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**Fifth Year Evaluation Report
Cornerstone Literacy Initiative**

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FIFTH YEAR EVALUATION REPORT FOR THE CORNERSTONE LITERACY INITIATIVE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. INTRODUCTION

The 2005-06 school year marked the sixth year of the implementation of the Cornerstone National Literacy Initiative. By the end of this year, Cornerstone activities were being carried out in 28 schools in eight districts.¹ Since the New York Institute for Special Education awarded the evaluation of Cornerstone to the New York University Institute for Education and Social Policy (IESP) in 2001, IESP has tracked both Cornerstone implementation and Cornerstone outcomes at participating school sites. In this report we present findings from the 2005-06 school year, including implementation and analysis of test scores over time.

The findings presented in this report are based on data from 28 schools within eight school districts that are implementing Cornerstone. The results confirm previous findings that that Cornerstone schools tend to become better at implementing the reform with time. In terms of implementation, as acceptance of and enthusiasm for the reform in the schools increases, changes in practice become gradually more institutionalized, and the skills of both teachers and students improve. In terms of final impact, we are seeing pockets of improvements in student performance.

2. IMPLEMENTATION

The ten schools in the Fulfilling cluster were successfully implementing the model and institutionalizing Cornerstone practices. In these schools, Cornerstone elements such as coach release time, common planning time for teachers, and regular grade-level meetings, were in place to facilitate Cornerstone professional development; administrators and teachers engaged in continuous planning and assessment; Cornerstone work was given high priority; and the majority of teachers were supportive of the Initiative and reported that they had changed their classroom practice as a result of participating in Cornerstone activities. Principal leadership and stability of principal and coach tenure also continue to be critical to the implementation of Cornerstone. Coaches and principals at these schools reported that while resources would be a concern in

¹ There are three types of Cornerstone schools: Cornerstone Network schools i.e., schools in the initial four year implementation cycle; Foundation schools, which have been awarded three additional years of support from Cornerstone to continue their work and spread the Initiative to other schools; and Partner schools, those schools that have been teamed with Foundation schools to begin implementing Cornerstone at their site.

perpetuating the Initiative beyond the period of support, Cornerstone was seen as an integral part of the functioning of their school.

Most of the 11 schools in the Implementing cluster were in their first or second year of implementing Cornerstone activities. The fundamental components of Cornerstone were operating in these schools, however, the first- and second-year schools confronted issues common to schools new to the Initiative, such as developing functional co-teaching schedules for their literacy coaches; structuring an uninterrupted literacy block; providing time for regular grade-level meetings; conducting effective professional reading groups; and overcoming the skepticism of entrenched faculty. A large number of teachers in this group also indicated that while Cornerstone had become a fundamental part of their regular approach to literacy, they were unsure about Cornerstone's future in their school.

Among schools ranked in the lower implementation clusters, the majority was in the early years of implementation. The main difference between these schools and their higher-performing counterparts was the ability of the school leadership to establish time for collaborative work, integrate Cornerstone successfully with other literacy programs in their buildings, and overcome staff reluctance to participate in the reform. Despite these challenges, some Cornerstone elements such as leadership teams and grade-level meetings were taking shape, and staff in most of these schools was hopeful about increased implementation in the coming years.

3. IMPACT

INTERMEDIATE IMPACTS

Impact on School Culture: The successful implementation of Cornerstone relies extensively on collegial exchange and collaboration among staff members. Teachers at Fulfilling and Implementing schools are more likely to report having “formal arrangements that provide opportunities for teachers to discuss and critique their instruction with each other” than teachers in other implementation categories and generally are more positive about their school than their counterparts in lower implementing groups.

Impact on Classroom Practice: According to Cornerstone’s theory of action, effective professional development, including modeling and demonstrating, in association with improvements in school culture, will lead to increased implementation of strategies that have been proven to be effective in improving student literacy. Classroom practices associated with Cornerstone are more strongly established in Fulfilling and Implementing schools for each of the three categories of activities. Low Implementing schools did make use of the strategies, but were generally more likely to implement them less frequently.

Impact on Student Literacy Growth: Teachers in schools at the higher implementation levels were more likely to report a positive impact of Cornerstone on student literacy growth. And consistent with findings in previous years, coaches and principals continue to describe the positive impact of Cornerstone on literacy culture: students were engaged at higher levels, were taking responsibility for their learning, had increased motivation, and were developing into independent, critical thinkers.

IMPACT ON STUDENT OUTCOMES

Comparison of Cornerstone Schools’ Performance on the Spring 2006 DRA

On average, among the Cornerstone school students, higher percentages of second and third graders (80% and 82% respectively) than first graders (62%) met or exceeded the Pearson’s benchmark.² Mean percentages are higher in the Cornerstone schools than in the non-Cornerstone schools for which data are available, where an average of 51% of first graders, 74% of second graders, and 63% of third graders met or exceeded the benchmark. In total, combining the three grades, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding the Pearson’s benchmark was higher in Cornerstone schools than in the rest of the schools for four of the six schools in districts with data for the whole district. Overall, however, there is a wide range of performance, with the total percentage of students who met or exceeded the Pearson’s benchmark ranging from 30% at Watkins in Jackson to 94% at Aynor in Horry County.

² For consistency, we employ Pearson’s DRA benchmark for each grade level as a basis for comparison in the districts that administer it for the evaluation (Horry County, Jackson, Muscogee County, and Talladega). In addition, Bridgeport, New Haven, and Springfield were the only districts that provided DRA spring 2006 test score data for all of the students in the district that took the test during the administration. In these districts, district averages exclude the Cornerstone schools.

Comparison of Cornerstone Schools' Performance on State and District Mandated Tests

Bridgeport: Although there was a drop in the percent proficient for the first two years after Cornerstone was implemented, Marin has made steady gains in the percent of students achieving proficiency on both the writing and reading portions of the CMT. In 2005-06, however, the percent of fourth graders proficient in reading dropped by almost half and was considerably lower than the district average. Both third and fifth grade students were also performing lower than the district average. At Maplewood Annex, the percent of third graders who were proficient and above was also lower than the district average. At Garfield, third, fourth, and fifth grade reading test results decreased slightly between 2004-05 and 2005-06 and students performed below the district average.

Horry County: Third graders and fourth graders at Aynor and Waccamaw have shown a small and steady increase on the PACT, and did not experience the same drop in percent proficient in 2005-06 that the district experienced. Percent proficient in among third graders in North Myrtle Beach Elementary and third and fourth grades in South Conway dropped in 2005-06 (third grade experienced an increase in both schools after their first year). Kingston also had a drop in percent proficient in 2005-06 (their first year). The pattern for fifth grade results differs considerably: Waccamaw, Aynor, and Kingston all saw a drop in the percent proficient among fifth graders, while South Conway experienced a large increase in the percent proficient, even larger than that seen by the district.

Jackson: In general, the percent proficient or above across grades at the Foundation schools has increased on both the language and reading exams since the implementation of Cornerstone, but are mixed for both Partner schools. In reading, the percent of third graders who were proficient or advanced continued to increase at both Lake and Watkins. The fifth grade test results show that Lake experienced a sharp decline in the percent proficient or advanced from the prior year, while Watkins experienced a small decrease, similar to the district, in reading and a larger increase in language results, bringing the percent of fifth graders who were proficient or advanced in line with the district averages.

The results are mixed for the Partner schools. Brown saw large increases in percent proficient or advanced for both third and fifth grade reading and language results, while small declines were found in both fourth grade tests. For fifth graders, Brown had a larger percentage of students meeting proficiency than the district. At Raines, results increased on the third grade reading test, as well as both portions of the fifth grade test. However, scores slightly declined at Raines in 2005-06 on the third grade language test and both sections of the fourth grade MCT. Raines' results were lower than those of the district in all grades.

Muscogee County: Students in the second grade at all four Muscogee County Cornerstone schools either increased in proficiency on the reading portion or remained stable between 2004-05 and 2005-06. Reading results in grade two for all four Cornerstone schools were also higher than those of the district in 2005-06.

New Haven: In spring 2006, Bishop Woods' fourth grade students experienced a large increase in percent proficient on both the reading and writing portions of the CMT, compared to fall 2004. Bishop Woods' results for both reading and writing continued to outperform the district as a whole in both third and fourth grades.

Springfield: At Freedman, the percent proficient has dropped for both third and fourth grade reading scores. While third grade scores at Harris also showed a small decrease, similar to that of the district, Harris' fourth grade test scores have surpassed the district average for the past five years, and increased between 2004-05 and 2005-06.

Stamford: On the third grade test, the percentage proficient at Hart, Stark, and Stillmeadow was below the district on both portions, while Springdale was on par with the district in reading and had a higher percent proficient in writing in 2005-06. All four schools had lower proficiency than the district in reading and writing on the fifth grade test, though more than half of fifth graders were proficient on both portions of the exam at all of the Cornerstone schools.

Talladega: Third graders at Stemley saw a substantial increase in the average percentile rank on the reading test. Fourth graders experienced declines on both the reading and language tests.

Stemley's fifth grade results have increased steadily in average percentile rank since 2003-04 in both reading and language, while district results decreased on both portions of the test. Sycamore, on the other hand, saw decreases among third and fourth graders in both reading and language, although they are on par with the district average.

B.B. Comer's third graders remained relatively stable in average percentile rank on the SAT 10 reading test, while increasing in language results. Fourth graders at B.B. Comer experienced a decline in average percentile rank in both reading and language. Fifth graders' results at B.B. Comer decreased substantially in reading. At Munford, there was a sharp decline in the average percentile rank of third graders, reaching the district level in 2005-06. Munford saw an increase in the results of their fourth graders in reading, and scored above the district average on reading and language. Munford's fifth graders showed a slight increase on the reading test.

Regression Analyses

Regression analysis enables us to compare the test scores of students in Cornerstone schools to the scores of students in non-Cornerstone schools and, by controlling for student characteristics, we ensure that students in the Cornerstone schools are compared to *similar* students in the non-Cornerstone schools. We were able to conduct regression analyses in four districts, Horry County, Jackson, Springfield, and Talladega.³

- *Horry County*: Subgroup analyses revealed that Cornerstone improved both the reading and language test scores of black students, who are among the most disadvantaged pupils in the district. When we compare the performance of black students in Cornerstone schools to the performance of black students in the non-Cornerstone schools, we find that the former do worse in the first two years of implementation, but perform on par in the third year.⁴
- *Jackson*: The data suggests that students in the Cornerstone schools were on par with the rest of the students in 2001 and 2002 in reading performance, then did better in 2003 and 2004, and were on par again in 2005 and 2006. While second grade students in the Cornerstone schools performed similarly to other students in 2001 and 2002, starting in 2003, they have been doing better than the rest of second grade students. Notably, since

³ Data for New Haven and Bridgeport were not ready at the time of writing. Data for Muscogee County and Stamford were missing information necessary to estimate regression models.

⁴ Unreported results show that there is no difference between the Cornerstone and non-Cornerstone schools for those students.

96% of the students in Jackson are black, this suggests that Cornerstone is helping black students in this district. We also found that the Partner schools performed at a higher level than the non-Cornerstone schools in reading in grades two and five in both 2005 and 2006, and in grade three in 2006.

- *Springfield:* Results show that Cornerstone has chosen to work in particularly low-performing schools, and indicate that the Initiative brings them up to par with other schools in the district. Towards the beginning of implementation, the Cornerstone schools had lower performance than the rest of the schools, but by 2004, the Cornerstone schools were performing at the same level as the other schools in the district, and have remained at par with the rest of the schools since.
- *Talladega:* While these results are not as robust as those in the other districts, it appears that students in the Cornerstone schools are performing at the same level as similar students in non-Cornerstone schools. While this may imply that Cornerstone has no impact on performance in Talladega, other analyses indicate that overall, over the whole time period, average test scores in the Cornerstone schools tended to be lower than those in other schools. This suggests that the Cornerstone schools have caught up with the other schools between 2004 and 2006.

4. SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

New Schools and Districts: Over the past six years, Cornerstone has elected to work with 14 different school districts, some more successfully than others. In September 2005, Cornerstone expanded into 12 new schools simultaneously; eight of these schools were in two districts that were new to the Cornerstone network. According to Cornerstone staff, the process of selecting districts has become more well-tuned over time and now the organization has clear selection parameters that include considerations of district size, the district's commitment to other literacy programs, whether there is a foundation for reform to build on, and leadership capacity to make change. While most coaches and principals were satisfied with the content of the support they had received from Cornerstone staff, some interviewees expressed concern about Cornerstone's and their organizational capacity to provide support to all of the schools in their portfolio. New schools were able to implement the principle components of Cornerstone within the first year. The hurdles they faced were scheduling, including release time for coaches, and resistant

teachers. Participants in new schools were also eager to receive more support in understanding the role of the coach.

The Foundation Model: During 2005-06, five schools in three districts undertook or continued work as Foundation-status schools. Foundation school partnerships are focused on developing Cornerstone work within the Partner school, and Foundation school staff provides support to their Partner school akin to the assistance they received from Cornerstone during their initial period of implementation. In Talladega, this work is extended by implementing a district wide “Lab School” model. The lab school is a vehicle for cross-school collaboration because it brings in staff from other district schools (and elsewhere) to observe exemplary work.

While teachers at Foundation schools experienced some challenges, they were generally pleased with the impact on their school and teaching. However, while the Foundation-Partner school partnerships continue to grow and progress, it is in many ways a fragile model. It is fragile because its success depends on a large number of variables that must coalesce – including support for the partnership at the district level (in terms of available funding, staffing assistance and time for professional development), supportive conditions within the Foundation school, and supportive conditions in the Partner school (including the number of new teachers and the experience of coaches). Changes in any one can impede the progress towards full implementation of Cornerstone practices in the Partner school or continued growth within the Foundation school.

Lesson Study: The widespread introduction of lesson study was reported by both school and Cornerstone staff to be the most important instructional development in the Cornerstone Initiative this year. Lesson study was “the vehicle we used to get across the content and the format of Cornerstone,” explains one literacy fellow. A number of coaches described it as the best professional development in which they had taken part all year and across all schools and districts, coaches and principals were overwhelmingly positive about their experiences implementing lesson study and most coaches reported enthusiastic responses on the part of teachers in their buildings.

New Teacher Induction and Turnover: An important trend highlighted by coaches and principals this year has been the utility of the Cornerstone structure for inducting new teachers into a common school culture. Principals and coaches have highlighted Cornerstone's structure of collective professional development and lesson planning, as well as the explicit modeling of teaching practices by coaches, as key mechanisms for acculturating teachers into a teaching community and, ideally, increasing the likelihood of retention. Although Cornerstone schools have perennially high turnover rates, district administrators, principals, and coaches all hope that Cornerstone practices will improve the retention of new teachers.

Parent and Community Engagement: Cornerstone's parent and community engagement work is built on two guiding principles: that parents and the community have important roles to play in helping children achieve high levels of literacy and that literacy instruction is improved when it builds on prior knowledge that children bring to school. Staff in many schools reported that their Cornerstone-related work on parent and community engagement has had a positive impact on the level of involvement in their school, particularly in schools that have been in the Initiative the longest, but overall, parent involvement at most of the schools was described as weak or needing improvement. Despite Cornerstone's efforts to strengthen schools' work with parents through a grant process and by dedicating a particular staff member to the work, many schools' efforts remained about getting more parents and community members into the school and having them help with schoolwork at home. Contextual difficulties such as transportation, or language and cultural issues, also posed challenges.

District Context: District factors continue to contribute to or detract from successful Cornerstone implementation. While district support alone cannot promote the work of Cornerstone, without their support, Cornerstone has little hope of sustaining the Initiative beyond the period of support or spreading the work to additional sites. In 2005-06, Cornerstone staff continued to expand their work with district-level staff. Through consultation with superintendents to inform their work with districts, Cornerstone staff described a shifting sense of their role within districts. In particular, Cornerstone worked with district personnel to help articulate the relationship between Cornerstone and state and district standards, and look at student-level data. Experiences leading up to the withdrawal of Horry County and New Haven reinforced the need for more strategic

work and open lines of communication.

Sustainability: An issue that is bound to gain increasing importance in the 2006-07 school year concerns the sustainability of the Cornerstone model, as the two original Foundation districts reach the end of their final year of the three-year Foundation-school cycle. While many believe that best practices will continue, there is concern about the ability to maintain the coach position and the level of professional development activity. An encouraging finding was the prevalence of discussion among new schools about becoming Foundation schools.

5. CONCLUSION

The 2005-06 school year was the sixth year of Cornerstone implementation in schools across the country. Cornerstone is a non-prescriptive reform, which tries to be attentive to and meet the individual needs of schools and districts. Although the overarching goal to promote professional capacity and student literacy is a constant, schools and districts have taken different paths to reach this goal. Because of the different contexts in which the Initiative operates, it is natural to expect different results in different locations. This finding is illustrated throughout this report. Among the schools implementing Cornerstone in 2005-06, we find that Cornerstone schools tend to improve their implementation of the reform with time. At the highest levels of implementation, teachers, coaches, and principals continue to report a positive impact on school culture, classroom instruction and student literacy growth.

While there is variation at each site, analysis of test score outcomes seems to indicate that given time, Cornerstone schools do see improvement in student achievement. Regression results highlight areas in which Cornerstone is particularly successful, conditions that improve the chance of success, and areas that need to be further explored to better understand and overcome challenges. Cornerstone is successful at improving the achievement of students overall in some districts (Jackson, Springfield, and possibly Talladega), and at raising the performance of students who are typically considered most at risk in other districts (for example, black students in Horry County and poor students in Jackson). These successes have not happened overnight however. The regression results highlight that it may take, at the very least, two to three years of implementation to begin to see even a small impact on test scores.

1. INTRODUCTION

The 2005-06 school year marked the sixth year of the implementation of the Cornerstone National Literacy Initiative. By the end of this year, Cornerstone activities were being carried out in 28 schools in eight districts.¹ Since the New York Institute for Special Education awarded the evaluation of Cornerstone to the New York University Institute for Education and Social Policy (IESP) in 2001, IESP has followed the implementation of Cornerstone and its impact at participating schools. This fifth evaluation report:

- Presents our analyses of the data collected during the 2005-06 school year, including surveys, interviews, standardized student test score outcomes, and results of the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA);
- Compares this year's test scores, DRA results and other findings to previous years';
- Refines and updates last year's analysis, in particular through an improved, more comprehensive, and more systematic implementation index; and
- Provides an analysis of test scores for four districts that uses data collected over all the years of the evaluation, using more sophisticated statistical techniques.

This report confirms that Cornerstone schools tend to become better at implementing the reform over time. In terms of implementation, acceptance of and enthusiasm for the reform in the schools increases, changes in practice become gradually more institutionalized, and the skills of both teachers and students improve. In terms of final impact, we are seeing pockets of improvements in student performance.

The report is organized into five sections. The next section of this introduction explains the goals of the evaluation, outlines our understanding of the Cornerstone theory of action, and describes the Cornerstone model. The section that follows examines the implementation of Cornerstone in the schools clustered by their level of implementation. The third section examines the impact of Cornerstone on school culture, parent engagement, classroom instruction, students' literacy growth, and test score growth. In the fourth section we consider the lessons learned from the analysis in terms of factors that foster or challenge Cornerstone implementation. A

¹ There are three types of Cornerstone schools: Cornerstone Network schools i.e., schools in the initial four year implementation cycle; Foundation schools, which have been awarded three additional years of support from Cornerstone to continue their work and spread the Initiative to other schools; and Partner schools, those schools that have been teamed with Foundation schools to begin implementing Cornerstone at their site.

concluding section summarizes the major findings of our report and offers recommendations for Cornerstone's ongoing and future work. The appendices include background information on the schools participating in Cornerstone, a summary of findings from previous reports, and technical information about our analysis.

EVALUATION GOALS

Our evaluation seeks to document and understand the implementation and impact of the Cornerstone Initiative in participating schools. Three main research questions continue to frame our evaluation:

- To what extent have participating schools and districts implemented the Cornerstone model?
- To what extent has implementation made an impact on school culture, classroom instruction, and students' social-emotional and academic growth?
- To what extent have student test scores and DRA levels in participating schools and districts changed as a result of Cornerstone implementation?

We address the first two questions by collecting and analyzing survey and interview data from all participating sites and districts and from Cornerstone staff. We address the third question by analyzing the results of district and state standardized test scores administered to students in Cornerstone schools, and by analyzing the outcomes of the DRA, an instrument used in Cornerstone schools to evaluate student literacy growth.²

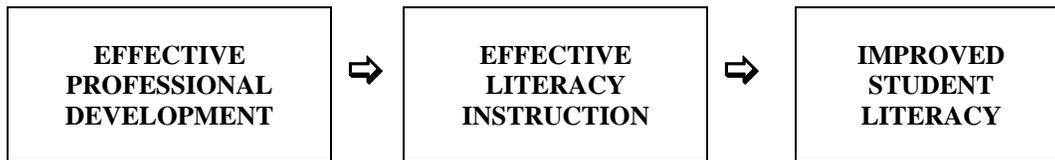
² The DRA is administered district-wide in five of the 2005-06 eight Cornerstone districts: Bridgeport, New Haven, Horry County, Springfield, and Stamford. It was administered for the purposes of the evaluation in the three other districts: Muscogee County, Talladega, and Jackson.

THE CORNERSTONE NATIONAL LITERACY INITIATIVE

Cornerstone is a national initiative designed to improve the quality of literacy instruction in low-performing, high-poverty elementary schools. In the Cornerstone model, continuous professional development is defined as essential to this effort, as indicated in the organization’s mission statement, “*Ensuring student literacy through professional development.*” Cornerstone’s goal is to ensure that all children reach an acceptable standard of literacy by third grade.

The Cornerstone theory of action is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Cornerstone Theory of Action



Cornerstone professional development is firmly rooted in social learning theories that emphasize the importance of social interaction and modeling in human growth and development. These theories hold that, rather than passively receiving information, learners actively construct their own understanding based on what they learn observationally through modeling, as well as from their own previous knowledge and experiences. Woven throughout the Cornerstone model is the use of the instructional strategy scaffolding wherein teachers model a desired strategy or task to be learned and then gradually shift responsibility for accomplishing the task over to the learner.

The Cornerstone Initiative consists of the following program components:

Support for School-Based Professional Development and Teacher Learning

Each Cornerstone school selects **two teacher coaches**, usually from among the school faculty, to provide leadership in improving literacy knowledge and teaching practice within their school. Each coach works half time as a coach and half time as a classroom teacher.

Cornerstone assigns a **staff team**—composed of a literacy fellow, a district liaison, and a leadership fellow—to each school to provide in-school literacy support, technology support, leadership development, parent/community development support, and support in working with the district. Staff team members help the coaches develop expertise in student and adult learning, literacy, and professional inquiry. Other members of the staff team provide support for the school principal and parent involvement.

Cornerstone coaches lead a wide range of professional development activities designed to enhance teacher content knowledge including **whole faculty professional development, grade-level meetings, school-based workshops, book study, and lesson study. In-classroom modeling, demonstrations, and peer coaching** are essential elements in the Cornerstone model.

To enhance professional learning, Cornerstone provides each school with **information technology equipment** including laptops, videoconferencing equipment, digital cameras, and multimedia projectors, as well as technical support.

At the beginning of each school year, Cornerstone team members work with the whole school faculty on strategic planning. Teachers and administrators develop an **asset map** that identifies school strengths and challenges, leading to the creation of school goals and a **literacy action plan**.

Each school establishes a **leadership team** consisting of the Cornerstone coaches, the school principal, other school administrators, supervisors or teachers, and parents/community members. The leadership team meets regularly to discuss implementation and address literacy issues and concerns.

Cornerstone coaches and school principals participate in **Cornerstone national and regional meetings**.

The Cornerstone staff team works with the school leadership team to plan school-based professional development experiences based on the unique needs of the school and district. Cornerstone provides individualized support and development to principals, coaches, family/community representatives, district strategy managers, and superintendents.

Cornerstone Literacy Framework

Cornerstone provides a comprehensive, research-based **literacy framework** that defines the essential elements of literacy learning. The literacy framework describes two types of cognitive strategies: surface structure systems (grapho-phonetic, lexical, syntactic, and word problem-solving strategies) and deep structure systems (semantic, schematic, pragmatic, and cognitive strategies for comprehending). Cornerstone's professional development activities emphasize a balanced approach to literacy instruction.

Family and Community Development

Literacy learning takes place both in and out of school, within social, personal, and instructional contexts. Cornerstone staff team members assist schools in working **in partnership with parents** to support children's literacy development.

School Review and Self-Assessment

Each year, **school review** teams, composed of peers from other districts and led by Cornerstone staff, visit each school for several days to analyze school progress in implementing the Cornerstone approach. They subsequently prepare a written report for each school visited. Annually, Cornerstone coaches and school principals participate in at least one review visit. These visits serve as professional development opportunities for review team participants.

Foundation Status

Schools that have been successful at implementing Cornerstone over the course of the four-year implementation cycle apply for and may be awarded three additional years of support and become **Foundation schools**. Foundation schools partner with other district schools to spread the Cornerstone work.

The Sample

During 2005-06, Cornerstone activities were being implemented in 28 schools within eight school districts. Table 1 provides a list of the 2005-06 Cornerstone schools included in the analysis presented in the sections below, and indicates when they joined the Initiative.

Table 1. Cornerstone Districts and Schools in the *Fifth Year Evaluation Report*

District	Schools	Year Joined Cornerstone					
		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Bridgeport, CT	Garfield						✓
	Maplewood Annex		✓				
	Marin		✓				
Horry County, SC	Aynor					✓	
	Kingston						✓
	North Myrtle Beach Elementary					✓	
	North Myrtle Beach Primary						✓
	South Conway				✓		
	Waccamaw				✓		
Jackson, MS	Brown					✓	
	Lake	✓					
	Raines						✓
	Watkins	✓					
Muscogee County, GA	Downtown						✓
	Key						✓
	Rigdon Road						✓
	St. Mary's						✓
New Haven, CT	Bishop Woods			✓			
Springfield, MA	Freedman			✓			
	Harris			✓			
Stamford, CT	Hart						✓
	Springdale						✓
	Stark						✓
	Stillmeadow						✓
Talladega, AL	B. B. Comer					✓	
	Munford					✓	
	Stemley	✓					
	Sycamore	✓					

2. IMPLEMENTATION

In this section, we present the schools clustered by level of implementation, and examine commonalities among schools at each level. In the *Fourth Year Evaluation Report*, we considered only those schools that were receiving direct support from Cornerstone (i.e., Cornerstone and Foundation schools). Because the Foundation-Partner school model was in its first year, activities conducted by Partner schools in conjunction with their Foundation counterparts were explored in a separate section. However, because work at the Partner schools constitutes an important measure of the capacity Cornerstone has built within the districts it serves, in this report we consider the implementation level for *all* schools conducting Cornerstone activities, including Partner schools in their first or second year of implementation.

