive effects that is greater than or equal to +0.25, then the model received a very strong rating. A very strong rating is symbolized by a fully shaded circle (●).
- **Moderately Strong.** If a model had 5 to 9 studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design, with at least 3 rated conclusive (and/or conclusive studies constituted at least 50% of the total studies coded), and 51% to 74% of the outcomes showed statistically significant positive model effects ( $p \leq .05$ ), with an overall mean model achievement effect size for positive effects that is between or equal to +0.20 and +0.24, then the model received a moderately strong rating. A moderately strong rating is symbolized by a three-fourths shaded circle (◐).
- **Moderate.** If a model had 2 to 4 studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design, with at least 1 rated conclusive (and/or conclusive studies constituted at least 50% of the total studies coded), and 26% to 50% of the outcomes showed statistically significant positive model effects ( $p \leq .05$ ), with an overall mean

model achievement effect size for positive effects that is between or equal to +0.15 and +0.19, then the model received a moderate rating. A moderate rating is symbolized by a half shaded circle (◐).

- **Limited.** If a model had 1 study that met the CSRQ Center’s standards for rigor of research design and 1% to 25% of the outcomes showed statistically significant positive model effects ( $p \leq .05$ ), then the model received a limited rating. A limited rating is symbolized by a one-fourth shaded circle (◑).
- **Zero.** If a model had zero studies that met the CSRQ Center’s standards for rigor of research design or 0% of the outcomes in the studies that met the CSRQ Center’s standards for rigor of research design showed statistically significant positive effects, as required for a limited rating, then the model received a zero rating. A zero rating is symbolized by a circle with a diagonal slash (⊘).
- **Negative.** If a model had at least 10 studies that met the CSRQ Center’s standards for rigor of research design, with at least 5 rated conclusive (and/or conclusive studies constituted at least 50% of the total studies coded), and 75% of the outcomes showed statistically significant negative model effects ( $p \leq .05$ ), with an overall mean model achievement effect size of less than or equal to zero, then the model received a negative rating. A negative rating is symbolized by a circle with a minus sign (⊖). Studies that receive a negative rating suggest that the model has detrimental effects. In practice, this review did not find any evidence of this kind for any model.
- **No Rating.** If a model had no studies (i.e., no evidence was available), then the model received a no rating. A no rating is symbolized by a circle with “NR” (⊘<sub>NR</sub>).

Category 4 evaluates the link between research and the ESP’s design. This category used the qualitative

information from QRT Part 1. Qualitative researchers applied the information synthesized in the Model Description Form (from QRT Part 1) onto the following rubric.

- **Very Strong.** If a model provided documentation that explicitly described and convincingly supported links between the research base and *all* (100%) core components of its design, then the model received a very strong rating. A very strong rating is symbolized by a fully shaded circle (●).
- **Moderately Strong.** If a model provided documentation that explicitly described and supported links between the research base and *most* (75%) of the core components of its design, then the model received a moderately strong rating. A moderately strong rating is symbolized by a three-fourths shaded circle (◔).
- **Moderate.** If a model provided documentation that explicitly described and supported links between the research base and *half* (50%) of the core components of its design, then the model received a moderate rating. A moderate rating is symbolized by a half shaded circle (◐).
- **Limited.** If a model provided documentation that explicitly described and supported links between the research base and *less than half* (below 50%) of the core components of its design, then it received a limited rating. A limited rating is symbolized by a one-fourth shaded circle (◑).
- **Zero.** If a model provided documentation that referred to a *nonspecific* research base to support the inclusion of the core components in its design, then the model received a zero rating. A zero rating is symbolized by a circle with a diagonal slash (⊘).
- **No Rating.** If the CSRQ Center was unable to conduct a conversation with the model provider or obtain complete information to verify evidence,

then the model received a no rating. A no rating is symbolized by a circle with “NR” (NR).

Two main questions guided the ratings for Category 5 (evidence that the model provider offers services and support to schools to ensure successful implementation). The first question—does the ESP provide evidence of readiness for successful implementation—included the following subcategories:

- Provider tracks and supports full implementation in schools.
- Provider helps schools allocate resources that are needed to fully implement the ESP.

Unlike many whole school reform models that often require a consensus among an existing school’s staff to adopt the model, ESPs do not need to ensure an initial commitment from schools because these models often open new schools. ESPs offer an alternative route to gain consensus; they use an induction process to familiarize the new school staff with the model. Thus, for this report, under Category 5, the following subcategory did not apply as it was used for other reports from the CSRQ Center: provider ensures initial commitment from schools.

Qualitative researchers used the information synthesized in the Model Description Form (from QRT Part 1) to rate the two subcategories using a specific rubric. These two ratings were then averaged to determine the rating for evidence of readiness for successful implementation. In general, a model’s rating was based on evidence of the following: formal or informal benchmarks for all or some of its core components and a formal or informal process for the allocation of such school resources as materials, staffing, and time.

The second question—does the ESP provide schools with professional development and technical assistance needed to help teachers implement the model—included the following subcategories:

- Provider offers comprehensive training opportunities and supporting materials.
- Provider ensures that professional development effectively supports full model implementation.
- Provider develops a school’s internal capacity to provide professional development.

Again, each subcategory received a rating. The three ratings were averaged to determine the rating for evidence of professional development and technical assistance for successful implementation. In general, a model’s rating was based on evidence of the following: a variety of training opportunities, supporting materials for professional development in all or some of its core components, and a formal or informal plan to help build a school’s capacity to provide professional development.

In addition to the ratings across these five categories, the qualitative data gathered in QRT Part 1, such as the artifacts and phone conversations, were synthesized into a narrative description of each ESP. Each narrative included indepth information about the ESP’s costs and descriptions of the following components: organization and governance; administrative services; curriculum and instruction; scheduling and grouping; technology; monitoring of student progress; parent, family, and community involvement; professional development and technical assistance; and implementation expectations and benchmarks.

In all, qualitative and quantitative data were mapped to rate each ESP on

- Evidence of positive effects on student achievement;
- Evidence of positive effects on additional outcomes;
- Evidence of positive effects on parent, family, and community outcomes;
- Evidence of link between research and the model’s design; and

- Evidence of services and support to schools to enable successful implementation.

The quantitative analysis provided a systematic literature review of the reported effects of student achievement and other outcome variables. ESPs that could show relatively more literature consisting of evaluation studies were more likely to achieve higher ratings in Categories 1–3 (as long as results demonstrated positive impact). Through the qualitative analysis, newer ESPs and those that did not have a substantial number of evaluation reports could be evaluated on such dimensions as quality of professional development offered by the ESP. Although previous research on student achievement offers important considerations, education consumers may also consider whether the ESP’s design is based on solid research and provides a strong commitment to support schools through professional development and technical assistance. Providers of newer models may not have had sufficient time to conduct research on the effectiveness of their models, but they should be able to clearly demonstrate that their models *can work*, that is, that the model’s design is based on solid evidence of *what works*. Hence, by using both qualitative and quantitative methods, the CSRQ Center strives to provide the education consumer with a thorough and systematic description of the effectiveness of each ESP reviewed in this report.

By using qualitative and quantitative methods to evaluate the effectiveness of widely implemented ESPs, this study also strives to provide usable information to education consumers. In 2005, U.S. Education Secretary Margaret Spellings stated that the No Child Left Behind Act “rests on the common sense principles of accountability for results, data-based decision making, high expectations for all, and empowering change” (U.S. Department of Education, 2005).

Meeting these goals will require a significant expansion of information for education consumers about what works. This report is intended to act as a decision-support tool for educators who wish to find effective

whole school improvement approaches for meeting locally defined needs. This report helps to provide descriptive and evidence-based information on selected ESPs that may help educators make decisions—marking a significant change in the culture of the education system to meet the needs of educators, policymakers, community leaders, families, and most importantly, America’s children.

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# Edison Schools

Overview:		Basic Model Information and Review Results			
<b>Model Name:</b>	Edison Whole School Management and Edison Alliance				
<b>Model Mission/Focus:</b>	According to Edison Schools, its mission is to establish schools where all students can receive a high-quality education. Edison seeks to have all of its students achieve high academic standards in a full range of academic subjects, particularly in literacy and math. Edison also stresses character development.				
<b>Year Introduced in Schools:</b>	1995				
<b>Grade Levels Served:</b>	K–12				
<b>Number of Schools</b>					
<b>Total:</b>	<b>Urban:</b>	<b>Suburban:</b>	<b>Rural:</b>		
157	N/A	N/A	N/A		
<b>Costs</b>					
	<b>Total Operating Costs:</b>	<b>Training:</b>	<b>Materials:</b>	<b>Personnel:</b>	<b>Other:</b>
<b>Year 1</b>	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies
<b>Year 2</b>	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies
<b>Year 3</b>	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies
<b>Years 4+</b>	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies
<b>1. Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement:</b>					
a.	Overall effects				
b.	Evidence of positive effects for diverse student populations				 <sup>1</sup>
c.	Evidence of positive effects in subject areas:				
	Reading				
	Writing				
	Math				
<b>2. Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes</b>					
<b>3. Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement</b>					
<b>4. Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design</b>					
<b>5. Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation:</b>					
a.	Evidence of readiness for successful implementation				
b.	Evidence of professional development/technical assistance for successful implementation				
 = Very Strong  = Moderately Strong  = Moderate  = Limited  = Zero  = Negative  = No Rating					
<p>This description is based on publicly available information, including the model's Web site, regarding the model and its costs. The Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center attempted to obtain specific information, but this was not always possible. Areas in which exact information was not provided are marked by "N/A."</p>					

<sup>1</sup>Although the rating in this subcategory is zero, readers should note that most of the studies on Edison that met standards and also demonstrated evidence of positive overall effects on student achievement, examined the effects of this model on schools that served primarily low-income and minority populations.

## Model Description

In 1992, Edison Schools was conceived and founded by Chris Whittle, an entrepreneur who launched Channel One—the first electronic system that provided American middle and high school students with domestic and international news each morning. Edison is a for-profit education service provider (ESP) that was created to partner with school districts and charter schools to raise student achievement through a research-based school design, management services, and professional development.

Between 1992 and 1995, a team of 30 full-time Edison employees—led by Benno C. Schmidt, Jr., former president of Yale University—conducted primary and secondary research to develop the Edison school design and support services. Over the course of 3 years, this team—including education researchers, teachers, school administrators, technology specialists, and experts in school finance and management—visited schools throughout the world to interview teachers and administrators to identify recurring best practices. Simultaneously, Edison staff reviewed the research of social scientists in the areas of education reform and school management, including work by James P. Comer, Robert Slavin, James Coleman, Marshall Smith, and Stuart Purkey. In August 1995, Edison partnered with four schools to implement a school design based on these research and development efforts.

During the past 10 years, Edison has created two distinct school reform initiatives with this school design as their basis: Edison Whole School Management (including district partnerships and Edison charter schools) and Edison Alliance. Through the Whole School Management model, Edison partners with school districts or charter boards to provide well-defined academic, operational, and management services to individual schools and in rare cases, entire districts. Through the Alliance model, Edison partners

with school districts to provide customized solutions to individual schools that are struggling to meet Adequate Yearly Progress. Unlike schools implementing the Whole School Management model, schools that use the Alliance model remain under the management and operational control of the school district. The CSRQ Center reviewed both models.

According to the CSRQ Center's standards, the following were identified as core components of the Whole School Management model: organization and governance; professional development; technical assistance; curriculum; instruction; inclusion; technology; time and scheduling; instructional grouping; student assessment; data-based decision making; and parent, family, and community involvement. The following were identified as core components of the Alliance model: professional development; technical assistance; inclusion; student assessment; data-based decision making; and parent, family, and community involvement. Core components are considered essential to the successful implementation of the model.

### Model Mission/Focus

According to Edison, its mission is to establish schools where all students can receive a high-quality education. The model seeks to have all of its students achieve high academic standards in a full range of academic subjects, particularly in literacy and math. Edison also stresses character development.

To achieve this mission, Edison is committed to implementing its research-based school design in individual schools and districts throughout the United States and United Kingdom. This school design, which is the basis for both the Whole School Management and Alliance models, includes 10 fundamental elements:

- **Schools organized for every student.** Edison seeks to meet the needs of all students by creating smaller schools within schools, also known as academies.



- **A better use of time.** Edison seeks to increase time for core academic subjects through extended school days and dedicated instructional blocks.
- **A rich and challenging curriculum.** Edison designed a curriculum for all core content areas for grades K–12.
- **Teaching methods that motivate.** Edison provides professional development on instructional strategies that are designed to meet the needs of all learners, including English language learners and students with disabilities.
- **Assessments that provide accountability.** Edison designed benchmark assessments and data tracking systems that allow teachers to differentiate instruction for each student and to prepare students for standardized tests.
- **A professional environment for teachers.** Edison provides teachers with a path for career development through professional development and mentoring.
- **Technology for an information age.** Edison integrates technology into a school’s academic program but does not replace instruction with technology.
- **A partnership with families.** Edison seeks to involve family members in their child’s education through volunteerism, committees, and quarterly meetings.
- **Schools tailored to the community.** Edison seeks to link community service providers with the needs of the school.
- **The advantages of system and scale.** Edison believes that its schools benefit from being part of a national Edison network that can share resources.

### Goals/Rationale

The Edison school design is based on seven principles derived from primary and secondary research

conducted between 1992 and 1995 by a team of Edison staff:

1. School staff should have a clear and ambitious sense of purpose.
2. Strong leadership is essential to a school’s success.
3. Teachers should have clear expectations and ongoing training to meet these expectations.
4. All staff members are important to the school’s success.
5. School leaders should encourage teamwork.
6. Principles and practices of accountability should be adopted.
7. Schools should function as communities in which teachers know students as individuals.

### **C**osts

The models’ costs vary by school or district. According to Edison, for schools or districts that adopt the Whole School Management model, the model costs are comparable to the cost per pupil spent by other schools in the same district. The average cost for schools that adopt the Alliance model is \$800–\$1000 per pupil. For more information on the costs of training, materials, and personnel, sites should directly contact Edison.

### **E**vidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement

#### Evidence of Positive Overall Effects

*Rating:* 

It is important to note that a rating of limited or higher in this category indicates that the research on the whole school improvement model provides evidence

of *positive* impact on student achievement. But, few ESP models reviewed for this report had evidence that met the CSRQ Center's standards in this category. Edison is commended for offering a number of empirical studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards.

The CSRQ Center reviewed 28 studies of Edison for effects on student achievement.<sup>2</sup> Nine of these studies met the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design. Upon review, the CSRQ Center considered the findings of seven of these studies to be *conclusive*, meaning that the CSRQ Center has confidence in the results reported. The findings of the other two studies are considered to be *suggestive*, meaning that the CSRQ Center has limited confidence in them.

Overall, the nine studies reported a mix of results showing positive, negative, and no effects of Edison; about 40% of the 19 separate achievement test findings with a reported level of statistical significance demonstrated a statistically significant positive impact.<sup>3</sup> The average effect size of these positive effects was +0.38. These results are consistent with an overall rating of moderate for the overall effects of Edison on student achievement. The nine studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards are described below. (Appendix A reports on the 19 other studies that were reviewed but did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards.)

The seven studies that met standards and were considered to be conclusive used a quasi-experimental design. Two studies considered to be suggestive used a longitudinal design without a comparison group. Most of the studies that met standards and were considered to be conclusive or suggestive examined the effects of Edison on students from low-income families in

schools with large minority populations; most of these studies focused on achievement in reading and math. One study focused on an Edison high school that served predominantly white students from middle- to high-income families, and one study focused on the average performance of all Edison conversion schools across the United States. The majority of the studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards were technical reports.

One of the seven conclusive studies examined the average performance of all Edison conversion schools versus comparison schools in each of their first 5 years of operation. Findings indicated no statistically significant differences in state standardized tests in reading and math in the 2nd year of operation.<sup>4</sup>

Another study examined reading, writing, and math achievement of students in seven Edison schools in a large Texas district versus comparison schools. Student achievement was measured using results on the Stanford Achievement Test, 9th Edition and the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS). The study found that students in Edison schools did not meet or exceed the performance of students in the comparison schools.

A third study examined reading and math achievement data from high school students who took the Delaware Student Testing Program. This study found significant differences in favor of students in Edison schools in both subject areas; however, no effect sizes were reported.

A fourth study was a longitudinal analysis of achievement outcomes in reading and math on the Stanford Achievement Test, 8th Edition. Two subsamples of students were followed: Subsample A progressed from grade 2 to 4, and subsample B progressed from grade 3 to 5. Students in Edison and comparison groups

<sup>2</sup>The CSRQ Center reviewed empirical evidence on both the Edison Whole School Management model and the Edison Alliance model. Because many reports did not specify the type of model that was being implemented in the schools examined, the CSRQ Center could not separate findings by type of model.

<sup>3</sup>The findings that contributed to the total count for Edison come from studies that evaluated the effects of Edison in single schools as well as studies that evaluated the effects of Edison in multiple schools.

<sup>4</sup>This study also found a negative effect on math in the 3rd year of operation and no statistically significant differences between Edison and comparison schools in the 4th and 5th years. The CSRQ Center did not include findings from these years in the review because of large rates of attrition in schools in the study's sample.

showed no statistically significant differences in reading achievement. In math, students in the Edison group of subsample B showed significantly greater growth rates.

Three other studies considered to be conclusive examined reading achievement of students in grades K–3 in Edison schools versus comparison schools. Reading achievement was measured using the Durrell Oral Reading subtest and the Woodcock Reading Mastery Test. These studies found a mix of positive, null, and negative results for students in grades K–2, and no significant differences for students in grade 3.

Two studies considered to be suggestive examined trends in student achievement in reading and math in multiple Edison schools. These studies found a mix of positive, null, and negative trends that varied by school.

### Evidence of Positive Effects for Diverse Student Populations

*Rating:*

It is important to note that a rating in this category indicates that the model provided detailed additional evidence for specific diverse student populations. None of the other ESPs reviewed for this report had evidence that met the CSRQ Center’s standards in this category. Edison is commended for offering detailed additional evidence that met the CSRQ Center’s standards. Also, the CSRQ Center urges readers to not necessarily judge a no rating or a low rating in this category as evidence that the model cannot be effective in Title I schools or other schools with similar student populations. In fact, many ESPs, including Edison, provide most of their services to high-poverty, high-minority school populations. Thus, readers may interpret our overall rating in the category of positive overall effects on student achievement as an indicator of the models’ effectiveness in working in challenging settings, such as Title I schools.

<sup>5</sup>This study defined low-achieving students as those who scored in the lowest 25% on the language proficiency test at the baseline year.

A study that met the CSRQ Center’s standards examined the impact of Edison on low achieving students.<sup>5</sup> This study found no statistically significant differences between students in the Edison and comparison schools. Thus, the rating in this subcategory is zero.

### Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Reading

*Rating:*

The impact of Edison on reading achievement was mixed. All studies that met the CSRQ Center’s standards examined reading achievement. Four of the studies demonstrated some positive impact on reading achievement. The average effect size of the positive results was +0.40. The difference between reading by students in Edison schools and those in comparison schools was statistically significant in favor of Edison for about 38% of the reading outcomes examined for Edison. Thus, the rating in this subcategory is moderate.

### Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Writing

*Rating:*

Two studies that met the CSRQ Center’s standards examined the TAAS to measure the writing achievement of elementary school students. The first study was considered to be suggestive and reported a negative trend. The second study was considered to be conclusive and reported a positive trend. But, neither study reported a level of statistical significance. Thus, the rating in this subcategory is zero.

### Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Math

*Rating:*

Five studies that met the CSRQ Center’s standards examined the impact of Edison on student achievement in math. Of those, four studies were considered to be

conclusive. One of these studies examined the math performance of elementary school students in a large school district in Texas and found that students in Edison schools did not meet or exceed the performance of students in comparison schools. However, this study did not report a level of statistical significance among the findings.

A second study reported no statistically significant effects of Edison on math achievement.

A third study found statistically significant positive effects on math achievement of high school students, but an effect size was not reported and could not be estimated by the CSRQ Center.

The fourth study found a statistically significant positive impact of Edison on math achievement of elementary school students. The CSRQ Center calculated an effect size of +0.34 for this positive outcome.

Finally, the fifth study that met standards and was considered to be suggestive did not provide information on the level of statistical significance of the outcomes examined. This study reported a mix of positive, null, and negative trends that varied by school.

Across these studies, the positive findings constituted about one half (49%) of the math outcomes with a reported level of statistical significance. Therefore, the rating for evidence of positive impact on math achievement is moderate.

## **E**vidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes

*Rating:* (NR)

No studies of Edison that examined additional outcomes were available for review. Therefore, the rating in this category is no rating.

## **E**vidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement

*Rating:* (NR)

No studies that examined effects on parent, family, and community involvement were available for review. Therefore, the rating in this category is no rating.

## **E**vidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design

*Rating:* ●

Based on documentation provided by Edison, explicit citations support all of the core components of the Whole School Management model: organization and governance; professional development; technical assistance; curriculum; instruction; inclusion; technology; time and scheduling; instructional grouping; student assessment; data-based decision making; and parent, family, and community involvement. Therefore, according to the CSRQ Center's standards, the Whole School Management model rating for evidence of link between research and the model's design is very strong.

Furthermore, based on documentation provided by Edison, explicit citations also support all of the core components of the Alliance model: professional development; technical assistance; inclusion; student assessment; data-based decision making; and parent, family, and community involvement. Therefore, according to the CSRQ Center's standards, the Alliance model rating for evidence of link between research and the model's design is very strong.

Across both Edison models, the CSRQ Center's rating for evidence of link between research and the model's design is very strong.

## Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation

### Evidence of Readiness for Successful Implementation

Rating: ●

Based on documentation provided by Edison, the Whole School Management model and the Alliance model offer a formal process to help school staff establish an initial understanding of the respective models.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, both models offer a formal process for allocating school resources—such as materials, staffing, and time—and provide formal benchmarks for implementation. Therefore, according to the CSRQ Center’s standards, the Whole School Management model rating for evidence of readiness for successful implementation is very strong. Also, the Alliance model rating for evidence of readiness for successful implementation is very strong.

Across both Edison models, the CSRQ Center’s rating in this category is very strong.

### Evidence of Professional Development/Technical Assistance for Successful Implementation

Rating: ●

The Whole School Management model and the Alliance model provide ongoing training opportunities, such as workshops, peer coaching, capacity building, and sessions for new staff. Additionally, both of the models provide supporting materials for professional development that address all of their core components. Edison also offers a comprehensive plan to help build school capacity to provide professional development. Therefore, according to the CSRQ Center’s standards, the Whole School Management model rating for evidence of professional development/technical assistance for

successful implementation is very strong. Also, the Alliance model rating for evidence of professional development/technical assistance for successful implementation is very strong.

Across both Edison models, the CSRQ Center’s rating in this category is very strong.

## Central Components

### Administrative Services

For schools that implement the Whole School Management model, Edison claims to provide “soup to nuts” administrative services and to assume management and operational control of the school. Its administrative services include operation management, financial management, facilities management, and human resources management. Notably, two types of school partnerships fall under the Whole School Management model: district partnerships and Edison charter schools. The administrative services provided to a school depend on the type of partnership.

In a district partnership, Edison assumes management and operational control of a school at the request of a district. Furthermore, a district may hire Edison to assume responsibility for the management of the entire district. These schools receive financial management services—including budget oversight, payroll management, and audit assistance—from an Edison financial manager. In addition, Edison provides such human resources services as screening, interviewing, and hiring school staff (e.g., the school principal, administrative staff, and teachers). Teachers are offered opportunities for career advancement and increased pay through a career ladder that moves from resident teacher to lead teacher. The various teaching positions are described in greater detail in “Organization and Governance.”

<sup>6</sup>As noted in “Methodology,” the following subcategory, which has been used to rate school reform models in previous reports from the CSRQ Center, is not applicable to ESPs: Provider ensures initial commitment from schools.

Edison charter schools receive the same financial and human resources services but they also receive additional administrative support. In the start-up process, either during the application process or after the charter is granted, Edison partners with the nonprofit organization or group (also known as the charter board) that is applying for the charter. If needed, Edison provides assistance with the charter application. After the charter is granted, a general manager from Edison works with the charter board, school staff, and principal to support the start-up process of the charter school. To this end, Edison provides facilities management services, such as identifying and acquiring a school site and acquiring funding for the site. In addition, Edison helps charter schools to recruit new students and maintain student enrollment through a community outreach and marketing plan. All Edison charter schools are public schools; therefore, they are open to all students.

Conversely, Edison Alliance schools do not receive administrative services. These schools remain under the management and operational control of the district.

### Organization and Governance

The organizational structure of the Edison school design is intended to create learning communities in which all students are known as individuals. In the Whole School Management model, each Edison school is designed to have smaller, flexible schools within schools, also known as academies. Five types of academies serve grades K–12:

- Primary Academies (K–2)
- Elementary Academies (3–5)
- Junior Academies (6–8)
- Senior Academies (9–10)
- Collegiate Academies (11–12)

Within each academy, students are placed into multi-grade “houses” of 100–180 students. A team of four to six teachers, directed by a lead teacher, is assigned to each house. The team stays with this group of students (or house) for their entire experience in the academy.

According to Edison, the success of this organizational structure depends upon strong academic leadership from teachers, the school principal, and the school leadership team. All teachers receive opportunities for leadership and career advancement. Teachers who have recently completed a teacher preparatory program join Edison as a resident teacher. These teachers work under a lead teacher to improve their instructional skills and develop long-range professional development goals. With 2 years of teaching experience and teacher certification, a teacher is given the responsibility of writing curricula, communicating with parents, and developing professional relationships with other Edison staff. After years of experience as a teacher and proven mastery in the areas of curriculum, instructional methods, and classroom management, teachers are given the title of senior teacher and are appointed as curriculum coordinators. Senior teachers are expected to administer assessments, model instructional methods to other teachers, and provide regular updates to the school principal. Senior teachers who have master’s degrees (or are pursuing master’s degrees); have 3 to 5 years of teaching experience; have experience creating and publishing units, assessments, and other Edison curriculum materials; and exhibit success in the classroom are asked to be lead teachers. Lead teachers are the instructional and organizational leaders of the houses within each academy. Edison provides all teachers with explicit benchmarks and indicators for the organization of each house.

Likewise, the school principal supports all teachers as an instructional leader, site manager, and “builder of school culture.” As an instructional leader, the school principal monitors the implementation of curricular programs, supervises and evaluates staff, and helps

create professional growth plans for teachers and other staff. As the site manager, the school principal manages school operations, creates emergency and safety policies, manages school resources, creates human resources policies, and monitors building maintenance. As the builder of school culture, the school principal creates goals for working toward the model's mission, encourages teamwork through houses, monitors technology, and develops relationships with parents and community members. Edison holds all principals accountable in five areas: student achievement, school design, customer satisfaction, financial management, and Edison system growth (i.e., expanding the national Edison network). Each principal receives explicit benchmarks and indicators to track his/her growth as a school principal.

The school leadership team is appointed by the school principal. The leadership team collaborates with the school staff, principal, and houses to monitor student achievement and the school design. To this end, the team monitors and analyzes achievement data to ensure that intervention strategies are being used appropriately and meets regularly with the curriculum coordinators or senior teachers to review and revise instructional strategies. The leadership team also works closely with the school principal to set goals, implement curricular programs, and develop relationships with parents and community members. Edison provides the leadership team with explicit benchmarks and indicators for carrying out these tasks.

These organizational and leadership structures are recommended to Edison Alliance schools but organization and governance solutions are customized to meet the needs of each school.

### Curriculum and Instruction

The Edison school design includes curricular programs, either selected or developed by Edison, for all core

content areas. The curriculum covers five domains: math and science, humanities and the arts, character and ethics, practical arts and skills, and physical fitness and health. The curricular program and academic standards for each of these domains is specific to each academy.

In the Primary and Elementary Academies (K–5), schools are required to adopt either Success for All (<http://www.successforall.net/>)<sup>7</sup> or Open Court (<http://www.sraonline.com>) as their reading curriculum and to deliver 90 minutes of reading instruction daily using one of these curricular programs. Both curricular programs include a mandatory tutoring program. Likewise, schools are required to adopt the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project's Everyday Mathematics (<http://everydaymath.uchicago.edu/>) and to deliver 60 minutes of math instruction daily. The Edison school design also requires schools to adopt its science, social studies, and writing/language arts curricula and to deliver 45 minutes of daily instruction in each of these content areas. Several times a month, teachers are required to use the social studies instructional block to teach a character and ethics lesson. The Edison character and ethics curriculum was developed by the Heartwood Institute (<http://www.heartwoodethics.org/>). In addition, the daily instructional schedule includes 45 minutes for physical education (PE), art, music, or world language.

In the Junior Academy (6–8), schools are required to offer 90 minutes of uninterrupted reading/language arts instruction. All students receive the Scholastic Reading Inventory (<http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/sri/>), and if students score below grade level, they are given the Woodcock Reading Mastery test to determine whether a decoding problem exists. If this problem exists, the student is placed in Wilson Reading (<http://www.wilsonlanguage.com/>). Wilson Reading is taught during the regularly scheduled reading block.

<sup>7</sup>The CSRQ Center reviewed the Success for All model in an earlier report: *CSRQ Center Report on Elementary School Comprehensive School Reform Models*. The report can be accessed at <http://www.csrq.org>.

Schools are also required to offer 45 minutes of math instruction daily. Students are placed in the appropriate math class based upon their math background and skill level. Schools are required to offer the following math courses: Everyday Math (grade 6), Transitions (grades 7 and 8), Extended Transitions (grades 7 and 8), and Contemporary Mathematics in Context (<http://www.glencoe.com/sec/math/cpmp/>). Furthermore, schools are required to adopt the Edison social studies curriculum and a science curriculum, which was designed by Biological Sciences Curriculum Study (<http://www.bsccs.org/>). Students receive 45 minutes of social studies and science instruction daily, in addition to 45 minutes of world language, PE, and fine arts.

In the Senior Academy (9–10), schools are required to provide 65 minutes of instruction in math (algebra, geometry, calculus), literature and language arts (world, American, and British literature), science (biology, chemistry, and physics), social studies (courses based on state requirements), world language (conversational Spanish), fine arts, and PE. All curricula are designed to prepare students for Advanced Placement (AP) courses offered in the Collegiate Academy (10–12).

In the Collegiate Academy, schools are required to offer 65 minutes of instruction in math, literature and language arts, science, social studies, world language, fine arts, and PE. However, in the Collegiate Academy, course selection is expanded to include multiple AP courses in each content area as well as dedicated time for college preparation. Edison partners with Princeton Review to provide students with orientation to college applications, SAT or ACT preparation, and career counseling.

In all five academies, teachers are required to deliver curricula using specific instructional strategies. These strategies include project-based learning, direct instruction, cooperative learning, and differentiated instruction. Teachers receive training on each of these instructional strategies and explicit benchmarks that

guide the implementation of the strategy. The school leadership team and the curriculum coordinator support teachers by modeling these strategies and monitoring implementation. Furthermore, the Edison school design embraces a policy of responsible inclusion—a commitment to include all students, including those with disabilities, to the extent possible, in the general education classroom. To this end, general and special education teachers are trained in the instructional methods of co-planning and co-teaching.

Schools that adopt the Alliance model have the flexibility to choose their own curricular programs but are trained to implement the aforementioned instructional strategies and are required to adopt the policy of responsible inclusion.

### Scheduling and Grouping

The Edison school design seeks to organize the school day so that instructional time increases and teachers have ample time for planning and professional development. Although daily schedules vary by school, each school that adopts the Whole School Management model is required to implement the scheduling guidelines described previously in “Curriculum and Instruction.” During the school start-up process or planning stage, an Edison scheduling specialist works with school staff to create a master schedule based upon the length of the school day. Although Edison Alliance schools are not required to adhere to strict scheduling guidelines, they also receive these consultative services.

Edison has four fundamental policies for designing a school schedule:

- All schedules must adhere to the curricular and instructional school design.
- The schedule must accommodate smaller class sizes and include dedicated instructional blocks, houses, and access to special subjects (e.g., language, fine arts, PE).



- The schedule must allow for common planning time within houses, morning meetings (K–5), home-based advisory (6–8), and midday meetings (9–12).
- The schedule must increase time for instruction.

Edison strongly recommends that schools adopt an extended school day and school year. According to the Edison school design, the recommended length of a school day for the Primary and Elementary Academies is 7 hours and 8 hours for the Junior, Senior, and Collegiate Academies. Edison also recommends extending the school year from 180 to 200 days.

As described in “Organization and Governance,” students are heterogeneously grouped in multigrade houses. In the Primary, Elementary, and Junior Academies, students are taught reading and math in homogenous groups and all other subjects in heterogeneous groups. In the Senior and Collegiate Academies, students select courses based on background and skill level.

All scheduling and grouping strategies are recommended for Edison Alliance schools but these components are customized to meet the needs of each school.

### Technology

Schools that implement the Whole School Management model are required to use technology as both an instructional and management tool. Rather than using technology to replace instruction, Edison expects teachers to use it as tool to improve communication, research, writing, and analysis. All teachers and students have access to technology in their classroom. Specifically, each classroom is equipped with computers, televisions, and VCRs. In addition, most schools have wireless labs that travel between classrooms. Wireless labs are used for computer-based benchmark assessments, which are described in “Monitoring Student Progress and Performance.”

In addition, each teacher is given a laptop computer for the academic year to be used for research and lesson planning, maintaining an online grade book, and reviewing benchmark assessments. If needed, students in grades 3 and higher are also given a laptop computer for home use during the academic year. Edison staff support schools in the implementation of technology, including allocating funding for hardware and software purchases and networking.

Edison Alliance schools are not required to use technology as an instructional tool but are required to use online benchmark assessments.

### Monitoring Student Progress and Performance

Student and teacher accountability is essential to the Edison school design. For this reason, the Edison school design includes four types of student assessments: state and district assessments, benchmark assessments, structured portfolios, and quarterly learning contracts. Edison expects all assessments to be stored electronically so that the school principal and leadership team can monitor student performance.

- **State and district assessments.** The Edison staff, school leadership team, and the school principal work together to set achievable goals on state and district assessments. In addition, Edison seeks to align curricular programs with state and district standards.
- **Edison Benchmark Assessment System.** Each school that adopts the Whole School Management model or the Alliance model is required to use the diagnostic and assessment tools designed by Tungsten Learning, a division of Edison Schools. These tools are packaged in an online benchmark assessment system. The system includes norm-referenced tests that cover academic standards in reading, writing/language arts, and math for grades 2–10. These tests are designed to be administered

monthly. The system also provides teaching notes that help teachers to modify instructional strategies based on assessment results. In addition, the system allows teachers and administrators to track and graph student data. Administrators also have the option to create real-time reports of aggregated and disaggregated student data.

- **Structured portfolio.** Teachers maintain an electronic portfolio of each student's work. Each quarter, teachers and students jointly select a few pieces of work that illustrate a student's improvement over the quarter. Edison provides suggestions for portfolio entries.
- **Quarterly learning contracts.** Each quarter, Edison plans family conferences that involve the student, teacher, and parents. During these quarterly conferences, the group develops a quarterly learning contract that provides an overview of the student's performance during the past quarter; establishes goals for the upcoming quarter; and requires the signature of the student, teacher, and parents. Edison recommends that schools allocate 2 half days per quarter for teachers to prepare quarterly learning contracts and to conduct family conferences.

### Family and Community Involvement

The Whole School Management model and the Alliance model require the involvement of family members. As described in "Monitoring Student Progress and Performance," parents are required to attend quarterly conferences where learning contracts are developed. These contracts are designed to involve parents in the learning process and to keep them informed about their child's progress toward end-of-year goals. In addition, each school has a Family and Student Support Team that works with families who are experiencing problems that may interfere with their child's academic performance. Schools also have a Parent Advisory Council that is used to elicit the

support of parents for school programs and practices. Finally, Edison encourages parent volunteerism.

### Professional Development and Technical Assistance

The Edison school design requires schools to create professional learning environments for all staff. Edison supports schools that implement both the Whole School Management model and the Alliance model by offering intensive leadership training, pre-implementation curriculum and instructional training for staff, and ongoing professional development and technical assistance during implementation. The professional development opportunities are offered through onsite workshops, national and regional conferences, onsite mentoring and monitoring, and online and teleconference training sessions.

The spring before implementation begins, Edison provides Edison Leadership Team Training (ELTT). At ELTT, Edison provides workshops on student achievement, student management, and leadership and design implementation to new principals, the school leadership team, and new lead teachers. These workshops are generally offsite and last 4 days. For more experienced principals and school leadership teams, Edison provides ongoing training and support through the Edison Leadership Development Academy (ELDA). The academy begins with an intensive summer conference, which lasts 4 days, and continues throughout the year with discussion groups, teleconference training sessions, and regular mentoring from ELDA's facilitators.

The summer before implementation, all new professional staff members attend the Edison Teaching Academy, also known as Camp Edison, for an intensive 4-day, offsite training on technology, curriculum, instruction, and classroom management. Teachers also receive onsite training on the Edison Benchmark Assessment System that lasts 1 day.

In addition, school staff members receive ongoing professional development and technical assistance from an Edison support team. This support team is comprised of reading and math specialists, technology specialists, and advisors that provide expertise in financial management, scheduling, English language learners, and classroom management. This ongoing support is provided through onsite meetings, phone conferences, and classroom observations. Throughout the school year, school staff members are expected to attend a 4-day curriculum training, a 2-day learning environment training, and a 2-day benchmark training. Moreover, schools are required to build common planning time and two professional development periods into the daily schedule for teachers.

### Implementation Expectations/Benchmarks

For schools that implement the Whole School Management model and the Alliance model, Edison begins the partnership by conducting a diagnostic assessment to identify the school's strengths and weaknesses. The results of this assessment are used by Edison staff, in collaboration with the school principal, to create a Plan for Success. Each school that implements the Whole School Management model is given a formal set of benchmarks and indicators to guide the implementation of this plan. Although Edison Alliance schools have access to these benchmarks, their plan and implementation goals are customized to meet the needs of each partnership school.

### Special Considerations

The services that a school receives from Edison depend on the Edison model a school selects. The Whole School Management model closely adheres to the Edison school design; the Alliance model is more dependent upon the needs of each school. Nonetheless, charter authorizers contacted by the CSRQ Center noted that Edison is willing to tailor the Whole School

Management model to meet the needs of the local community and to accommodate budget limitations. All districts, charter authorizers, and school principals contacted by the CSRQ Center emphasized that a strong commitment to the model is needed for the change process to be successful.