Each school was ranked along seven components of the Cornerstone model: asset mapping; leadership team meetings; book study groups; grade-level meetings (common planning time); coaching (including both release time for coaches and their contact with faculty conducting demonstrations, modeling, and observations); the implementation of an uninterrupted literacy block for grades K-3; and staff perceptions of the Initiative. These elements provide an opportunity for schools to develop the professional knowledge necessary to promote changes in teaching practice and promote student literacy. The ranking scheme takes into account teacher beliefs about the usefulness of particular activities and their level of participation. The revised methodology used for ranking the schools, including the items from both surveys and interviews, is included as Appendix B.³

Based on the consideration of each element, schools were then assigned to one of four implementation categories:

Fulfilling Schools: Cornerstone implementation was evident across the school, and was fully developed; signs of institutionalization were also evident. Cornerstone was embedded in the school culture and organization, and transcended mere continuation of activities.⁴

Implementing Schools: the majority of teachers were regularly implementing Cornerstone components, and those components were well-developed.

Partially Implementing Schools: Cornerstone components and practices were being implemented by some teachers with some students, but had not been fully developed.

³ The methodology was revised in 2006 over the one used last year to include more survey items, and it employs a more explicit strategy for the use of narrative data.

⁴ Miles, M. and A. M. Huberman, 1984. *Innovation Up Close: How School Improvement Works*. NY: Plenum Press.

Low Implementing Schools: some elements of Cornerstone were being implemented by a segment of faculty and students, but implementation faced internal and external challenges that impeded the spread of the Initiative.

One of the primary findings in previous reports was that schools participating in Cornerstone the longest were implementing the Initiative at higher levels than schools that had joined more recently. Among the schools participating in the Initiative during 2005-06, this finding is largely confirmed. However, by ranking the schools individually, we are able to examine the unique conditions at each site, as well as within districts, that may have contributed to or inhibited implementation. In particular, within each implementation cluster, we examine school-level factors such as school leadership and principal support for the Initiative, as well as staff turnover. Given the range of organizational and contextual differences among the schools participating in the Initiative, and because of the non-prescriptive and adaptable nature of the Cornerstone model, some variation is predictable.

In 2005-06, most of the 28 schools implementing Cornerstone were categorized as either Fulfilling or Implementing. These clusters included all schools that have been implementing the Initiative for three or more years. Thus the bulk of these schools were considered to be either progressing toward or institutionalizing Cornerstone practices. Schools new to the Initiative were distributed across the categories of Implementing, Partially Implementing, and Low Implementing.

FULFILLING SCHOOLS

The ten schools that met the criteria of Fulfilling included schools in both Northern and Southern districts, as well as schools that had been implementing Cornerstone for as few as two years to as many as six years at the end of 2006.

Schools were considered Fulfilling if they conducted planning activities including the asset map (and continued to use the asset map throughout the year), and held regular leadership team meetings that included representation from the teaching staff and administration beyond the coaches and principal. Professional learning opportunities were also in place: schools held regular book studies and made time available for teachers to meet with grade-level teams. This cluster of schools also implemented an uninterrupted literacy block throughout the school at the

K-3 level.⁵ Coaches in Fulfilling schools were released from classroom or other responsibilities to do Cornerstone work, and teachers reported working frequently with those coaches and feeling that the work was productive.

Planning

Strategic planning for ongoing, needs-based professional development was a common attribute among the Fulfilling schools. Staff worked hard to define meaningful goals and constantly monitored their work to assess its impact and fine-tune it. In Fulfilling schools that had school reviews (most Foundation schools did not), reviewers' recommendations were incorporated into school-wide planning, and these plans were displayed and well-known to staff.

Planning for Cornerstone activities largely took place during leadership team meetings. The composition of leadership teams across Fulfilling sites varied: all included the principals and coaches, and most tried to achieve representation from all grade levels and to include other literacy specialists and in many cases parent representatives. However, the teams' charge to guide Cornerstone work in the building was consistent. Leadership teams met at least twice per month.

Professional Learning

Coaching

In all Fulfilling schools, classroom-based coaches were released half time to carry out their coaching responsibilities and develop their own capacities. At least one of the coaches in the majority of these schools was classroom-based, which provided an opportunity for other teaching staff to observe the coach working with her own students. In six schools, there were two classroom-based coaches; in three schools, the second coach also served as a district literacy coach assigned to the school. One Fulfilling school chose to have both Cornerstone coaches float between several classrooms this year.

Coaches modeled effective instructional practices for other teachers, conducted demonstration lessons, visited classrooms, participated in grade-level meetings, helped organize lesson studies, and worked with Cornerstone staff through on-site meetings or videoconferences. How their time was spent varied at each site and depended on needs as assessed by the literacy

⁵ Departmentalization of upper grades often made it difficult to put the literacy block in place throughout those grades.

action plan. Coaches also led school-wide professional development activities such as extended-day professional development sessions. In the Foundation schools, these responsibilities extended to providing similar support in the Partner school.

Survey data indicate that teachers in Fulfilling schools felt that their Cornerstone coaches provided valuable feedback on their literacy instruction (78%). More teachers in Fulfilling schools reported having greater contact with their coaches, and that their coaches had had a greater impact on their literacy teaching, than their colleagues in Low and Partially Implementing schools (see Appendix C).⁶

Book Study

In most of the Fulfilling schools, book study groups met regularly as part of other staff development or as independent events. Either way, book studies continued to be perceived by teachers as useful for learning about best practices. This was true in both Foundation and Network schools. Materials were collectively selected for book studies based on needs and interests, and meetings were often led by staff other than the coaches in order to spread responsibility for the Initiative and build capacity.

Grade-Level Meetings and Staff Meetings

Principals in Fulfilling schools created schedules that accommodated regular grade-level planning time for teachers, and worked to ensure that this time was not consumed with non-Cornerstone work. Principals regularly attended these meetings.

Uninterrupted Literacy Block

Whereas many schools described the difficulties of implementing an uninterrupted literacy block across grade levels, all but one of the schools within this group were able to establish schedules that allowed for an uninterrupted time in which to teach literacy to grades K-3.

Staff Perceptions of Cornerstone

Cornerstone practices were being used in classrooms across all grade levels in each Fulfilling school and were being implemented in other subject areas, in particular social studies and science, as well. Eighty-five percent of teachers in Fulfilling schools felt that the majority of

⁶ Survey responses from 256 teachers from ten Fulfilling schools were included in our analysis.

teachers in their building supported Cornerstone implementation. Coaches and principals reported limited resistance.

School-Level Factors

Factors theorized to influence implementation included stability of teaching staff, coaches, and principals, as well as teacher perception of the principal's capacity to lead the instructional work within their school.

Leadership

Principal leadership continues to be critical to the implementation of Cornerstone for administrative support and classroom teacher accountability. While staff in Cornerstone schools in general tended to be positive about their principal as an instructional leader, teachers in schools considered Fulfilling were almost uniformly so. Coaches in Fulfilling schools reported that their principals supported Cornerstone work not only in terms of resources and time, but by personally engaging with the work by attending professional development activities such as book studies and grade-level meetings.

Stability

Staff and, in particular, leadership stability is often seen as contributing to the consistency of reform efforts over time.⁷ Among the Fulfilling schools, five have had the same principal throughout their Cornerstone tenure. However, among those Fulfilling schools in Cornerstone the longest, only one principal had been with the school since the inception of the initiative in their building. Similarly, few of the Fulfilling schools have had the same coaches throughout. The continuation of Cornerstone work in these schools, despite site team disruptions, may be attributed to several factors, including capacity building among staff and strategic assistance from Cornerstone.

The majority of Fulfilling schools experienced moderate to high teacher turnover (one school's estimate was 41% turnover), and nearly 40% of teachers indicated that teacher turnover posed a major challenge to Cornerstone implementation. Coaches often directed their efforts towards new teachers, which limited their contact with the rest of the staff.

⁷ Fullan, M.G. (1991) *The New Meaning of Educational Change*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Institutionalization

In discussing the future of Cornerstone in their building, coaches and principals in Fulfilling schools reported that while resources would be a concern in perpetuating the Initiative beyond the period of support, Cornerstone was an integral part of the functioning of their school. Teachers felt that Cornerstone fit well with district and state literacy initiatives (85%), and two-thirds felt that it was “a fundamental part of our regular approach to literacy” (66%), and that it would remain part of their school’s education program. As a coach in a fulfilling school described their commitment, “It’s a new way of teaching for us and it’s not going to go anywhere. We’re going to continue to do what we need to do for kids and this is what we need to do for kids. Whether Cornerstone is here or whether it’s the end of our four years, we’re just going to continue.”

IMPLEMENTING SCHOOLS

Among the 11 schools in the Implementing cluster, there were both Northern and Southern schools. Most of these schools were in the early years of implementing Cornerstone activities. Three of the schools were considered part of the Implementing cluster in the Fourth Year Report, and one had been part of the Partially Implementing cluster, while the others were new to the Initiative. Like their counterparts in the Fulfilling cluster, these schools ranged in size from small to large.

Site team members at Implementing schools reported that the fundamental components of Cornerstone were operating in their schools. Respondents in the majority of Implementing schools reported that teachers in the school supported Cornerstone implementation. At three schools, all new to the Initiative, teachers reported less support. First- and second-year schools confronted issues common to schools new to the Initiative, such as developing functional co-teaching schedules for their literacy coaches; structuring an uninterrupted literacy block; providing time for regular grade-level meetings; conducting effective professional reading groups; and overcoming the skepticism of entrenched faculty.

Planning

The nine schools in their first and second years of Cornerstone were able to plan Cornerstone activities together as a school. All schools participated in asset mapping at the

beginning of the year and most found it useful in guiding their Cornerstone activities. Most of these schools had frequent leadership team meetings.

Professional Learning

Coaching

Coaches in the majority of Implementing schools were provided release time by co-teaching with the other coach in their building. Balancing the work between the two sets of responsibilities presented challenges to the new coaches who felt drawn in multiple directions. One principal explained the conflict: “[coaches] feel torn to help these teachers in the school...It's very, very difficult...They're out coaching, but their minds are still on their children, because they're their children.” Of the eleven schools in this group, eight had classroom-based coaches who shared a room (co-taught); two schools had one classroom-based coach as well as a coach who acted as a full-time literacy coach; and one school had only one coach who was also the literacy coach for their district.

Teachers in Implementing schools reported that their coaches were helpful and effective but that coach contact was, in some cases, limited. Cornerstone staff reported that coaches in many of the new schools had been hesitant to go out and work with teachers in their classrooms until the second part of the year. New coaches expressed a need to have more training support in how to work with adults. Teachers' evaluation of their interactions with coaches in Implementing schools were on par with those in the Fulfilling group: the majority felt that coaches had positively affected their literacy teaching practice, and that coaches provided valuable advice and feedback.⁸ Coaches, in turn, reported good reception of their efforts.

Whole School Learning

Although book study groups had been established in all 11 Implementing schools, they were not always held regularly and attendance at some schools was limited. Teachers were also mixed in their evaluation of the usefulness of book studies. Providing time for grade-level planning was a challenge, in particular for some first-year schools. Coaches and principals in new schools indicated that they now recognized the value of providing this time to teachers

⁸ Survey responses from 276 teachers from the 11 implementing schools were included in our analysis.

during the day to coordinate activities like lesson study, and had plans to construct a schedule that was amenable to group work of this sort for the following school year.

Uninterrupted Literacy Block

More than half of the Implementing schools reported that scheduling difficulties made an uninterrupted literacy block for grades K-3 a challenge. This was particularly true in small schools that reported having few options because of the limited time available for specials such as gym and art.

Staff Perceptions of Cornerstone

Resistant faculty remained an issue for a number of the Implementing schools. Although there was general support for Cornerstone, site team members noted resistance or anxiety among teachers regarding Cornerstone, and teachers indicated that resistant teachers represented one of the major challenges to implementing Cornerstone (42%).

School-Level Factors

Leadership

Interviews and survey data indicate that the overwhelming majority of staff in all 11 schools described their principals as instructional leaders, committed to Cornerstone, and supportive of their staff. An overwhelming majority (96%) of teachers at Implementing schools agreed that their principal supports and promotes Cornerstone.

Stability

Among the four schools that had been working with Cornerstone for more than a year, principal and coach stability was inconsistent. Two of the schools had had the same principal throughout, and consistency in their coaching; one school had a new coach this year and a new principal mid-way through their third year of implementation; the other had a change in principal in 2005-06. Teacher turnover at three of the four schools was reported as low this year.

Institutionalization

Although it is early to make determinations about the long-term prospects for Cornerstone in the new schools in this group, a large number of teachers in the Implementing cluster indicated that Cornerstone was a fundamental part of their regular approach to literacy (42%), and one school was moving towards becoming a Foundation school the following year. While some of these new schools already had their sights set on becoming Foundation schools to spread the work in their district, 32% of teachers indicated that whether to keep Cornerstone was still under consideration in their building. In Implementing schools, as with their Fulfilling counterparts, teachers reported using Cornerstone strategies across the curriculum. Almost three-fourths of teachers in Implementing schools felt that Cornerstone fit well with other district and state literacy initiatives, but of all four clusters, teachers in this group worried more than others that high stakes tests posed a challenge to Cornerstone implementation (58%).

PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTING SCHOOLS

The five schools identified as Partially Implementing Cornerstone in 2005-06 were located in three school districts and were in the early years of implementation. These districts had schools in other implementation categories.

Partially Implementing schools had initiated most components of the Cornerstone program, such as conducting asset mapping, leadership team meetings, book study groups, and grade-level meetings. Other components such as coach demonstrations and observations, and the uninterrupted literacy block, were not yet consistently implemented.

Planning

Planning was inconsistent in the Partially Implementing schools, as was oversight of the Cornerstone Initiative within schools. Site team members reported using the asset mapping process at the beginning of the school year to set school-wide goals, but did not follow through with it during the year. Leadership team meetings were not regularly held in many Partially Implementing schools, and in some schools, teams were still being established.

Professional Learning

Coaching

Providing reliable classroom coverage and release time for coaches posed a challenge for many of the Partially Implementing schools. When coaches had been released to train teachers, teachers reported less contact with coaches. Teachers reported that coaches demonstrated lessons and observed classes, but less so than their counterparts in other implementation groups. Teachers indicated that coaches provided important feedback on literacy teaching (58%), but fewer than half reported being in frequent contact with coaches.⁹

Whole School Learning

Grade-level meetings and book studies were not yet routine in all of these schools, though coaches and principals indicated their intention to expand these opportunities the following year. The need for common planning time became especially apparent when schools saw the lesson study implemented at the Cornerstone Regional Meeting. Grade-level meetings, when they did occur, were reportedly often focused on information exchange and were not full working sessions.

Uninterrupted Literacy Block

Two out of the five Partially Implementing schools had an uninterrupted literacy block for the early grades, while the other schools in the cluster were still attempting to establish one. These schools encountered typical barriers such as having to accommodate the schedules of specials' teachers.

Staff Perceptions of Cornerstone

In Partially Implementing schools, some staff still viewed Cornerstone as competing or at cross-purposes with other district initiatives or, worse, as just another passing initiative. Thirty-five percent of teachers indicated that competing district and state literacy mandates were one of the main challenges to the successful implementation of Cornerstone. Only 31% of teachers felt that Cornerstone was a fundamental part of their school's approach to literacy. Resistant

⁹ Survey responses from 105 teachers from the five Partially Implementing schools were included in our analysis.

teachers were one of the primary obstacles to implementing Cornerstone. Coaches and principals frequently reported teachers' suspicion that this was another program that was passing through.

School-Level Factors

Leadership

For all but one school, staff in Partially Implementing schools believed that their principal was an instructional leader, and coaches indicated that they felt supported in their work. Teachers believed that their principal was in favor of Cornerstone and supported the Initiative.

Stability

We did not have enough information to consider the stability of staff in this group because of the relative newness of the schools to the Initiative and incomplete data on teacher turnover.

Challenges to Implementation

One of the main challenges for Partially Implementing schools was establishing a schedule that could accommodate planning and professional learning activities including release time for coaches. Partially Implementing schools also had to tackle negative staff sentiment: roughly half of the teachers in these schools indicated that resistant teachers were a major challenge to implementing Cornerstone.

LOW IMPLEMENTING SCHOOLS

Two schools were considered part of the Low Implementing cluster, and both were relatively new to the Initiative. One was a Partner school, the other a first-year Network school in a new district.

Planning

Both schools had difficulty establishing Cornerstone elements such as asset mapping and leadership team meetings. However, both schools reported holding regular grade-level meetings and indicated in interviews that they had plans to develop schedules that would allow teachers to work collaboratively with colleagues during the school day.

Coaching

Both schools experienced difficulties with their coaching coverage. The Partner school had only one coach this year, who was also the Title I teacher in the school. The new school encountered difficulty developing a satisfactory co-teaching arrangement. In both cases, as with the majority of schools in the Partially Implementing category, the limited availability of coaches was reflected in the amount of contact reported by teachers with coaches (52% of Low Implementing teachers reported consistent communication with the coach focused on literacy) and in the level of impact these interactions had had on their literacy teaching.¹⁰

Staff Perceptions of Cornerstone

Teachers in these schools did not feel that there was support for Cornerstone activities, and mentioned resistant faculties, limited planning time, and insufficient training as the major issues hampering implementation. A large proportion of teachers thought that the future of Cornerstone in their school was unclear, and many believed that Cornerstone would remain in the school but be adapted to the school's needs. Schools in this group were the least likely of all the schools to indicate that Cornerstone meshed well with other state or district literacy initiatives.

School-Level Factors

Leadership

Staff in the Partner school felt that their principal was an instructional leader; many fewer agreed in the Network school. The majority of teachers in the Low Implementing schools felt that their principal supported and promoted Cornerstone, articulated clear expectations for teachers, and had confidence in the abilities of their teaching staff. Overall, fewer teachers in the Low Implementing schools felt that their principal had a clear vision for the school that was communicated to staff, compared to their counterparts in higher implementing groups. However, it is important to note that in some cases there were considerable differences between the two schools on these measures; Partner school staff tended to be much more positive about their principal.

¹⁰ Survey responses from 55 teachers from the two Low Implementing schools were included in our analysis.

Stability

Teacher turnover was one of the primary challenges to implementing Cornerstone that teachers identified on the survey (46%) and teacher stability was reported as high in the Partner school. The principal and one coach had remained stable in the Partner school.

3. IMPACT

INTERMEDIATE IMPACTS

The Cornerstone model operates at several different levels within participating schools. Successful implementation of the embedded professional development activities is expected to result in intermediate school-level and classroom-level changes. School-level change includes improved school culture, enhanced leadership capacity, and increased parent involvement. Ongoing professional development, supported by improved school culture, is expected to bring about classroom-level changes including enhanced teacher content knowledge and effective instructional strategies. More effective classroom instruction, supported by increased parental involvement in their children's education, is expected to bring about improved student knowledge and skills and enhanced student social/emotional development which will, over time, result in increased student literacy as measured by standardized tests. Many of the changes occur simultaneously, reinforcing and promoting progress in multiple areas. The model is not linear, but rather iterative: successful change in any domain can both drive and be affected by change in any other.

This subsection presents the intermediate and long-term impacts the Cornerstone Initiative has had in participating schools as described by teachers, coaches, and administrators through surveys and interviews during 2005-06. It also examines the relationships between a range of reported outcomes along the implementation continuum, and presents staff perceptions regarding Cornerstone's impact on student test scores. Student achievement, as measured by a variety of standardized tests, is presented in the next subsection.

Impact on School Culture

The successful implementation of Cornerstone relies extensively on collegial exchange and collaboration among staff members. Through collective work, staff members assess their needs and strengths, and plan embedded professional development activities according to these priorities. These activities are designed to bring about and reinforce positive changes in the overall school culture. These changes include an increasingly shared vision for teaching and learning, increased teamwork among staff members, higher expectations for both teachers and students, and the creation of a more knowledgeable and inquiring learning community.

Consistent with the other measures in the implementation analysis, more teachers in Fulfilling schools report having "formal arrangements that provide opportunities for teachers to

discuss and critique their instruction with each other” than teachers in other implementation categories. These formal arrangements make collective work part of the institutional culture. Teachers in Fulfilling and Implementing schools generally have more positive responses on survey items related to school culture than their counterparts in Partially or Low Implementing schools (see Table A15, Appendix C). This is particularly true with respect to questions such as “teachers’ respect for colleagues who are expert teachers” and shared decision-making among staff, items for which there is at least a ten percentage point difference between the two groups.

Although new schools often report that Cornerstone has helped them open classroom doors and examine their work collectively, veteran Network schools also mention the durability of the collaborative culture established through their Cornerstone work. A coach in a fourth year school stated that teachers in her school, “collaborate more often, they’re more open to having people in their classes, [and] sharing ideas and resources.” According to interviews, the introduction of lesson study during 2005-06 further reinforced collaborative processes at the schools that tried to implement it.

Impact on Parent Engagement

Schools are encouraged to consider ways in which to expand and enhance parent and community involvement in literacy learning. Survey findings indicate that Fulfilling and Implementing schools are more likely than Partially and Low Implementing schools to hold regular literacy events for parents, that these events are more likely to be regularly attended by parents, and that teachers consider parents as partners in educating students (Table A16, Appendix C). Teachers in Fulfilling schools were most likely to report that they hold literacy-related events for parents (78%). Fewer than half of teachers in the Partial and Low Implementation categories reported the same.

Despite offering events for parents, there are indications that parent attendance at these events was not strong: less than half of the respondents in all of the implementation categories indicated that parents regularly attended literacy events. Interviewees across the implementation spectrum expressed frustration about their ability to engage with parents, and interviewees at four of the five Foundation schools described parent involvement in their schools this year as poor. Overall, schools that have been in Cornerstone longer assessed their parent involvement as having improved or improving, while the majority of new schools felt that their parent involvement work had not yet begun. Surveys indicated that teachers in Fulfilling and

Implementing schools felt that parents were much more likely to know about and support Cornerstone, than teachers in Partial and Low Implementing schools.

Parent involvement in decision making and parent-teacher collaboration were more consistent across implementation categories, with a higher percentage of respondents in the Low Implementing schools indicating that “Parents have an influence on decision making” compared to respondents in other clusters.

Impact on Classroom Practice

According to Cornerstone’s theory of action, effective professional development, including modeling and demonstrating, in association with improvements in school culture, will lead to increased implementation of strategies that have been proven to be effective in improving student literacy. To examine Cornerstone’s impact on teaching practices, we compare teacher survey items associated with the Cornerstone Literacy Framework across implementation levels (Table A18, Appendix C). Survey items measuring the frequency of particular activities were combined into three categories: student activities including “Read aloud” and “Read texts that vary in genre;” teacher activities such as “Provide opportunities for students to work in small groups and individually” and “Craft for students;” and comprehension topics including “Activating prior knowledge or making personal connections to text” and “Making predictions, previewing, or surveying text.”

Classroom practices associated with Cornerstone are more strongly established in Fulfilling schools for each of the three categories of activities. These activities are more likely to be a part of regular instruction in Fulfilling schools, with the percentage of respondents indicating that the instruction took place at least once or twice a week ranging from 93% to 95%. Low Implementing schools made use of the strategies, but were generally more likely than schools in other implementation categories to implement them once or twice a month or once or twice a semester.

Teachers in higher implementing schools are more likely to view Cornerstone as having a positive impact on instructional practices in the school (Table A19, Appendix C). Approximately 88% of respondents in Fulfilling schools and 80% of respondents in Implementing schools indicated that Cornerstone had deepened their understanding of how students learn literacy, compared to 61% of respondents in Partially Implementing schools and 65% in Low Implementing schools. Teachers in Fulfilling schools had higher rates of positive responses for the item “How much has your participation in Cornerstone activities overall improved your

literacy teaching practice?” Seventy-two percent of Fulfilling school respondents selected “Strongly agree” or “Agree” compared to 56% of Implementing school respondents, and less than 43% of Partially and Low Implementing school respondents.

Coaches and principals at all stages of implementing Cornerstone reported continued growth as professionals. In new schools, the emphasis on changing the classroom environment prompted one coach to describe her room as a “sanctuary” for her students and herself. In schools in later stages of development, site team members reported that the collaborative work established by Cornerstone continued to push them to become better teachers. A fourth-year coach explained: “You’re always refining. Not necessarily the recreating or reinventing. We all are just continuing to constantly improve, spring-boarding new ideas and better ideas.”

Impact on Student Literacy Growth

Teachers in schools at the higher implementation levels were more likely to report a positive impact of Cornerstone on student academic growth (Table A20, Appendix C): higher percentages of teachers in Fulfilling and Implementing schools indicated that Cornerstone had improved their students’ test scores and literacy skills compared to teachers in Partially and Low Implementing schools.

Consonant with findings in previous years, coaches and principals continue to describe the positive impact of Cornerstone on literacy culture: students were engaged at higher levels, were taking responsibility for their learning, had increased motivation, and were developing into independent, critical thinkers.

IMPACT ON STUDENT OUTCOMES

The following section presents test score outcomes for each school. We report three categories of test results: the results of the DRA, which was administered to K-3 students in each Cornerstone school;¹¹ grade-level state and district standardized test results; and the results of regression analyses that compare the outcomes of Cornerstone schools to those of the other schools in their district. We conducted regression analyses in four districts, Horry County, Jackson, Springfield, and Talladega.¹² Table 2 lists the schools and districts whose outcomes are presented in this section along with the number of years that they have been a part of the Cornerstone Initiative as of the 2005-06 school year

¹¹ Five Districts in which Cornerstone is being implemented administer the DRA as a district assessment (Bridgeport, Horry County, New Haven, Springfield, and Stamford). Beginning in the 2004-05 school year, schools in districts that do not use the DRA were requested to administer the assessment to all K-3 students in the Cornerstone schools.

¹²Data for New Haven and Bridgeport were not ready at the time of writing. Data for Muscogee County and Stamford were missing information necessary to estimate regression models.

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Table 2. Schools Included in Student Outcomes Section

District	School	Years in Cornerstone as of 2005-06
Bridgeport	Garfield	1
	Maplewood Annex	5
	Marin	5
Horry County	Aynor	2
	Kingston	1
	North Myrtle Beach Elementary	2
	North Myrtle Beach Primary	1
	South Conway	3
	Waccamaw	3
Jackson	Brown	2
	Lake	6
	Raines	1
	Watkins	6
Muscogee County	Downtown	1
	Key	1
	Rigdon Road	1
	St. Mary's	1
New Haven	Bishop Woods	4
Springfield	Freedman	4
	Frederick Harris	4
Stamford	Hart	1
	Springdale	1
	Stark	1
	Stillmeadow	1
Talladega	B. B. Comer	2
	Munford	2
	Stemley	6
	Sycamore	6

Regression Methodology

Comparisons of average test scores at the school level over time may not adequately reflect Cornerstone’s impact on student performance because the characteristics of school populations change from one year to the next. As an example, the average performance of a Cornerstone school may drop one year because it has more poor students than it did the year before, and poor students often have lower performance, on average, than non-poor students. This drop in performance may happen even if Cornerstone has successfully improved the performance of most of the students in the school, reflecting the composition of the school’s students and not the effects of Cornerstone. We take this into account by turning to regression analyses, which control for school and student characteristics that may affect performance, and ensure that the impact of Cornerstone is net of the influence of these characteristics. Regression analysis enables us to compare the test scores of students in Cornerstone schools to the scores of students in non-Cornerstone schools and, by controlling for student characteristics, we ensure that students in the Cornerstone schools are compared to *similar* students in the non-Cornerstone schools.

The centerpiece of the empirical work is a model in which an indicator for student participation in a Cornerstone school is included in a model that predicts student performance. Test scores are generally reported as raw or scale scores, and districts may administer different reading and/or language tests in different years. To make these tests comparable, we convert them into Z scores, for which changes are expressed in units of standard deviation.¹³ The regression model is briefly described below.¹⁴

$$(1) \text{ TEST} = \alpha + \beta CS * \text{TIME} + \text{GRADE} + \text{TIME} + \gamma X + \theta + e$$

where *TEST* refers to the performance of each student in their grade and school at the time they were tested (*TIME* i.e., year or term). *CS* is a dummy variable that takes a value of one if a student attended a Cornerstone school. This variable is interacted with the time variable, and the coefficient on this interaction captures the impact of Cornerstone on the performance of the students in Cornerstone schools, by comparing it to that of students in non-Cornerstone schools

¹³ As explained in previous reports, we used the mean and standard deviation of test scores for the group of students who took the test to standardize scores, which is analogous to changing value scales, such as converting yards to meters.

¹⁴ A more detailed description is presented in Appendix B.

in the same testing period.¹⁵ *GRADE* refers to the grade in which each student is tested. *X* is a set of student characteristics, which may include race, sex, free lunch status (a poverty indicator), and immigrant status. *TIME* controls for unobserved events that may take place in each time period and affect all the schools. The school fixed effects, θ , are a set of dummy variables indicating which school a student attended, and they capture the impact on student performance of unobserved, time-invariant school characteristics, so that the impact of Cornerstone on performance is net of the effect of other school variables that might influence the performance of students. More specifically, the model includes fixed effects for all the schools except one (the reference school, which may be any school, as the coefficients will adjust accordingly), and the coefficient on the fixed effect for any school is a measure of the difference in test score between that school and the reference school that is not explained by changes in the other variables included in the model. *e* is an error term with the usual properties.

In this model, to which we refer as the basic model, the coefficient on the interaction, β , provides an estimate of the impact of Cornerstone participation on the performance of students, controlling for student and school characteristics. This model is estimated using data on cohorts of students that include both students who attended Cornerstone schools and those who did not. In each district, we estimated a series of variations on the basic model. In the interest of brevity, we discuss the basic and most interesting models for each district, and we provide regression tables in the appendix for the most interesting models.

Comparison of Cornerstone Schools' Performance on the Spring 2006 DRA

To examine how literacy learning varies across Cornerstone schools, we compare the performance of first, second, and third grade students on the spring 2006 administration of the DRA (Table 3).¹⁶ On average, among the Cornerstone school students, higher percentages of second and third graders (80% and 82% respectively) than first graders (62%) met or exceeded the Pearson's benchmark. Mean percentages are higher in the Cornerstone schools than in the non-Cornerstone schools for which data are available, where an average of 51% of first graders, 74% of second graders, and 63% of third graders met or exceeded the benchmark. In total, combining the three grades, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding the Pearson's

¹⁵ Generally the same year, except for Horry County, where it is the same term.

¹⁶ For consistency, we employ Pearson's DRA benchmark for each grade level as a basis for comparison in the districts that administer it for the evaluation (Horry County, Jackson, Muscogee County, and Talladega). Bridgeport, New Haven, and Springfield were the only districts that provided DRA spring 2006 test score data for all of the students in the district. In these districts, the district averages presented exclude the Cornerstone schools.

benchmark was higher in Cornerstone schools than it was in the rest of the schools for four of the six schools in districts with data for the whole district. Overall, however, there is a wide range of performance, with the total percentage of students who met or exceeded the Pearson’s benchmark ranging from 30% at Watkins to 94% at Aynor.

Table 3. Percentage of Students Meeting the Pearson’s Benchmark on the Spring 2006 DRA for Students, Grades One, Two, and Three

District	School	% Meeting Pearson's Benchmark							
		Grade 1		Grade 2		Grade 3		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>Bridgeport*</i>	Garfield	34	41.2	33	57.6	37	62.2	104	53.9
	Maplewood	18	44.4	19	94.7	27	81.5	64	75.0
	Marin	57	38.3	61	61.9	37	89.2	155	59.4
	District (26 schools)***	1517	62.9	1428	79.7	1338	82.3	4283	74.6
<i>Horry County**</i>	Aynor	89	92.1	68	97.1	79	92.4	236	93.6
	Waccamaw	85	94.1	60	93.3	55	85.5	200	91.5
<i>Jackson**</i>	Lake	72	41.7	14	71.4	34	21.8	120	36.9
	Watkins	76	25.0	71	26.8	41	43.9	188	29.8
<i>Muscogee County**</i>	Downtown	47	68.1	72	84.7	54	35.9	173	65.3
	Key	49	61.2	42	81.0	36	77.8	127	72.4
	Rigdon Rd	30	53.3	41	41.5	32	62.5	103	51.5
	St. Mary's	76	79.0	64	53.1	69	71.0	209	68.4
<i>New Haven</i>	Bishop Woods	53	47.2	41	92.7	41	64.3	135	66.2
	District (27 schools)***	1430	44.4	1235	70.1	1285	65.1	3950	59.5
<i>Springfield**</i>	Freedman	19	63.2	9	55.6	22	77.3	50	68.0
	Harris	90	53.3	74	78.4	55	67.9	219	65.5
	District (31 schools)***	1200	45.4	1312	71.4	248	41.8	2760	56.1
<i>Stamford*</i>	Hart	86	57.0	69	87.0	78	75.6	233	72.1
	Springdale	85	32.9	98	66.3	76	83.0	259	60.2
	Stark	101	57.4	91	72.5	82	78.1	274	68.6
	Stillmeadow	95	68.4	93	74.2	78	84.6	266	75.2
<i>Talladega**</i>	BB Comer	104	51.0	77	79.2	77	62.3	258	62.8
	Munford	117	79.5	113	68.1	93	91.4	323	79.0
	Stemley	74	67.6	85	68.2	55	62.5	214	66.5
	Sycamore	43	62.8	43	62.8	33	54.6	119	60.5

Notes: Scores are from the spring 2006 administration of the DRA. “% Meeting Pearson’s Benchmark” indicates the percentage of students in grades one, two, and three and the three grades combined (Total) who met or exceeded the spring 2006 Pearson’s DRA benchmark (as opposed to the district-determined benchmark) for student proficiency.

N is the number of students in grades one, two, and three, and in the three grades together who are included in the analysis.

* Special education students are not included in the analysis for these districts. In districts where special education data are not available, we did/could not exclude special education students.

** Special education students and students with reading accuracy rate levels below 94% are not included in the analysis for these districts. An accurate DRA reading level of a student is measured when the student’s reading accuracy is 94% or higher and the comprehension level is at least “adequate”. A small number of teachers did not follow this guideline and instead scored students based on a lower accuracy percentage. In districts where data on accuracy rate were available, there were 55 cases out of 2596 in which the accuracy rate of the student was not at the 94% level; these cases were excluded from the analysis.

*** The district-level percentage meeting benchmarks excludes Cornerstone schools.

Bridgeport Outcomes

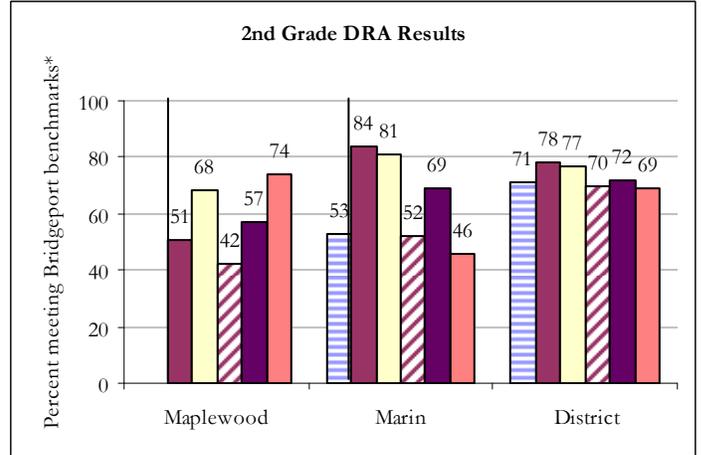
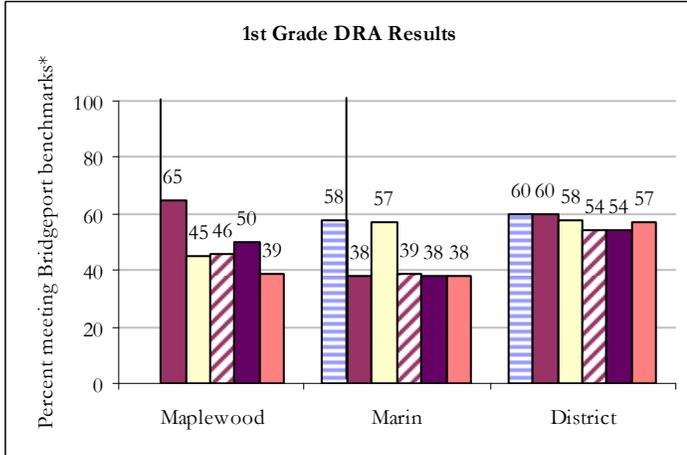
Foundation Schools

Marin and Maplewood Annex joined Cornerstone in the fall of 2001.

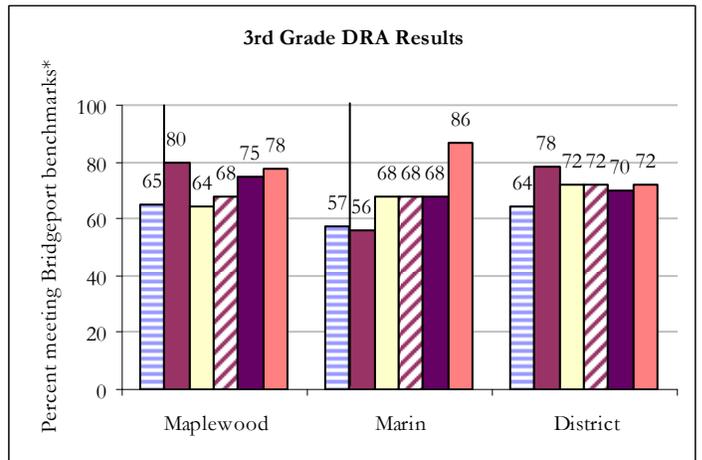
Developmental Reading Assessment Results

The DRA is given across the Bridgeport district. Until 2004-05, Bridgeport changed the benchmark level that students must meet each year, raising it to a higher level.¹⁷ Thus, changes in test scores reflect both students' abilities and rising benchmarks.

Figure 2. Bridgeport DRA Results



* First Grade: 18, Second Grade: 28, Third Grade: 38
 Note: Vertical lines on chart indicate year each school implemented Cornerstone.
 Source: Authors' calculations based on data provided by district



¹⁷ In 2004-05, the benchmarks remained at the 2003-04 levels. The benchmarks in the last two years were higher than those used to assess the other Cornerstone schools. For first graders, the Bridgeport spring benchmark was level 10 on the DRA in 2001-02, 14 in 2002-03, and 18 in 2003-04. They were 18, 20, and 28 respectively for second graders, and 30, 34 and 38 for third graders.

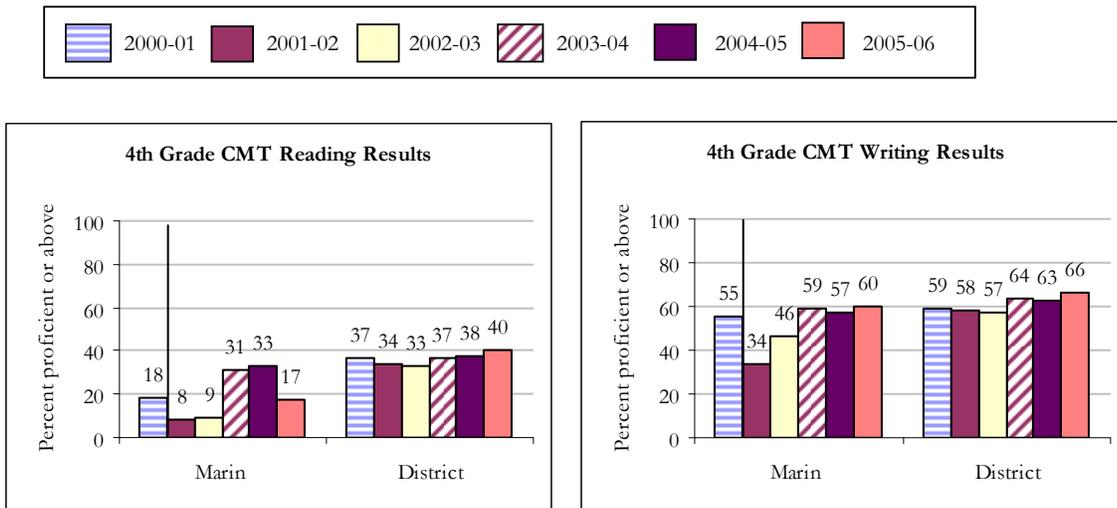
At Maplewood Annex, the percent of first graders meeting the benchmark increased steadily between 2002-03 and 2004-05, but decreased substantially in 2005-06 to 39%, well below the district average of 57%. The second grade at Maplewood Annex increased in percentage meeting the benchmark to 74% in 2005-06, its highest since the school began using Cornerstone in 2002-03. Results for the third grade have increased steadily in percent meeting Bridgeport's benchmark since the 2002-03 school year. Both Maplewood Annex's second and third grade results surpassed the district average in 2005-06.

With the exception of two years, the percent of first graders at Marin meeting the district's benchmark has been slightly less than 40%, lower than the district average. In the second grade, Marin made progress between 2003-04 and 2004-05, but decreased substantially to 46% meeting the district's benchmark in 2005-06. Third graders' results remained stable between 2002-03 and 2004-05 at a little less than 70% of students meeting the benchmark. However, in 2005-06, results increased to 86%, surpassing the district average.

State Mandated Tests

Connecticut mandates the administration of the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) in reading and writing for the fourth and sixth grades. The CMT fourth grade test of writing and reading was administered in the spring of 2005-06, after having been administered in the fall for all past years, and it assesses the percent of students who are proficient or above. The figure below shows the percent of students scoring at proficient or above on the fourth grade reading and writing tests at Marin and district-wide. Maplewood Annex is a K-3 school so there are no fourth grade test scores.

Figure 3. Bridgeport Fourth Grade CMT Results

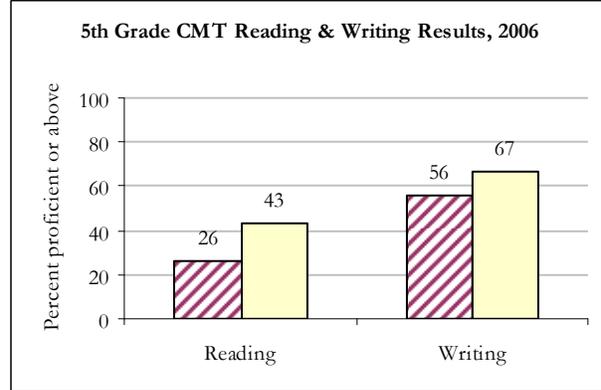
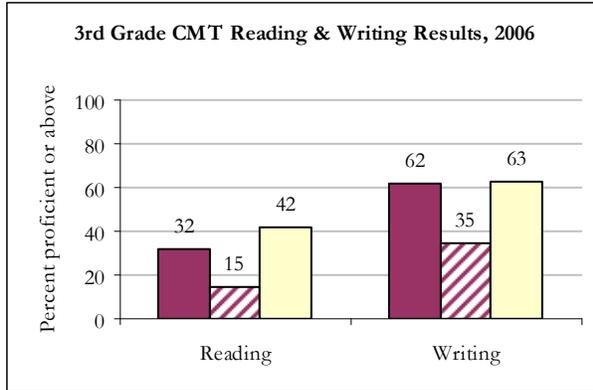


Note: Vertical lines on chart indicate year each school implemented Cornerstone.
 Source: Connecticut Online Report Center. (2006). Retrieved January 8, 2007, from <http://www.ctreports.com>

The 2000-01 school year was the year before Cornerstone began working in Bridgeport. Marin, although experiencing a drop in the percent proficient for the first two years after Cornerstone was implemented, made steady gains in the percent of students achieving proficiency on both the writing and reading portions of the CMT exam between 2002-03 and 2004-05. In 2005-06, however, the percent of fourth graders proficient or above in reading dropped by almost half and was considerably lower than the district average. On the writing portion, though, there was a small increase, and the school continues to approach the district average.

The CMT was administered to third and fifth graders for the first time in the 2005-06 school year. The percent of third graders who were proficient or above at Maplewood Annex was lower than the district average in reading, but similar to the district average in writing, as shown in Figure 4. The percent of third grade students at Marin who are proficient or above in both reading and writing was considerably lower than the district average. Fifth grade students at Marin were under-performing compared to the district average in both reading and writing in 2005-06.

Figure 4. Bridgeport Third and Fifth Grade CMT Results



Source: Connecticut Online Report Center. (2006). Retrieved January 8, 2007, from <http://www.ctreports.com>

Partner Schools

Garfield was a first year Partner school during the 2005-06 school year.

Developmental Reading Assessment Results

DRA results for Garfield are shown below. Less than half of first, second and third graders at Garfield scored above the Bridgeport DRA benchmark in 2005-06.

Table 4. DRA Results for Grades One through Three in Bridgeport

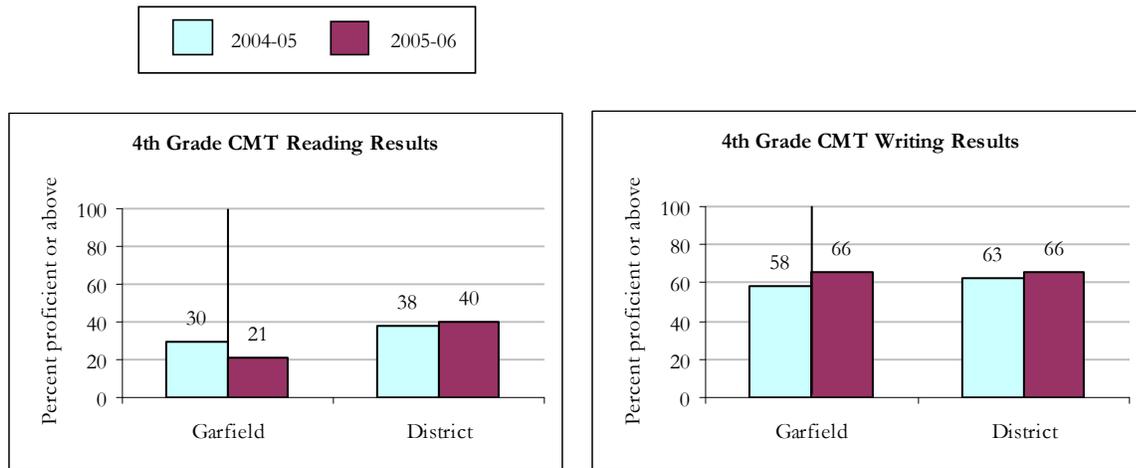
Bridgeport	Grade 1 2005-06	Grade 2 2005-06	Grade 3 2005-06
<i>Percent Meeting Spring Bridgeport Benchmark*</i>	32.5%	42.4%	46.0%
<i>Total number of students tested</i>	34	33	37

* First Grade: 18, Second Grade: 28, Third Grade: 38
Source: Authors' calculations based on data provided by district

State Mandated Tests

Figure 5 shows the percent of students scoring proficient or above on the fourth grade reading and writing tests at Garfield and district-wide.

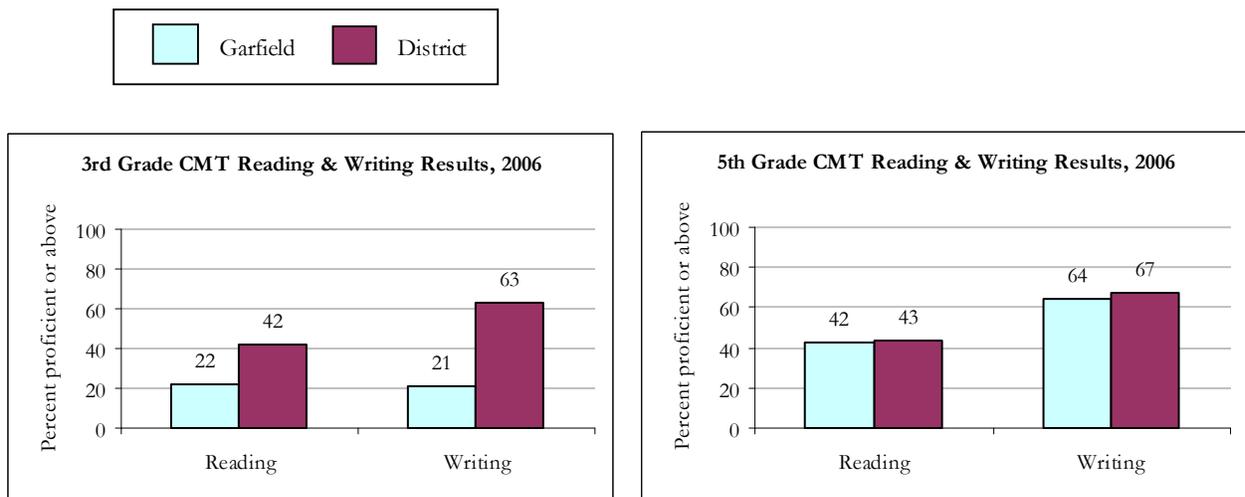
Figure 5. Bridgeport Fourth Grade CMT Results



Note: Vertical lines on chart indicate year each school implemented Cornerstone.
 Source: Connecticut Online Report Center. (2006). Retrieved January 8, 2007, from <http://www.ctreports.com>

Garfield’s fourth grade reading test results decreased slightly between 2004-05 and 2005-06, while writing results increased. Even though fourth graders’ proficiency was lower than the district in reading, it was on par with the district in writing.

Figure 6. Bridgeport Third and Fifth Grade CMT Results



Source: Connecticut Online Report Center. (2006). Retrieved January 8, 2007, from <http://www.ctreports.com>

Proficiency in both reading and writing for the third grade at Garfield was well below that of the district. Garfield’s fifth grade results were slightly below the district in both reading and writing in 2005-06 as well, though only by a small percent.

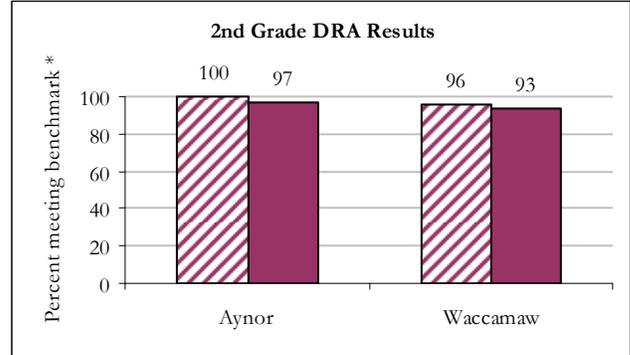
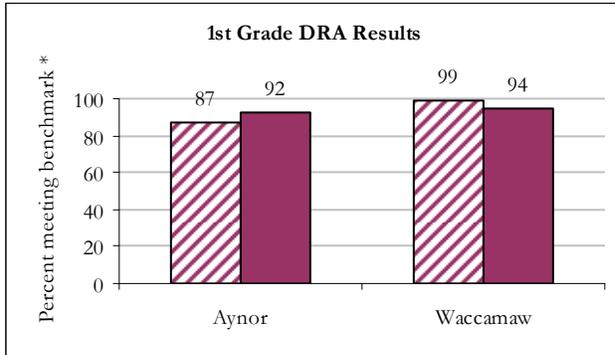
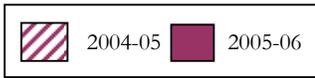
Horry County Outcomes

The six Horry County schools included in our outcomes analysis are Aynor, Kingston, North Myrtle Beach Elementary, North Myrtle Beach Primary South Conway, and Waccamaw. North Myrtle Beach Primary is not included in the PACT and MAP charts because it does not serve the test grades (it is a K-1 school).

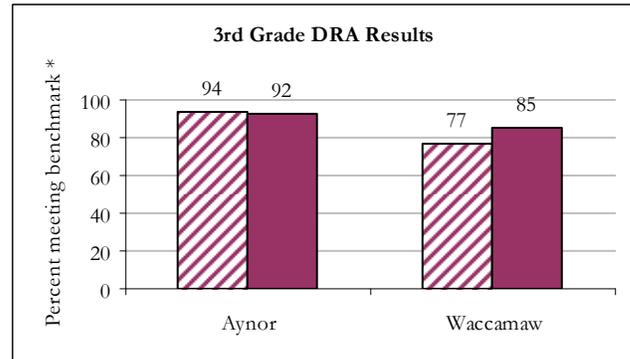
Developmental Reading Assessment Results

The DRA results in Figure 7 are from the Cornerstone test administration. Although Horry County has been administering the DRA for a number of years, they have not required teachers to use the comprehension portion of the test. Teachers in Cornerstone schools in Horry County were asked to administer the test using the comprehension portion for our evaluation. However, because of the high stakes use of the DRA in the district, these data should be interpreted cautiously. It is likely that not all teachers in these schools used the comprehension portion of the test to assess the reading level of their students. The result of this omission would inflate the DRA scores.

Figure 7. Horry County DRA Results



* First Grade: 16, Second Grade: 24, Third Grade: 34
 Notes: DRA scores were not available for Kingston, North Myrtle Beach Elementary, North Myrtle Beach Primary, and South Conway
 Source: Authors' calculations based on data provided by individual schools

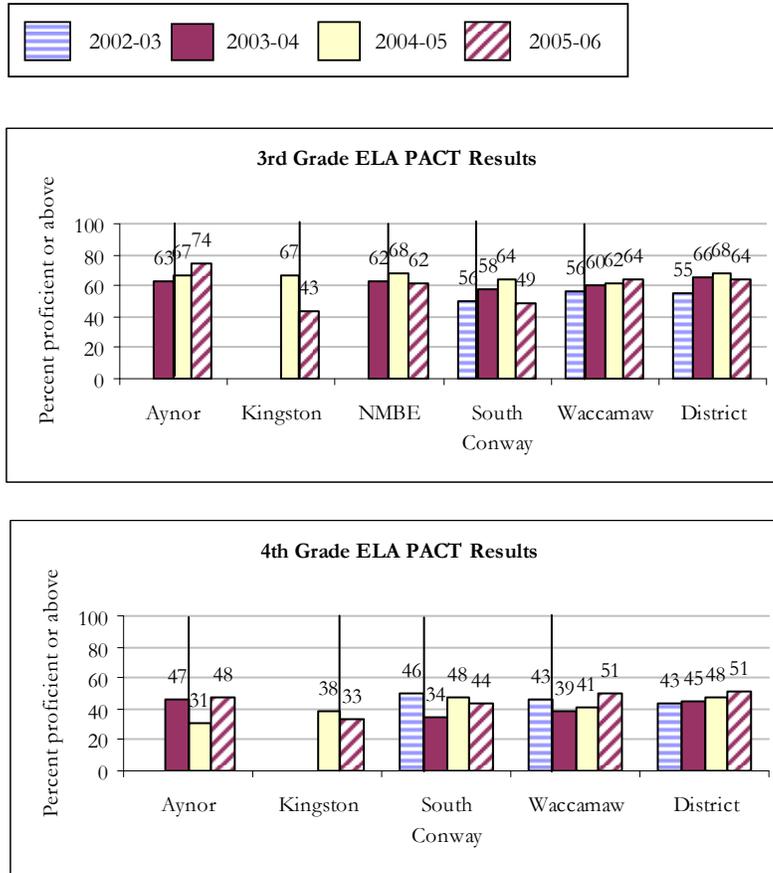


Results remained relatively stable at both Aynor and Waccamaw between 2004-05 and 2005-06. More than 90% of students in the first through third grades at Aynor met the benchmarks, along with over 90% of first and second graders at Waccamaw.