## **M**odel Studies Reviewed

### Met Standards (Suggestive)

American Federation of Teachers. (1998). *Student achievement in Edison Schools: Mixed results in an ongoing enterprise*. Washington, DC: Author.

Miron, G., & Applegate, B. (2000). *An evaluation of student achievement in Edison schools opened in 1995 and 1996*. Kalamazoo, MI: The Evaluation Center, Western Michigan University.

### Met Standards (Conclusive)

Dryden, M. (2004). *The performance of Edison Schools Inc. in the Dallas schools*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA.

Gill, B. P., Hamilton, L. S., Lockwood, J. R., Marsh, J. A., Zimmer, R. W., Hill, D., et al. (2005). *Inspiration, perspiration, and time: Operations and achievement in Edison Schools*. Arlington, VA: RAND Corporation.

Miron, G. (2006). *Evaluation of the Delaware Charter school reform, year 2 report*. Kalamazoo, MI: The Evaluation Center, Western Michigan University. Retrieved February 21, 2006, from [http://www.doe.k12.de.us/files/pdf/dedoe\\_charterschreform2006.pdf](http://www.doe.k12.de.us/files/pdf/dedoe_charterschreform2006.pdf)

Mislevy, R. J. (1996). *Reading achievement test-score analysis: 1995/96 Washington-Edison School*,

grades K–2 Sherman Independent School District. Retrieved January 24, 2006, from <http://web.archive.org/web/19990209120006/www.aft.org/research/edisonproject/sfa/w96/mislevy.htm>

Mislevy, R. J. (1997). *Reading achievement test-score analysis: 1996/97 Dodge-Edison vs. control schools, grades 1–3 Wichita Unified School District #259*. Retrieved January 24, 2006, from <http://web.archive.org/web/19990209120006/www.aft.org/research/edisonproject/sfa/w96/mislevy.htm>

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Shay, S. A., & Gomez, J. J. (2002). *Privatization in education: A growth curve analysis of achievement*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

## Contact Information

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# Imagine Schools

Overview:		Basic Model Information and Review Results			
<b>Model Name:</b>	Imagine Schools				
<b>Model Mission/Focus:</b>	Imagine Schools' philosophy emphasizes a challenging, effective academic program, strong character formation, solid financial health for each school, and a positive school culture built on adherence to the shared principles of integrity, justice, and fun.				
<b>Year Introduced in Schools:</b>	2004				
<b>Grade Levels Served:</b>	Pre-K–12				
<b>Number of Schools</b>					
<b>Total:</b>	<b>Urban:</b>	<b>Suburban:</b>	<b>Rural:</b>		
42	N/A	N/A	N/A		
<b>Costs</b>					
	<b>Total Operating Costs:</b>	<b>Training:</b>	<b>Materials:</b>	<b>Personnel:</b>	<b>Other:</b>
<b>Year 1</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Year 2</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Year 3</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Years 4+</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>1. Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement:</b>					
a.	Overall effects				NR
b.	Evidence of positive effects for diverse student populations				NR
c.	Evidence of positive effects in subject areas				NR
<b>2. Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes</b>					
<b>3. Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement</b>					
<b>4. Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design</b>					
<b>5. Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation:</b>					
a.	Evidence of readiness for successful implementation				NR
b.	Evidence of professional development/technical assistance for successful implementation				NR
<p>This description is based on publicly available information, including the model's Web site, regarding the model and its costs. The Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center attempted to obtain specific information, but this was not always possible. Areas in which exact information was not provided are marked by "N/A."</p>					

## Model Description

The information presented in the following description of Imagine Schools was collected using (a) Imagine’s Web site and (b) conversations with three charter authorizers that oversee the charter authorization process for schools that use this model. Although contact was initiated with a representative of Imagine, the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center was unable to conduct a conversation with the education service provider (ESP).

Imagine Schools, an employee-owned company, established itself as an ESP in 2004 when Eileen and Dennis Bakke bought out Chancellor Beacon Academies, another charter management company.<sup>1</sup> Imagine offers charter management services, including financial management and human resources, to both existing charter schools and community members that are interested in starting new charter schools.

According to the CSRQ Center’s standards, the following were identified as core components of Imagine: curriculum; instruction; student assessment; data-based decision making; and parent, family, and community involvement. Core components are considered essential to successful implementation of the model.

### Mission/Focus

According to the provider’s Web site, the philosophy of Imagine is to emphasize a challenging and effective academic program; strong character formation; solid financial health for each school; and a positive school culture built on adherence to the shared principles of integrity, justice, and fun. To accomplish this mission, the provider focuses on four main components for successful learning:

- Qualified teachers committed to implementing the school’s mission and educational approach
- A curriculum that stresses mastery of the basic building blocks of learning while providing subject matter that is rich and varied and engages students’ curiosity
- A school environment that is safe, orderly, purposeful, and positive
- The involvement of parents in an active role that is aligned with the educational mission of the school

### Goals/Rationale

The provider’s Web site indicates that the founders’ goal is to make a difference in education by implementing a unique organizational and operational structure that puts teachers and school leaders squarely in charge of the decisions that affect the schools they serve. To accomplish this goal, Imagine allows each school to select a structure that is based on the specific needs of the school community.

Although the provider emphasizes site-based control for almost all aspects of the school, Imagine stresses the importance of Professor Ronald R. Edmonds’s Effective Schools Research to create a healthy learning environment. (Mr. Edmonds is the former director of the Center for Urban Studies at Harvard University.) Imagine underscores several aspects of Effective Schools Research: a clear school mission, instructional leadership, a home and school partnership, high expectations, the opportunity to learn, a safe and orderly environment, and frequent monitoring of student progress.

## Costs

For more information on the costs of training, materials, and personnel, sites should directly contact the ESP.

<sup>1</sup>In August 2005, Imagine Schools created a new nonprofit organization, Imagine Schools Non-Profit, Inc., which intends to purchase the ownership interests of Imagine Schools, Inc. Operations for its existing charter schools will then be conducted as a nonprofit educational service provider.

## Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement

### Evidence of Positive Overall Effects

Rating: (NR)

No quantitative studies that examined the effects of Imagine on student achievement were available for review by the CSRQ Center. Therefore, the overall rating of the evidence of positive overall effects of this model on student achievement is no rating.

### Evidence of Positive Effects for Diverse Student Populations

Rating: (NR)

Because no studies of Imagine were available for review by the CSRQ Center, the impact of this model on student achievement for diverse student populations is unknown. Therefore, the rating in this subcategory is no rating.

### Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas

Rating: (NR)

Because no studies of Imagine were available for review by the CSRQ Center, the rating in this subcategory is no rating.

## Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes

Rating: (NR)

Because no studies of Imagine were available for review by the CSRQ Center, it was not able to evaluate the effects of Imagine on additional outcomes. Therefore, the rating in this category is no rating.

## Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement

Rating: (NR)

Because no studies of Imagine were available for review by the CSRQ Center, the effects of Imagine on this category are unknown. Therefore, the rating in this category is no rating.

## Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design

Rating: (NR)

The CSRQ Center did not conduct a conversation with the ESP, nor was it able to find publicly available information to allow it to rate this category. Therefore, the rating in this category is no rating.

## Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation

### Evidence of Readiness for Successful Implementation

Rating: (NR)

The CSRQ Center did not conduct a conversation with the ESP. Therefore, it was not able to collect the evidence necessary to rate this subcategory. Therefore, the rating in this subcategory is no rating.

### Evidence of Professional Development/Technical Assistance for Successful Implementation

Rating: (NR)

The CSRQ Center did not conduct a conversation with the ESP, nor was it able to find publicly available

information to allow it to rate this subcategory. Therefore, the rating in this subcategory is no rating.

## **C**entral Components

### Administrative Services

As described on its Web site and in publicly available information, Imagine provides a wide array of administrative services to its schools. Services appear to include financial management, facilities management, and human resources management. The provider works with both existing schools and start-up schools to provide administrative services that are tailored to the school's needs.

The provider established an admissions process for students interested in attending a school managed by Imagine. Interested students must complete an application, submit recommendations, attend an informal meeting with the director of admissions, and take an aptitude test. When the amount of approved applications exceeds the number of open spots at a school site, that school uses a lottery system to select students for admittance.

### Organization and Governance

The overall organization and governance of individual schools served by Imagine is similar to the features found in most charter schools. Each Imagine school is likely to have a board of directors that oversees its progress, in addition to an outside entity that authorizes its charter and monitors its progress. States have different requirements for authorizers, but generally authorizers include local school districts and colleges or universities. Depending on state law, the employees of each Imagine school may be either employees of the school district or employees of Imagine.

Because the provider emphasizes a model of site-based control, the organizational structure of each school may differ. However, Imagine encourages each school's staff to commit themselves to a specific school mission that is focused on instruction and accountability. Imagine also highlights the importance of the principal as the instructional leader, who communicates this mission to the staff, parents, and students of the school.

The provider's Web site explains that to create a safe and orderly environment free from threats of physical harm, Imagine institutes a clear and consistent discipline policy. In addition, to help ensure a focus on learning, schools have either student uniforms or follow a dress code.

### Curriculum and Instruction

Imagine emphasizes instruction as one of the four main components for successful schools. However, given that the emphasis is on site-based control, the provider does not endorse or require one specific curriculum. For example, one charter authorizer explained that it develops the curriculum for the Imagine schools that it authorizes. The provider, therefore, does not have strict criteria for the curriculum used in its schools. Instead, the provider indicates general guidelines that schools should use in selecting curricula for two different grade-level tracks: K–8 and 9–12.

For grades K–8, according to the provider's Web site, a school's educational approach should focus on basic skills: reading, fluency, oral communication, and computation. Character education is also integrated into all classes and subjects. The primary grades focus on a phonics-based reading program, and as the grades progress, an increased focus in math, science, and history emphasizes sequential learning, mastery of critical skills, and project-based instruction. In addition, Imagine offers a variety of literature, art, music, and drama components.



For grades 9–12, according to the provider’s Web site, the high schools should focus on dropout prevention and workforce preparation or higher education. The curriculum for grades 9 and 10 should emphasize such core academic subjects as English, math, science, history, and foreign language. In grades 11 and 12, students select one of three academies in which to specialize: Humanities and the Arts, Business, or Science and Technology. As is found in the earlier grades, character education is emphasized in the different classes and subjects.

### Scheduling and Grouping

Because each school develops its own structure, Imagine does not have specific scheduling or grouping requirements for its schools.

### Technology

Imagine does not specifically emphasize the use of technology across all grade levels and schools, but high school students in grades 11 and 12 can elect to focus on technology in the Science and Technology Academy. For more information on the Science and Technology Academy, sites should directly contact the ESP.

### Monitoring Student Progress and Performance

Imagine suggests that its schools use frequent assessments of student progress to determine individual student progress and to improve the instructional program. In addition to such diagnostic assessments as the Stanford Achievement Test, Ninth Edition and the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills, each school follows specific state testing requirements.

### Family and Community Involvement

Imagine notes that an essential component for successful implementation is the involvement of parents in

the school’s educational mission. Each school asks parents to take an active role in their child’s education by signing a covenant with their child that details expectations for students, parents, and the school.

### Professional Development and Technical Assistance

The provider’s Web site mentions that Imagine provides teachers and counselors with professional development tools through The Imagine Schools Institute. However, the provider’s emphasis on site-based control also allows different professional development plans for each school site. For example, one charter authorizer of an Imagine school noted in a conversation with the CSRQ Center that within one school district containing several Imagine schools, the schools have implemented a “school of excellence” program in which teachers and principals visit other Imagine sites to offer suggestions for improvement and to observe successful aspects of their program.

### Implementation Expectations/Benchmarks

The provider’s Web site indicates that Imagine reviews implementation progress for its schools on an annual basis. For some schools, progress may be monitored on a monthly basis. For more specific information on timelines and benchmarks for implementation, schools should directly contact the ESP.

### Special Considerations

According to its Web site, the provider stresses the importance of site-based control so that each school can tailor educational services to the school’s individual needs. However, one authorizer noted that when Imagine took over for Chancellor Beacon, the 1st year was a challenging transition for teachers and staff who were suddenly given control over many aspects without proper training by the provider. However, this same authorizer noted that, after the 1st year, the site-based

control feature became one of the most attractive components to many teachers.













One charter authorizer noted that Imagine offers a flexible human resources operation that offers a desirable alternative to traditional teacher hiring and salary schedules.

Although the costs for this model are not publicly available, one authorizer noted that the large management fee would not be economically sound for smaller charter schools (e.g., with 200 to 400 students). However, this authorizer strongly recommended this provider for larger charter schools (e.g., schools with more than 500 students).

Readers should note that the CSRQ Center was unable to conduct a conversation with the ESP. The description of Imagine was based on publicly available information and conversations with three charter authorizers. For more specific information on Imagine, schools should directly contact the ESP.

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# The Leona Group, L.L.C.

Overview:		Basic Model Information and Review Results			
<b>Model Name:</b>	The Leona Group, L.L.C.				
<b>Model Mission/Focus:</b>	According to the model's Web site, the mission of The Leona Group, L.L.C. is to encourage choice and competition within America's public education system to improve the academic achievement of all students, including those with special needs.				
<b>Year Introduced in Schools:</b>	1996				
<b>Grade Levels Served:</b>	Pre-K–12				
<b>Number of Schools</b>					
<b>Total:</b>	<b>Urban:</b>	<b>Suburban:</b>	<b>Rural:</b>		
48	N/A	N/A	N/A		
<b>Costs</b>					
	<b>Total Operating Costs:</b>	<b>Training:</b>	<b>Materials:</b>	<b>Personnel:</b>	<b>Other:</b>
<b>Year 1</b>	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies
<b>Year 2</b>	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies
<b>Year 3</b>	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies
<b>Years 4+</b>	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies
<b>1. Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement:</b>					
a.	Overall effects				
b.	Evidence of positive effects for diverse student populations				
c.	Evidence of positive effects in subject areas				
<b>2. Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes</b>					
<b>3. Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement</b>					
<b>4. Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design</b>					
<b>5. Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation:</b>					
a.	Evidence of readiness for successful implementation				
b.	Evidence of professional development/technical assistance for successful implementation				
 = Very Strong  = Moderately Strong  = Moderate  = Limited  = Zero  = Negative  = No Rating					
<p>This description is based on publicly available information, including the model's Web site, regarding the model and its costs. The Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center attempted to obtain specific information, but this was not always possible. Areas in which exact information was not provided are marked by "N/A."</p>					

## Model Description

In 1996, Dr. William Coats formed The Leona Group, L.L.C.—a privately held education service provider (ESP)—to develop and manage public charter schools in the Midwest. In its 1st year, Leona was hired by the board of directors of four charter schools in Michigan to provide start-up and management services. These services included, but were not limited to, human resources, educational programming, financial management, communications and marketing, and technology consulting. During the past decade, Leona has been hired to provide these services to more than 31 schools in Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio.

In 1997, Leona opened a second division in Arizona. Unlike states in the Midwest, the charter authorizer in Arizona issues contracts directly to managing organizations. Therefore, Leona owns and operates the contract for a group of 16 charter schools in Arizona. In both the Arizona and Midwest divisions, Leona seeks to serve poor and minority students in urban areas.

According to the CSRQ Center’s standards, the following were identified as core components of Leona: organization and governance; professional development; technical assistance; inclusion; and technology. Core components are considered essential to successful implementation of the model.

### Model Mission/Focus

According to the model’s Web site, Leona’s mission is to encourage choice and competition within America’s public education system to improve the academic achievement of all students, including those with special needs. To achieve this mission, Leona seeks to provide comprehensive management services to public charter schools in Arizona and the Midwest. Although each Leona-managed school uses a customized curricular

and instructional program, these schools share common elements:

- **Inclusive classrooms and personal learning programs for each student.** Leona-managed schools embrace a philosophy of full inclusion. All special education students are taught in general education classrooms, and teachers develop a personal learning program for all students.
- **A safe and secure environment.** Leona-managed schools develop codes of conduct and an action plan for emergency situations to ensure that all schools are safe.
- **Strong ties between home and school.** Leona-managed schools encourage parental and community involvement through volunteerism, planning committees, and parent-teacher associations. In addition, Leona-managed schools often provide before and after school care.
- **Flexible scheduling.** School leaders work with Leona to develop a customized daily schedule and school calendar.
- **A qualified staff that is screened and employed by Leona.** Leona seeks to hire, train, and pay qualified school leaders, teachers, and support staff at all Leona schools.

### Goals/Rationale

Leona believes that each school has unique characteristics that are based on (a) the community that the school serves and (b) the needs of the school’s students and families. Therefore, Leona provides schools with whole school management and start-up services (financial, human resources, marketing, technology consulting, etc.) and works closely with parents, school improvement teams, and school staff to develop a customized educational program that includes curriculum, instruction, scheduling, and assessment.

The guiding principle for all educational programs at Leona-managed schools is that all students will succeed if they are held to high expectations. For this reason, all students, including students with special needs, are educated in general education classrooms with peers of the same age. To ensure that all students succeed in the general education classroom, teachers are expected to modify instructional strategies and classroom activities to meet the needs of all learners.

## **C**osts

The costs for the services provided by Leona typically equal a contracted fee that represents a percentage of each charter school's budget. This fee varies by school and state. For more information on the costs of training, materials, and personnel, sites should directly contact the ESP.

## **E**vidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement

### Evidence of Positive Overall Effects

*Rating:* 

The CSRQ Center reviewed two quantitative studies of Leona on student achievement. Neither study had sufficient rigor to meet the CSRQ Center's standards. Therefore, the overall rating of the evidence of positive overall effects of this model on student achievement is zero. (Appendix C reports on the two studies that were reviewed but did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards.)

### Evidence of Positive Effects for Diverse Student Populations

*Rating:* 

Because no studies of Leona met the CSRQ Center's standards, the impact of this model on student

achievement for diverse student populations is unknown. Therefore, the rating in this subcategory is no rating.

### Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas

*Rating:* 

Because no studies of Leona met the CSRQ Center's standards to review, the rating in this subcategory is no rating.

## **E**vidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes

*Rating:* 

Because no studies of Leona met the CSRQ Center's standards, it was not able to evaluate the effects of Leona on additional outcomes. Therefore, the rating in this category is no rating.

## **E**vidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement

*Rating:* 

Because no studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards examined the effects of Leona on parent, family, or community involvement, the rating in this category is no rating.

## **E**vidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design

*Rating:* 

Based on documentation provided by the model, explicit citations support the inclusion component of the model. However, explicit citations for the following core components were not provided: organization and

governance, professional development, technical assistance, and technology. Therefore, the model rating for evidence of link between research and the model's design is limited.

## Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation

### Evidence of Readiness for Successful Implementation

Rating: 

Based on documentation provided by the model, Leona offers a formal process to help school staff establish an initial understanding of the model.<sup>1</sup> The model also offers a formal process for allocating school resources, such as materials, staffing, and time. However, the model provides only informal benchmarks for implementation in the form of a management contract and an action plan. The contract and action plan do not include indicators of successful implementation. Therefore, according to the CSRQ Center's standards, the rating for evidence of readiness for successful implementation is moderate.

### Evidence of Professional Development/Technical Assistance for Successful Implementation

Rating: 

Leona provides ongoing training opportunities, such as workshops, peer coaching, capacity building, and sessions for new staff. Additionally, the model provides supporting materials for professional development that address all of Leona's core components. However, the model offers only an informal plan to help build school capacity to provide professional development. Therefore, according to the CSRQ Center's standards, the rating for evidence of professional

development/technical assistance for successful implementation is moderately strong.