State Mandated Tests

Horry County administers two standardized exams, the state's Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test (PACT) and the district's Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) test. The PACT test is given annually in the spring in grades three through eight. The MAP test targets grades two through five and is a computerized assessment given three times a year.

Figure 8. Horry County PACT Results

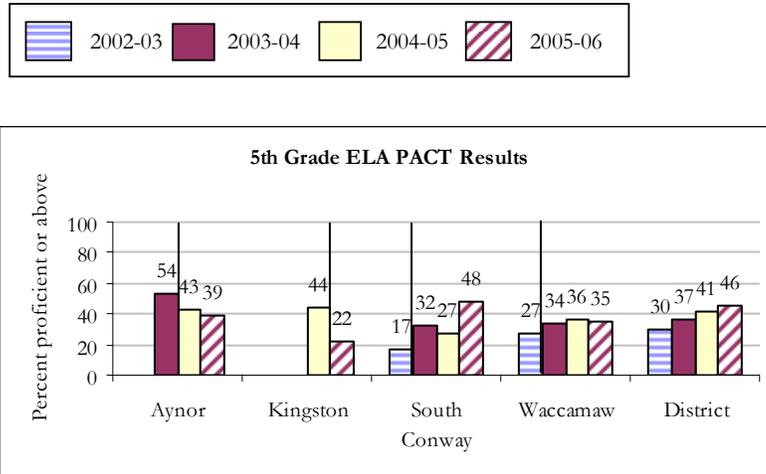


Note: Vertical lines on chart indicate year each school implemented Cornerstone.
 Source: State of Carolina 2006 Annual School Report Cards

The PACT assessment focuses on English Language Arts (ELA). Third graders at Aynor and Waccamaw have shown a small and steady increase, and did not experience the same drop in percent proficient in 2005-06 that the district experienced. South Conway, after two years of steady improvement, saw the percent proficient drop among third graders, while North Myrtle Beach Elementary also saw a drop in percent proficient in 2005-06 after experiencing an increase in their first year of Cornerstone. Kingston’s third grade results dropped 20% in 2005-06, its first year of Cornerstone.

The pattern was similar for fourth grade. Both Aynor and Waccamaw saw an increase in percent proficient, while South Conway and Kingston experienced a decrease. The gains at both Aynor and Waccamaw were much larger than those seen at the district level.

Figure 9. Horry County PACT Results cont.

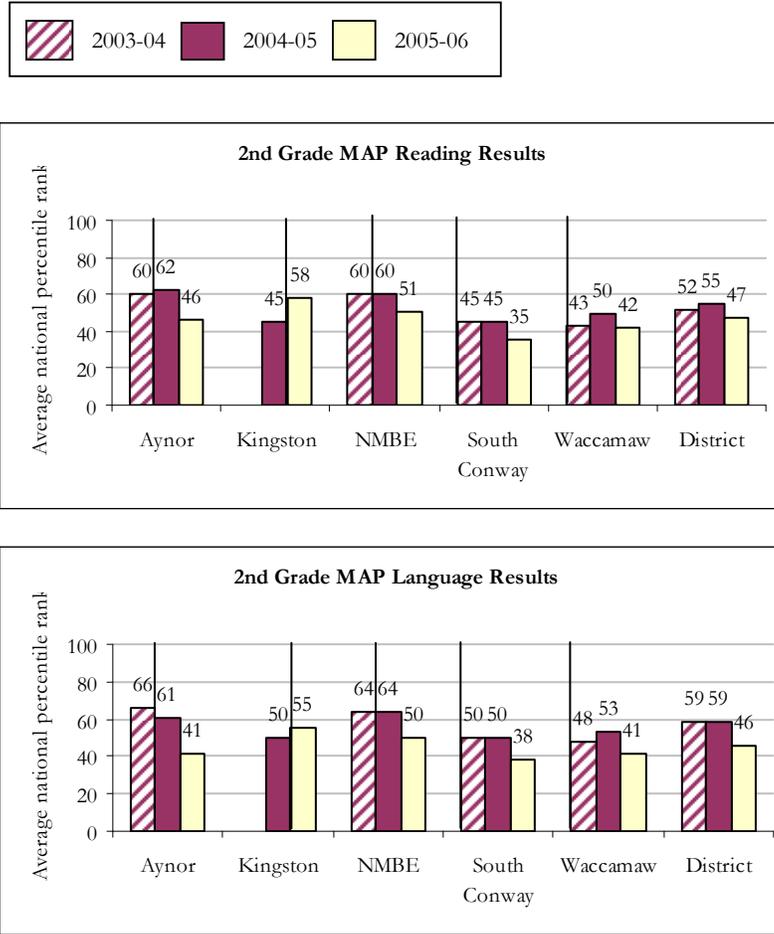


Note: Vertical lines on chart indicate year each school implemented Cornerstone.
 Source: State of Carolina 2006 Annual School Report Cards

The pattern for fifth grade results differs considerably from that seen in the third and fourth grade tests. Waccamaw and Aynor both saw a drop in the percent proficient among fifth graders, while South Conway experienced a large increase in the percent proficient, even larger than that seen by the district. Kingston’s percent proficient for the fifth grade in 2005-06 was half that of 2004-05.

Horry County began using the MAP test in 2003-04, and we present the three years of available data in Figures 10-12. The scores are reported in average national percentile rank.

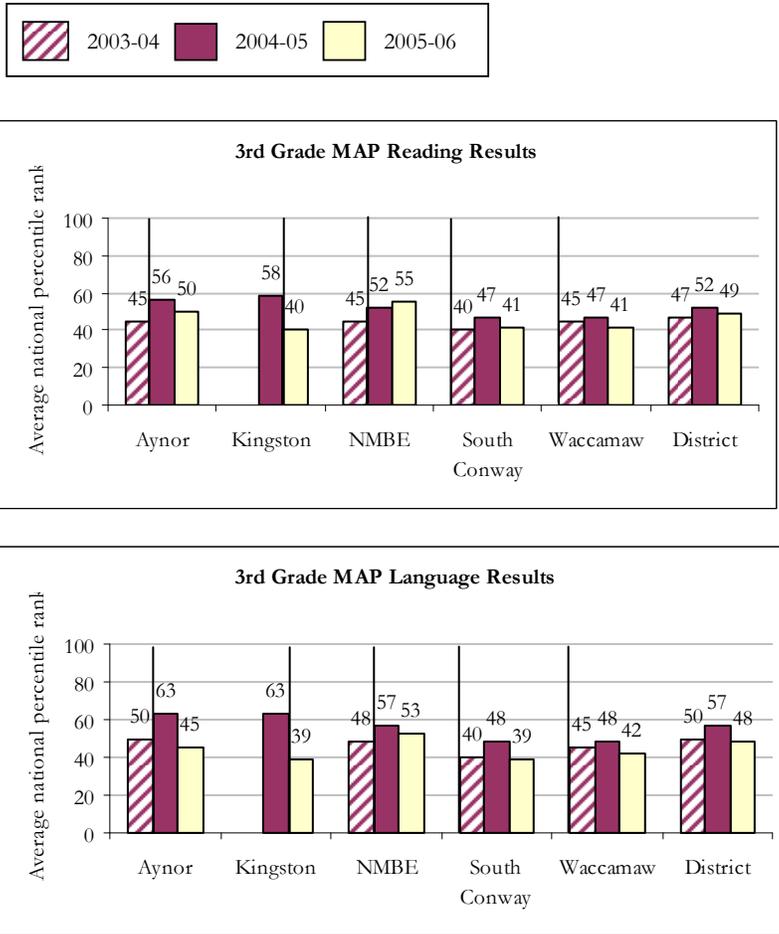
Figure 10. Horry County MAP Results



Note: Vertical lines on chart indicate year each school implemented Cornerstone.
 Source: Horry County 2006 School Assessment Profiles

After experiencing small increases or stable scores in the first two years of the administration of the MAP, all of the Horry County Cornerstone schools of two years or more, and the district, experienced drops in the average national percentile ranks on both the second grade reading and language exams. The largest decreases on both exams were seen at Aynor. Kingston, in its first year of Cornerstone, increased in national percentile rank in both reading and language for the second grade in 2005-06.

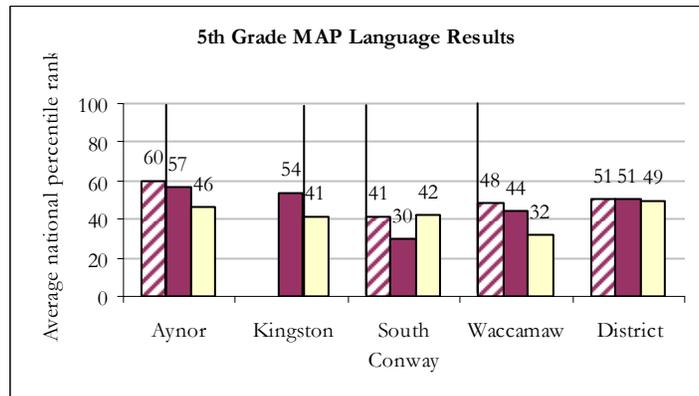
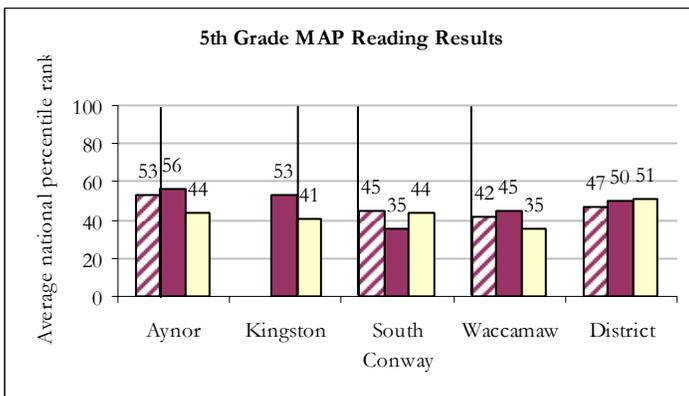
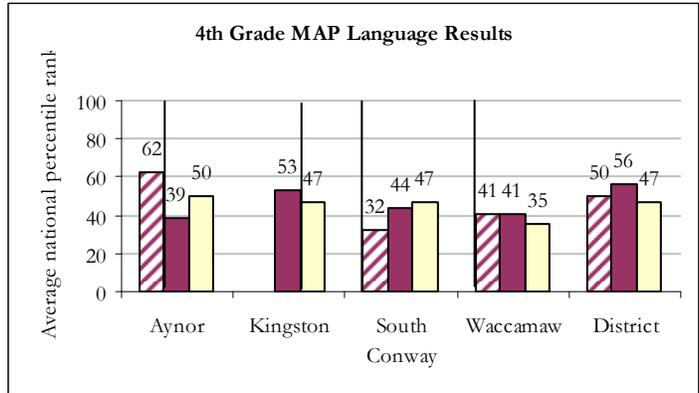
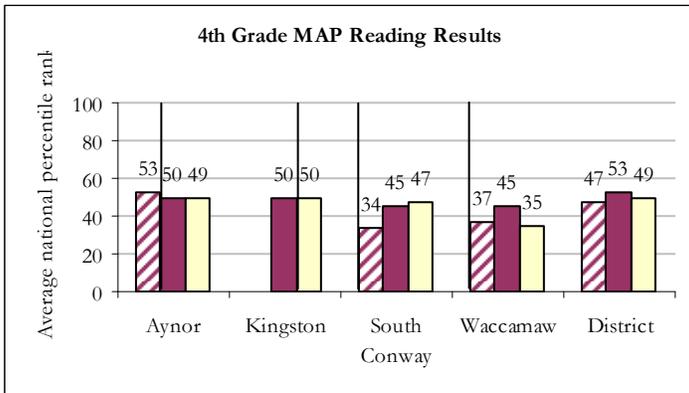
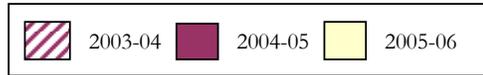
Figure 11. Horry County MAP Results cont.



Note: Vertical lines on chart indicate year each school implemented Cornerstone.
 Source: Horry County 2006 School Assessment Profiles

North Myrtle Beach Elementary was the only school to continue to experience an increase in the average national percentile rank among third graders in reading. Aynor, Kingston, South Conway, and Waccamaw, along with the district, saw their scores decline in 2005-06. All of the schools and the district saw a decline in scores for third grade language results.

Figure 12. Horry County MAP Results cont.



Note: Vertical lines on chart indicate year each school implemented Cornerstone.
 Source: Horry County 2006 School Assessment Profiles

Among fourth graders, only South Conway experienced an improvement in scores for reading, while Aynor, Waccamaw, and the district experienced declines, and Kingston remained stable, between 2004-05 and 2005-06. On the language portion of the test, the fourth grades at Kingston and Waccamaw saw a decline in national percentile rank, along with the district, and Aynor and South Conway’s results increased.

On the fifth grade test, South Conway experienced an improvement in scores, while the other Cornerstone schools all saw a decline on both portions. The district, as a whole, remained relatively stable.

Regression Adjusted Comparisons

We estimated the impact of Cornerstone on the reading and language MAP scores of second, third, fourth, and fifth graders up to 2006. A student was coded as having participated in Cornerstone if he or she was tested at one of the participating schools (Aynor, Kingston, North Myrtle Beach Elementary, South Conway, and Waccamaw) in 2004 or later.¹⁸ The models include controls for time, student demographics (race, sex, and poverty (free or reduced lunch)), and unobserved school characteristics to ensure that results are not driven by events (such as reforms or staff changes) that may have affected the district or specific grades in that time period, nor by changes in the composition or other characteristics of the schools and their populations.

At first glance, based on the basic model, it appeared that Cornerstone had no impact on test scores in Horry County.¹⁹ Yet, further subgroup exploration revealed that Cornerstone improved both the reading and language test scores of black students, who are among the most disadvantaged pupils in the district (Table A5 reports language results; reading results are very similar). Indeed, when we compare the performance of black students in Cornerstone schools to the performance of black students in the non-Cornerstone schools, we find that the former do worse in the first two years of implementation, but perform at par in the third year.²⁰

These models are also a reminder that it takes time for reform to have an impact on test scores: indeed, models such as the one we report that control for how much time has passed since the Cornerstone schools first implemented the reform (rather than the calendar year in which the Initiative started in each school), indicate that black students in schools that have been implementing Cornerstone for less than two years do worse than their non-Cornerstone counterparts in reading and language, while black students in schools that have been implementing Cornerstone for more than two years do as well as the non-Cornerstone students. Other models we have estimated indicated that multiethnic students fare better in Cornerstone schools: While the performance of these students in reading and language is no different when we compare students in schools in their first and second years of Cornerstone implementation to those in the non-Cornerstone schools, by the third year of implementation, multiethnic students in Cornerstone schools outperform non-Cornerstone students.²¹

¹⁸ We, of course, take into consideration the fact that some of these schools joined after 2004. North Myrtle Beach Primary is not included because it does not serve the test grades.

¹⁹ This model is not reported to conserve space for the more interesting model described below. Note that controls for grade are not included because when they were, they did not alter other coefficients, and their coefficients were always insignificant.

²⁰ Unreported results show that there is no difference between the Cornerstone and non-Cornerstone schools for those students.

²¹ Again, these models are not reported in the interest of brevity.

Jackson Outcomes

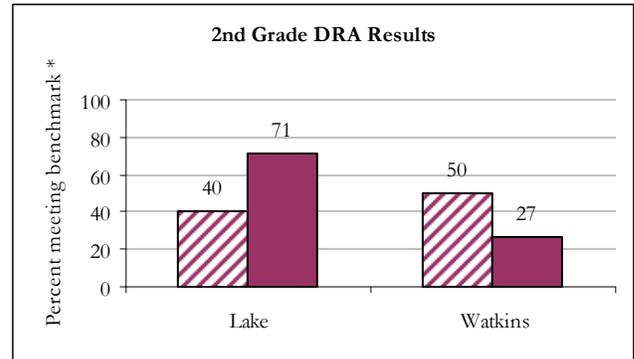
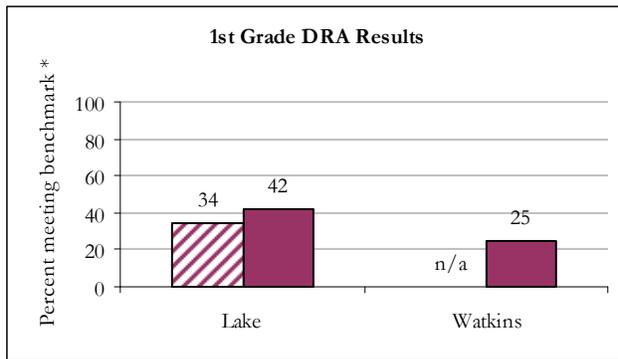
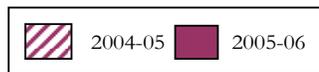
Foundation Schools

Jackson’s two Foundation schools, Lake and Watkins, were in their sixth year of Cornerstone implementation in 2005-06.

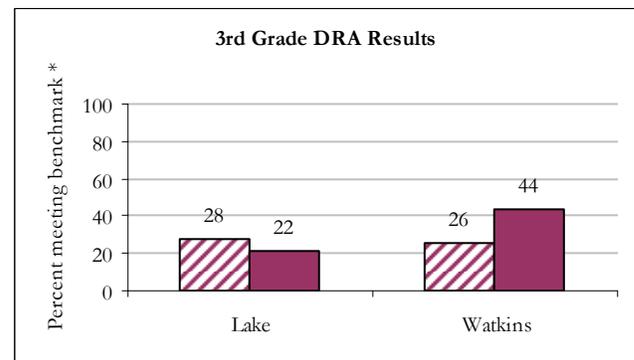
Developmental Reading Assessment Results

DRA data are presented in Figure 13 for the two Jackson Foundation schools.

Figure 13. Jackson DRA Results



* First Grade: 16, Second Grade: 24, Third Grade: 34
 Source: Authors’ calculations based on data provided by individual schools

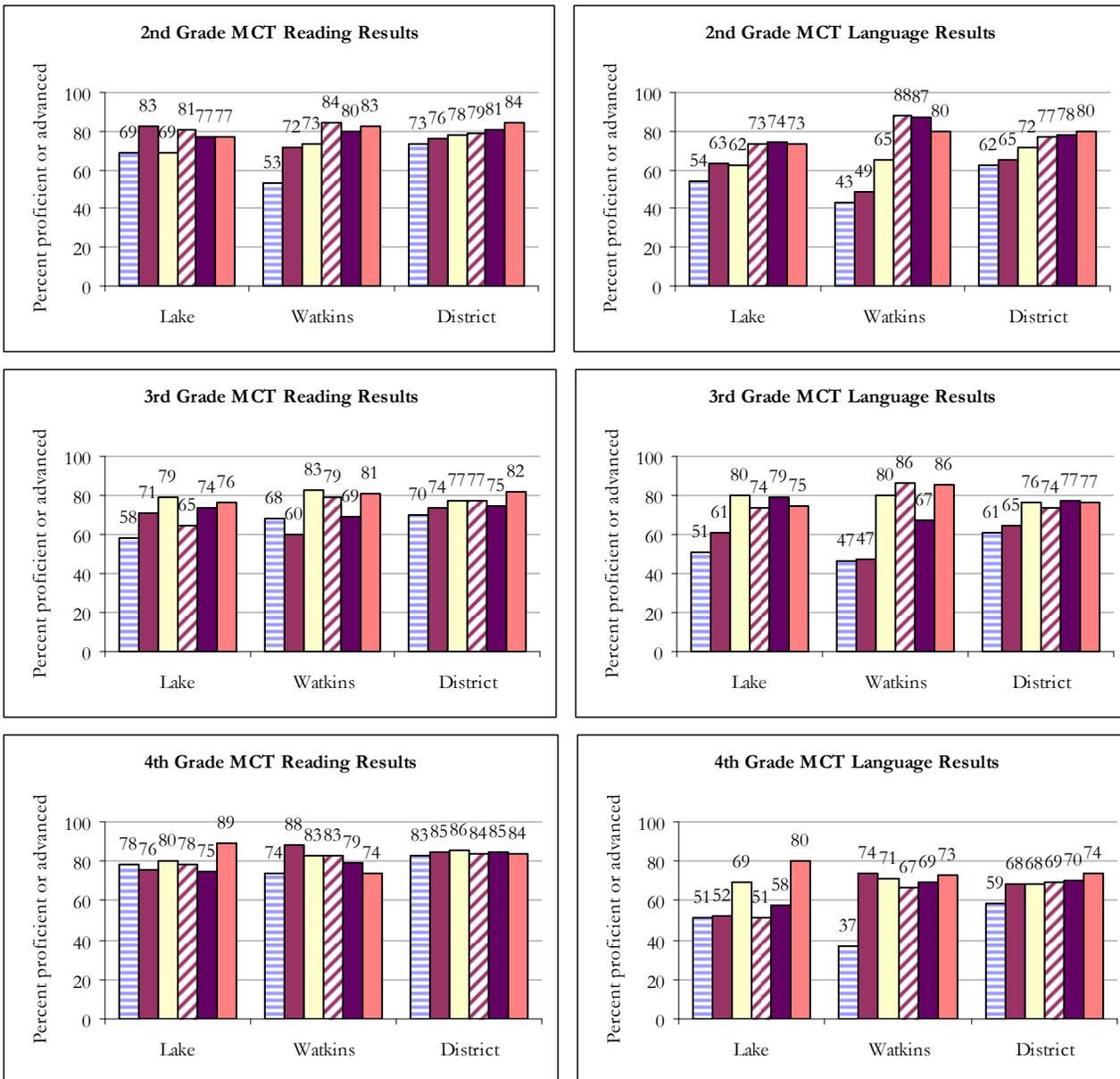


Overall, the DRA scores of students at Lake and Watkins were low; neither school had high levels of students meeting the benchmark, except for the second grade at Lake, which had the better results of the two schools by far. Less than 30% of first and second graders at Watkins and third graders at Lake met the benchmark. Scores did increase between 2004-05 and 2005-06 in the first and second grades at Lake, and the third grade at Watkins.

State Mandated Tests

Mississippi has administered the Mississippi Curriculum Test (MCT) in both reading and language for the six years of Cornerstone’s involvement with Jackson. Figure 14 indicates the percentage of students scoring at the state defined proficiency level or above on the MCT reading and language exams.

Figure 14. Jackson MCT Results

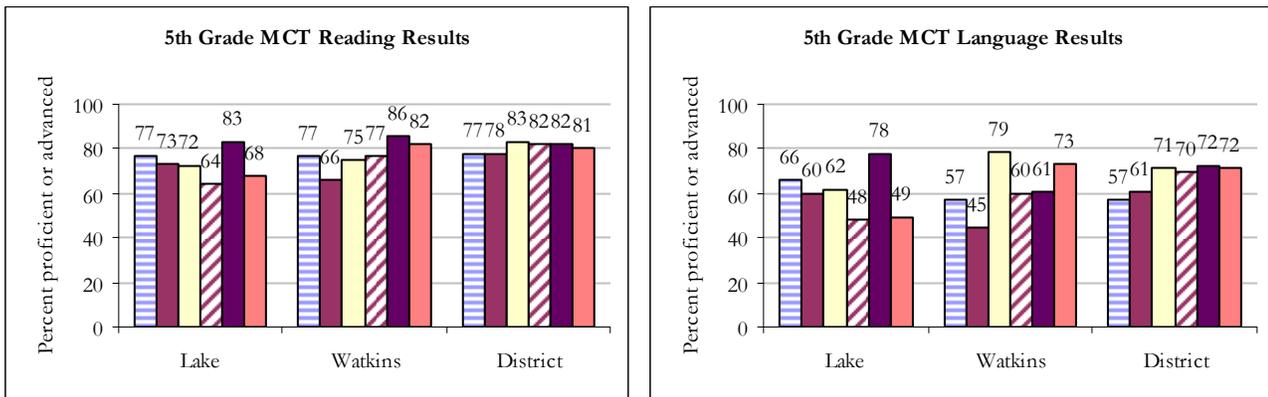


Source: Mississippi Assessment and Accountability Reporting System. (2006). Retrieved January 16, 2007, from <http://orsap.mde.k12.ms.us:8080/MAARS/index.jsp>

In general, the percent proficient or above across grades at Lake and Watkins has increased on both the language and reading exams since the implementation of Cornerstone. The percent of third graders who were proficient or advanced continued to increase at both Lake and Watkins in reading, although both schools were still slightly lower than in 2001-02. On the language test, Lake experienced a small drop in the percent scoring proficient or advanced, while Watkins experienced a large increase.

For the fourth grade reading results, Lake experienced a large increase in the percent proficient or advanced, while Watkins saw a small drop, similar to that found in the district as a whole. On the language exam, both Lake and Watkins experienced an increase. The percent increase at Watkins was similar to that of the district as a whole. Lake, however, saw a very large increase on the language exam; the percent proficient increased by 22%.

Figure 15. Jackson MCT Results cont.