## Central Components

### Administrative Services

Leona provides comprehensive management and start-up services to schools. Because Leona owns the contract for charter schools in Arizona, the company provides all start-up and management services to these schools. In the Midwest, Leona is hired by the charter school's board of directors; therefore, the board may hire Leona to provide a limited number of management services. The company has three categories for classifying these services: start-up, operations, and professional.

- **Start-up.** During the start-up phase, Leona provides consultation on locating and acquiring a school facility. Leona's staff works directly with school boards to negotiate leases and purchases. In addition, Leona offers such financial management as arranging short-term loans, restructuring debt, and providing grant support.
- **Operations.** According to Leona, its staff seeks to keep each school in compliance with local, state, and federal regulations and the school's charter contract. To this end, Leona prepares timely reports for local, state, and federal governing bodies. Leona-managed schools also receive budget oversight, financial reporting, human resources, and marketing support from Leona. Although the board of directors in the Midwest retains ultimate authority over the budget, Leona prepares the school budget; makes loan arrangements; oversees purchasing; coordinates an independent audit; and prepares budget reports for local, state, and federal

<sup>1</sup>As noted in "Methodology," the following subcategory, which has been used to rate school reform models in previous reports from the CSRQ Center, is not applicable to ESPs: Provider ensures initial commitment from schools.

governing bodies. Notably, Leona has a full-service grants department that helps all Leona-managed schools research, write, and track grant applications that earn schools additional funds for curricular programs, supplemental educational services, and technology.

- **Professional.** Leona is responsible for recruiting, training, and tracking the certification of all school staff. According to Leona, salaries and most benefits (e.g., medical, dental, and vision care and retirement savings programs) are paid in full by the company. In addition, Leona performs an annual review of school staff and provides merit pay based on this review. Finally, Leona works collaboratively with the school leader (the ESP's preferred term for *principal*) to develop a strategic plan for recruiting students and maintaining student enrollment. Leona-managed schools welcome all students; however, if the school reaches capacity, then student selection occurs through a lottery.

### Organization and Governance

At the state level, each Leona-managed school in the Midwest is accountable to its charter authorizer and the school's board of directors. In Arizona, Leona-managed schools are accountable directly to the charter authorizer. All Leona-managed schools must comply with legislation of the state charter. To this end, Leona works with key stakeholders (school boards, charter authorizers, and school staff) to maintain compliance and produce appropriate fiscal and evaluative reports on each Leona-managed school.

At each school, Leona hires and trains the school leader. Because this position entails administrative and instructional leadership, Leona believes the term *school leader* is more appropriate than *school principal*. The school leader works closely with the school's

board of directors and Leona to plan and coordinate professional development sessions and onsite meetings, to select and implement a curricular program, and to develop a strategic plan for maintaining school enrollment. The school leader also collaborates with the school improvement team—which involves other school staff, school board members, parents, and students—to make decisions about school operations, such as the curriculum, the daily schedule, and extracurricular activities.

In addition, Leona hires a curriculum coach for each Leona-managed school. This coach assists the school leader by mentoring teachers, overseeing instructional practices and the curricular program, and providing onsite professional development and technical assistance.

### Curriculum and Instruction

Leona does not require schools to adopt a certain curricular program. Instead, Leona's staff provides guidance to the school leader and school improvement teams on specific curricular programs and strategies for meeting the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Leona hopes that the selection of a curricular program will be a joint decision made by all key stakeholders, including school staff, board members, Leona's staff, and parents. Notably, current Leona-managed schools have selected such curricular programs as Direct Instruction, Success for All, and Core Knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

In addition, Leona hires a curriculum coach for each Leona-managed school. The coach's major responsibility is to improve the instructional practices of Leona's staff through professional development opportunities. The curriculum coach performs such duties as helping teachers align the curriculum with state and district standards, implementing the curriculum, writing lesson plans, and developing curriculum maps. The coach

<sup>2</sup>The CSRQ Center reviewed Direct Instruction, Success for All, and Core Knowledge in a previous report: *CSRQ Center Report on Elementary School Comprehensive School Reform Models*. The report can be accessed at <http://www.csrq.org>.

also observes teachers and provides feedback to improve their instructional practices.

The curriculum coach encourages teachers to adopt instructional strategies that meet the needs of students with multilevel abilities. Because Leona requires each student, including those with special needs, to be educated in the general education classroom, teachers are responsible for adopting instructional strategies that meet the social and cognitive needs of each student. Special and general education teachers work collaboratively in the general education classroom to develop individualized instructional programs for all students. Leona provides both general and special education teachers with training on co-planning and co-teaching.

To individualize instruction for each student, Leona recommends that teachers adopt the following instructional strategies: cooperative learning, project learning, differentiated instruction, and learning centers. School staff at Leona-managed schools receives on- and off-site professional development on these instructional strategies.

### Scheduling and Grouping

Leona works closely with the school's board of directors, school improvement teams, and the school leader to establish a schedule that meets the needs of the community. Although Leona does not require schools to adopt a specific schedule, the ESP does make recommendations about scheduling practices for elementary/middle schools and high schools. In Leona-managed elementary/middle schools, it recommends a full-day kindergarten, an extended school day and year, and before and after school childcare. In Leona-managed high schools, the ESP recommends block scheduling; a 4-day school week, with an additional day for focused tutoring and study; and evening classes.

Leona does not have specific grouping requirements beyond its commitment to full inclusion. Leona expects

general and special education teachers to work collaboratively in the general education classroom to teach all students, including those with special needs.

### Technology

Leona requires technology for both instructional and administrative use. Leona provides all schools with technology support, including network management, hardware and software purchases, and technical troubleshooting. Most Leona-managed schools have a mobile, wireless computer lab. Leona also works with the school leader and the school's board of directors to get the most use out of technology with a minimal impact on the school's budget. Therefore, Leona does not require a specific number of computers per pupil or specific computer packages for core content areas.

### Monitoring Student Progress and Performance

In the Midwest, Leona-managed schools are required to use state-mandated assessments to measure the progress of students. In addition to the state-mandated assessments, Leona expects teachers to use multiple forms of qualitative and quantitative assessments, such as project-based learning. In accordance with Leona's full inclusion philosophy, teachers are expected to modify the curriculum so that students can progress at their own pace.

In Arizona, Leona-managed schools use state-mandated assessments and formal benchmark assessments that are developed by Leona. The benchmark assessments delineate student progress by state or district standard. Teachers are expected to use the results of these assessments to monitor student and school performance and to assess their instructional practices. Leona-managed schools in Arizona also adhere to the full inclusion philosophy; therefore, teachers use multiple forms of assessments, and students are not penalized for not performing at grade level.



Leona conducts an annual evaluation of its schools. The evaluation reviews the school environment, curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional development. The results of the evaluation help all Leona-managed schools to establish annual goals for academic progress. These goals and achievement data are published annually by Leona in a school-specific report. The report also briefly describes the school's educational philosophy, professional development schedule, student enrollment, extracurricular activities, and parent satisfaction.

### Family and Community Involvement

Leona recommends that all Leona-managed schools involve parents in daily school activities through volunteerism, school improvement teams, and parent-teacher associations. Leona works with the school leader and the school's board of directors to develop a strategic communications and marketing plan for parents and the community. School staff members are encouraged to involve parents and community members in field trips, school tutoring, sports, clubs, and decision-making teams. Likewise, teachers are expected to encourage students to volunteer in their community.

Leona assesses parent satisfaction annually through parent surveys. The results of these surveys and information on parent and community interaction with the school are published by Leona in the school's annual report.

### Professional Development and Technical Assistance

During the 2003–2004 school year, Leona began implementing a Quality Schools Initiative. Through this initiative, Leona seeks to provide a formal professional development and technical assistance plan for

all Leona-managed schools. To this end, each Leona-managed school has a curriculum coach who oversees the school's curricular and instructional program and provides onsite professional development and technical assistance to Leona's staff. In addition, a team of employees from Leona coordinates monthly meetings with curriculum coaches and bimonthly meetings with school leaders. During these meetings and weekly school visits, a team of staff from Leona, who are dedicated to an individual school, monitors the school's implementation progress and provides strategies for improvement.

Leona also provides on- and offsite training on technology, inclusive practices, Sheltered English<sup>3</sup> instruction, assessment, leadership, and instructional practices. Additionally, Leona works with the school leader and the school improvement team to identify topical areas in which teachers need training. When these areas are identified, Leona's staff or contracted staff provides training on these topics.

### Implementation Expectations/Benchmarks

Leona does not provide schools with implementation benchmarks or specific timelines for implementation. However, Leona does work with the school board to develop a management contract. The contract includes implementation tasks for the start-up process, financial management, and the educational program and specifies who is responsible for completing each task. Moreover, Leona's staff develops an action plan that includes an implementation checklist for each school.

### Special Considerations

Leona seeks to provide a flexible educational program that meets the needs of the local community. Thus, the model does not require a specific curriculum or

<sup>3</sup>Sheltered English instruction uses English as a Second Language instructional strategies in content area classes to support students in the acquisition of English and content area knowledge.

school calendar. One charter authorizer contacted by the CSRQ Center noted that because the educational program is flexible, the types of services that are delivered to each school vary.

Leona-managed schools are also encouraged to establish a strong link between home and school through after school childcare; parent volunteerism; and such extracurricular programs as clubs, sports, and interest groups. According to Leona, parent satisfaction is critical to a school's success.

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# Mosaica Education

## Overview: Basic Model Information and Review Results

<b>Model Name:</b>	Mosaica Education
<b>Model Mission/Focus:</b>	Mosaica Education is based on eight pillars that form the basic tenets of the model: student achievement, professional development, integrated technology, parental involvement, Paragon curriculum, community support, secure environment, and extended learning time. Mosaica's goal is for the pillars to work together to create superior academic and cost-effective results in each of its schools.
<b>Year Introduced in Schools:</b>	1997
<b>Grade Levels Served:</b>	K–8

### Number of Schools

<b>Total:</b>	<b>Urban:</b>	<b>Suburban:</b>	<b>Rural:</b>
40	N/A	N/A	N/A

### Costs

	<b>Total Operating Costs:</b>	<b>Training:</b>	<b>Materials:</b>	<b>Personnel:</b>	<b>Other:</b>
<b>Year 1</b>	Varies	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Year 2</b>	Varies	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Year 3</b>	Varies	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Years 4+</b>	Varies	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

### 1. Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement:

- a. Overall effects ⊘
- b. Evidence of positive effects for diverse student populations ⊘ NR
- c. Evidence of positive effects in subject areas:
  - Reading ⊘
  - Math ⊘








### 2. Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes ⊘ NR

### 3. Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement ⊘ NR

### 4. Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design ⊘ NR

### 5. Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation:

- a. Evidence of readiness for successful implementation ⊘ NR
- b. Evidence of professional development/technical assistance for successful implementation ⊘ NR

 = Very Strong  
  = Moderately Strong  
  = Moderate  
  = Limited  
  = Zero  
  = Negative  
  = No Rating

This description is based on publicly available information, including the model's Web site, regarding the model and its costs. The Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center attempted to obtain specific information, but this was not always possible. Areas in which exact information was not provided are marked by "N/A."

## **M**odel Description

The information presented in this description of Mosaica Education was collected using (a) Mosaica’s Web site and (b) responses from conversations with three charter authorizers who oversee the charter authorization process for schools using the model. Although contact was initiated with a representative of Mosaica, the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center was unable to conduct a conversation with the model provider. For more specific information on Mosaica, sites should directly contact the model.

Mosaica Education is an education service provider (ESP) that was founded in 1997 by Dawn and Gene Eidelmam. Four years later, the model acquired Advantage Schools, Inc. and merged the models. According to the ESP’s Web site, Mosaica currently operates more than 40 elementary and middle schools in eight states. Mosaica generally partners with community groups, universities, or school districts to create new schools or to reform existing ones. Mosaica’s schools feature strong mentor and volunteer programs, an interdisciplinary curriculum, and an extensive focus on technology. The Paragon curriculum (developed by Mosaica and described in “Curriculum and Instruction”) is used in all schools and is based on Dr. Howard Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1983).

According to the CSRQ Center’s standards, the following were identified as core components of Mosaica: organization and governance; professional development; curriculum; instruction; technology; time and scheduling; and parent, family, and community involvement. Core components are considered essential to successful implementation of the model.

### Mission/Focus

According to its Web site, Mosaica’s mission is to open portals of opportunity for children and adults through

excellence in education. The ESP claims that its schools serve as community pillars of life-long learning.

### Goals/Rationale

According to its Web site, Mosaica’s philosophy of education is centered on the needs of each student. The model attempts to identify and address individual strengths through the use of the Paragon curriculum and Personalized Learning Plans (PLPs). Mosaica claims that its model is flexible and can be customized to meet the specific needs of a school or district that chooses to partner with the ESP.

Eight pillars form the basic tenets of Mosaica: student achievement, professional development, integrated technology, parent involvement, Paragon curriculum, community support, secure environment, and extended learning time. The ESP believes that these pillars work together to provide learning opportunities for all students regardless of their specific learning needs. Strict requirements for schools in each of these areas are discussed in “Central Components.”

## **C**osts

The model’s costs vary depending on per-pupil spending in a specific district. For more information on the costs of training, materials, and personnel, sites should directly contact the model provider.

## **E**vidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement

### Evidence of Positive Overall Effects

*Rating:* 

The CSRQ Center reviewed three quantitative studies that examined the effects of Mosaica on student

achievement. One of these studies met the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design. Upon review, the CSRQ Center considered the findings of this study to be *conclusive*, meaning the CSRQ Center has confidence in the results reported. This study used a matched-comparison group, quasi-experimental design. This study focused on fifth and eighth graders in one Mosaica school in Delaware that predominantly served African-American students from low-income families.<sup>1</sup> The study reported findings from four separate achievement tests and found no statistically significant positive impact. On three of the achievement measures, Mosaica showed no effect, and on one achievement measure Mosaica showed negative effects. Therefore, the rating for positive overall effects is zero. (Appendix D reports on the other two studies that were reviewed but did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards.)

#### Evidence of Positive Effects for Diverse Student Populations

Rating: 

The study that met the CSRQ Center's standards and is considered to be conclusive did not examine the impact of Mosaica on student achievement for diverse student populations. Therefore, the rating in this sub-category is no rating.

#### Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Reading

Rating: 

One study that met the CSRQ Center's standards and was considered to be conclusive examined fifth- and eighth-grade students' reading achievement data from the Delaware Student Testing Program. The study did not find statistically significant differences in favor of Mosaica's students. The rating for reading is zero.

<sup>1</sup>This school has terminated its agreement with Mosaica Education after the time of the posttest.

#### Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Math

Rating: 

One study that met the CSRQ Center's standards and was considered to be conclusive examined fifth- and eighth-grade students' math achievement data from the Delaware Student Testing Program. The study did not find statistically significant differences in favor of Mosaica's students. The rating for math is zero.

#### **E**vidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes

Rating: 

No studies were eligible for review that examined the impact of Mosaica on additional student outcomes. Therefore, the rating in this category is no rating.

#### **E**vidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement

Rating: 

No studies were eligible for review that examined the effects of Mosaica on parent, family, or community involvement. Therefore, the rating in this category is no rating.

#### **E**vidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design

Rating: 

The CSRQ Center did not conduct a conversation with the ESP, nor was it able to find publicly available information to allow it to rate this dimension. Consequently, the model received no rating for its link between research and the model's design. However, readers may

wish to review the research on the effectiveness of Howard Gardner’s multiple intelligences approach that is used as a building block for Mosaica’s instructional approach (Gardner, 1983).

## **E**vidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation

### Evidence of Readiness for Successful Implementation

*Rating:* (NR)

The CSRQ Center did not conduct a conversation with the ESP and therefore, was not able to collect the evidence necessary to rate this category. Therefore, the model received no rating for evidence of readiness for successful implementation.

### Evidence of Professional Development/Technical Assistance for Successful Implementation

*Rating:* (NR)

The CSRQ Center did not conduct a conversation with the ESP, nor was it able to find publicly available information to allow it to rate this dimension. Consequently, the model received no rating for evidence of professional development/technical assistance for successful implementation.

## **C**entral Components

### Administrative Services

Mosaica offers a wide range of administrative services to its schools through Spectra Services, a division of the company that focuses on the management of public and private schools. Services offered by the model include operations management (e.g., marketing and governance), financial management (e.g., payroll management and grant writing), facilities management

(e.g., identifying school sites and renovating facilities), and human resources management (e.g., hiring and training personnel). In addition, Spectra Services can also provide technology and assessment services for both special education and general education students and supplemental education services as required under the guidelines of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Administrative services are available to all schools regardless of the grade levels served.

Mosaica works with both new and existing schools. For a new school, Mosaica begins by conducting a population analysis and meets with community members to determine the need for and interest in a charter school. The start-up process for an existing school begins with a charter school’s board of trustees that contracts with Mosaica to provide both educational and administrative services to a school. Mosaica prefers to partner with school districts but this is not always the case in practice. Mosaica schools are open to any student who is qualified under state law for admission to the local public school system.

### Organization and Governance

Mosaica does not require its schools to make any specific changes to their governance structure or to hire any additional staff members. However, the model does require its schools to make some smaller organizational changes. For example, all Mosaica schools are required to have dedicated instructional blocks and to extend the school day and school year to increase the learning time available for students. Mosaica’s schools also use the model’s behavioral program and disciplinary code of conduct.

### Curriculum and Instruction

Mosaica requires all of its schools to use Paragon, an integrated and student-centered humanities and social studies curriculum that was developed by the model. Paragon is an interdisciplinary curriculum that is

organized around a series of essential questions. Although it is primarily a social studies curriculum, it also integrates music, technology, and the arts into the learning process.

Paragon is based on the theory of multiple intelligences and is designed to address individual learning styles. The model believes that the interdisciplinary nature of Paragon, which uses music and art instruction in addition to the core subject areas, allows teachers to recognize and cultivate the success of each student in the most appropriate manner. The model further believes that Paragon can help students identify individual strengths that can in turn be used to support the learning process. To this end, the ESP requires teachers to use what it considers to be research-based and effective teaching strategies, such as journals, Socratic discussions, role plays, and graphic organizers.

The curriculum fulfills all state and national history, social studies, and geography standards. Paragon is designed to balance cultural literacy with extensive hands-on learning opportunities while providing a chronological approach to the study of history. The curriculum presents histories of different countries through a series of cycles that repeat themselves over time. Students develop a large picture of history and associated interrelationships by learning how ideas originate simultaneously in different areas. The curriculum focuses more on fostering students' understanding of sequential events than on rote memorization of dates and facts.

Daily lessons are organized around a series of essential questions that were developed by the model. The essential questions encourage students to connect the topics discussed with other topics and subject areas as well as with their life experiences with the hope of making the lessons seem more relevant and purposeful. Paragon aims to help students see all subjects as relevant parts of their lives rather than as separate disciplines.

Paragon also integrates music and arts instruction into the curriculum. For example, Paragon integrates

relevant music into each unit of instruction and focuses on how music and art in one era can influence developments in another. Students are encouraged to approach each era of the curriculum through several angles, including singing, dancing, and performing. Paragon also uses arts to help enhance the communication skills of its students. The model believes that arts instruction enhances traditional learning instruction through a deeper level of analysis and self-expression than can be offered through a textbook. The model further believes that the use of such alternative teaching methods can help draw students who have been marginally successful into the learning process.