Source: Mississippi Assessment and Accountability Reporting System. (2006). Retrieved January 16, 2007, from <http://orsap.mde.k12.ms.us:8080/MAARS/index.jsp>

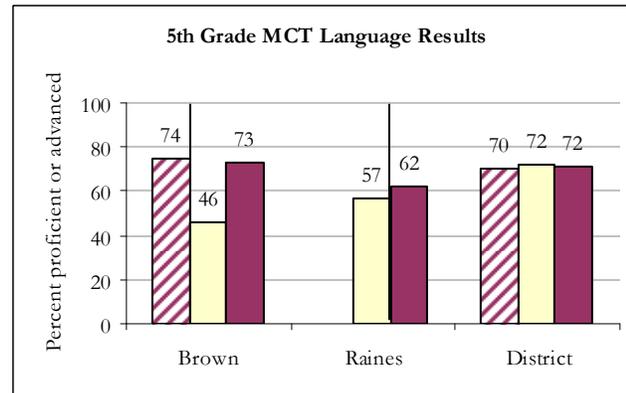
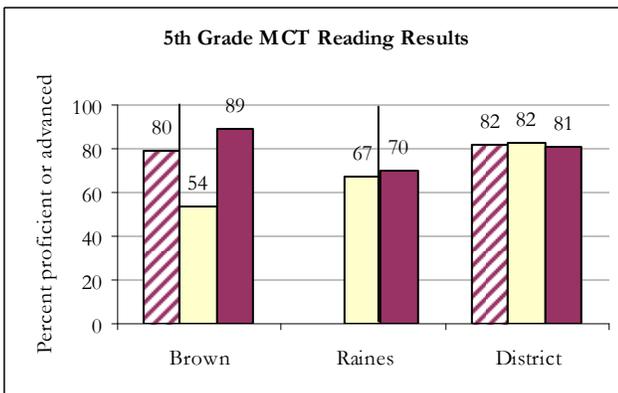
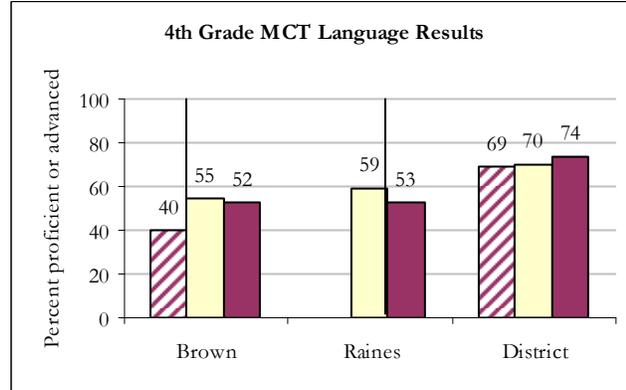
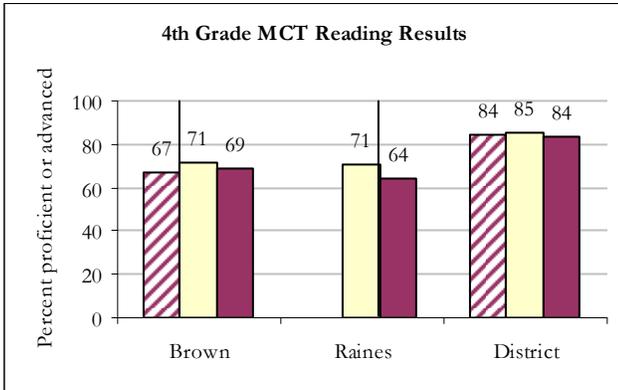
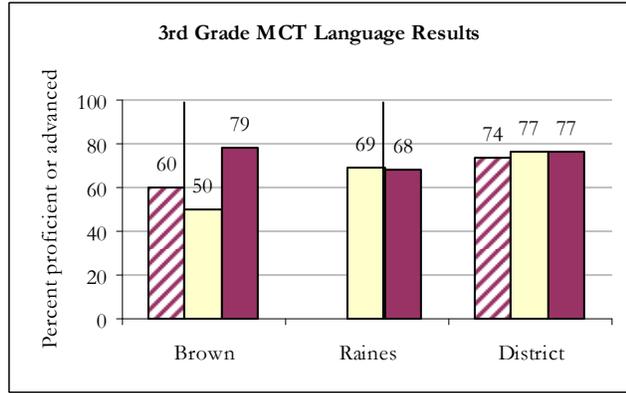
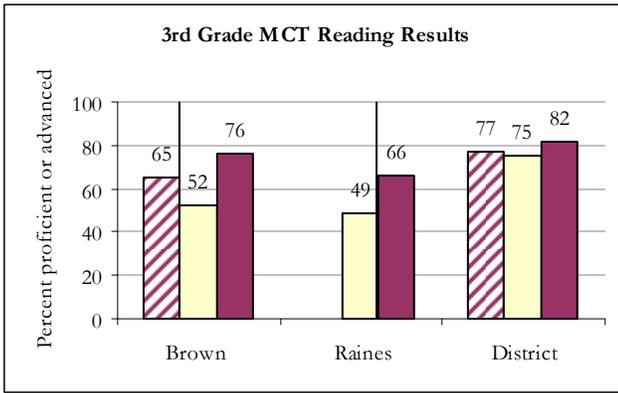
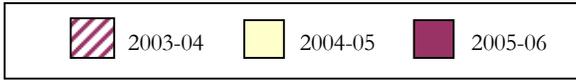
The fifth grade test results for both reading and language show that Lake experienced a sharp decline in the percent proficient or advanced from the prior year, while Watkins experienced a small decrease, similar to the district, in reading and a larger increase in language results, bringing the percent of fifth graders who were proficient or advanced in line with the district averages.

Partner Schools

Of the two Partner schools in Jackson, Brown has been a part of the Initiative since 2003-04 and Raines since 2004-05.

State Mandated Tests

Figure 16. Jackson MCT Results



Note: Vertical lines on chart indicate year each school implemented Cornerstone.
 Source: Mississippi Assessment and Accountability Reporting System. (2006). Retrieved January 16, 2007, from <http://orsap.mde.k12.ms.us:8080/MAARS/index.jsp>

The results of the MCT scores show mixed results for Brown. Large increases in percent proficient or advanced were found for both third and fifth grade reading and language results, while small declines were found in both fourth grade tests. The increases in third and fifth grades were larger than those in the district as a whole. For fifth graders, Brown had a larger percentage of students meeting proficiency than the district.

Raines, in its first year as a Partner school, also had mixed results on the MCT. Results increased on the third grade reading test, as well as both portions of the fifth grade test. However, scores slightly declined at Raines in 2005-06 on the third grade language test and both sections of the fourth grade MCT. Raines' results were lower than those of the district in all grades.

Regression Adjusted Comparisons

We estimated the impact of Cornerstone on the MCT reading and language test scores of second, third, fourth, and fifth graders up to 2006. A student was coded as having participated in Cornerstone if he or she was tested at French, Lake, or Watkins in 2001 or later, at Brown or Galloway in 2005 or later, or at Raines in 2006. The models include controls for time, grades, student demographics (race, sex and poverty (free or reduced lunch)), and unobserved school characteristics, so Cornerstone students are compared to otherwise similar students in the non-Cornerstone schools.

The basic model suggests that students in the Cornerstone schools were on par with the rest of the students in 2001 and 2002 in reading performance, then did better in 2003 and 2004, then were on par again in 2005 and 2006. There was no difference between Cornerstone and non-Cornerstone students on the language exam. This model is not reported to leave room for the more interesting one described below.

Choosing a preferred model to report for Jackson proved quite a challenge, as different ways of aggregating or disaggregating groups of schools and students provided different (but not contradictory) insight. We report a model for reading that differs from the basic model in that it disaggregates the individual grades, and we find that the Cornerstone schools improve over time, driven by improvements in the second grade (Table A6). Indeed, while students in the Cornerstone schools are on par with the other students in 2001 and 2002 in the second grade, starting in 2003, they are doing better than the rest of second grade students, by approximately 0.2 to 0.3 standard deviations. Notably, since 96% of the students in Jackson are black, this

suggests that Cornerstone is helping black students in this district. Results are inconsistent in the other grades however, with gains in some years that are not sustained.

Additional models that were estimated but are not reported suggest that Cornerstone fares particularly well with poor students in Jackson. Indeed, models estimated with poor students only (about half of the observations) indicate that the Cornerstone schools are performing consistently higher than the rest of the schools starting in 2003 in reading; they are also more successful with language than the other schools in grade two in 2005 and 2006, and in grade three in 2006.

In addition, basic model results as described above made it relevant in Jackson to distinguish the older schools (French, Lake, and Watkins) from the younger ones (Galloway, Brown, and Raines). The year 2005 (when the Cornerstone schools went back to being at par with the rest of the schools, after outperforming them in reading for two years) is the year when two schools became Foundation schools and two new schools came in as their Partner schools. Thus, we estimated models that distinguished the two types of schools, and we found that the Partner schools performed at a higher level than the non-Cornerstone schools in reading in grades two and five in both 2005 and 2006, and in grade three in 2006. This interesting finding may suggest that the Foundation schools are losing some of their gains when they shift focus to start working in depth with the Partner schools; however, it may be that the Partner schools are in turn benefiting from the expertise of the Foundation schools.

Muscogee County Outcomes

Downtown, Key, Rigdon Road, and St. Mary’s were in their first year as Cornerstone schools in 2005-06.

Developmental Reading Assessment Results

Table 5. DRA Results for Grades One through Three in Muscogee County

<i>Muscogee</i>		Grade 1 2005-06	Grade 2 2005-06	Grade 3 2005-06
Downtown	<i>Students reading at or above spring benchmarks*</i>	68.1%	84.7%	35.9%
	<i>Total number of students tested</i>	47	72	53
Key	<i>Students reading at or above spring benchmarks*</i>	61.2%	81.0%	77.8%
	<i>Total number of students tested</i>	49	42	36
Rigdon Road	<i>Students reading at or above spring benchmarks*</i>	53.3%	41.5%	62.5%
	<i>Total number of students tested</i>	30	41	32
St. Mary’s	<i>Students reading at or above spring benchmarks*</i>	79.0%	53.1%	71.0%
	<i>Total number of students tested</i>	76	64	69

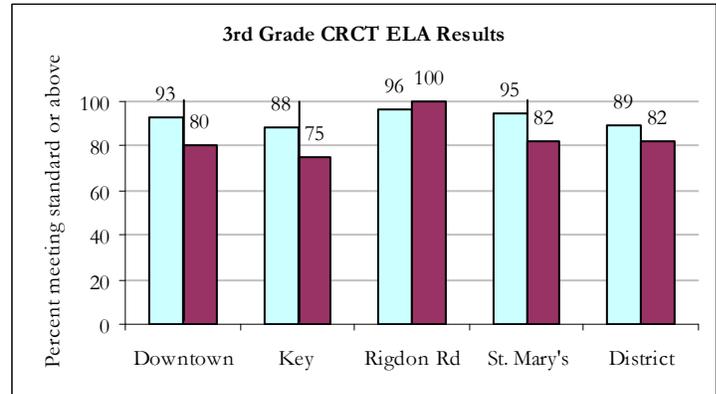
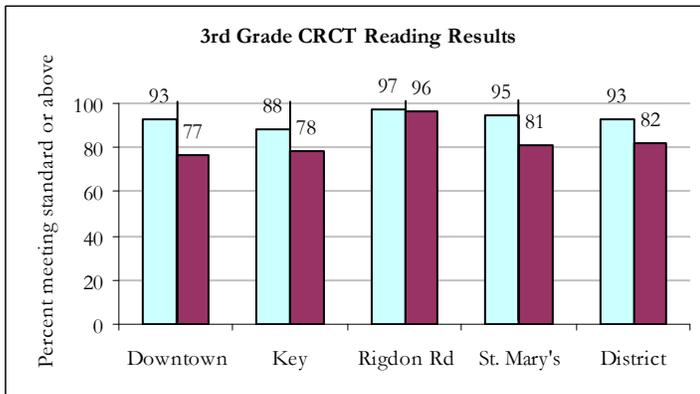
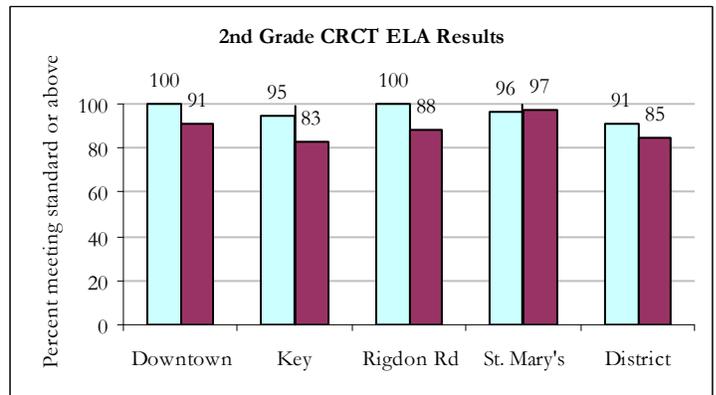
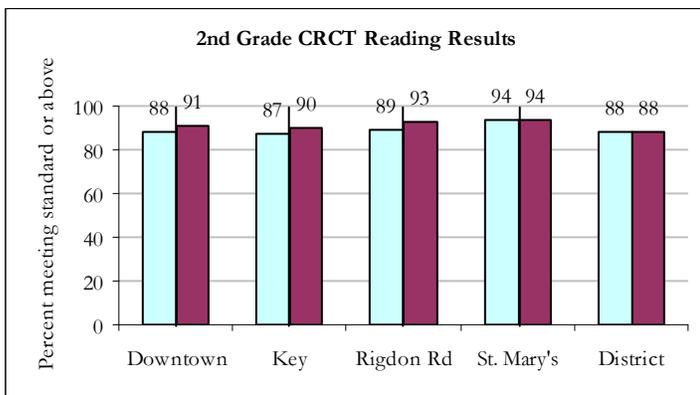
* First Grade: 16, Second Grade: 24, Third Grade: 34
 Source: Authors’ calculations based on data provided by individual schools

More than half of the first graders at all Muscogee County Cornerstone schools scored at or above spring DRA benchmarks in 2005-06. In the second grade, Downtown and Key scored substantially higher than Rigdon Road and St. Mary’s, with 80% and 78% meeting the benchmark respectively. Downtown had only 36% of third graders meet the DRA benchmark, while the other three schools had nearly twice that percentage or more meeting the benchmark in 2005-06.

State Mandated Tests

The state of Georgia administers the Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) in reading and English/language arts (ELA) to grades one through eight at the end of each school year. Figure 17 shows the percent of students at Muscogee County Cornerstone schools meeting or exceeding the state standard.

Figure 17. Muscogee County CRCT Results



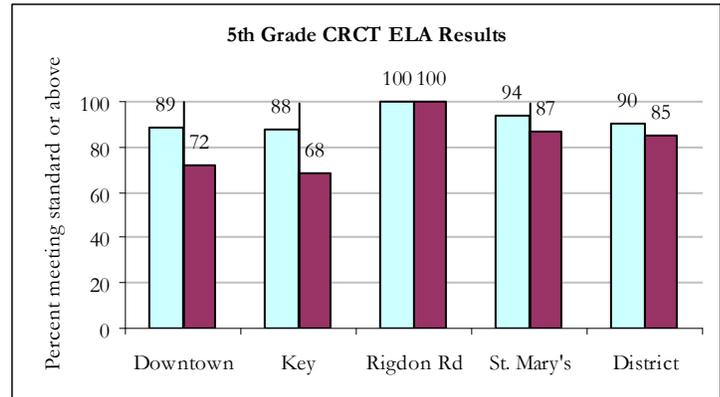
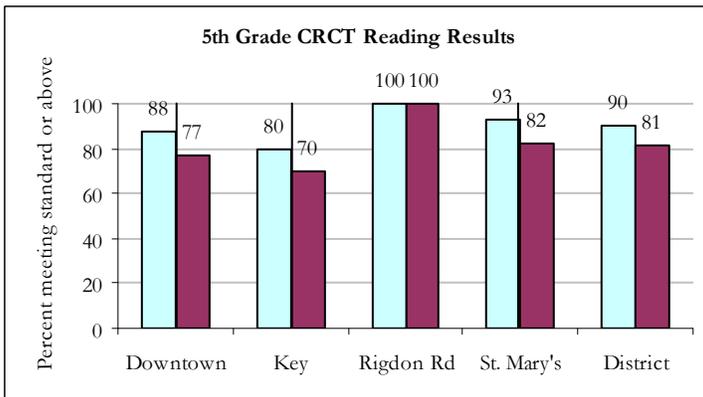
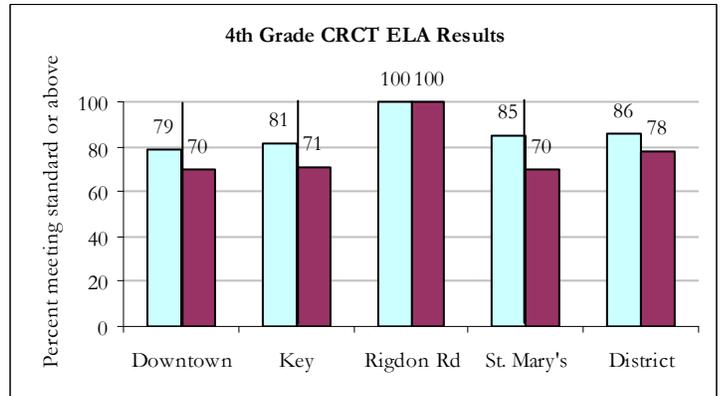
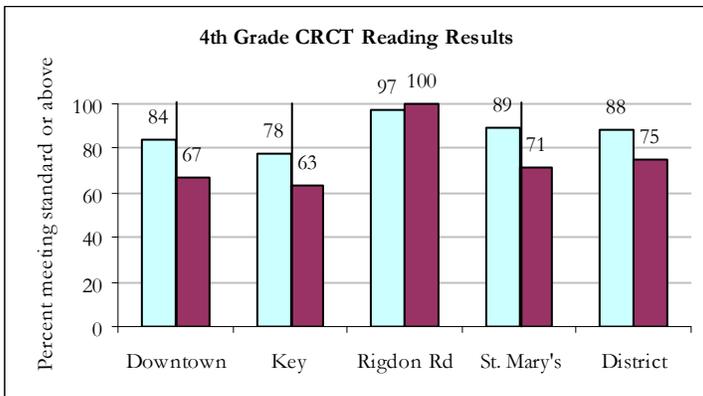
Note: Vertical lines on chart indicate year each school implemented Cornerstone.
 Source: 2005-2006 State of Georgia K-12 Report Card

Students in the second grade at all four schools either increased in proficiency on the reading portion or remained stable between 2004-05 and 2005-06. Reading results in grade two for all Cornerstone schools were also higher than those of the district in 2005-06. Downtown, Key, and Rigdon Road, along with the district, all saw declines in percent meeting the standard on the second grade ELA portion of the test, though scores at St. Mary's did improve slightly.

Percent meeting state standards in the third grade declined for all schools in both reading and ELA, except for Rigdon Road, which saw a small increase in ELA results between 2004-05 and 2005-06.

On the fourth and fifth grade reading and ELA tests, all schools declined from 2004-05 in percent meeting the standard except for Rigdon Road, as shown in Figure 18. Rigdon Road had 100% proficiency in both portions of the fourth and fifth grade tests in 2005-06.

Figure 18. Muscogee County CRCT Results cont.



Note: Vertical lines on chart indicate year each school implemented Cornerstone.
 Source: 2005-2006 State of Georgia K-12 Report Card

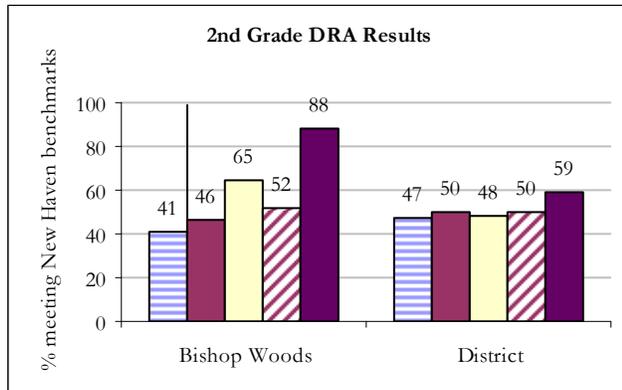
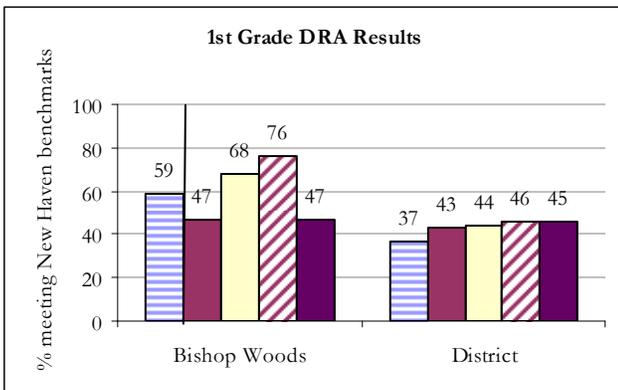
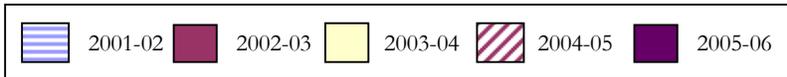
New Haven Outcomes

In 2005-06, there was only Cornerstone school in New Haven, Bishop Woods, which was in its fourth year of implementation.

Developmental Reading Assessment Results

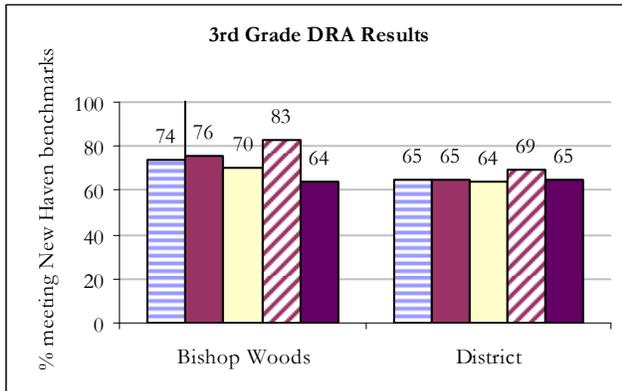
The charts below show the DRA results for Bishop Woods and the district as a whole since Cornerstone began working in the district. These data were provided by the New Haven School District and reflect the New Haven benchmarks.²²

Figure 19. New Haven DRA Results



* First Grade: 16, Second Grade: 28, Third Grade: 34
 Note: Vertical lines on chart indicate year each school implemented Cornerstone.
 Source: Authors' calculations based on data provided by district

The percent of first graders at Bishop Woods meeting spring New Haven benchmarks dropped in 2005-06 after experiencing a continuous increase since Cornerstone was implemented in the



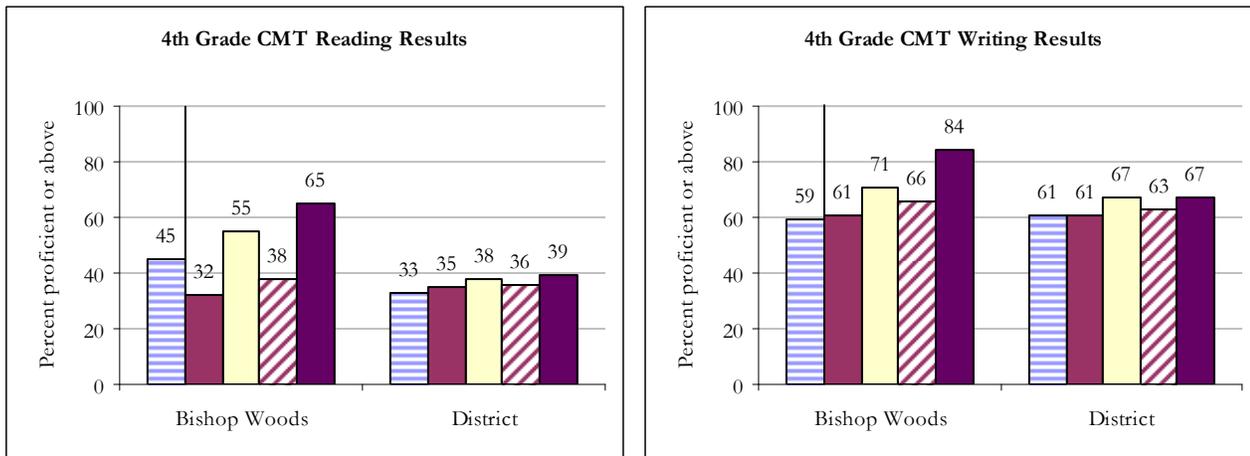
school. Third grade scores also decreased substantially in 2005-06. On the other hand, Bishop Woods experienced a large increase among second graders, where 88% of students were meeting

²² The spring New Haven benchmarks across these four years have not changed. To achieve the benchmark, students must be at DRA level 16 in first grade, 28 in second grade, and 34 in third grade. These benchmarks are slightly higher for second graders than what we used to assess the other Cornerstone schools.

the benchmark. Grades one and two at Bishop Woods were outperforming the district in percent meeting New Haven benchmarks, while grade three was on par with the district.

State Mandated Tests

Figure 20. New Haven Fourth Grade CMT Results

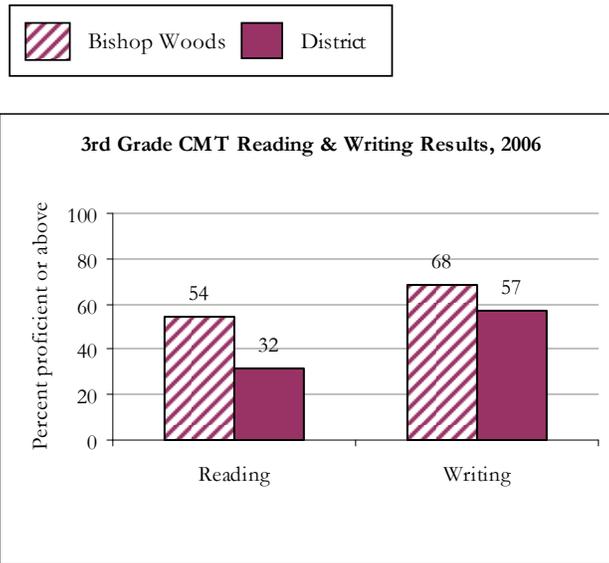


Note: Vertical lines on chart indicate year each school implemented Cornerstone.
 Source: Connecticut Online Report Center. (2006). Retrieved January 8, 2007, from <http://www.ctreports.com>

In spring 2006, Bishop Woods’ fourth grade students experienced a large increase in percent proficient on both the reading and writing portions of the CMT, compared to fall 2004. Bishop Woods’ results for both reading and writing continued to outperform the district as a whole.

The CMT was administered to third graders for the first time in the 2005-06 school year. These data show students at Bishop Woods outperforming third graders in the district as a whole in both reading and writing.

Figure 21. New Haven Third Grade CMT Results



Source: Connecticut Online Report Center. (2006). Retrieved January 8, 2007, from <http://www.ctreports.com>

Springfield Outcomes

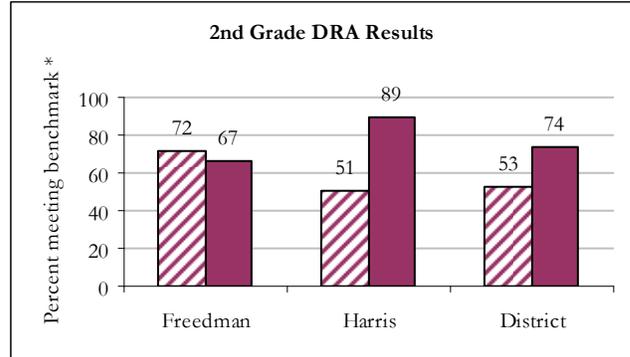
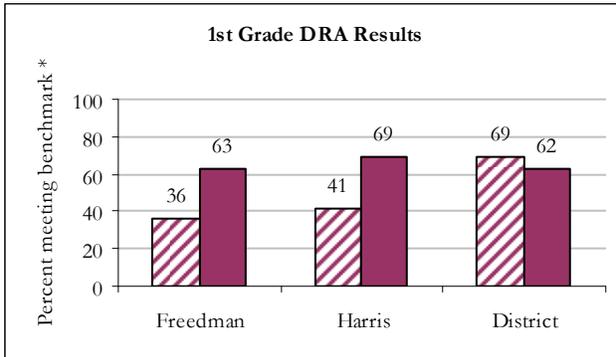
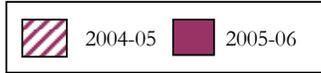
Two Springfield schools, Freedman and Harris, have been involved with Cornerstone for four years.

Developmental Reading Assessment Results

The DRA is given across schools in grades K-2 in Springfield. The Cornerstone schools were asked to administer the assessment to third graders, in addition to the grades already tested by district mandate.²³

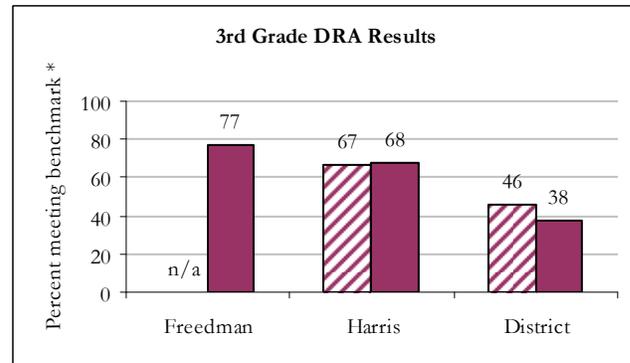
²³ We received the DRA results for only nine second grade students from Freedman.

Figure 22. Springfield DRA Results



*First Grade: 12, Second Grade: 20, Third Grade: 34
 Source: Authors' calculations based on data provided by district

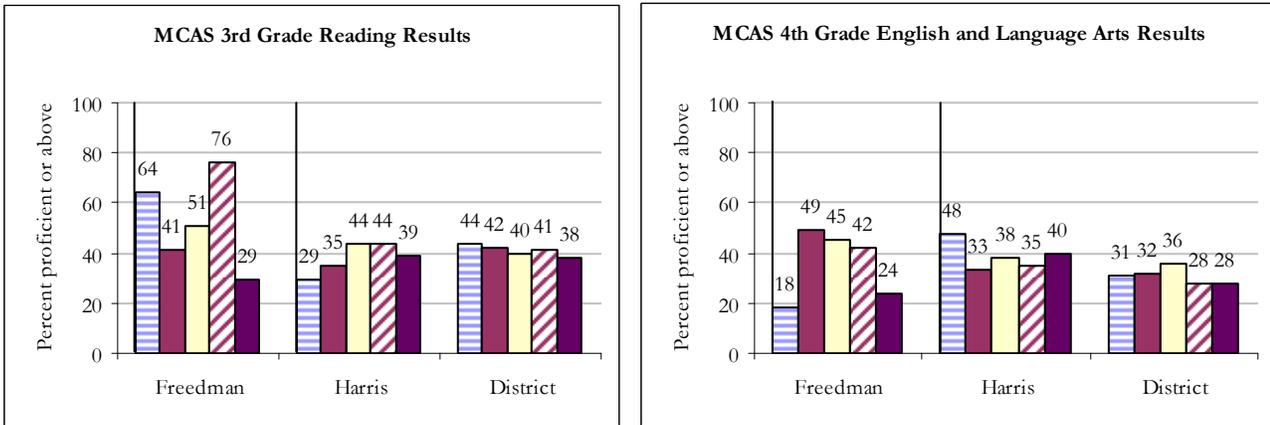
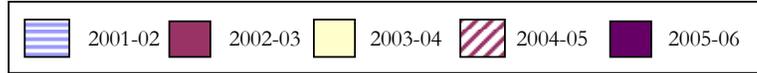
Scores increased at Freedman and Harris in all grades between 2004-05 and 2005-06, except for Freedman's second grade, which decreased slightly. The second grade at Freedman was also the only exception in comparing Freedman and Harris to the district, with all other grades surpassing the district's results.



State Mandated Tests

The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) has been administered to Springfield's third and fourth graders for the past five years. The MCAS measures students' proficiency levels in reading in the third grade and English and language arts (ELA) in the fourth grade. Figure 23 shows the percent of students scoring proficient or above on the MCAS.

Figure 23. Springfield MCAS Results



Note: Vertical lines on chart indicate year each school implemented Cornerstone.
 Source: Massachusetts Department of Education. (2006). Retrieved January 10, 2007, from <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/mcas.aspx>

On the MCAS third grade reading exam, Freedman’s scores dropped considerably between 2004-05 and 2005-06, after having had a substantial increase between 2003-04 and 2004-05. Harris’ scores showed a small decrease, similar to that of the district, in 2005-06.

At Freedman, the percent of fourth graders rated proficient on the ELA test has dropped steadily since the implementation of Cornerstone. However, Harris’ fourth grade test scores have surpassed the district average for the past five years, and increased between 2004-05 and 2005-06.

Regression Adjusted Comparisons

We estimated the impact of Cornerstone on the MCAS test scores of third and fourth graders up to 2006. A student was coded as having participated in Cornerstone if he or she was tested at Freedman or Harris in 2003 or later. As in the other districts, the models include controls for year, grades, student demographics (race, sex, poverty (free or reduced lunch), and immigrant status), and unobserved school characteristics, to ensure that results are not driven by events (such as reforms or staff changes) that may have affected the district or specific grades in that time period, nor by changes in the composition or other characteristics of the schools and their populations.

Basic regression results for Springfield reflect that Cornerstone chooses to work in particularly low-performing schools, and indicate that the Initiative brings them up to par with other schools in the district (Table A7). Indeed, in 2003, i.e. towards the beginning of

implementation, the Cornerstone schools have lower performance than the rest of the schools (by 0.30 standard deviations). By 2004, however, the Cornerstone schools perform at the same level as the other schools in the district, and have remained on par with the rest of the schools since. Notably, in additional models that we do not report in the interest of brevity, we see that these results are largely driven by improvements in the performance of third graders.

Stamford Outcomes

The school year 2005-06 was Stamford’s first year of involvement with Cornerstone. Four schools, Hart, Springdale, Stark, and Stillmeadow, participated.

Developmental Reading Assessment Results

Table 6 shows DRA results for grades one through three at the Stamford Cornerstone schools for 2005-06.

Table 6. DRA Results for Grades One through Three in Stamford

<i>Stamford</i>		Grade 1 2005-06	Grade 2 2005-06	Grade 3 2005-06
Hart	<i>Students reading at or above spring benchmarks</i>	48.8%	79.7%	60.3%
	<i>Total number of students tested</i>	86	69	78
Springdale	<i>Students reading at or above spring benchmarks</i>	31.8%	63.3%	68.4%
	<i>Total number of students tested</i>	85	98	76
Stark	<i>Students reading at or above spring benchmarks</i>	50.5%	64.8%	68.3%
	<i>Total number of students tested</i>	101	91	82
Stillmeadow	<i>Students reading at or above spring benchmarks</i>	63.2%	73.1%	74.4%
	<i>Total number of students tested</i>	95	93	78

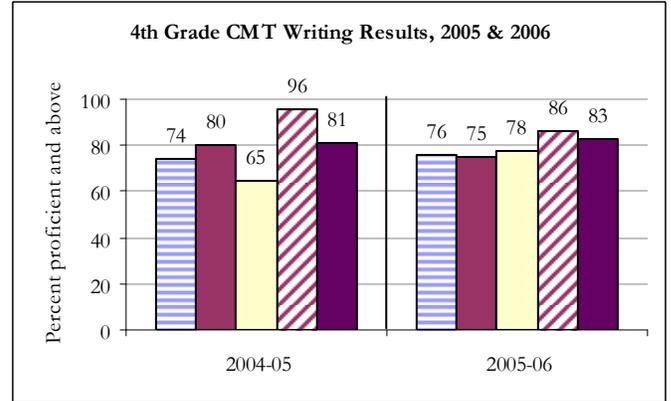
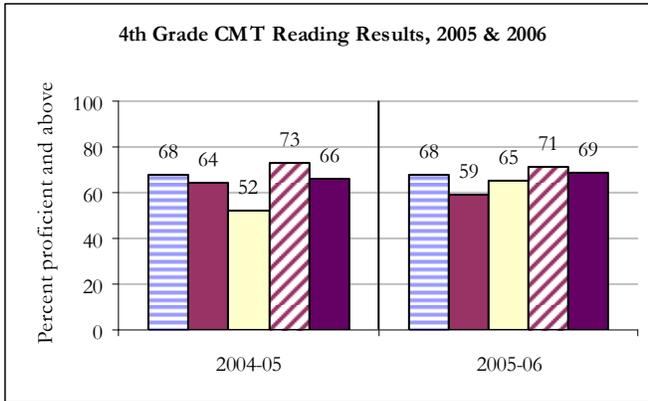
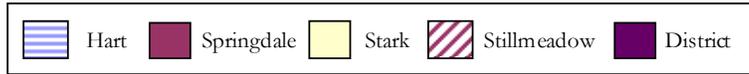
* First Grade: 18, Second Grade: 28, Third Grade: 38
 Source: Authors’ calculations based on data provided by district

Other than the first grades at Hart and Springdale, all grades at the four Cornerstone schools in Stamford had at least 50% of students reading at or above spring DRA benchmarks. Stillmeadow had the highest average percent of students meeting benchmarks of the Stamford Cornerstone schools in 2005-06.

State Mandated Tests

Figure 24 shows the percent of students scoring proficient or above on the fourth grade reading and writing tests at Hart, Springdale, Stark, and Stillmeadow, as well as district-wide.

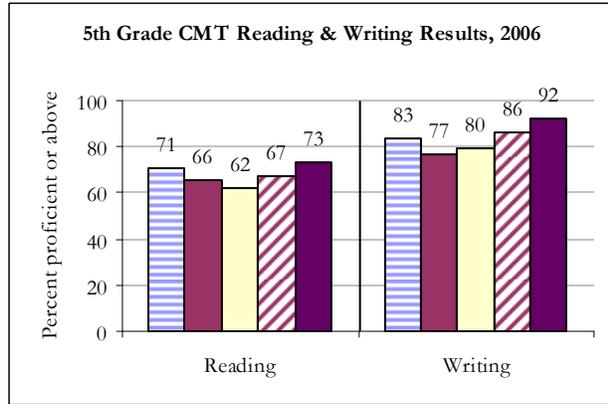
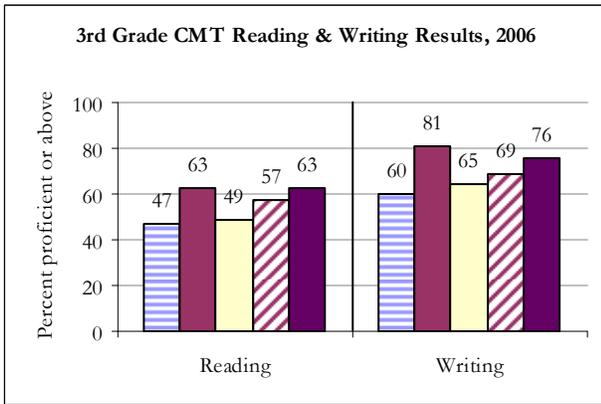
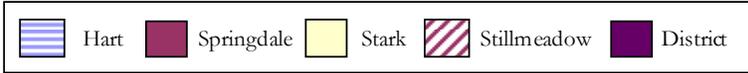
Figure 24. Stamford Fourth Grade CMT Results



Note: Vertical lines on chart indicate year each school implemented Cornerstone.
 Source: Connecticut Online Report Center. (2006). Retrieved January 8, 2007, from <http://www.ctreports.com>

Fourth graders at Hart remained stable in percent proficient on the reading portion of the test, and increased in writing proficiency between 2004-05 and 2005-06. Fourth graders' proficiency at Springdale decreased in both portions of the test for 2005-06, while Stark's fourth grade results increased substantially in both reading and writing. Stillmeadow's scores have declined since 2004-05, though they continued to surpass the district's results.

Figure 25. Stamford Third and Fifth Grade CMT Results



Note: Vertical lines on chart indicate year each school implemented Cornerstone.
 Source: Connecticut Online Report Center. (2006). Retrieved January 8, 2007, from <http://www.ctreports.com>

On the third grade test, the percentage proficient at Hart, Stark, and Stillmeadow was below the district on both portions, while Springdale was on par with the district in reading and had a higher percent proficient in writing in 2005-06.

All four schools had lower proficiency than the district in reading and writing on the fifth grade test, though more than half of fifth graders were proficient on both portions of the exam at all of the Cornerstone schools.

Talladega Outcomes

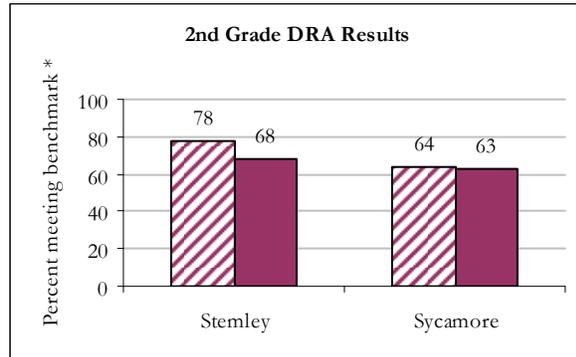
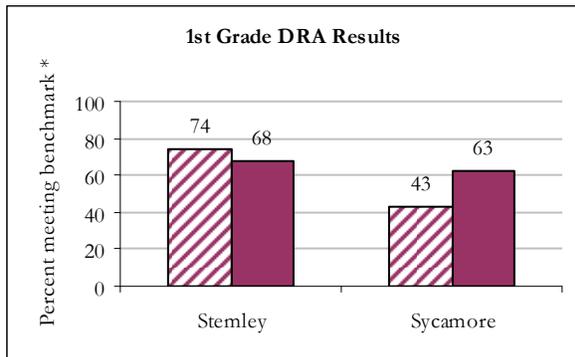
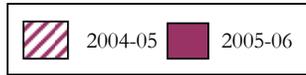
Foundation Schools

Both Stemley and Sycamore were in their sixth year of Cornerstone implementation in the 2005-06 school year.

Developmental Reading Assessment Results

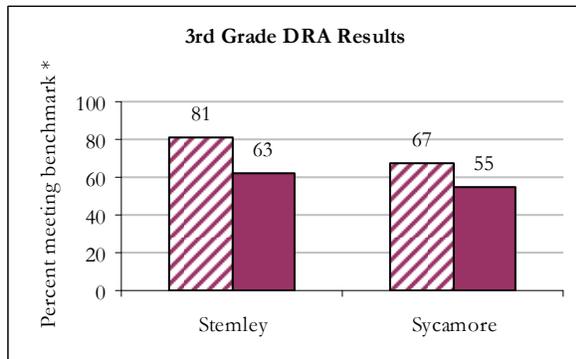
Figure 26 shows DRA results from the universal administration of the DRA in the Talladega Foundation schools.

Figure 26. Talladega DRA Results



* First Grade: 16, Second Grade: 24, Third Grade: 34
 Source: Authors' calculations based on data provided by individual schools

Stemley and Sycamore's students scored well on the DRA, with the majority meeting spring DRA benchmarks. Scores did, however, decrease at both schools in all grades other than Sycamore's first grade, which saw a 20% increase in results.

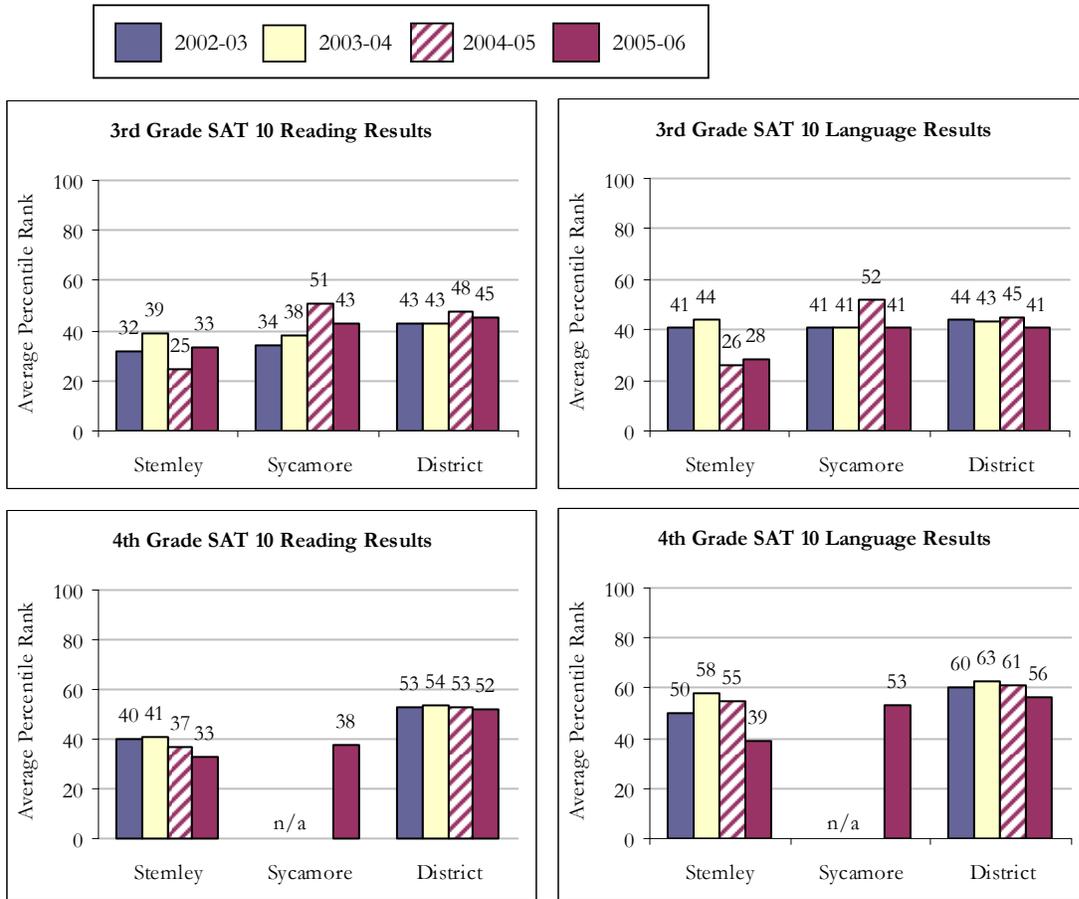


State Mandated Tests

In 2005-06, Alabama administered three standardized tests: the Stanford 10 (SAT 10), a nationally normed test; the Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test (ARMT), a state test in its third year of use in 2005-06; and the Alabama Direct Assessment of Writing, given in the fifth grade.

Figure 27 shows the results of the SAT 10 for the Talladega Foundation schools and the district average. The results shown below are the average percentile rank of students in the Foundation schools and in the district as a whole.

Figure 27. Talladega SAT 10 Results



Note: Sycamore did not enroll a fourth grade class prior to the 2005-06 school year.

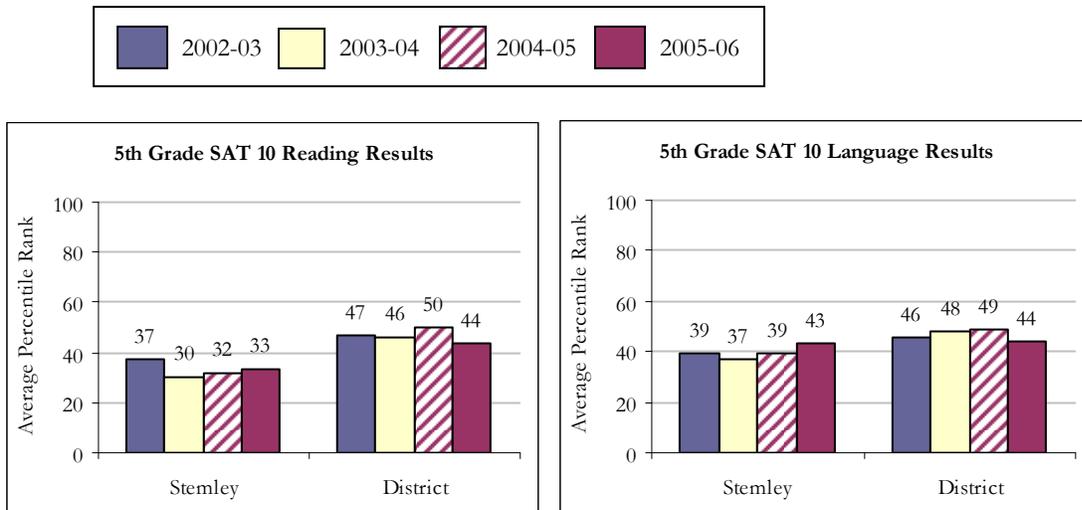
Source: Alabama State Department of Education, Accountability and Reporting. (2006). Retrieved January 10, 2007, from <http://www.alsde.edu/Accountability/preAccountability.asp>

On the SAT 10, Stemley’s third graders in 2005-06 had a substantial increase in the average percentile rank on the reading test and a smaller increase on the language test. Sycamore, on the other hand, saw a large decrease in average percentile rank of their third graders in both reading and language, ranking on par with the district average.

The fourth graders at Stemley also experienced a slight decline in average percentile rank on the reading test, along with a larger decline in results for the language test. Sycamore enrolled fourth graders for the first time in 2005-06. These fourth graders achieved a much lower average percentile rank than the district in reading, though their performance was only slightly lower than the district’s in language.

Stemley’s fifth grade results have increased steadily in average percentile rank since 2003-04 on both the reading and language portions of the SAT 10, while district results decreased in 2005-06 on both portions of the test.

Figure 28. Talladega SAT 10 Results, Fifth Grade

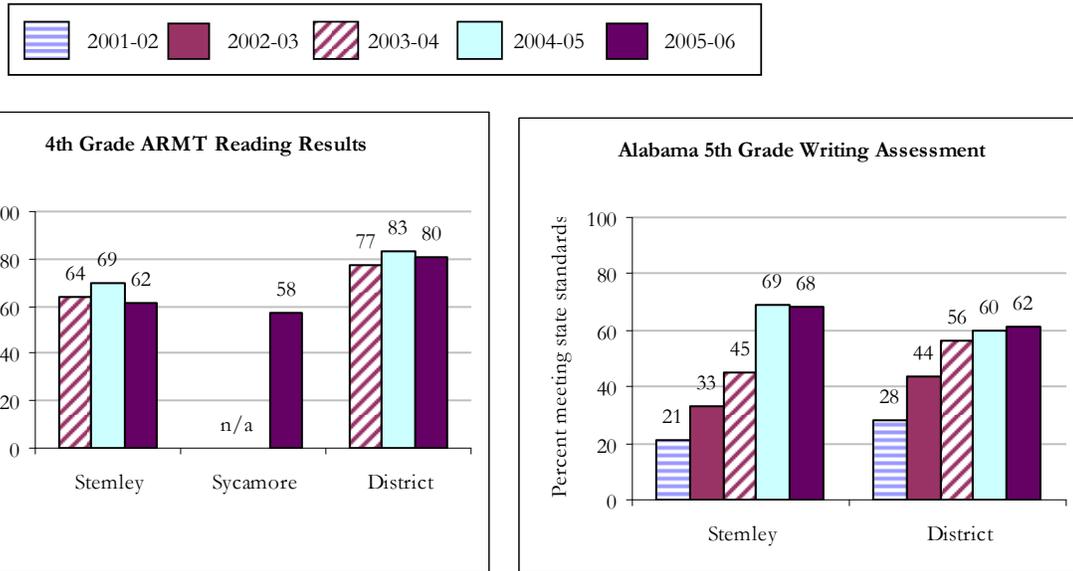


Source: Alabama State Department of Education, Accountability and Reporting. (2006). Retrieved January 10, 2007, from <http://www.alsde.edu/Accountability/preAccountability.asp>

The ARMT measures student proficiency levels. Figure 29 shows the percent of fourth grade students at Stemley who scored proficient or above on the ARMT test. Fourth graders' results at Stemley have decreased in 2005-06 after increasing between 2003-04 and 2004-05. The district shows a similar pattern for the same period. In its first year enrolling a fourth grade, Sycamore's results were well below the district average.

The Alabama Direct Assessment of Writing has been given to fifth graders since the start of Cornerstone.²⁴ Figure 29 indicates that since 2001-02, the percent of fifth graders at Stemley meeting the state standard was increasing. In 2005-06 however, Stemley showed a slight decrease, but still received higher results than the district. The district's percentage meeting state standards has continued to increase steadily since 2001-02.

Figure 29. Talladega ARMT and Direct Assessment of Writing Results



Note: Fourth grade ARMT data are not available for Sycamore prior to the 2005-06 school year.
 Source: Alabama State Department of Education, Accountability and Reporting. (2006). Retrieved January 10, 2007, from <http://www.alsde.edu/Accountability/preAccountability.asp>

²⁴ The Alabama Direct of Assessment of Writing in 2000-01 was scored differently than later tests. For this reason, these results are not presented here.

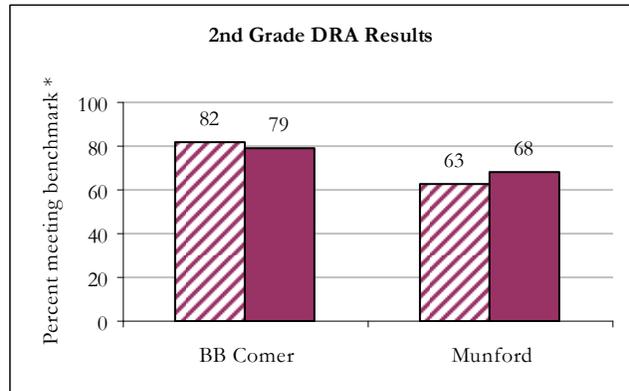
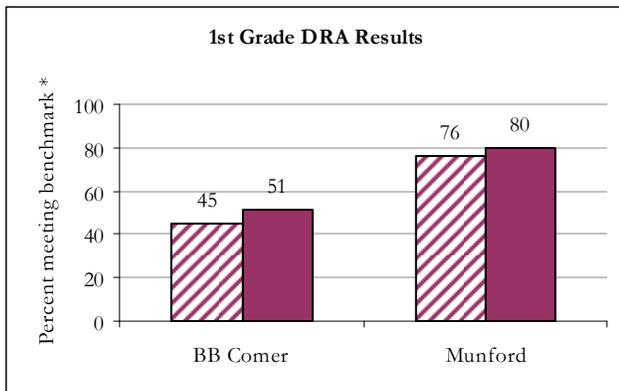
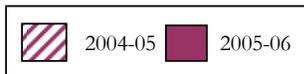
Partner Schools

There were two Partner schools in Talladega in 2005-06, B.B. Comer and Munford. Both schools were in their second year of implementation during 2005-06.