Each Mosaica school follows a similar daily schedule. Mornings are dedicated to the core subject areas of reading, writing, math, and science. Afternoons are dedicated to Spanish, music, and physical education instruction in addition to a daily, 90-minute block that is dedicated to Paragon. In addition to the core subject areas and Paragon, students also learn about character, ethics, empathy, and self-esteem by studying great thinkers of the past and present. Mosaica introduces all students to foreign language instruction beginning in kindergarten. Mosaica also provides tutorial assistance to all struggling students through additional work with a classroom teacher, tutor, or classmate.

### Scheduling and Grouping

Mosaica requires its schools to extend the school day and the school year to allow for additional learning opportunities. At most of Mosaica's schools, the school day is extended by 1 hour and the school year by 20 days compared with the traditional district schedule. The model believes that these changes allow students to master topics rather than to memorize facts.

Mosaica does not require the use of any specific grouping strategies within a school. However, the model does require schools to cap class size at 25 students. The model claims that the limited class size allows

students to receive additional attention and to focus better on the subjects covered.

### Technology

Mosaica places a strong emphasis on the use of technology to enrich instruction and to aid with problem solving. The model requires all schools to use technology for instructional and noninstructional purposes. The model provides teachers and administrators with laptops and technology training sessions. The model also requires schools to secure enough computers to maintain a computer-to-student ratio of 1:3. All of Mosaica's schools have an Intranet connection that is used to connect classroom computers to instructional and informational technology resources.

Students use computers to research topics, express themselves creatively, problem solve, interpret and organize data, and explore math and scientific principles through simulations. Mosaica believes that students need constant access to computers to gain true computer literacy. In addition to schoolwide computer labs, each classroom is equipped with computers for student use.

Paragon provides several opportunities for hands-on computer work and Internet resources for further learning opportunities. Because Paragon frequently uses film clips from movies to engage students in history lessons, each classroom must have a TV and VCR. Overhead projectors are also provided in every classroom to support Paragon.

### Monitoring Student Progress and Performance

Mosaica requires all schools to develop and follow PLPs for each student. PLPs are designed to help teachers (a) monitor a student's attendance and behavior and (b) follow the academic growth of students both in the classroom and through the individualized tutorial programs that are available in reading and math. The model believes that such individualized student

monitoring helps teachers to communicate better with students and parents.

Students in all of Mosaica's schools are tested using the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), a norm-referenced standardized assessment. The model selected ITBS because it believes that the assessment is closely aligned with Paragon.

For low-performing students, Mosaica uses an Integrated Learning System (ILS) to track student progress in math and language arts and to supplement classroom instruction. ISL aligns with state and national standardized tests, including the ITBS. ISL provides detailed reports that help teachers to evaluate the needs of each student. Teachers are encouraged to use the information when making instructional decisions.

### Family and Community Involvement

All of Mosaica's schools are required to establish relationships with community and family members. Parents are expected to participate in one of the available service opportunities on a monthly basis. Examples of service opportunities include calling other parents to remind them about meetings, assisting with clerical work, and attending school programs. Mosaica also encourages its schools to establish partnerships with local businesses and often obtains financial support and direction from such businesses or from philanthropic foundations. Eight times a year, Mosaica's schools hold Paragon Night where individuals from families, universities, cultural centers, local businesses, and other community organizations are invited to the school to see student performances that focus on the historical era being studied through Paragon.

Mosaica also encourages schools to develop a close connection between home and school to help enhance student performance. Mosaica's schools require parents to attend regular goal setting conferences to help determine the direction of a student's PLP. Parents are



invited to take an active role in the decision-making process that determines their child's PLP. Parents are also able to contribute to schoolwide decisions by serving on subcommittees or on the board of trustees. Each year, Mosaica's schools conduct an annual parent satisfaction survey.

### Professional Development and Technical Assistance

Mosaica assumes responsibility for hiring and training teachers and for providing ongoing professional development. All new staff members attend a 2-week summer training session before the start of the school year. Mosaica also provides each school with 15–20 days of professional development each year. Topics and schedules vary depending on the terms of a school's charter and the needs of the school. According to one charter authorizer, each school is assigned a regional vice president who visits the school on a weekly basis. For specific information on professional development and technical assistance provided by Mosaica, sites should directly contact the model provider.

### Implementation Expectations/Benchmarks

Mosaica does not indicate that it provides schools with benchmarks or implementation expectations. For specific information on benchmarks and implementation expectations, schools should directly contact the model provider.

### Special Considerations

In conversations with three charter authorizers who have partnered with Mosaica, each felt that the model is beneficial, despite some challenges in implementation. Each of the charter authorizers praised Paragon and felt that its interdisciplinary nature and wide array of instructional strategies complement diverse student bodies. However, one charter authorizer cautioned that the service provider's highly customizable nature

spread staff thin while trying to meet the needs of each school's unique situation. Another charter authorizer noted the potential for conflicts between the board of trustees and the service provider over the direction that a Mosaica school should take as it continues to grow. Overall, the three charter authorizers felt that the combination of administrative services and curriculum is an asset to the districts in which they work.

## **R**eference

Gardner, H. (1983). *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences*. New York: Basic Books.

## **M**odel Studies Reviewed

### Met Standards (Conclusive)

Miron, G. (2004). *Evaluation of the Delaware Charter School reform, year 1 report*. Kalamazoo, MI: The Evaluation Center, Western Michigan University. Retrieved November 9, 2005, from [http://www.doe.k12.de.us/files/pdf/dedoe\\_charterschreform2004.pdf](http://www.doe.k12.de.us/files/pdf/dedoe_charterschreform2004.pdf)

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# National Heritage Academies

Overview:		Basic Model Information and Review Results			
<b>Model Name:</b>	National Heritage Academies (NHA)				
<b>Model Mission/Focus:</b>	NHA contracts with authorizing agencies to create new public charter schools with the intent of helping all children achieve their greatest potential.				
<b>Year Introduced in Schools:</b>	1995				
<b>Grade Levels Served:</b>	K–8				
<b>Number of Schools</b>					
<b>Total:</b>	<b>Urban:</b>	<b>Suburban:</b>	<b>Rural:</b>		
51	N/A	N/A	N/A		
<b>Costs</b>					
	<b>Total Operating Costs:</b>	<b>Training:</b>	<b>Materials:</b>	<b>Personnel:</b>	<b>Other:</b>
<b>Year 1</b>	Varies	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Year 2</b>	Varies	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Year 3</b>	Varies	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Years 4+</b>	Varies	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>1. Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement:</b>					
a.	Overall effects				
b.	Evidence of positive effects for diverse student populations				
c.	Evidence of positive effects in subject areas				
<b>2. Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes</b>					
<b>3. Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement</b>					
<b>4. Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design</b>					
<b>5. Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation:</b>					
a.	Evidence of readiness for successful implementation				
b.	Evidence of professional development/technical assistance for successful implementation				
 = Very Strong  = Moderately Strong  = Moderate  = Limited  = Zero  = Negative  = No Rating					
<p>This description is based on publicly available information, including the model's Web site, regarding the model and its costs. The Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center attempted to obtain specific information, but this was not always possible. Areas in which exact information was not provided are marked by "N/A."</p>					

## Model Description

National Heritage Academies (NHA) is an education service provider (ESP) that was founded in Michigan in 1995 by J. C. Huizenga. In the past decade, the model has been implemented by more than 50 schools in five states.

According to NHA, it uses a back-to-basics approach to education that combines parental involvement, moral guidance, and rigorous academics. NHA chooses to establish new schools rather than take over existing ones. The model works with districts and local reform organizations to establish public charter schools in urban and suburban areas across the United States.

According to the CSRQ Center's standards, the following were identified as core components of NHA: organization and governance; curriculum; instruction; inclusion; technology; time and scheduling; instructional grouping; student assessment; data-based decision making; and parent, family, and community involvement. Core components are considered essential to successful implementation of the model.

### Model Mission/Focus

According to the NHA, its mission is to challenge children to achieve their greatest potential. The model aspires to create a network of more than 200 charter schools that use high levels of parental involvement as their foundation.

NHA combines academic excellence, parental involvement, moral guidance, measurable results, and highly qualified teachers to meet its commitment to all children. The model also strives to increase the quality of life and financial security of its employees and stakeholders.

Four central pillars provide the foundation for all of NHA's activities and programs:

- **Challenging academic programs.** NHA uses a clearly defined curriculum and series of high standards to encourage academic progress in the core subjects of instruction.
- **Teaching virtues.** NHA teachers strive to help students develop strong moral values.
- **Parent-teacher-child partnerships.** NHA schools actively encourage parental involvement in all components of the program, both in and out of the classroom.
- **Accountability.** Each NHA school is held accountable to the state and district in which the school operates, the national center, and parents of all students who are enrolled at an NHA school.

NHA believes that these four pillars work together to provide an effective learning environment for all students.

### Goals/Rationale

According to its Web site, NHA's educational philosophy is grounded in the principles of Effective School Research. Developed by Professor Ronald R. Edmonds, Effective Schools Research defines an *effective school* as an institution in which all children can obtain the essential knowledge and skills needed to be successful in life (Edmonds, 1981). (Mr. Edmonds is the former director of the Center for Urban Studies at Harvard University.) Effective Schools Research recommends that schools follow a research-based program that can quantifiably improve student learning. NHA strives to create effective schools by integrating several unique, research-based characteristics that correlate with student achievement.

## **C**osts

NHA schools receive funding from four sources:

- Approximately 90% of funding comes from one source—per pupil allocations from state tax dollars. This amount varies depending on per pupil spending in a specific district.
- Three other funding sources include local school districts, federal grants, and private investments.

For more information on the specific costs of training, materials, and personnel, sites should directly contact the ESP.

## **E**vidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement

### Evidence of Positive Overall Effects

*Rating:* 

The CSRQ Center reviewed three quantitative studies of NHA on student achievement. None of the studies had sufficient rigor to meet the CSRQ Center's standards for review. Therefore, the overall rating of the evidence of positive overall effects of this model on student achievement is zero. (Appendix E reports on the three studies that were reviewed but did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards.)

### Evidence of Positive Effects for Diverse Student Populations

*Rating:* 

Because no studies of NHA met the CSRQ Center's standards for review, the impact of this model on student achievement for diverse student populations is unknown. Therefore, the rating in this subcategory is no rating.

### Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas

*Rating:* 

Because no studies of NHA met the CSRQ Center's standards for review, the rating in this subcategory is no rating.

## **E**vidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes

*Rating:* 

Because no studies of NHA met the CSRQ Center's standards for review, it was not able to evaluate the effects of NHA on additional outcomes. Therefore, the rating in this category is no rating.

## **E**vidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement

*Rating:* 

No studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards examined the effects of NHA on parent, family, and community involvement. Therefore, the rating in this category is no rating.

## **E**vidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design

*Rating:* 

Based on documentation provided by the ESP, the model's underlying theory is influenced by Edmonds's principles of Effective Schools Research. (For more information, see the discussion of Effective Schools Research in "Goals/Rationale.") However, NHA does not provide explicit citations for Edmonds's principles. Therefore, based on the CSRQ Center's standards for

review, the rating for evidence of link between research and the model's design is zero.

## **E**vidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation

### Evidence of Readiness for Successful Implementation

*Rating:* 

Based on documentation provided by the ESP, the model offers a formal process for allocating such school resources as materials, staffing, and time. However, the model does not provide formal benchmarks for implementation. Instead, NHA monitors the progress of its schools by enforcing strict performance standards and collecting monthly data on student performance. Therefore, according to the CSRQ Center's standards for review, the rating for evidence of readiness for successful implementation is moderate.<sup>1</sup>

### Evidence of Professional Development/Technical Assistance for Successful Implementation

*Rating:* 

The model provides such ongoing training opportunities as workshops, coaching, ongoing training, and sessions for new staff. Additionally, the model provides supporting materials for professional development that address all of its core components. However, the model offers only an informal plan to help build school capacity to provide professional development. Therefore, according to the CSRQ Center's standards for review, the rating for evidence of professional development/technical assistance for successful implementation is moderately strong.

<sup>1</sup>As noted in "Methodology," the following subcategory, which has been used to rate school reform models in previous reports from the CSRQ Center, is not applicable to ESPs: Provider ensures initial commitment from schools.

## **C**entral Components

### Administrative Services

NHA considers itself to be a full-service model and provides a wide array of services to its schools. Administrative services, such as staff training and technology procurement, are provided to all schools regardless of the grade levels served. NHA also offers additional services, including

- Operations management, such as student recruitment and charter negotiations;
- Financial management, such as budget oversight and payroll management;
- Facilities management, such as securing school sites and renovating facilities; and
- Human resources management, such as hiring personnel and developing benefit packages.

NHA does not work with existing schools. Instead, NHA opens and maintains only its own system of public charter schools. Each charter school is managed as an individual business unit, with the school principal being held accountable for both educational and financial results. Generally, as the first step of the start-up process, NHA coordinates with a local school reform group in the community where it intends to open a new school. The ESP collaborates with the organization to write the charter and submit it to the relevant authorizing agency. After the charter is authorized, NHA takes the lead in selecting and securing the school site and developing community support. The ESP conducts extensive demographic research before selecting the final site. NHA estimates that the entire start-up process takes between 3 months and 1 year.

NHA is responsible for recruiting and admitting students to new NHA schools. Although NHA schools are open to all students, the number of applicants often exceeds the number of available spaces in a particular school. During an open enrollment period, interested students fill out applications to a school. If there are more applications than spaces, then a random-selection lottery is used to determine which students are admitted. After the open enrollment period ends, non-admitted applicants are placed on a waiting list, in case additional spaces become open. NHA gives preference to siblings of previously admitted students.

### Organization and Governance

Each school is held responsible to several groups of individuals at different levels. In addition to the state board of education and NHA itself, each NHA school is overseen by both the chartering agency that authorized the initial charter and an academy board of directors that is established at each school. The board of directors comprises five to seven community volunteers. The primary responsibility of the board is to ensure that the school complies with all relevant laws and regulations.

Each NHA school is governed by both the principal and the school leadership team (SLT). The ESP believes that the principal is instrumental in shaping the overall success of each school and expects him/her to serve as both the instructional leader and the general manager of the school. The principal also serves as a member of the SLT. Specific duties of the principal, as outlined by NHA, include hiring and mentoring teachers, attending national conferences and professional development activities, granting release time for teachers to attend professional development activities, promoting parental involvement, approving the use of instructional programs and materials, and scheduling common planning periods for teachers.

The SLT meets monthly under the leadership of the principal to discuss and review the school's progress. The SLT is responsible for developing the school improvement plan for subsequent years. The composition of the team varies from school to school but generally consists of the school principal and the chairpersons from each parent committee.

Each teacher at an NHA school is expected to hold a valid teaching certificate. NHA hires teachers through a selective screening process that includes parental input. Teacher pay is based on merit rather than seniority. NHA teachers work in a team setting to promote a dynamic learning environment for all students and use both direct and indirect instructional strategies to teach a multimethod curriculum using research-based best practices. NHA schools limit class size to 19–25 students in kindergarten and 24–28 students in grades 1–8.

All NHA schools follow a strict disciplinary code that encourages personal responsibility and universal respect. The ESP believes that by promoting good behavior, schools are also promoting student achievement. Thus, NHA has developed a Student Code of Conduct and a disciplinary system of six levels that range from verbal warning to expulsion. NHA also requires students in all grades to follow a strict dress code.

NHA can be implemented in both urban and suburban settings. All NHA schools begin as K–5 schools during the 1st year. Generally, one grade is added to the school each year of implementation through grade 8. A typical NHA school begins with 15–17 classrooms of grades K–5 and ends with 26–28 classrooms of grades K–8. This growth model increases a school size from roughly 360 to 650 students over a 4-year period. The model provides the same services to students in all grade levels. Currently, NHA does not provide services to high schools.

## Curriculum and Instruction

NHA focuses on providing students with a liberal arts education that provides a solid foundation in the core subjects of math, English, history, geography, government, economics, science, art, music, and physical education. NHA requires schools to use a combination of published curricula and model-developed curricula in all grade levels and recommends that schools spend twice as much time on language arts and math instruction as on other core subject areas.

For reading and writing instruction, NHA requires school to use the Open Court curriculum (<http://www.sraonline.com>). Through Open Court, all students, particularly those in grades K–2, receive intensive phonics instruction. Comprehension and fluency are also emphasized, taught, and evaluated at all grade levels. Saxon Math is used as the core math curriculum (<http://saxonpublishers.harcourtachieve.com>). The math program is based on the philosophy that students learn best through repetition of ideas. Sample lessons for both subject areas are provided by the developers of each curriculum.

In other subject areas, the model combines the Core Knowledge sequence with model-developed and teacher-developed materials to provide instruction (<http://www.coreknowledge.org>).<sup>2</sup> For example, NHA schools do not use textbooks for history or geography classes. Instead, teachers are expected to develop materials that align with the Core Knowledge sequence. The Core Knowledge sequence accounts for more than half of the required curricula; the model-developed materials are designed to fill in instructional gaps. The NHA curriculum is aligned with Core Knowledge in the following subject areas: math, history, geography, government, science, English, and reading.

In addition to the core curriculum requirements, NHA schools must also integrate moral values instruction

into all subject areas. Each month, a different moral value is selected for instruction from a list based on the Greek Cardinal Virtues of justice, temperance, fortitude, and prudence. The moral values are rotated so that each one is selected for instruction only once every 2 years. NHA students are also continually taught to look for role models and heroes. The ESP considers individual character development to be a cornerstone of its instructional philosophy. Character development is not treated as a separate curriculum but is integrated into all core subject areas as a constant theme. All students at NHA schools are expected to demonstrate certain moral values.

All NHA teachers are instructed to create teacher-directed classrooms. Teachers are expected to serve as leaders and role models for all students. Specific duties include

- Preparing lesson plans that are based on previous knowledge of the subject,
- Determining the most effective way to present instructional materials,
- Engaging students in thought provoking lessons,
- Continually monitoring student comprehension throughout daily lessons, and
- Providing continued learning opportunities and practice with instructional materials.

In teacher-directed classrooms, teachers are expected to direct instruction so that (a) all necessary objectives are met every day and (b) all students are able to master the content.

## Scheduling and Grouping

The ESP schedules a 7-hour school day, with a minimum of 6 hours of instructional time. NHA does not

<sup>2</sup>The CSRQ Center reviewed the Core Knowledge model in a previous report: *CSRQ Center Report on Elementary School Comprehensive School Reform Models*. The report can be accessed at <http://www.csrq.org>.

require its schools to follow a particular calendar. Instead, schools generally follow the calendar of the school districts in which they are located. NHA does require each of its school to have a minimum number of hours per day and days per year during which students must be in school. NHA schools are allowed more scheduling flexibility on a daily basis than on an annual one. The ESP encourages the use of dedicated instructional blocks but does not require it.

The ESP claims that inclusion of students with disabilities in the general curriculum is a central component of the model but did not provide any information about specific inclusion strategies.