Developmental Reading Assessment Results

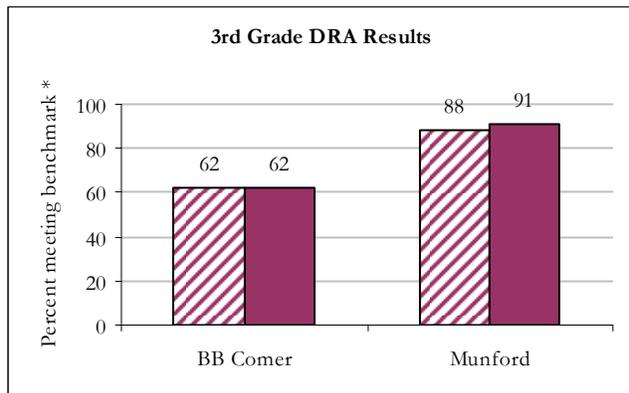
Figure 30 shows results from the universal administration of the DRA in the Talladega Partner schools.

Figure 30. Talladega DRA Results



* First Grade: 16, Second Grade: 24, Third Grade: 34
 Source: Authors' calculations based on data provided by individual schools

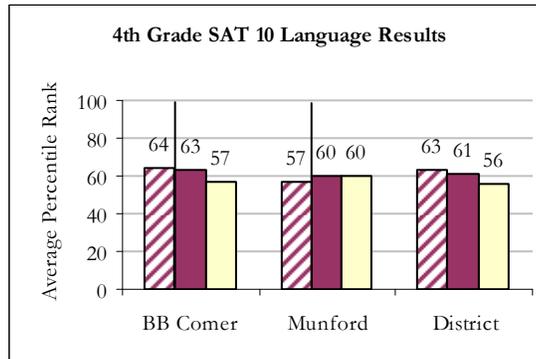
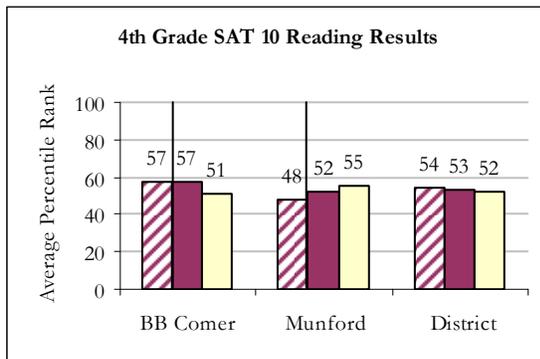
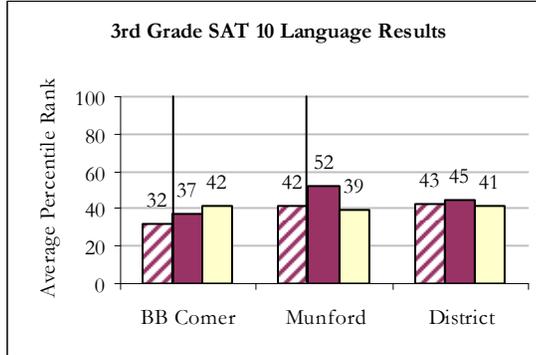
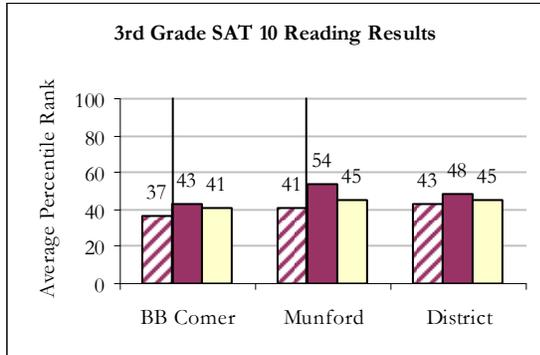
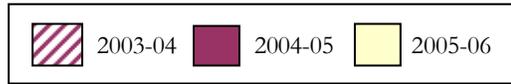
B.B. Comer students did well on the DRA, with the majority of students meeting the spring DRA benchmarks. Munford's students also scored well, with over 90% of students reading at or above the DRA benchmarks in the third grade and well more



than half of students in grades one and two meeting the benchmarks. Scores at both schools either increased or remained stable for all grades between 2004-05 and 2005-06, except for the second grade at B.B. Comer, where they decreased.

State Mandated Tests

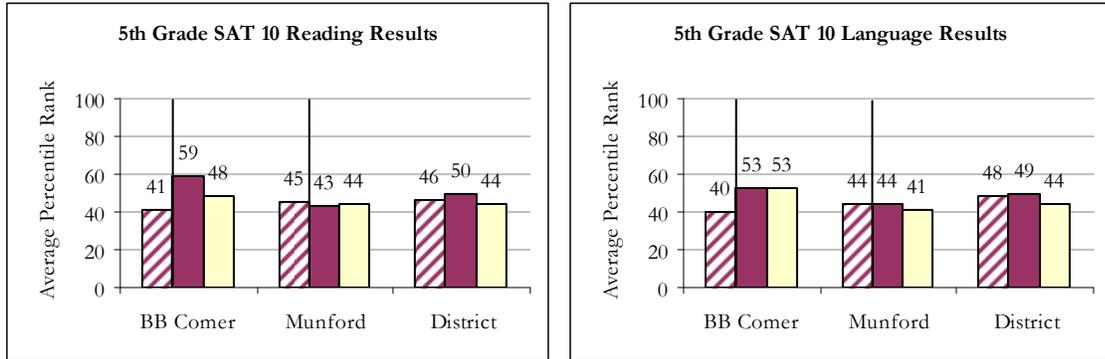
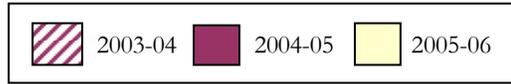
Figure 31. Talladega SAT 10 Results



Note: Vertical lines on chart indicate year each school implemented Cornerstone.
 Source: Alabama State Department of Education, Accountability and Reporting. (2006). Retrieved January 10, 2007, from <http://www.alsde.edu/Accountability/preAccountability.asp>

For 2005-06, B.B. Comer’s third graders remained relatively stable in average percentile rank on the SAT 10 reading test, while increasing in language results. There was a sharp decline in the average percentile rank of third graders at Munford in both reading and language, reaching the district level in 2005-06. Fourth graders at B.B. Comer experienced a decline in average percentile rank in both reading and language. Munford saw an increase in the results of their fourth graders in reading, and remained at 60% in language, scoring above the district average on both tests.

Figure 32. Talladega SAT 10 Results, Fifth Grade



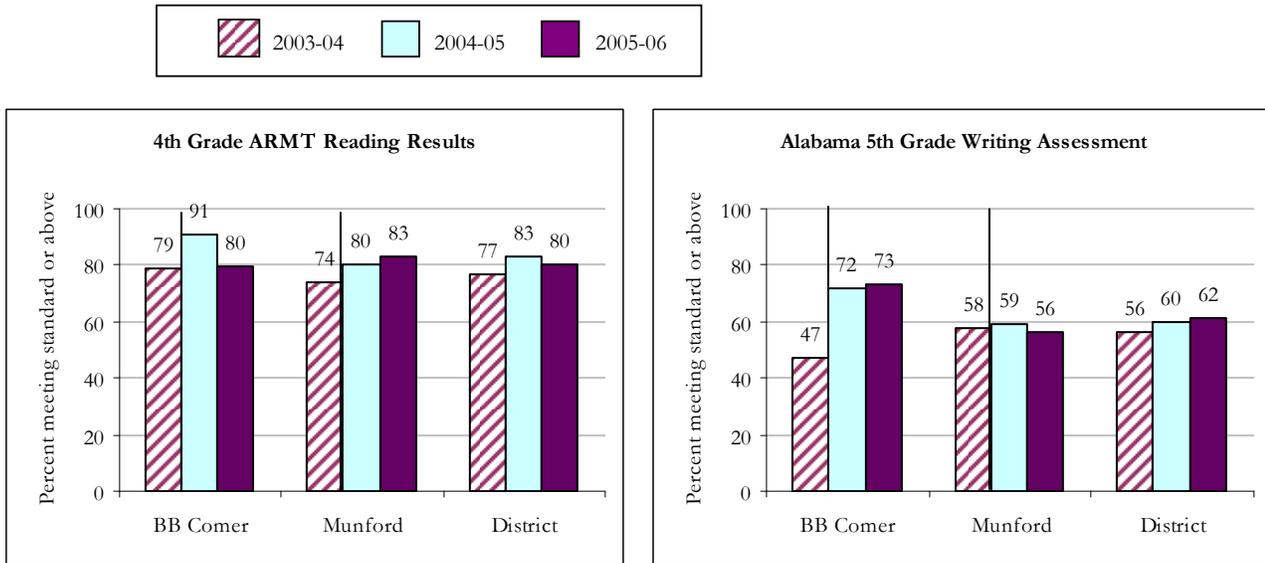
Note: Vertical lines on chart indicate year each school implemented Cornerstone.
 Source: Alabama State Department of Education, Accountability and Reporting. (2006). Retrieved January 10, 2007, from <http://www.alsde.edu/Accountability/preAccountability.asp>

Fifth graders’ results at B.B. Comer decreased substantially on the reading portion of the SAT 10. Scores remained stable on the language portion, though they were above the district average percentile rank on both, as shown in Figure 32. Munford’s fifth graders showed a slight increase on the reading test, while their results decreased in language for 2005-06.

Figure 33 presents ARMT results for the Talladega Partner schools. Fourth graders at B.B. Comer who were proficient or above decreased in 2005-06, as did the district during this period. Munford’s fourth grade had a small increase in percent meeting standards between 2004-05 and 2005-06.

The chart on the right shows results of the Talladega Partner schools on Alabama’s Direct Assessment of Writing. The percents meeting the standard or above at both B.B. Comer and Munford have remained relatively stable between 2004-05 and 2005-06.

Figure 33. Talladega ARMT and Direct Assessment of Writing Results



Note: Vertical lines on chart indicate year each school implemented Cornerstone.
 Source: Alabama State Department of Education, Accountability and Reporting. (2006). Retrieved January 10, 2007, from <http://www.alsde.edu/Accountability/preAccountability.asp>

Regression Adjusted Comparisons

We estimated the impact of Cornerstone on the ARMT test scores of third, fourth, fifth, and sixth graders up to 2006. A student was coded as having participated in Cornerstone if he or she was tested at Stemley or Sycamore in 2004 or later, or B.B. Comer or Munford in 2005 or later. Once again, we controlled for time, grades, available student demographics (race and sex), and unobserved school characteristics, in order to compare students who are otherwise similar, except for their participation in Cornerstone.

Impact estimates in Talladega were hampered by poor data availability, with valid test scores reported for 2004 and 2006 only.²⁵ These limited data reduced sample size, which in turn decreased the precision of the estimates, and it was not possible to distinguish statistically significant effects of Cornerstone on student test scores. Yet, results are worth examining as they show promise if better data became available to confirm suggested results.

First, we disregard the significance of the coefficients, as it may be caused by the small sample size rather than by the true absence of a relationship. The sign and magnitude of the coefficient on the interaction in the basic model suggest that in 2006, test scores in the

²⁵ Test scores for 2005 came in a format that made it impossible to assign a single test score to a child.

Cornerstone schools may be slightly higher than they are in the rest of the schools (Table A8), so that Cornerstone may have had a positive impact on achievement. If we do take into account the significance of coefficients however, it appears that students in the Cornerstone schools perform at the same level as similar students in the non-Cornerstone school. On the one hand, this may imply that Cornerstone has no impact on performance in this district. On the other hand, descriptive statistics (not reported), indicate that overall, over the whole time period, average test scores in the Cornerstone schools tended to be lower than those in the other schools, such that, even if we take into account the insignificant coefficient on the Cornerstone indicator, this would suggest that the Cornerstone schools have caught up with the other schools between 2004 and 2006. Additional, unreported models indicated that results are driven by students in the higher grades (fifth and sixth grades, vs. third and 4th grades). Notably, white students do better in all grades in the Cornerstone schools, while black students do better in the higher grades.

Summary of Student Testing Outcomes

Analysis of the 2005-06 DRA and standardized test scores continue to show mixed results across all the districts. In general, the DRA results for most of the Fulfilling schools show that the majority of students are meeting the benchmarks in grades one, two, and three. Although there are exceptions, most of these schools experienced a decrease in the percent of students meeting the standards on state- and district- mandated tests across all grades. Results for schools in other implementation clusters were also mixed.

There is good news overall, too. Indeed, results across all the districts indicate that Cornerstone is successful when given time. Table 7 presents changes in average standardized test scores (measured as Z scores) for the six districts that are not in their first year of Cornerstone implementation (Bridgeport, Horry County, Jackson, New Haven, Springfield, and Talladega). Short-term comparisons cast a somewhat unflattering light on the Cornerstone schools. Overall, these schools experienced a gain in language between 2005 and 2006, while the non-Cornerstone schools experienced a loss, but results are reversed for both reading and writing. Over the longer-run however, the Cornerstone schools all experienced a gain, while the non-Cornerstone schools saw a loss in reading and language, and a smaller gain in writing.

Table 7. Changes in Standardized Test Scores

	Change in test scores between 2005 and 2006		Change in test scores between Year 1 and 2006	
	Cornerstone schools	Non-Cornerstone schools	Cornerstone schools	Non- Cornerstone schools
Reading	-0.035	0.009	0.039	-0.004
Language	0.011	-0.013	0.081	-0.016
Writing	-0.153	0.012	0.047	0.004

Notes: These are changes in Z scores in the six districts that are not in their first year of Cornerstone implementation (Bridgeport, Horry County, Jackson, New Haven, Springfield, and Talladega). Reading tests are administered in all six districts. Language tests are administered in Horry County and Jackson. Writing tests are administered in Bridgeport and New Haven. Year 1 is the first year Cornerstone was implemented in each district and school, therefore it varies across districts and schools.

The regression-adjusted comparisons provide additional positive insight. Analysis of the results for schools in Horry County indicate that while the basic models show no impact on test scores, further analysis indicates that Cornerstone did improve the reading and language test scores of black students in these schools. Jackson results suggest that there are improvements after a couple of years with Cornerstone, and the Initiative does particularly well with poor students. Some gains are lost, however, as schools reach Foundation status and their focus switches to work with the Partner schools. These losses are in turn somewhat offset by the Partner schools’ seeming to benefit from the Cornerstone work in terms of improved test scores. In Springfield Cornerstone schools, we find that the Initiative brings low-performing schools up to par with other schools in the district, especially among third graders. There is also limited evidence that Talladega Cornerstone schools are catching up to the other schools in the district.

4. SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES, 2005-06

In this section, we explore several issues that emerged during our data collection and analysis of implementation during 2005-06, and the implications for the sustainability and success of Cornerstone in the schools and districts in which it operates. The sections below take up both the successes of and the challenges to the Cornerstone work during the past year. They include an examination of schools and districts at opposite ends of the implementation timeline (new schools in the Initiative and schools that have reached Foundation status), the introduction of lesson study, new teacher induction and teacher turnover, the implementation of the parent involvement component, the district context for implementation, and teacher perceptions of Cornerstone's sustainability and institutionalization.

NEW SCHOOLS AND DISTRICTS

2005-06 was a year of ambitious growth for Cornerstone. The work was expanded into 12 new schools simultaneously in September 2005. Eight of these schools were in two districts that were new to the Cornerstone network. Not since the initial year of implementation has Cornerstone had to provide assistance to so many new schools. In general, most Cornerstone elements and activities were in place or were being established. Coaches in these schools were very experienced teachers who were respected by their colleagues. Coaches, principals, and teachers reported that the introduction of Cornerstone has fostered change on a number of levels within schools that joined during 2005. This was true of schools that were partnered with Foundation schools as well.

School Practices

Cornerstone introduced a number of professional development activities to most of the new schools. In particular, common planning via grade-level meetings, collegial exchange through book studies, lesson study, whole-school professional development, and activities such as asset mapping were described by site team members as having contributed to an increased sense of community and collective sense of purpose in their schools. In many cases, these activities were new to the schools. When they were not new, staff reported that they had shifted the content of the work. Where grade-level meetings had once been about information exchange, they had become professional working sessions in which teachers looked at data together, laid strategic plans for targeted work including lesson study, and read professional literature.

Classroom Practices

Coaches and principals at new schools also reported change within classrooms. In particular, coaches felt that they had become more reflective in their practice, were more explicit and consistent in their instruction, and were beginning to release responsibility to their students to work independently and with one another. They also reported changing the climate in classrooms to one of mutual respect between students and teachers. One veteran teacher who was well-respected by colleagues described her transformation: “After 30-some odd years you’d think well, ‘This old girl is in the groove here’ you know, ‘We can’t get her out of this quickly’ [but] you know, it’s changed me. It has changed me.”

The introduction of the DRA to schools unfamiliar with it provided an opportunity for teachers to use real-time assessments of students’ reading level for planning instruction. A principal in one such school described the introduction of the assessment and the subsequent use of data to inform instruction: “It’s been one of the most forceful things in our school.”

District Selection and Compatibility

Over the past six years, Cornerstone has elected to work with 14 different school districts, some more successfully than others. According to Cornerstone staff, the process of selecting districts has become more well-tuned over time and now the organization has clear selection parameters that include considerations of district size, the district’s commitment to other literacy programs, whether there is a foundation for reform to build on, and leadership capacity to make change.

Both new Cornerstone districts, Stamford and Muscogee County, are in the process of defining their district literacy work, and among district and Cornerstone staff, Cornerstone was felt to be well aligned with the district literacy work in both places. Cornerstone staff, coaches, and principals reported explicitly working to integrate existing mandates with Cornerstone and to illustrate the connections between the two for teachers. Making these connections early on was seen as laying important groundwork for successful implementation.

In each new district, Cornerstone was being implemented in four schools: two were Cornerstone-supported and two were district-supported. This gives increased visibility to Cornerstone within these districts (Cornerstone is in four of 34 elementary schools in Muscogee County, and four of 12 in Stamford) and has necessarily increased the district’s initial investment in the success of the work.

Cornerstone Support

Cornerstone’s organizational capacity to support all the schools in its portfolio was a concern raised during interviews. In the fall of 2005, Cornerstone had the largest number of schools implementing Cornerstone to date (33—which included five Foundation-Partner school pairs). Within that large group were two new districts, each with four schools, and four new schools in existing districts (for a total of 12 new Network schools). New schools embarking on Cornerstone work need consistent and sometimes substantial support to initiate their plans. While most coaches and principals were satisfied with the content of the support they had received from Cornerstone, participants were eager to receive more support in understanding the role of the coach.

Student Growth

Site team members reported changes in their students’ literacy levels; many highlighted changes in the quality of student writing, increased comprehension skills, student engagement with literacy, in the words of one new coach, “our children are better thinkers.” Coaches in new schools particularly saw these changes within their own classrooms. The majority of people interviewed were cautious in predicting test score growth after one year of implementation.

THE FOUNDATION MODEL

The long-term goal of The Cornerstone Literacy Initiative is to create successful Cornerstone schools that can serve as springboards to spread Cornerstone practices across each participating district. After providing support to individual schools over the course of four years, Cornerstone invites schools to apply for Foundation status, an extended period of support in which Cornerstone schools serve as teaching schools for other schools within their district. In order to obtain Foundation status, schools are expected to successfully implement Cornerstone reform in K-3 and possibly more grades, show evidence of literacy achievement in grades one through four, and develop a plan that describes how the Foundation schools, Partner schools, and the district will work together to ensure both the continued success of the Foundation school and the introduction of the Initiative at the Partner school.

During 2005-06, five schools in three districts undertook or continued work as Foundation-status schools. While Cornerstone work within these schools is considered alongside other Network and Partner schools in this report, this section focuses specifically on the

Foundation status model. Here we consider how the work of the Foundation schools with their Partner schools has progressed, document the work that took place during the last year, and examine the successes and challenges experienced by both Foundation and Partner schools as they worked to spread the Initiative. In addition, we consider schools and districts that reached the end of the four-year implementation cycle in 2005-06 and developed plans to become Foundation status schools in 2006-07.

Table 8. Foundation Schools and their Partners

Foundation School's years in Cornerstone	District	Foundation School	Partner School
5	Bridgeport	Marin	Garfield
6	Jackson	Lake Watkins	Raines ⁺ Brown
6	Talladega	Stemley Road Sycamore	Munford B.B. Comer

⁺The original Partner for Lake, Galloway, dropped out after one year of work in 2004-05 and a new Partner school, Raines, was adopted.

Table 8 lists the three districts implementing the Foundation school work, the Foundation schools, and their Partner schools. In all three districts, Foundation school partnerships are focused on developing Cornerstone work within the Partner school, and Foundation school staff provides support to their Partner school akin to the assistance they received from Cornerstone during their initial period of implementation. In Talladega, this work is extended by implementing a district wide “Lab School” model. The lab school is a vehicle for cross-school collaboration because it brings in staff from other district schools (and elsewhere) to observe exemplary work. In one case, in which each school suffered from staffing shortages, the collective lesson planning and professional development that took place through the Lab School was the primary collaborative activity that occurred between the two schools.

Foundation-Partner School Activities

All five partnerships used similar strategies to begin the process of implementing Cornerstone practices in Partner schools. Most, or all, of the faculty from the five Partner schools traveled to their Foundation counterparts to observe Cornerstone work. At the same time, coaches and sometimes staff from the Foundation schools visited the Partner schools on a regular basis to help facilitate professional development sessions (such as book studies) or whole school planning (such as asset mapping). These visits were an opportunity to provide literacy and coaching training to the Partner school and expose a larger cohort of Partner school teachers to

key aspects of the Cornerstone Initiative. Finally, all Partner school coaches reported concentrating on rearranging classroom environments to make them conducive to Cornerstone teaching and learning.

Challenges to Implementation

Partner schools faced particular challenges in moving their work forward. Funding was identified as the largest obstacle to spread in all three districts. Limited resources had implications for all aspects of the Foundation-Partner school model.

Variation in Coaching Assignments

Due to limited funding, three Partner schools were only able to identify one Cornerstone coach per school in 2005-06.²⁶ In all three, Cornerstone coaching was done by someone already conducting similar activities in the school; in one district, the role was fulfilled by the district literacy coaches; and in another, by the Title I resource teacher. In the other schools, two classroom-based coaches were identified in each school. In Talladega and Bridgeport, district staff reported that funding issues threatened to eliminate *any* coaching positions in 2006-07. All of the Foundation schools maintained two coaches; in three schools, one of the coaches was a full-time literacy coach, while in the other, the coach was classroom-based.

The combined responsibility of being both a Cornerstone coach and a district literacy coach had both advantages and disadvantages. On the positive side, implementing both Cornerstone and district mandates could expedite the integration of literacy programs. However, having no classroom meant that there was not necessarily a model classroom for teachers to observe in the Partner schools; it also made impossible true “peer” coaching. Among the Partner schools that had only one coach, the coach was full-time but was also charged with other administrative duties as well as district coaching responsibilities, which frequently included coordinating standardized testing. In schools where one coach had responsibility for all Cornerstone activities, these coaches appeared to do fewer classroom observations and modeling on average than their counterparts in schools with two coaches.

With only one coach, Partner schools had difficulty establishing key components of the Initiative. The extent to which a Partner school coach was ready to begin observing and modeling appeared to depend in part on the scope of their other duties. For example, a number of

²⁶ One of these schools had three people serving as coaches during their first year of implementation.

coaches mentioned that elaborate testing responsibilities compromised their ability to maintain their Cornerstone coaching activities consistently throughout the year. In some cases though, Partner schools benefited by selecting coaches who had had prior exposure to Cornerstone through experience in either a Foundation school or at the district level.

Finally, unexpected challenges at Foundation schools impeded the degree of activity possible in some of the five Partner schools. For example, a staffing shortage at a Foundation school prevented their veteran coach from leaving her classroom at the beginning of the year, thus delaying her ability to work with the Partner school. In another case, student dislocations caused by Hurricane Katrina meant that the Foundation coaches were unable to work with the Partner school coaches at the beginning of the year. In addition, responsibilities to their home school such as an influx of new teachers made it difficult for Foundation coaches to attend to their Partner schools' needs.

Limited resources had other implications for Partner schools beyond funding the coaching position. While Partner school staff was eligible to participate in school reviews being conducted at Network schools, Partner schools did not have the opportunity to host an annual school review at their own school. Only one district paid for a school review to be conducted at a Partner school in 2005-06. Foundation schools shared videoconferencing equipment and access to Cornerstone staff, but the unequal support offered to Partner schools led one Cornerstone staff to wonder aloud about a two-tiered system of support.

Foundation and Partner school staff identified principal support at both sites as critical to the success and sustainability of their efforts. Coaches in at least three Foundation schools reported that they were uncertain whether Cornerstone could continue in their own building if the principal departed. In fact, one Foundation-Partner pair is experiencing a turnover of both principals – rendering the future support of Cornerstone in both schools, and their partnership, uncertain.

Turnover of veteran coaches at Foundation schools can be another obstacle. In several Foundation schools, veteran Foundation coaches took the lead in training the Partner school coaches while a newer coach sustained the work in the Foundation school. The loss of an experienced coach can impede progress in a Foundation school and delay the training of Partner school coaches and staff – creating a double loss for the Initiative.

Finally, staff at four of the five Partner schools in two of the three districts reported limited contact with Cornerstone national staff. Cornerstone staff continued to communicate with district-level personnel to ensure support for the Foundation schools and thus their work with the

Partner schools, but Partner school personnel seemed to desire more direct contact with and support from Cornerstone.

A Fragile Model

While the Foundation-Partner school partnerships continue to grow and progress, it is in many ways a fragile model. It is fragile because its success depends on a large number of variables that must coalesce – including support for the partnership at the district level (in terms of available funding, staffing assistance and time for professional development), supportive conditions within the Foundation school, and supportive conditions in the Partner school (including the number of new teachers and the experience of coaches). Changes in any one can impede the progress towards full implementation of Cornerstone practices in the Partner school or continued growth within the Foundation school.

Perhaps for this reason, Partner schools this year appear to be implementing at a slower pace than their first- and second-year Network school counterparts. During the 2005-2006 school year, eight of twelve (67%) first- and second-year Network schools had already reached the level of Implementing as opposed to only two of five Partner schools (40%). On average, beginning Network schools did more school reviews, had more consistent coach staffing, asset mapping, book studies, and parent activities than Partner schools did, and their coaches modeled more. The above findings should be taken into consideration as the Foundation-Partner school model continues to be refined.

Views on Foundation Status

Although the Foundation school–Partner school model experienced some challenges, survey results from teachers in Foundation schools indicate that most felt that Foundation status had had a positive impact upon their school and teaching (Table 9). Eighty percent of teachers in Foundation-status schools reported that being a Cornerstone Foundation-status school gave their teachers a sense of pride and accomplishment. Similarly, 80% of teachers in Foundation schools reported that being a Foundation school had helped build literacy teaching capacity in their school and that it had been beneficial to their school.