### Technology

NHA takes the lead in planning, implementing, and supporting the use of technology in its schools and is responsible for leasing an adequate number of computers to each school. Computers, available for both instructional and noninstructional purposes, are used by both teachers and students. Each classroom at an NHA school has at least one computer that is connected to NHA's computer network, and all schools have a media center with additional computers. NHA has also developed a series of grade-level computer proficiency goals to ensure that computers are used effectively in the classroom. Other uses of technology may include developing keyboarding skills, simulating a business plan, or analyzing data from a science experiment.

All computers are also equipped with AtSchool software, which serves as the operating system for all NHA schools. AtSchool is an Internet-based program that includes math and reading/writing programs (for instructional purposes) and communications, accounting, and recordkeeping software (for noninstructional purposes). Each school is required to use AtSchool. For more information on the costs of AtSchool, schools should directly contact the ESP.

### Monitoring Student Progress and Performance

NHA schools are expected to follow the assessment schedules required by the state and district in which they are located. In addition, the ESP requires schools to administer the Northwest Evaluation Assessment Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) three times a year in grades 2–8. MAP is administered in the fall and spring and includes an optional mid-year test. This computer-based examination is administered to more than 3 million students nationally each year and is capable of providing instant results. Assessment data is used to group students across classes into three achievement levels. Student achievement data is also used to guide instructional strategies and to identify students in need of intervention.

NHA does not have formal strategies in place to evaluate its effectiveness but does perform evaluations in some of its schools. Evaluations, using a variety of assessment tools, are generally conducted in low-performing schools. Both internal and external evaluators are used. NHA provides information to each of its schools that indicates where the particular school ranks among its peers. Implementation is monitored informally at the school level by surveys, observations, and student achievement data. The model expects each school to use implementation data to develop schoolwide goals for subsequent years.

### Family and Community Involvement

NHA believes that all of its schools are held accountable to the students' parents and strongly encourages a high level of participation from family and community members. Orientation meetings and parent-teacher conferences are held regularly. Parents are also asked to volunteer in the classroom or after school and to serve on the SLT or academy board of directors. Each of these activities is designed to sustain family involvement in the school for the entire academic year. The AtSchool program allows parents to access—from their



homes—newsletters, teacher messages, and individual records of their children.

NHA works with individual schools to establish parent committees at each school. The committees help to set the direction of a school, although the final responsibility for setting policy lies with the academy board of directors and the SLT. The committees deal with a wide range of areas, such as moral focus, building and grounds, library, booster, hospitality, and ambassadors. The ESP also works with each school to establish a parent room to help parents feel welcome in the school. The model strongly urges schools to develop and use parent/family contracts to ensure a continued level of involvement from family members. Each fall and spring, NHA schools conduct a Parent Satisfaction Survey to solicit feedback and input from family members.

#### Professional Development and Technical Assistance

NHA has developed an informal professional development plan that is available to all schools. Each new NHA school is required to use the model's professional development plan during its 1st year of operation. After the 1st year, the principal decides whether to continue using the plan. Mentoring teams are available to provide onsite coaching and technical assistance as needed.

Before a school opens, all new teachers attend a 2-week summer training session. NHA generally partners with local universities to offer the session in the format of an accredited summer school course. After the initial training session, NHA works with the school's principal to determine the topics and delivery format of additional training sessions. NHA claims that professional development and technical assistance materials are available for each of the core components listed under "Model Description."

Any school that is considered to be underperforming must send its staff members to a mandatory onsite

intervention workshop. Apart from the intervention workshops and the initial training, NHA does not have mandatory professional development sessions for any subject area. All professional development providers are trained by NHA at its national headquarters in Michigan.

#### Implementation Expectations/Benchmarks

NHA has not developed specific implementation timelines and benchmarks. However, it has developed a set of annual implementation goals that schools are expected to work toward. The ESP has also set up procedures that allow schools to monitor and report student progress, monitor instructional methods, certify completion of academic objectives, and solicit and monitor parent satisfaction. NHA collects monthly student performance data that when analyzed, can be compared with past and current performance and against other schools.

#### Special Considerations

The model claims to take all responsibility for ensuring a school's success. If a school is not performing at its highest potential, NHA supplies additional resources at no extra cost. However, in a conversation with one charter authorizer, it was noted that NHA is not always able to correctly interpret the implementation data that it collects to identify potential problems. Another charter authorizer noted that after a period of staff turnover within the company, NHA has an increased emphasis on training regional consultants to provide assistance to schools on a regular basis to supplement the support provided by the national center.

All three charter authorizers contacted by the CSRQ Center felt that even with some shortcomings, NHA provides valuable services to its schools. Each authorizer stressed the accessibility and competence of the ESP's staff members.

## R eference

Edmonds, R. R. (1981, September/October). Making public schools effective. *Social Policy*, 12(2): 56–60.

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# SABIS Educational Systems, Inc.

Overview:		Basic Model Information and Review Results			
<b>Model Name:</b>	SABIS Educational Systems, Inc.				
<b>Model Mission/Focus:</b>	SABIS's philosophy is built on the belief that all students can learn and all students should have access to a university education. SABIS strives to foster a love for learning and to create well-rounded citizens and leaders.				
<b>Year Introduced in Schools:</b>	1995 (in the United States)				
<b>Grade Levels Served:</b>	Pre-K–12				
<b>Number of Schools</b>					
<b>Total:</b>	<b>Urban:</b>	<b>Suburban:</b>	<b>Rural:</b>		
31 <sup>1</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A		
<b>Costs</b>					
	<b>Total Operating Costs:</b>	<b>Training:</b>	<b>Materials:</b>	<b>Personnel:</b>	<b>Other:</b>
<b>Year 1</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Year 2</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Year 3</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Years 4+</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>1. Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement:</b>					
a.	Overall effects				NR
b.	Evidence of positive effects for diverse student populations				NR
c.	Evidence of positive effects in subject areas				NR
<b>2. Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes</b>					
<b>3. Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement</b>					
<b>4. Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design</b>					
<b>5. Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation:</b>					
a.	Evidence of readiness for successful implementation				NR
b.	Evidence of professional development/technical assistance for successful implementation				NR
					
<p>This description is based on publicly available information, including the model's Web site, regarding the model and its costs. The Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center attempted to obtain specific information, but this was not always possible. Areas in which exact information was not provided are marked by "N/A."</p>					

<sup>1</sup>SABIS operates 10 schools in the United States.

## Model Description

The information presented in this description of SABIS Educational Systems, Inc., was collected using (a) SABIS's Web site, (b) materials sent to the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center by SABIS, and (c) responses from one conversation with a charter authorizer who oversees the charter authorization process for a school that uses SABIS. Although contact was initiated by the CSRQ Center, it was unable to conduct a conversation with a representative from SABIS and four other charter authorizers.

SABIS Educational Systems, Inc., was incorporated in 1985 in Minnesota. SABIS owns the rights to the SABIS Edge Education Program in North America, South America, and Europe. SABIS operates 31 schools in 11 countries. These schools are part of the SABIS School Network. The first SABIS charter school in the United States opened in 1995 in Springfield, Massachusetts.

According to the CSRQ Center's standards, the following were identified as core components of SABIS: organization and governance; professional development; technical assistance; curriculum; instruction; inclusion; technology; student assessment; data-based decision making; and parent, family, and community involvement. Core components are considered essential to successful implementation of the model.

### Mission/Focus

According to SABIS, its philosophy is that all students can learn, even those of average or slightly below average ability. SABIS believes that a core curriculum in conjunction with a methodology of mastering key concepts is necessary to reach this end. In addition to academics, SABIS's philosophy includes developing positive social skills and valuing and respecting cultural differences to become responsible citizens.

### Goals/Rationale

SABIS's Web site and materials indicate that the founders' goal is for students to recognize the importance of higher education, attend and be successful in college, be life-long learners, and be responsible citizens.

### Costs

SABIS's schools are public charter schools that are funded by the public school system. For more information on the costs of training, materials, and personnel, schools or districts should contact SABIS directly.

## Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement

### Evidence of Positive Overall Effects

*Rating:* (NR)

No quantitative studies that examined the effects of SABIS on student achievement were available for review by the CSRQ Center. Therefore, the overall rating in this subcategory is no rating.

### Evidence of Positive Effects for Diverse Student Populations

*Rating:* (NR)

Because no studies of SABIS were available for review by the CSRQ Center, the impact of this model on student achievement for diverse student populations is unknown. Therefore, the rating in this subcategory is no rating.

### Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas

*Rating:* (NR)

Because no studies of SABIS were available for review, the rating in this subcategory is no rating.

## Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes

Rating: (NR)

Because no studies of SABIS were available for review by the CSRQ Center, the effects of SABIS on additional outcomes could not be evaluated. Therefore, the model rating is no rating.

## Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement

Rating: (NR)

No studies that examined the effects of SABIS on parent, family, or community involvement were available for review by the CSRQ Center. Therefore, the model rating is no rating.

## Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design

Rating: (NR)

The CSRQ Center did not conduct a conversation with SABIS, nor was the Center able to find publicly available information to rate this category. Consequently, the rating in this category is no rating.

## Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation

### Evidence of Readiness for Successful Implementation

Rating: (NR)

The CSRQ Center did not conduct a conversation with SABIS. Therefore, the Center was not able to collect the

evidence necessary to rate this dimension. According to the CSRQ Center's standards, the model received no rating for evidence of readiness for successful implementation.

### Evidence of Professional Development/Technical Assistance for Successful Implementation

Rating: (NR)

The CSRQ Center did not conduct a conversation with SABIS, nor was the Center able to find publicly available information to rate this dimension. Consequently, the model received no rating for evidence of professional development/technical assistance for successful implementation.

## Central Components

### Administrative Services

As described on its Web site and in publicly available information and according to a charter authorizer who worked with the model, SABIS provides a wide array of administrative services to its schools. According to the charter authorizer, charter applications, and materials that SABIS provided to the CSRQ Center, the model provides financial management services, facilities management services, and human resources management services. SABIS works with start-up schools to provide administrative services that are tailored to each school's needs. These services are outlined in the contract agreement between SABIS and its clients.

SABIS has established an admissions process for students who are interested in attending one of its schools. According to Web sites of SABIS's schools, interested students must complete an application, submit recommendations, attend an informal meeting with the director of admissions, and take a placement test. SABIS has a nonselective admissions process.

## Organization and Governance

SABIS does not convert schools or take over and reconstitute existing schools. Instead, SABIS serves as managing partner with a school's founders and works with the school's board of directors to implement the model. The board of directors is in charge of the school, oversees the model's progress, and submits charter applications and renewals to its state charter office.

According to charter applications provided by SABIS to the CSRQ Center, SABIS offers options for the degree of control that SABIS has in governing the school:

- In some cases, SABIS emphasizes site-based control, whereby the principal and the board of directors run the school and set all policies. In this site-based control model, the board of directors oversees the school's fiscal, organizational, and academic operations and regularly convenes committees to meet with SABIS staff and school staff.
- In other cases, SABIS is contractually responsible for the day-to-day management and operation of the school. Under this complete management model, SABIS provides all recruitment, training, and supervision of staff.

SABIS stresses the importance that all school staff commits themselves to the SABIS mission: preparing all students for higher education. Parents and students must also commit to the mission and play supportive roles through the Parent Connection and the Student Life Organization (SLO).

## Curriculum and Instruction

Curriculum and instruction are the primary foci and building blocks of the SABIS educational system. The SABIS Edge Education Program encourages students to strive for excellence and develop confidence in themselves. The program has eight features:

- Screen all new students for pre-existing learning gaps
- Monitor the progress of all students to identify ongoing learning gaps
- Provide intensive interventions to fill gaps that do exist
- Use a comprehensive curriculum to teach essential skills and knowledge required for academic success
- Implement instructional strategies to maximize student engagement and learning
- Use peer tutors
- Develop a student life program that focuses on building positive student attitudes
- Establish a safe and secure environment

The range of products and services available varies depending on the management agreement between SABIS and the individual school. Under complete management, products and services for pre-K and K–12 include a complete curriculum that is aligned with state standards, more than 450 concept-targeted books, software systems, and a computerized testing and reporting system.

SABIS emphasizes skills in the following areas: reading, writing, communicating, abstract reasoning, problem solving, and critical thinking. Knowledge of a second language is stressed and begins at the preschool level.

According to SABIS, the SABIS Edge Education Program provides a structured curriculum that is aligned with state standards. SABIS's schools can also use SABIS's books that are coordinated with the curriculum. Curricula are available for English, Spanish, math, social studies, science, art, music, health, physical education, and computers.

SABIS believes in a hierarchy of subjects and that not all subjects are of equal value. According to SABIS, a

subject's importance is related to how central it is to a student's future academic success. Math and English are deemed the two most important subjects. Foreign language instruction is considered the third most important subject. Because math is the precursor to science and English is the precursor to history, math and English take precedence over science and history.

The math program teaches the four basic math operations and also requires applying math to everyday life and understanding the language of math and the theory and logic behind it. Students are expected to be able to teach others what they have learned. Proficiency in English and a foreign language is considered vital. According to the model, solid knowledge of languages enhances a student's ability to think logically, appreciate literature and other cultures, and communicate with others.

Science is taught in an order different from most schools. Students take physics first, with biology and chemistry coming later. The math skills necessary for learning physics are taught in a pre-calculus class. Examples and problems are used to apply science to everyday life and to emphasize concepts.

SABIS's social studies content is drawn from geography, history, and political science. Students are encouraged to be culturally aware and to have an appreciation of other cultures. SABIS claims that this training creates responsible and active citizens.

At the K–5 level, SABIS offers students a foundation of knowledge and skills to prepare them for more rigorous courses of study in the upper grades. Teaching methods of the SABIS Edge Education Program include memorization, phonics instruction in reading, and drills in math to build a foundation for more advanced learning.

The SABIS Edge Education Program believes in whole class instruction using direct instruction. Students are assessed weekly to monitor progress and to identify gaps in learning from missed concepts. Students who

need extra help to learn missed concepts or who are working below grade level are put in an intensive program with lower student-to-teacher ratios. Students in the intensive program are tested weekly and return to their regular classroom when their performance is back on target.

The premise is that missed concepts and lack of prerequisite knowledge, not a lack of ability, can result in poor academic performance or poor motivation. Preventing gaps and catching and closing possible gaps right away is essential for student academic success.

Students are encouraged to participate actively in lessons and classroom discussions. Teachers use class time for academics and curriculum-related activities and expect students to be on-task. Teachers use pacing charts that are provided by SABIS to ensure that each class is doing the same concept and lesson on the same day.

Efficiency is the goal of the SABIS Edge Education Program; teaching a set of knowledge or skills “in the shortest time possible with the least effort” avoids wasting time and increases time for additional learning or play. SABIS's pacing charts are intended to help teachers maximize content coverage without giving up mastery of the material. The pacing charts tell the teachers what and how much to teach in any given class period.

Teachers use a “point system” to implement maximum content coverage and pacing. The point system helps teachers focus on what they will teach and students focus on what they will learn. Teachers list concepts one point at a time, for example:

- Identifying the order of colors in the spectrum
- Ensuring gender agreement of articles and nouns

Teachers introduce each point with a presentation, explanation, examples, and questions. They then lead an activity to apply the concept and check for understanding. Teachers monitor student progress and

reteach as necessary. Student group leaders, or prefects, check the work of their peers.

SABIS's founders believe that efficient teaching includes

- Development of academic materials to fit student needs;
- Instructional strategies that encompass the appropriate activities and pacing to maintain momentum and interest;
- Selection of objectives at the appropriate level;
- Explicit instruction of the objectives;
- Application of basic principles of learning, such as maintaining motivation and encouraging retention and transfer;
- Instruction that is adjusted based on student progress; and
- Strong classroom management.

SABIS goes a step further in defining efficient teaching. After identifying skills and concepts for a class, efficient teaching involves identifying which concepts and skills are essential and which ones are nonessential. Essential concepts are necessary for future learning; therefore, 100% mastery of essential concepts is required for grade advancement. In addition, some nonessential concepts are included in the curriculum, and some mastery above the minimum is required. Students must demonstrate mastery of concepts through testing to be promoted to the next level.

### Scheduling and Grouping

SABIS groups students by ability and concepts mastered rather than by age. The model believes in whole class instruction. Within a class, students are divided into groups of four students. Each group has a student leader who can help other students in the group. When students are removed and put in the

intensive program, they are tested periodically to determine when they can return to the regular class.

SABIS offers an intensive English immersion program that emphasizes reading for students with limited English proficiency. This program promotes acquisition of English without diminishing the student's first language.

### Technology

SABIS offers the Academic Monitoring System (AMS), a computerized testing and reporting system to assess and track student achievement. AMS is proprietary to SABIS. Software for this system is available from SABIS under a management agreement. AMS is used to detect gaps in learning starting in fourth grade.

Computers are used in all classrooms for lessons and for testing. For more information on the availability and costs of technology, schools or districts should contact SABIS directly.

### Monitoring Student Progress and Performance

Monitoring student progress through regular assessments is an integral part of the SABIS model. Weekly assessments are meant to prevent learning gaps by helping teachers identify when "real time" remedial action is needed to catch students who may be falling behind. With some management arrangements, computerized tests, scoring, and feedback are available to assist teachers with tracking student achievement.

Assessment takes place in these areas: oral language, vocabulary, spelling, grammar, reading comprehension, composition, and memorization. Formal assessments begin in first grade, and by fourth grade, students are tested weekly. A comprehensive final exam is given at the end of each term. Report cards are distributed each term, and parents are informed via interim reports if their child is in danger of failing. In addition, teachers hold parent conferences twice a year.



SABIS uses AMS to test students weekly, identify learning gaps, and provide immediate feedback to teachers. The computerized tracking ensures that SABIS has strict accountability for students, teachers, and administrators.

### Family and Community Involvement

SABIS requires parents to participate in the Parent Connection, a parent-led organization. This program is designed to keep parents involved in their children's learning process. It is also used for fundraising. Parents can get involved in such areas as new family orientation, an international fair, community service, and social events.

### Professional Development and Technical Assistance

According to literature on SABIS and a charter authorizer, the model offers extensive training on its methods to principals and teachers before the school opens. A 1- to 2-week orientation program for new staff is provided during the summer (before the start of the school year). SABIS also provides a year-end review and follow-up training.

Evaluators from SABIS's national office spend time in schools to identify needs and devise improvement strategies for individual staff. Throughout the year, formal and informal evaluations and recommendations on areas in need of improvement are made by administrators, department heads, and peers who visit and conduct classroom observations. Teachers receive job-embedded professional development as they work in grade-level teams to observe each other's instruction and to provide feedback and support.

### Implementation Expectations/Benchmarks

The model does not provide formal benchmarks that apply across all SABIS schools. Rather, specific curriculum guidelines, pacing charts, and instructional

guides form SABIS's implementation expectations and benchmarks. In addition, each SABIS charter school has an accountability plan that outlines academic and organizational goals. The school's charter application states specific measures as to how the school will achieve its goals. Here are two examples of performance objectives:

- All students at the SABIS International Charter School will achieve mastery of computation and problem-solving skills necessary for proficiency in math.
- The administration of the SABIS International Charter School will ensure the safety of the school campus for all students and staff.

SABIS staff are in the schools (depending on the contract agreement) to monitor progress of and fidelity to the SABIS method.

### Special Considerations

The SABIS model includes an SLO for all grade levels. This program emphasizes learning life skills through real-life experiences. The SLO encourages students to lead activities to learn organizational and leadership skills. The program also aims to help students to form friendships and become constructive members in their community. Students in an SLO organize peer tutoring, plan social events, organize community service projects, and produce a school newspaper. Students who participate in an SLO take an Honor Code Pledge that emphasizes respect for self and others.

The Prefect System is part of the SLO. This program gives students varying degrees of leadership responsibility to assist their peers. For example, prefects may tutor peers, monitor hallways, or assist in the library or computer lab.

The preceding description of the SABIS method was based on publicly available information and a

conversation with one charter authorizer. The CSRQ Center was unable to conduct a conversation with SABIS. For more specific information on SABIS, schools or districts should contact the model provider directly.

### Contact Information







SABIS Educational Systems, Inc.  
6385 Beach Rd.  
Eden Prairie, MN 55344

**Phone:**  
952-918-1850

**E-mail:**  
sabisusa@sabis.net

**Web site:**  
<http://www.sabis.net>

# White Hat Management (HOPE Academies)

Overview:		Basic Model Information and Review Results			
<b>Model Name:</b>	White Hat Management (HOPE Academies) <sup>1</sup>				
<b>Model Mission/Focus:</b>	HOPE Academies believe that there is hope for every child and help students reach their academic potential by creating public charter community schools that provide a high-quality school of choice with curriculum programs and instructional methods that are specifically designed for the student population.				
<b>Year Introduced in Schools:</b>	1998				
<b>Grade Levels Served:</b>	K–11				
<b>Number of Schools</b>					
<b>Total:</b>	<b>Urban:</b>	<b>Suburban:</b>	<b>Rural:</b>		
32 <sup>2</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A		
<b>Costs</b>					
	<b>Total Operating Costs:</b>	<b>Training:</b>	<b>Materials:</b>	<b>Personnel:</b>	<b>Other:</b>
<b>Year 1</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Year 2</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Year 3</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Years 4+</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>1. Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement:</b>					
a.	Overall effects				
b.	Evidence of positive effects for diverse student populations				
c.	Evidence of positive effects in subject areas				
<b>2. Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes</b>					
<b>3. Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement</b>					
<b>4. Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design</b>					
<b>5. Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation:</b>					
a.	Evidence of readiness for successful implementation				
b.	Evidence of professional development/technical assistance for successful implementation				
					
<p>This description is based on publicly available information, including the model's Web site, regarding the model and its costs. The Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center attempted to obtain specific information, but this was not always possible. Areas in which exact information was not provided are marked by "N/A."</p>					

<sup>1</sup>White Hat Management offers many different educational services; however, this report focuses solely on HOPE Academies, because they are the only K–12 public education component of White Hat that focuses on a general student population.

<sup>2</sup>White Hat currently operates 13 schools as HOPE Academies.

## Model Description

All of the information on White Hat Management and the HOPE Academies model was collected using (a) White Hat's Web site and (b) responses from conversations with individuals representing two charter authorizers who oversee the charter authorization process for Hope Academies. Although contact was initiated with a representative of White Hat, the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center was unable to conduct a conversation with the model provider. For more specific information on the HOPE Academies model, sites should directly contact White Hat Management, the model's developer.

According to the provider's Web site, David L. Brennan, founder and chairman of White Hat, began his work in education reform by creating employee learning centers at his manufacturing company in the 1980s. When he saw the positive effect of education for his own employees, he expanded his focus to include K–12 students and founded White Hat as an education service provider (ESP) in 1998. White Hat offers many different education services to varying student populations, including home-schooled students, high school dropouts, and distance-learning students. For the purpose of this report, the CSRQ Center focuses on HOPE Academies, White Hat's charter school model that serves students in grades K–11. White Hat provides comprehensive management and education services to all HOPE Academies.

According to the CSRQ Center's standards, the following were identified as core components of White Hat's HOPE Academies: organization and governance; professional development; curriculum; instruction; inclusion; technology; student assessment; data-based decision making; and parent, family, and community involvement. Core components are considered essential to successful implementation.

### Mission/Focus

According to the model's Web site, the vision statement of HOPE Academies is that there is hope for every child. HOPE Academies claim to help students reach their academic potential by creating public charter schools that provide high-quality curriculum programs and instructional methods that are specifically designed for the student population. The ESP states that it helps parents and children overcome obstacles that may impede students' academic progress.

To accomplish this vision, the provider emphasizes seven guiding principles for working with public charter schools. These seven principles are known as the White Hat Way:

- Tailoring instruction to meet the needs of each student
- Focusing on the fundamentals of reading, writing, and math
- Integrating technology to supplement instruction in the classroom
- Employing passionate teachers
- Using data-driven decisionmaking
- Involving parents actively in their child's educational progress
- Designing each school around the community it serves

### Goals/Rationale

According to the provider's Web site, HOPE Academies establishes six goals for each student in its schools:

1. Each student will be motivated, taught, guided, and supported as he/she acquires the desire for and accepts the challenge of a lifetime of learning.

2. Each student will enjoy success as the natural outcome of his/her exploratory behavior and as a result, will become an active learner who participates in his/her own educational process.
3. Each student will receive instruction in a manner that results in the highest level of learning for that child.
4. Each student will learn ways to influence his/her school environment in a positive manner.
5. Each student will grow in positive self-confidence, have the ability to solve problems and make decisions, and display responsible behavior.
6. The parents and guardians of students will be actively involved in and supportive of their child's educational progress.

## **C**osts

The CSRQ Center did not conduct a conversation with the ESP, nor was it able to find publicly available information regarding the model's costs. For specific information on the costs of training, materials, and personnel, sites should directly contact White Hat.

## **E**vidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement

### Evidence of Positive Overall Effects

*Rating:* ⓪

The CSRQ Center reviewed one quantitative study of White Hat on student achievement but this study did not have sufficient rigor to meet the CSRQ Center's standards. Therefore, the overall rating of the evidence of positive effects of this model on student achievement is zero. (Appendix G reports on the

study that was reviewed but did not meet CSRQ Center standards.)

### Evidence of Positive Effects for Diverse Student Populations

*Rating:* Ⓝ

Because no studies of White Hat met the CSRQ Center's standards for review, the impact of this model on student achievement for diverse populations is unknown. Therefore, the rating in this subcategory is no rating.

### Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas

*Rating:* Ⓝ

Because no studies of White Hat met the CSRQ Center's standards for review, the rating in this subcategory is no rating.

## **E**vidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes

*Rating:* Ⓝ

Because no studies of White Hat met the CSRQ Center's standards for review, it was not able to evaluate the effects of White Hat on additional outcomes. Therefore, the rating in this category is no rating.

## **E**vidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement

*Rating:* Ⓝ

No studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards examined the effects of White Hat on parent, family, and community involvement. Therefore, the rating in this category is no rating.

## Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design

Rating: (NR)

The CSRQ Center did not conduct a conversation with the ESP, nor was it able to find publicly available information to allow it to rate this dimension. Consequently, the model received no rating in this category.

## Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation

### Evidence of Readiness for Successful Implementation

Rating: (NR)

The CSRQ Center did not conduct a conversation with the ESP, nor was it able to find publicly available information to allow it to rate this dimension. Consequently, the model received no rating in this subcategory.

### Evidence of Professional Development/Technical Assistance for Successful Implementation

Rating: (NR)

The CSRQ Center did not conduct a conversation with the ESP, nor was it able to find publicly available information to allow it to rate this dimension. Consequently, the model received no rating in this subcategory.

## Central Components

### Administrative Services

White Hat states on its Web site that it provides comprehensive administrative services to its school. The provider offers information technology consulting and support to determine how schools can best use modern

technology inside and outside the classroom. The provider also offers marketing and communications services, such as producing annual school reports for each HOPE Academy that details student performance, attendance rates, and student and parent satisfaction. The provider offers many other general operations management services, including reporting student data to state education authorities, providing school safety resources, negotiating contracts for different school products and services, and grant writing support that helps to identify and obtain federal and state grants and special federal program funding.

White Hat also provides comprehensive human resource services, such as recruiting new employees, creating organization charts and job descriptions and staffing requirements to hire new employees, developing a school's policies and procedures, and offering health care and retirement benefits for employees. In addition, White Hat provides complete financial management services, such as accounting, preparation of financial statements, creation and monitoring of school budgets, internal audits, and assistance for external audits. As a subsidiary of White Hat, White Hat Realty provides facilities management by obtaining, designing, constructing, and maintaining appropriate school sites. Lastly, White Hat provides assistance to those interested in creating new charter schools.

### Organization and Governance

Each HOPE Academy, as a public charter school, has a board of directors and a charter authorizer that oversees its progress. HOPE Academy High School Campus extends the mission and goals of the HOPE Academies to serve students in grades 9–11. White Hat, according to its Web site, plans to extend the high school program to 12th grade in 2006.

The ESP, according to its Web site, emphasizes a safe, clean, and positive school environment. To this end, teachers, staff, and students wear uniforms. Students

are expected to respond “yes madam” or “yes sir” to build a culture of respect.

### Curriculum and Instruction

HOPE Academies focus on reading and math as the foundation for academic success. The provider indicates that the curriculum is designed to help students master reading, writing, and math in the primary grades. Other subjects, such as science, social studies, and art, are added to the fundamental focus on reading and math in middle and high school grades.

The model’s Web site states that HOPE Academies use research-based practices that are aligned with state standards and supported by experts in the curriculum development field. In kindergarten through third grade, HOPE Academies teach reading using the Direct Instruction (DI) method.<sup>3</sup> DI methods provide a systematic approach that allows each student to master one component or skill at his/her individual pace before moving on to the next component or skill.

In addition, HOPE Academies use the Calvert Reading Curriculum, a spiraling curriculum that focuses on skill development at all grade levels. For students in grades K–2, this curriculum emphasizes phonics development, decoding, and comprehension using phonics story books and anthologies. Students in grades 3–5 are exposed to classic children’s literature to develop their reading skills in interpretation, appreciation, analysis, and critical thinking. In middle school, teachers use poetry and the classics to teach reading and develop critical thinking skills.

Along with the curricular standards set by the provider, White Hat also states that individualized instruction is one of the provider’s guiding principles. The model provider indicates that HOPE Academies develop a

specific educational plan for each student based on his/her individual needs.

According to the provider’s Web site, special needs students are serviced through a local service delivery plan and in accordance with state regulations. A special education resource teacher or consultant is assigned to each HOPE Academy to help ensure that the local service delivery plan is carried out. In addition, White Hat indicates that assistance is provided to students with limited English proficiency through a combination of resources that include the Ohio Department of Education’s English as a Second Language Bilingual and Multicultural Center, the Special Education Regional Resource Center and, when possible, a teacher of English as a second language.

### Scheduling and Grouping

White Hat does not have specific scheduling or grouping requirements for its schools. Typically, a HOPE Academy’s school year is aligned with the district’s schedule, starting in late August and ending in early June. The hours of operation for HOPE Academies vary by school location.

### Technology

One of White Hat’s guiding principles is using the latest technology to supplement instruction. According to the provider, every teacher’s desk has a computer with Internet access. Each HOPE Academy also has approximately six computers in all classrooms available for student use and a larger computer lab with approximately 30 computers. To help students use technology more effectively, every HOPE Academy has a full-time technology teacher or technology consultant. Specifically at the high school level, HOPE Academies aim to provide one laptop computer to every student.

<sup>3</sup>The CSRQ Center reviewed DI when used as a full immersion comprehensive school reform model in an earlier report: *CSRQ Center Report on Elementary School Comprehensive School Reform Models*. The report can be accessed at <http://www.csrq.org>.

In addition, students can opt to apply for the HOPE Extended Learning Program. This Web-based program allows students to receive assignments, submit homework, and access tutors especially when the student is away from a structured classroom environment (e.g. summer break, holidays, or illnesses).

According to the ESP, traditional teaching is supplemented with curriculum software that integrates coursework and curriculum objectives. For specific information on costs and use of software, sites should directly contact White Hat.

One charter authorizer commented in a conversation with the CSRQ Center that one of White Hat's strongest components is its effective use of technology in the classroom.

### Monitoring Student Progress and Performance

White Hat indicates that one of its guiding principles is measuring and analyzing all educational outcomes to best serve its students. HOPE Academies use several testing instruments to gauge student progress. Because HOPE Academies are currently located only in Ohio, students take the Ohio Proficiency tests as required by state law. HOPE Academies also use the Iowa Cognitive Ability Tests as a diagnostic assessment tool, with the goal to individualize instruction based on students' academic progress.

According to the provider, White Hat surveys students and parents twice per year. Results of these surveys, attendance rates of students and teachers, and the results from the Ohio state assessment are published for each school in an Annual Progress Report.

One charter authorizer noted that White Hat uses the Authorizer Oversight Information System, a data management system developed by Central Michigan University, to track the academic performance of each of its schools. The system uses both raw scores and

value-added outcome measures to demonstrate the progress of students in HOPE Academies.

### Family and Community Involvement

White Hat indicates that one of its guiding principles is to involve parents actively in their child's educational progress. To meet this goal, the provider encourages all schools to solicit parental input for student progress. In addition, all HOPE Academies have family advocates or trained counselors onsite that, according to the provider, form relationships with students, family, staff, and the community.

One charter authorizer of HOPE Academies told the CSRQ Center that one of White Hat's strengths is providing wrap-around services, such as information sessions for parents on community services available to them, that could further strengthen the family's living situation.

### Professional Development and Technical Assistance

According to the provider, White Hat provides 3 weeks of in-service training to all new teachers in HOPE Academies. White Hat also offers ongoing training and learning opportunities for all staff with a focus on professional development for specific curricula and instructional methods, such as DI and Calvert Reading. One charter authorizer, in a conversation with the CSRQ Center, noted that coaches visit different classrooms on a weekly basis to provide feedback and proper modeling of DI.

### Implementation Expectations/Benchmarks

The CSRQ Center did not conduct a conversation with the ESP, nor was it able to find publicly available information regarding the model's benchmarks. However, conversations with charter authorizers indicated that White Hat provides each HOPE Academy



with a set of benchmarks. For more specific information on timelines and benchmarks for implementation, sites should directly contact the ESP.

### Special Considerations

HOPE Academies distributes a *Home Resource Guide* to every student. This printed guide provides resources to support classroom instruction and to enable students to complete self-directed home study and research projects. Suggested resources include Web sites, games, activities, television programs, grade-appropriate books, and tips for parents. The resource guide is also available through the ESP's Web site.

As stated previously, the CSRQ Center did not conduct a conversation with model provider. All information provided is based on the model's Web site and other publicly available materials. In addition, conversations with two charter authorizers provided feedback on the nature of White Hat's services at individual school sites. For more specific information on White Hat and HOPE Academies, schools should directly contact the model provider.

## Contact Information

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info@whitehatmgmt.com

**Web site:**

<http://www.hope-academies.com>

# Appendix A: Edison Schools

The following is a description of studies that did not meet the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center's standards.

Nineteen studies of Edison Schools did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards. Of those studies, 8 were eligible for full review because they used quasi-experimental or longitudinal research designs. Their findings, however, were considered to be *inconclusive* for the following reasons: Two studies did not control for preexisting differences between the treatment and comparison groups, and six studies did not provide sufficient evidence that the model was implemented as intended.

The remaining 11 studies were ineligible for full review for the following reasons: Three studies did not contain baseline measures on which to establish equivalence between the groups; one study was descriptive and did not include quantitative data; two studies did not have control groups to compare Edison students; three studies were not eligible for further review because a more recent version of the study was available; finally, the reported results in two studies combined models from more than one education service provider, making it impossible to attribute any of the results solely to Edison.

## **N**ot Eligible for Initial Review

Cookson, P. W., Embree, K., & Fahey, S. (2000). *The Edison Partnership schools: An assessment of academic climate and classroom culture*. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University.

Hoxby, C. M. (2003). School choice and school competition: Evidence from the United States. *Swedish Economic Policy Review*, 10, 9–65.

**Not Relevant for Initial Review:** Study was not quantitative or on an education service provider.

**Not Eligible for Full Review:** Study's research design was not sufficiently rigorous or did not include student achievement outcomes.

**Did Not Meet Standards (Inconclusive):** Study had critical threats to causal validity.

**Met Standards (Suggestive):** Study had no critical threats to validity but used a less rigorous (e.g., longitudinal, cohort) research design.

**Met Standards (Conclusive):** Study had no critical threats to validity and used a rigorous (e.g., experimental, quasi-experimental) research design.

Miller, L. A. (2000). The impact of the Edison design on teachers and their perceptions of its impact on improved student achievement over time. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 61(07-A), 2542.

Rhim, L. M. (2002). *School privatization by way of a comprehensive management contract: A single case study of the extent to which privatization theory transfers to practice in a public charter school*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

U.S. General Accounting Office. (2002). *Public schools: Insufficient research to determine effectiveness of selected private education companies* (GAO-03-11). Washington, DC: Author.

## Not Eligible for Full Review

- American Federation of Teachers. (2000). *Trends in student achievement for Edison Schools, Inc.: The emerging track record*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Dryden, M. (2002). *Achievement performance report: Dallas-Edison Partnership schools 2001–2002*. Dallas, TX: Division of Evaluation and Accountability, Dallas Independent School District.
- Edison Project/Wichita Public Schools. (1997). *End-of-year report on Dodge Edison Elementary School*. New York: Edison Schools.
- Hoxby, C. M., & Rockoff, J. E. (2004). *The impact of charter schools on student achievement: A study of students who attend schools chartered by the Chicago Charter School Foundation*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University.
- Minneapolis Public Schools. (2001). *Edison High: School information report 2000–2001*. Minneapolis, MN: Author.
- Minneapolis Public Schools. (2001). *Edison/PPL Elementary: School information report 2000–2001*. Minneapolis, MN: Author.
- Miron, G. (2004). *Evaluation of the Delaware Charter school reform, year 1 report*. Kalamazoo, MI: The Evaluation Center, Western Michigan University. Retrieved November 14, 2005, from [http://www.doe.k12.de.us/files/pdf/dedoe\\_charterschreform2004.pdf](http://www.doe.k12.de.us/files/pdf/dedoe_charterschreform2004.pdf)
- Nelson, F. H., & Van Meter, N. (2003). *Update on student achievement for Edison Schools, Inc.* Washington, DC: American Federation of Teachers.
- Shay, S. A. (2000). A longitudinal study of achievement outcomes in a privatized public school: A growth curve analysis. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 61(05-A), 1746.
- Useem, E., & Balfanz, R. (2002, Winter). Comprehensive district reform: Philadelphia's grand experiment. *Benchmarks*, 4(1).
- U.S. General Accounting Office. (2003). *Public schools: Comparison of achievement results for students attending privately managed and traditional schools in six cities* (GAO-04-62). Washington, DC: Author.

## Did Not Meet Standards (Inconclusive)

- Gill, B. P., & Edison Schools. (2005). *Seventh annual report on school performance 2003–2004*. Arlington, VA: RAND Corporation.
- Edison Schools. (2000). *Third annual report on school performance*. New York: Author.
- Miron, G., Nelson, C., & Risley, J. (2002). *Strengthening Pennsylvania's charter school reform: Findings from the statewide evaluation and discussion of relevant policy issues*. Kalamazoo, MI: The Evaluation Center, Western Michigan University. Retrieved November 22, 2005, from [http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/charter/pa\\_5year/](http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/charter/pa_5year/)
- Mislevy, R. J. (1996). *Reading achievement test-score analysis: 1995/96 King-Edison vs. control schools, grades K–2, Mount Clemens Community Schools*. Retrieved January 24, 2006, from <http://web.archive.org/web/19990209120006/www.aft.org/research/edisonproject/sfa/w96/mislevy.htm>
- RAND Corporation. (2001). *Edison Schools 2000–2001 annual report on school performance*. Arlington, VA: Author.

RAND Corporation. (2002). *Edison Schools 2001–2002 annual report on school performance*. Arlington, VA: Author.

RAND Corporation. (2003). *Edison Schools 2002–2003 annual report on school performance*. Arlington, VA: Author.

Rhim, L. M. (2005). *Restructuring schools in Chester Upland, Pennsylvania: An analysis of state restructuring efforts*. Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States.

## Met Standards (Suggestive)

American Federation of Teachers. (1998). *Student achievement in Edison Schools: Mixed results in an ongoing enterprise*. Washington, DC: Author.

Miron, G., & Applegate, B. (2000). *An evaluation of student achievement in Edison schools opened in 1995 and 1996*. Kalamazoo, MI: The Evaluation Center, Western Michigan University.

## Met Standards (Conclusive)

Dryden, M. (2004). *The performance of Edison Schools Inc. in the Dallas schools*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA.

Gill, B. P., Hamilton, L. S., Lockwood, J. R., Marsh, J. A., Zimmer, R. W., Hill, D., et al. (2005). *Inspiration, perspiration, and time: Operations and achievement in Edison Schools*. Arlington, VA: RAND Corporation.

Miron, G. (2006). *Evaluation of the Delaware Charter school reform, year 2 report*. Kalamazoo, MI: The Evaluation Center, Western Michigan University. Retrieved February 21, 2006,

from [http://www.doe.k12.de.us/files/pdf/dedoe\\_charterschreform2006.pdf](http://www.doe.k12.de.us/files/pdf/dedoe_charterschreform2006.pdf)

Mislevy, R. J. (1996). *Reading achievement test-score analysis: 1995/96 Washington-Edison School, grades K–2 Sherman Independent School District*. Retrieved January 24, 2006, from <http://web.archive.org/web/19990209120006/www.aft.org/research/edisonproject/sfa/w96/mislevy.htm>

Mislevy, R. J. (1997). *Reading achievement test-score analysis: 1996/97 Dodge-Edison vs. control schools, grades 1–3 Wichita Unified School District #259*. Retrieved January 24, 2006, from <http://web.archive.org/web/19990209120006/www.aft.org/research/edisonproject/sfa/w96/mislevy.htm>

Mislevy, R. J. (1997). *Reading achievement test-score analysis, 1996/97, grades K–2, Roosevelt-Edison School, Colorado Springs, CO*. Retrieved January 24, 2006, from <http://web.archive.org/web/19990209120006/www.aft.org/research/edisonproject/sfa/w96/mislevy.htm>

Shay, S. A., & Gomez, J. J. (2002). *Privatization in education: A growth curve analysis of achievement*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

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## Appendix B: Imagine Schools

No studies of Imagine Schools were available for review by the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center.

**Not Relevant for Initial Review:** Study was not quantitative or on an education service provider.

**Not Eligible for Full Review:** Study's research design was not sufficiently rigorous or did not include student achievement outcomes.

**Did Not Meet Standards (Inconclusive):** Study had critical threats to causal validity.

**Met Standards (Suggestive):** Study had no critical threats to validity but used a less rigorous (e.g., longitudinal, cohort) research design.

**Met Standards (Conclusive):** Study had no critical threats to validity and used a rigorous (e.g., experimental, quasi-experimental) research design.

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## Appendix C: The Leona Group, L.L.C.

The following is a description of studies that did not meet the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center's standards.

The two studies of The Leona Group, L.L.C. that were reviewed did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards. One study was eligible for full review but was considered to be *inconclusive*. This study followed a Leona school over time, but the study did not meet the standards for establishing an adequate baseline measure.

The second study was not eligible for full review because it did not use a rigorous research design. This study provided no comparison group or baseline year; it looked only at the treatment group's posttest scores.

### **N**ot Eligible for Full Review

The Leona Group, L.L.C. (2004). *2003–2004 educational report*. East Lansing, MI: Author.

### **D**id Not Meet Standards (Inconclusive)

Horn, J., & Miron, G. (2000). *An evaluation of the Michigan Charter School initiative: Performance, accountability, and impact*. Kalamazoo, MI: The Evaluation Center, Western Michigan University.

**Not Relevant for Initial Review:** Study was not quantitative or on an education service provider.

**Not Eligible for Full Review:** Study's research design was not sufficiently rigorous or did not include student achievement outcomes.

**Did Not Meet Standards (Inconclusive):** Study had critical threats to causal validity.

**Met Standards (Suggestive):** Study had no critical threats to validity but used a less rigorous (e.g., longitudinal, cohort) research design.

**Met Standards (Conclusive):** Study had no critical threats to validity and used a rigorous (e.g., experimental, quasi-experimental) research design.

## Appendix D: Mosaica Education

The following is a description of studies that did not meet the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center's standards.

Three studies of Mosaica Education were reviewed but did not meet CSRQ Center standards.<sup>1</sup> Of those, one study was eligible for full review but did not provide sufficient evidence that the model was implemented as intended. Therefore, the study was considered to be *inconclusive*.

The remaining two studies were ineligible for full review. One of these studies intended to test the impact of Mosaica, but the research design was not eligible for full review because it did not include a control group that could be compared with the treatment group. The second study was not an evaluation of the impact of Mosaica. Instead, the study was more descriptive in nature than evaluative.

### **N**ot Relevant for Initial Review

Cross, R. W., Rebarber, T., & Wilson, S. F. (2002).

Student gains in a privately managed network of charter schools using Direct Instruction. *Journal of Direct Instruction*, 2(1): 3–21.

### **N**ot Eligible for Full Review

Miron, G. (2006). *Evaluation of the Delaware Charter School reform, year 2 report*. Kalamazoo, MI: The Evaluation Center, Western Michigan University. Retrieved November 9, 2005, from

**Not Relevant for Initial Review:** Study was not quantitative or on an education service provider.

**Not Eligible for Full Review:** Study's research design was not sufficiently rigorous or did not include student achievement outcomes.

**Did Not Meet Standards (Inconclusive):** Study had critical threats to causal validity.

**Met Standards (Suggestive):** Study had no critical threats to validity but used a less rigorous (e.g., longitudinal, cohort) research design.

**Met Standards (Conclusive):** Study had no critical threats to validity and used a rigorous (e.g., experimental, quasi-experimental) research design.

[http://www.doe.k12.de.us/files/pdf/dedoe\\_charterschreform2006.pdf](http://www.doe.k12.de.us/files/pdf/dedoe_charterschreform2006.pdf)

Nelson, F. H., & Van Meter, N. (2003). *Student achievement in schools managed by Mosaica*. Washington, DC: American Federation of Teachers.

### **D**id Not Meet Standards (Inconclusive)

Miron, G., Nelson, C., & Risley, J. (2002). *Strengthening Pennsylvania's charter school reform: Findings from the statewide evaluation and discussion of relevant policy issues*. Kalamazoo, MI: The Evaluation Center, Western Michigan University. Retrieved November 9, 2005, from [http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/charter/pa\\_5year/](http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/charter/pa_5year/)

<sup>1</sup>An additional study was not available in full copy for a review by the CSRQ Center and therefore, is not included in this report: Cash, R. W. (2002). *Mosaica Education annual report: Testing results 1998–2002*. San Francisco: WestEd.

## **M**et Standards (Conclusive)

Miron, G. (2004). *Evaluation of the Delaware Charter School reform, year 1 report*. Kalamazoo, MI: The Evaluation Center, Western Michigan University. Retrieved November 9, 2005, from [http://www.doe.k12.de.us/files/pdf/dedoe\\_charterschreform2004.pdf](http://www.doe.k12.de.us/files/pdf/dedoe_charterschreform2004.pdf)



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# Appendix E: National Heritage Academies

The following is a description of studies that did not meet the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center's standards.

Three studies of National Heritage Academies (NHA) that were reviewed did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards. Of those, one was eligible for full review but was considered to be *inconclusive*. This study followed NHA schools over time, but it did not establish an adequate baseline measure.

The two remaining studies were not eligible for full review because they did not use rigorous research designs. One study examined pretest-posttest changes without using a comparison group. The other study provided no comparison group or baseline year and looked only at the treatment group's posttest scores.

**Not Relevant for Initial Review:** Study was not quantitative or on an education service provider.

**Not Eligible for Full Review:** Study's research design was not sufficiently rigorous or did not include student achievement outcomes.

**Did Not Meet Standards (Inconclusive):** Study had critical threats to causal validity.

**Met Standards (Suggestive):** Study had no critical threats to validity but used a less rigorous (e.g., longitudinal, cohort) research design.

**Met Standards (Conclusive):** Study had no critical threats to validity and used a rigorous (e.g., experimental, quasi-experimental) research design.

## **N**ot Eligible for Full Review

Hess, F. M., & Leal, D. L. (2003). *An evaluation of student achievement in National Heritage Academy charter schools, 2000–2003*. Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute.

Wolfram, G. L. (2002). *Making the (better) grade: A detailed statistical analysis of the effect of National Heritage Academies on student MEAP scores*. Hillsdale, MI: Hillsdale Policy Group, Ltd.

## **D**id Not Meet Standards (Inconclusive)

Horn, J., & Miron, G. (2000). *An evaluation of the Michigan Charter School initiative: Performance, accountability, and impact*. Kalamazoo MI: The Evaluation Center, Western Michigan University.

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## Appendix F: SABIS Educational Systems, Inc.

No studies of SABIS were available for review by the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center.

**Not Relevant for Initial Review:** Study was not quantitative or on an education service provider.

**Not Eligible for Full Review:** Study's research design was not sufficiently rigorous or did not include student achievement outcomes.

**Did Not Meet Standards (Inconclusive):** Study had critical threats to causal validity.

**Met Standards (Suggestive):** Study had no critical threats to validity but used a less rigorous (e.g., longitudinal, cohort) research design.

**Met Standards (Conclusive):** Study had no critical threats to validity and used a rigorous (e.g., experimental, quasi-experimental) research design.

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## Appendix G: White Hat Management

The one study of White Hat Management that was reviewed was not eligible for full review because it did not meet the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center’s standards. The study did not use rigorous research designs, using a matched comparison of treatment and control schools with no pretest to establish equivalence.

### **N**ot Eligible for Full Review

Ohio State Legislative Office of Education Oversight. (2002). *Community schools in Ohio: Preliminary report on proficiency test results, attendance, and satisfaction*. Columbus, OH: Author.

**Not Relevant for Initial Review:** Study was not quantitative or on an education service provider.

**Not Eligible for Full Review:** Study’s research design was not sufficiently rigorous or did not include student achievement outcomes.

**Did Not Meet Standards (Inconclusive):** Study had critical threats to causal validity.

**Met Standards (Suggestive):** Study had no critical threats to validity but used a less rigorous (e.g., longitudinal, cohort) research design.

**Met Standards (Conclusive):** Study had no critical threats to validity and used a rigorous (e.g., experimental, quasi-experimental) research design.

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## Appendix H: Letters From Model Providers

On March 1, 2006, the Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center provided all model developers with background information on this report and with an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of the CSRQ Center's review of the education service provider (ESP). In most instances, this contact was a followup to ongoing communication with the ESPs throughout the development of this report.

The CSRQ Center invited ESPs to share questions and concerns about the reviews and provide documentation for any information they needed to be corrected. Several ESPs engaged in telephone and e-mail communication with the CSRQ Center to provide valuable insight and information on improving the report. The CSRQ Center considered all concerns and suggested edits for the final narrative.

The CSRQ Center also encouraged providers to submit a two-page letter about the review of their models that could be published along with the report. The letters received from the ESPs give consumers additional information that they can consider in making decisions about adopting a model. The following ESPs submitted letters of comment:

- The Leona Group, L.L.C.

*All letters have been reproduced as submitted to the CSRQ Center.*

## L etter From The Leona Group, L.L.C.

*(Reproduced As Submitted)*



Response to CSRQ Center:

The most important factor to note about The Leona Group is that it does not prescribe a rigid curriculum model or design for the schools it manages. Each school staff uses best practices and methodologies, following state standards and benchmarks, which best fit its students' needs. Based on our experience and philosophy of education, we disagree that one model/size fits all.

The Leona Group is unlike the majority of educational service providers managing charter schools in that it does not mandate a particular curriculum model. This is a key reason why community boards choose Leona to manage their schools. Leona does not subscribe to a cookie-cutter teaching model because its flexibility in curriculum design allows each school staff to quickly and innovatively make decisions for students, many of whom are at least two grade levels behind their peers when they enter a Leona school. Our schools offer a rich variety of proven educational models.

Because of a highly focused Quality Schools Initiative begun three years ago, the majority of schools managed by The Leona Group met Adequate Yearly Progress academic performance measures in 2005. This is due to a strong emphasis on professional development for staff and the addition of a curriculum coach to the school leadership team. This person assists the school leader and teachers in ensuring that school's curriculum, pacing guides, lesson plans and assessments are effectively in place and aligned with state standards. All teachers receive an annual formal performance review along with several informal evaluations throughout the school year. This Leona initiative has been praised by outside consultants and state education department officials as a "model" for other public schools. Students are making academic progress because of this strategic initiative. Their performance data are readily available from annual education reports that are at the schools and posted to the Internet.

In addition to high academic achievement and focused professional training, Leona schools have strong parental support; many schools have waiting lists. This is the type of model that Leona provides to its schools. Because there is no specific or singular educational model that is mandated to Leona-managed schools, it is not correct and is in fact misleading to rate or review The Leona Group against a methodology regarding a singular companywide curriculum model. Instead of providing specific ratings for our organization, it is accurate to list The Leona Group as Does Not Fit CSRQ Center Methodology.

[www.leonagroup.com](http://www.leonagroup.com)

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4660 S. Hagadorn Rd. Suite 500 East Lansing, Michigan 48823 T 517.333.9030 F 517.333.4559

# Appendix I: Study Findings Summary Tables

**Table I–1. Quantitative Study Findings Used to Rate Evidence of Overall Positive Effects on Student Achievement**

Education Service Provider	Number of Studies					Number of Findings	Percentage of Positive Findings
	Initially Relevant	Eligible for Full Review	Meeting Standards	Conclusive	Suggestive		
Edison Schools	28	17	9	7	2	19	40
Imagine Schools	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A
The Leona Group, L.L.C.	2	1	0	0	0	N/A	N/A
Mosaica Schools	3	1	0	0	0	N/A	N/A
National Heritage Academies	3	1	0	0	0	N/A	N/A
SABIS Educational Systems, Inc.	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A
White Hat Management (HOPE Academies)	1	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>19</b>	

**Key:**

**Initially Relevant:** Of the nearly 940 studies screened, the number of studies per model found to be relevant to this review.

**Eligible for Full Review:** The number of studies per model that used research designs that were sufficiently rigorous and included student achievement outcomes.

**Meeting Standards:** The number of studies per model considered to be *suggestive or conclusive* according to causal validity rubrics of the CSRQ Center’s Quality Review Tool.

**Conclusive:** The number of studies per model that used a rigorous research design (e.g., experimental, quasi-experimental) with no critical threats to validity.

**Suggestive:** The number of studies per model that used a less rigorous research design (e.g., longitudinal) with no critical threats to validity.

**Number of Findings:** The total number of individually measured outcomes found in the studies that met the CSRQ Center’s standards.

The “N/A” indicates models in which zero studies met the CSRQ Center’s standards.

**Percentage of Positive Findings:** The percentage of total findings in the studies that met the CSRQ Center’s standards that were statistically significant and indicated that a model had a positive impact. The “N/A” indicates models in which zero studies met the CSRQ Center’s standards.

**Table I–2. Summary of Basic Information by Model**

Education Service Provider	Grade Levels Served	Number of Schools	Year Introduced in Schools	Costs (Year 1)	Evidence of Positive Overall Effects	Evidence of Positive Effects for Diverse Student Populations	Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas	Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes	Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement	Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design	Evidence of Readiness for Successful Implementation	Evidence of Professional Development/ Technical Assistance for Successful Implementation
Edison Schools	K–12	157	1995	Varies		<sup>1</sup>	Reading: Writing: Math:					
Imagine Schools	Pre-K–12	42	2004	N/A								
The Leona Group, L.L.C.	Pre-K–12	48	1996	Varies								
Mosaica Education	K–8	40	1997	Varies			Reading: Math:					
National Heritage Academies	K–8	51	1995	Varies								
SABIS Educational Systems, Inc.	Pre-K–12	31 <sup>2</sup>	1995	N/A								
White Hat Management (HOPE Academies)	K–11	32 <sup>3</sup>	1998	N/A								

*Note.* Readers are encouraged to use this table in conjunction with the entire report, which explains in detail how the approaches were reviewed and rated. The report also provides detailed information about each model's ratings and offers in-depth descriptions of each model's services.

<sup>1</sup>Although the rating in this subcategory is zero, readers should note that most of the studies on Edison that met standards and also demonstrated evidence of positive overall effects on student achievement, examined the effects of this model on schools that served primarily low-income and minority populations.

<sup>2</sup>SABIS operates 10 schools in the United States.

<sup>3</sup>White Hat currently operates 13 schools as HOPE Academies.

Table I–2. Summary of Basic Information by Model (continued)

**Key:**

**Grade Levels Served:** The grade levels served represents the full range of grades that the model serves.

**Number of Schools:** This reflects the number of schools that use the model, as reported by the model provider. This number includes all schools regardless of the length of time implemented or the level of implementation.

**Year Introduced in Schools:** This date refers to the year in which schools first implemented the model. This is included so that readers can judge whether the ratings are influenced by the relative newness of the model.

**Costs (Year 1):** The costs are estimates provided by the model provider. The full report provides additional details on costs for each model.

**Evidence of Positive Overall Effects:** This rating focuses on a model's overall effects on student achievement. The rating is a function of the number of studies that were rated to be *suggestive* and *conclusive*, the percentage of findings in the suggestive and conclusive studies that demonstrated a positive impact, and the average effect size of those findings. The final rating reflects the amount of rigorous research and the strength of the effects reported in that research. The full report provides complete information about the methodology used to produce all ratings in this report.

**Evidence of Positive Effects for Diverse Student Populations:** This rating refers to positive effects for the achievement of students from diverse backgrounds, such as low socioeconomic status, minority, special needs, or English language learners.

**Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas:** This rating refers to positive effects on achievement in specific subject areas, such as reading, math, writing, science, or social studies.

**Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes:** This rating refers to positive effects on additional outcomes, such as student discipline, student attendance, school climate, retention/promotion rates, or teacher satisfaction.

**Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement:** This rating refers to positive effects for improvement in family and community involvement, such as involvement in school governance, participation in family nights, or homework support.

**Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design:** This rating refers to evidence that the model developer can provide explicit links between research and the core components of the model. Core components are considered essential to successful implementation.

**Evidence of Readiness for Successful Implementation:** This rating refers to evidence that the model provider ensures initial commitment from schools, tracks and supports full implementation, and helps schools allocate resources for successful implementation.

**Evidence of Professional Development/Technical Assistance for Successful Implementation:** This rating refers to evidence that the model provider offers comprehensive training opportunities and supporting materials, ensures that professional development effectively supports full model implementation, and develops the school's internal capacity to provide professional development.

● = Very Strong   ● = Moderately Strong   ● = Moderate   ● = Limited   / = Zero   ⊖ = Negative   (NR) = No Rating