Corroborating this trend, only about one quarter of respondents reported that they did not understand their role as a Foundation school (26%) and only one out of five (21%) reported that Foundation status had distracted from working with their students. Teachers identified only one downside to Foundation status – 45% of Foundation school teachers indicated that work with the

Partner school took the coaches’ time and energy away from literacy work in the school. This finding parallels reports from interviews with coaches in which some express feeling “spread thin,” as responsibilities in Partner schools were added on to their already complex responsibilities in their own school.

Table 9. Perceptions of Foundation Status among Foundation Status School Teachers

	Percentage Strongly Agree or Agree* N= 127
Being a Cornerstone Foundation School gives us a sense of pride and accomplishment.	79.5
I do NOT understand our role as a Foundation School.	25.6
Being a Cornerstone Foundation School is beneficial to our school.	78.7
Being a Cornerstone Foundation School is a distraction from working with our students.	21.4
Being a Cornerstone Foundation School has helped build literacy teaching capacity at our school.	81.1
Work with our Partner school helps us reflect and improve on our practice.	61.9
Work with our Partner school has positively influenced the way Cornerstone is viewed in our school.	56.8
Work with our Partner school takes the coaches' time and energy away from literacy work in this school.	44.8

* Other response categories “Disagree or Strongly Disagree” and “Don’t know” are not shown.

Applying for Foundation Status

Cornerstone is at its core non-prescriptive, and as schools complete the initial four-year implementation cycle, they are asked to design their own plan for growing the work beyond the walls of their building. Three schools in two districts prepared to obtain Foundation status in 2006-07. One school established a plan to serve as a model school without working directly with a Partner, while schools in the other district planned to serve both as district-wide labs and training facilities for district literacy coaches and teachers participating in leadership training, in addition to working with Partner schools.

School staff underscored the need for deep commitment from the district to see the work through, and principals and coaches worried that moving into Foundation status would limit the amount of support they received from Cornerstone. The disposition of district personnel toward the Initiative can emerge at the time of Foundation status: in both districts, administrators were positive about Cornerstone and the impact it had had on teaching and learning, including test scores, but the model in one district was more limited in scope and was being driven by the school, while in the other it was conceptualized as a multi-pronged district initiative, which

included the commitment of a new district-level staff position in oversight of “rolling out the model.”

Both models have potential limitations. In the former case, district staff were unclear about the reach of the work and school staff worried about long-term commitment from the district. In the latter, whereas district staff laid out a carefully developed plan, school-level personnel expressed confusion about what their role in Foundation status would be.

LESSON STUDY

The widespread introduction of lesson study was reported by both school and Cornerstone staff to be the most important instructional development in the Cornerstone Initiative this year. Lesson study was “the vehicle we used to get across the content and the format of Cornerstone,” explains one literacy fellow. In lesson study, a team of teachers plans and refines a lesson together through a process of observation and reflection. While one member teaches the lesson, the others observe the impact on individual students and record their observations. Afterward, team members discuss possible improvements to the lesson and how the lesson could better meet the instructional needs of the students. Teachers revise the lesson, another member of the team teaches the lesson, and the process is repeated.

All coaches who attended the 2006 Cornerstone Regional Meetings had a chance to witness the lesson study process being implemented with students during real classroom time. They then met as school teams to plan what aspects of lesson study they could implement in their own schools. In the following months of spring 2006, the majority of coaches experimented with some form of lesson study in their school; those schools that did not planned to do so the following year (2006-07). Coaches and school administrators consistently described lesson studies observed at the 2006 regional conferences as “very helpful,” “powerful,” and “effective.” A number of coaches described it as the best professional development in which they had taken part all year.

Across all schools and districts, coaches and principals were overwhelmingly positive about their experiences implementing lesson study and most coaches reported enthusiastic responses on the part of teachers in their buildings. In some schools, administrators reported teachers spontaneously requesting the spread of lesson study to their grade-levels. A coach reported, “I saw lesson study was really beginning to take off in the school. We’ve got first grade doing lesson study. Second grade, the whole team is doing lesson study and kindergarten.”

In another school, lesson study work was credited with having “really pulled the faculty together in a very powerful way, because they had to work together as a team.”

School coaches and literacy fellows have described lesson study as a “natural fit” with other elements of the Cornerstone Initiative. Because lesson study combines collective planning, assessment, and modeling, it can be integrated with other Cornerstone elements such as grade-level meetings, book studies, and coach modeling. One literacy fellow describes why lesson study has been so successful: “... this is a way forward because you can look at so many areas, you can hit planning, you can hit teaching, you can hit learning, you can hit collaborative learning cultures. It hits so many things.” Lesson study is also reported to reinforce teacher exposure to Cornerstone classroom strategies. It was mentioned that in a number of schools lesson studies were conducted around math or science themes, extending the application of Cornerstone strategies beyond literacy and across the curriculum.²⁷

Coaches also remarked that lesson study entails an innovative shift from teacher-focused professional development to student-focused professional development. Since each teacher is assigned one child to observe for an entire lesson, teachers collectively gather specific information on how different strategies work for different children. One coach in a first year Network school describes the shift that took place for her: “I wasn’t in the habit [of focusing] on the kids. You know you [often] go for the lesson, [and conclude] ‘The teacher’s wonderful.’ Or ‘Boy, that was boring.’ But, you weren’t focusing on what the child was doing from moment one to the end of the lesson.” This process introduces “many pairs of eyes” into a classroom, and thereby accelerates teachers’ ability to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all their children.

Another advantage of lesson study is that it spreads the skills and responsibilities formerly associated with coaches (e.g., observing, assessing, and modeling) to all teachers in a school. Teachers throughout an entire grade level become responsible for observing, planning, and modeling –usually the responsibility of the coach. One leadership fellow succinctly states that lesson study “helps teachers to coach each other.”

Because lesson study necessitates the involvement of whole grade levels of teachers, school staff emphasized the amount of up-front planning and coordination necessary to schedule teacher preparation time (for example, scheduling substitutes to cover an entire grade level

²⁷ The practice of lesson study originated in Japan and is typically used in developing math lessons. “What is Lesson Study?” Lesson Study Research Group. Teachers College, Columbia University. <<http://www.tc.columbia.edu/lessonstudy/lessonstudy.html>>

requires an upfront decision by the principal to invest that level of time and money). Thus some schools preferred to start slowly in their schools this year – introducing partial versions of it to make it easier for their staff to integrate.

In response to enthusiasm for the technique, principals and coaches found innovative ways to introduce scaled-down versions of lesson study. Some schools introduced “lesson links” in the lower grades, in which a set of four teachers would take turns teaching and observing twenty minute mini-lessons in each others classrooms over the course of a day or two – thereby reducing the cost of substitute teachers. In another school, the principal explained that “when we did the lesson study, the teachers would need time to debrief and so the parents would take the classes to lunch and take care of them for a little bit so the teachers had that time to talk as a team.”

Yet other schools made the decision to hold off on introducing lesson study to their staff this year so as not to “overwhelm teachers with reform.” The coaches and principals in these schools reported that they were relieved that Cornerstone literacy fellows trusted them enough to gauge the appropriate pace of change in their school. In these schools, the general feeling was that they preferred to wait until next year to do it right as opposed to doing it quickly.

One district administrator explains nicely how lesson study embodies the Cornerstone philosophy: “I very much think this is something for everyone. The thing that I value most about Cornerstone and especially the lesson study is that it’s collaborative work. It’s not one teacher out there on her own or his own, trying to figure this out. It’s everybody together, and I think that’s the most important part for me... sometimes it’s difficult to get that message across that everybody’s invited to everything.”

In sum, this year’s lesson study was identified across the board as an overwhelming success, with very little reported downside to date. Such success and enthusiasm may be crucial in sustaining and spreading the Initiative in participating districts and beyond.

NEW TEACHER INDUCTION AND TEACHER TURNOVER

An important trend highlighted by coaches and principals this year has been the utility of the Cornerstone structure for inducting new teachers into a common school culture. High poverty schools tend to be plagued by high teacher turnover and this is true for Cornerstone schools. Some schools reported a teacher turnover rate as high as 40% at the start of the 2005-06 school year. A perennial turnover of teachers necessitates a strategy for acclimating and supporting new teachers in a school building, and has been identified as a challenge in many of the Cornerstone

schools. Principals and coaches have highlighted Cornerstone's structure of collective professional development and lesson planning, as well as the explicit modeling of teaching practices by coaches, as key mechanisms for acculturating teachers into a teaching community and, ideally, increasing the likelihood of retention.

The common pedagogical strategies and approach developed by Cornerstone also ensure that students transferring between classes as they progress through the school, or even between Cornerstone schools, will have common educational experiences.

Coaches this year, as in years past, mentioned in interviews that they spent a particularly large amount of time working with new teachers in their building. While some reported new teachers at first feeling overwhelmed or resistant to the Cornerstone practices, classroom modeling by the coaches appears to have been highly effective in convincing new teachers of the value of the Cornerstone strategies. In fact, some have reported that they believe explicit modeling by Cornerstone coaches has accelerated both the learning curve and the enthusiasm of new teachers in their school. In other cases, coaches report that Cornerstone practices are aligned with graduate-level classes focused on research-based practice to which new teachers had already been exposed.

At the same time, coaches also reported that coaching new teachers was more time-intensive than coaching more seasoned teachers. New teachers usually struggle with the basics of classroom management and lesson planning, so that there is much more that coaches have to teach them if they are the only support offered to new faculty. The learning needs of new teachers were reported to be more manageable in schools where new teachers were also supported by their own mentor teacher, as well as a grade-level team that collectively advised and supported the new teachers. In these cases, coaches reported that the development of new teachers was less of a drain on their time.

District administrators, principals, and coaches all hope that Cornerstone practices will improve the retention of new teachers. Nonetheless, a number of Cornerstone schools continue to have perennially high turnover rates. Ironically, some principals and coaches have pointed out that training teachers in Cornerstone practices makes teachers more marketable to wealthier schools and districts, thus increasing the temptation for them to work elsewhere. Nonetheless, there is evidence that Cornerstone is providing a common and supportive culture for teachers and increasing their level of enjoyment of their job, which should improve retention in the long run. Meanwhile, in the short run, many coaches and principals have pointed out that the Cornerstone

structures of collective planning, professional development, and assessment have provided a sense of continuity within the school building that helps smooth out changes in personnel.

PARENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Two major principles have guided Cornerstone's efforts to improve parent and community engagement. These are that parents and the community have important roles to play in children obtaining high levels of literacy by grade three, and that schools are more successful at insuring high levels of literacy when they draw on the resources, knowledge and expertise of parents and the community. These principles are based on research that shows that literacy instruction is more effective when it builds on the prior knowledge (schema) that children bring to the classroom, including linguistic, cultural, and community knowledge. Classroom communities of readers and writers must be inclusive, accepting and affirming of all students.

Each Cornerstone Network school is expected to identify two parent representatives who will participate in Cornerstone training events and work as partners with school faculty in reaching out to parents and community members. Expectations for parent involvement are detailed in the Cornerstone Tool Kit. Since 2002-03, the Cornerstone Associate for Parent and Community Engagement has provided school administrators, coaches and parent representatives with training and technical assistance designed to strengthen parent and community engagement. In addition, Cornerstone Network schools have been able to apply for an additional Cornerstone Parent Grant of \$5,000 to support parent involvement activities. Because information regarding parent involvement provided by respondents in previous years tended to be vague, we attempted to gather more specific and consistent data during the spring 2006 interviews. Additional information was obtained during interviews with school district officials and Cornerstone staff.

During 2005-06, the Cornerstone Associate for Parent and Community Engagement visited all Cornerstone Network schools at least once and maintained on-going communication through e-mail and telephone. To further clarify Cornerstone's position regarding parent involvement, a series of articles were published in the Cornerstone newsletter. No Cornerstone support in the form of staff visits or parent grants was provided to the Foundation or Partner schools during 2005-06, except in Bridgeport.

According to interviews, almost all of the Cornerstone Network schools had parent representatives but about half of the coaches and principals reported that they were unclear about the role the parent representatives were supposed to play. Coaches in only three of the ten first-year schools reported that parents were informed about Cornerstone principles and practices.

In contrast to prior years, when schools that applied for parent grants were reasonably sure to receive them, in 2005-06, schools had to submit grant proposals that met the criteria described in the Parent/Community Continuum, and they were not guaranteed funding. As a result, fewer than half of the 18 Cornerstone Network schools actually applied for and received parent grants. Schools chose to apply or not to apply for a variety of reasons. In Stamford, the coaches and principals reported that their Literacy Fellow had strongly urged them to apply and assisted them in preparing their proposals. On the other hand, in another district, several coaches complained that they had not understood how to complete the application and had not received enough support to do so. In Horry County, where other funds were available to support parent involvement, none of the six schools received parent grants, and some principals explained that they had not applied because they felt they did not need additional resources.

The results of Cornerstone's efforts to improve parent and community engagement have been mixed. In general, respondents in those schools that had been in Cornerstone for longer periods of time assessed parent involvement in their schools more positively. All of the interviewees in the third- and fourth-year schools described parent involvement as good or improving. Staff in one second-year school reported having very active parents, while coaches in the other second-year school said that parent involvement was one of their weak areas. Of the ten first-year schools, staff in eight schools in three different districts said that the parent component had not gotten off the ground and that they were still trying to figure it out. Overall, parent involvement in more than half of the Cornerstone Network schools was described as weak or needing improvement by coaches and principals. A surprising finding was that interviewees in four of the five Foundation schools described parent involvement in their schools as poor.

Cornerstone staff highlighted other concerns. One problem was that many of the parent involvement efforts were only weakly connected to school literacy goals, changes in teaching practice and improved student achievement. In many schools, the goal of parent/community engagement was conceived as simply getting more parents into the building and enlisting more parents to help their children with their schoolwork at home. To this end, most schools planned school-wide events designed to help parents support their children's learning at home. Often these events were not planned around specific learning goals for students as identified by asset mapping or literacy leadership teams. When asked how the classrooms and curriculum reflected student, family and community interests, languages and cultures, most coaches and principals seemed not to recognize the important role that culture plays in language and literacy learning or

to understand the need for culturally informed teaching knowledge. Few coaches described any systemic classroom-level changes in teaching practice.

Some of the problems faced by Cornerstone staff in promoting parent involvement have been contextual. Different districts and schools face different challenges in encouraging parents to become more involved in their children's schooling. In several districts, children do not attend neighborhood schools, making it more difficult for parents to participate in meetings or other school activities. In some districts, many of the parents speak little English and are sometimes hesitant to interact with school staff. In others, long-standing divisions based on ethnic and class differences within particular communities have been difficult for schools to overcome.

Other challenges with increasing parent involvement within Cornerstone schools are structural. To some extent, support for parent involvement has been provided apart from other Cornerstone training and technical assistance. Unlike the Cornerstone work in improving classroom environments, which had a lead trainer but was also supported by the Literacy Fellows and other Cornerstone staff, most school staff reported that only the Associate for Parent and Community Engagement actively worked with schools to promote parent involvement and worked with the parent representatives. During Summer Institutes and Regional Meetings, parent representatives attended training sessions with coaches and administrators, but coaches and administrators participated in few parent-focused sessions. As a result, some coaches and principals believed that efforts to involve parents were the responsibility of the parent representatives. The fact that schools had to prepare an application for the parent involvement funds also helped create the sense that efforts to involve parents were separate and ancillary to the work in the classrooms to improve literacy instruction.

DISTRICT CONTEXT

District factors continue to contribute to or detract from successful Cornerstone implementation. Without district support, Cornerstone has little hope of sustaining the Initiative beyond the period of support or spreading the work to additional sites. However, supportive district conditions alone cannot promote the work in schools in which there is limited leadership and commitment. In the *Fourth Year Evaluation Report* we found that different schools from the same district were within different implementation categories. This was also true among schools included in the analysis presented here.

Our *Fourth Year Evaluation Report* indicated that schools in districts that had a district-wide balanced literacy approach, experience with the school-level coaching model, and professional development experiences including book studies and grade-level planning prior to their involvement with Cornerstone, had an advantage in implementing the Initiative over schools in districts that had not. Cornerstone's experiences with two new districts in 2005-06 provide a more nuanced understanding of this finding. Interviewees in both new districts indicated that schools had been offered a large amount of high quality professional development, and described Cornerstone as fitting well with their existing district-level literacy plans. To a greater or lesser degree, Muscogee County and Stamford had many of the Cornerstone pieces in place. However, despite these encouraging conditions, implementation in these schools was not uniform, nor was it immediately at high levels.

Table A26, in the appendix, illustrates teacher, coach, and principal perception of district support. Across all eight districts in which Cornerstone is being implemented, the majority of respondents believed that their district is responsive to their school's instructional and literacy needs, provides sufficient professional development opportunities, and uses student-level data to improve support for schools. There is more variability concerning the district's openness to change and whether the district fosters communication among schools. Respondents were least positive about the openness of their district in Stamford and Muscogee County, the two districts newest to Cornerstone. Only three districts had more than 75% of respondents who felt that their district fostered communication among schools within the district; two of them belong to the first Cornerstone cohort, which is now sponsoring Foundation and Partner schools.

Responses to questions specifically about the districts' relationships to the Cornerstone Initiative were mixed (Table A27). The three districts that were seen to foster communication among district schools (Horry County, Jackson and Talladega) also had the highest percentage of respondents who agreed their district was actively involved in the Cornerstone work. In terms of resources available to support the Cornerstone work, few districts were perceived as providing sufficient resources; the highest percentage of respondents who agreed were in Horry County and Talladega.

Engaging District Support

Cornerstone staff continued to expand their work with district-level staff during 2005-06. In general, district personnel reported being in regular contact with Cornerstone personnel and being well apprised of Cornerstone's work in the schools. This year, one District Liaison worked

with all but one of the Cornerstone districts either by telephone, visits, or email. The District Liaison was responsible for establishing positive working relationships with the superintendent and district staff, ensuring that schools received district support, keeping district-level staff engaged with the work, and assisting districts in developing structures and policies for the scale-up and sustainability of Cornerstone practices.

Through consultation with superintendents to inform their work with districts, Cornerstone staff described a shifting sense of their role within districts. In particular, Cornerstone worked with district personnel to help articulate the relationship between Cornerstone and state and district standards, and look at student-level data. In addition, Cornerstone staff described trying to establish a two-way dialogue to help districts define their goals and assess how Cornerstone might help them reach them. Experiences leading up to the withdrawal of Horry County and New Haven reinforced the need for more strategic work and open lines of communication.

SUSTAINABILITY

An issue that is bound to gain increasing importance in the 2006-07 school year concerns the sustainability of the Cornerstone model, as the two original Foundation districts reach the end of their final year of the three-year Foundation school cycle. This year, as in years past, we asked all interviewees what steps they had taken to ensure that Cornerstone would be sustained over time and what they thought might occur if support was diminished or not available. In the main, coaches and principals responded that the best practices would continue, and in many cases, they also acknowledged how valuable the time spent in grade-level planning had been, and believed that they would work hard to maintain content-filled common planning and professional dialogue. The area in which many anticipated the most difficulty was in maintaining the coach position. Resources and high-stakes testing were generally perceived as the major challenges (Table A23).

Based on the survey data, a great level of uncertainty across all eight districts was expressed about their district's commitment to continuing support for Cornerstone beyond the initial period of support (Table A27). The highest percentage of teachers, coaches, and principals in the two newest districts responded "do not know" with regard to the continuation of district support beyond the initial implementation cycle. Talladega and Springfield respondents had the highest level of certainty in their districts' support of Cornerstone. In all other districts

roughly 50% or fewer respondents expressed confidence that their district would continue to support the work.

A number of survey questions this year addressed institutionalization and the future of the reform in schools. As discussed in the implementation section, teachers who were in Fulfilling schools were more likely to indicate that Cornerstone had become a fundamental part of their regular approach to literacy, that it was no longer considered an innovation in their school, and that it would remain an enduring part of the school's educational program (Tables A21 and A22). Even among the lowest implementing group, nearly half of the teachers felt that Cornerstone would endure in their schools in some form.²⁸ Most Foundation schools were similarly confident that the Initiative would remain after support ended. One coach explained: "if there were a new principal here, she would have evidence of Cornerstone having been here. It's in place, it's been in place, and it's effective."

An encouraging finding was the prevalence of discussion among new schools about becoming Foundation schools. A coach in a first year school described the sentiment in her Partially Implementing school: "at our last staff meeting [we] said we're going to be a Foundation school in four years...we've not giving ourselves the option of not being there." This suggests that despite uncertainties, coaches and principals are taking a long-term view of the reform. However, these interviewees were quick to highlight the need for appropriate levels of support to help them reach their goal.

²⁸ Specifically, this is the sum of the 19% of teachers who responded that Cornerstone would "remain an enduring part of our school's educational program" and the 30% of teachers who responded that it would "remain but will be adapted to our school's needs."

5. CONCLUSION

We have sought to answer three questions about Cornerstone's work this year: to what extent has Cornerstone been implemented in participating schools? To what extent has implementation had an impact on schools, teachers, and students? And to what extent has student performance on standardized tests and the DRA changed?

Implementation

For this report, we again assigned schools implementing Cornerstone activities to one of four implementation categories (Fulfilling, Implementing, Partially Implementing, or Low Implementing) based on survey and interview data about the work conducted during the 2005-06 school year. The highest implementation cluster contained ten of the 28 schools implementing Cornerstone. Schools in the Fulfilling cluster were successfully implementing the model and institutionalizing Cornerstone practices. In these schools, Cornerstone elements such as coach release time, common planning time for teachers, and regular grade-level meetings, were in place to facilitate Cornerstone professional development; administrators and teachers engaged in continuous planning and assessment; Cornerstone work was given high priority; and the majority of teachers were supportive of the Initiative and reported that they had changed their classroom practice as a result of participating in Cornerstone activities. Principal leadership and stability of principal and coach tenure also continue to be critical to the implementation of Cornerstone. Coaches and principals at these schools reported that while resources would be a concern in perpetuating the Initiative beyond the period of support, Cornerstone was seen as an integral part of the functioning of their school.

Most of the 11 schools in the Implementing cluster were in their first or second year of implementing Cornerstone activities. The fundamental components of Cornerstone were operating in these schools, however, the first- and second-year schools confronted issues common to schools new to the Initiative, such as developing functional co-teaching schedules for their literacy coaches; structuring an uninterrupted literacy block; providing time for regular grade-level meetings; conducting effective professional reading groups; and overcoming the skepticism of entrenched faculty. A large number of teachers in this group also indicated that while Cornerstone had become a fundamental part of their regular approach to literacy, they were unsure about Cornerstone's future in their school.

Among schools ranked in the lower implementation clusters, the majority was in their early years of implementation. The main difference between these schools and their higher-performing counterparts was the ability of the school leadership to establish time for collaborative work, integrate Cornerstone successfully with other literacy programs in their buildings, and overcome staff reluctance to participate in the reform. Despite these challenges, some Cornerstone elements such as leadership teams and grade-level meetings were taking shape, and staff in most of these schools was hopeful about increased implementation in the coming years.

Impact

The report examined two levels of Cornerstone impact: intermediate impacts and impact on student outcomes. Intermediate impacts include school culture, parent engagement, classroom practice, and student literacy growth. The successful implementation of Cornerstone relies extensively on school culture that fosters collegial exchange and collaboration among staff members. Teachers at Fulfilling and Implementing schools are more likely to report having “formal arrangements that provide opportunities for teachers to discuss and critique their instruction with each other” than teachers in other implementation categories and generally are more positive about their school than their counterparts in lower implementing groups.

According to interviews and surveys, Fulfilling and Implementing schools are more likely to hold regular literacy events for parents, events are more likely to be regularly attended by parents, and teachers are more likely to consider parents as partners in educating students. However, across implementation levels there are indications that parent attendance at these events was not strong. Teachers in Fulfilling and Implementing schools were more likely to indicate that parents know about and support Cornerstone. Parent involvement in decision-making and parent-teacher collaboration was more consistent across implementation categories.

According to Cornerstone’s theory of action, effective professional development, including modeling and demonstrating, in association with improvements in school culture, will lead to increased implementation of strategies that have been proven to be effective in improving student literacy. Classroom practices associated with Cornerstone are more strongly established in Fulfilling and Implementing schools for each of the three categories of activities. Low Implementing schools did make use of the strategies, but were generally more likely to implement them less frequently.

Teachers in schools at the higher implementation levels were more likely to report a positive impact of Cornerstone on student literacy growth. Consistent with findings in previous years, coaches and principals continue to describe the positive impact of Cornerstone on literacy culture: students were engaged at higher levels, were taking responsibility for their learning, had increased motivation, and were developing into independent, critical thinkers.

While there is variation at each site, analysis of test score outcomes seems to indicate that given time, Cornerstone schools do see improvement in student achievement. Regression results highlight areas in which Cornerstone is particularly successful, conditions that improve the chance of success, and areas that need to be further explored to better understand and overcome challenges.

Cornerstone is successful at improving the achievement of students overall in some districts (Jackson, Springfield, and possibly Talladega), and at raising the performance of students who are typically considered most at risk in other districts (for example, black students in Horry County and poor students in Jackson). These successes have not happened overnight however. The regression results highlight that it may take, at the very least, two to three years of implementation to begin to see a small impact on test scores. Recall that a reform such as Cornerstone must be put in place, expanded throughout each school, to all teachers and staff who must then learn the principles and the practice of the reform. Thus, there must be an introduction phase, followed by an implementation and expansion phase. Only then may one hope to see an impact on intermediate outcomes, and stakeholders' perceptions of the reform and its successes, before finally obtaining measurable impacts such as improvements in test scores. These are bound to be small, scattered improvements at first, affecting some students in some grades, schools, or districts, and they may not be immediately sustained. Yet results show that, as time passes and the schools are implementing the reform longer, areas of success and hope begin to emerge.

Successes and Challenges

In this report, we examined several areas of Cornerstone's work and the successes and challenges within each area. These include the adoption of Cornerstone in a number of new schools, the induction of new teachers and teacher turnover, the introduction of lesson study, the district context and its relationship to Cornerstone, the issue of sustainability, the Foundation school work, and parent and community engagement efforts.

Cornerstone worked with more new schools in 2005-06 than it had since its first year. The majority of these schools were able to implement the principal components of the Cornerstone model within the first year. The biggest implementation hurdles reported by these schools were resistant teachers and scheduling, which includes providing release time for coaches.

Teacher turnover is a fact of life for many schools participating in the Initiative, and teachers, coaches, and principals in schools across all levels of implementation see turnover as one of the major challenges to the work. However, there seems to be ways in which implementing Cornerstone has helped mitigate some of the potentially negative impacts of high teacher mobility, thanks to the common cooperative peer culture it helps schools create. In the best scenario, new teachers have multiple supports through coaches, grade-level teams, and other mentors and have an accelerated learning curve as a result.

Lesson study was a focus for Cornerstone staff in 2005-06, and by most accounts was the chief instructional development this year. The lesson study format embodies Cornerstone principles of collective, student-focused, reflective work. Most schools in the network attempted to implement lesson study in their school this year or had plans to do so. Lesson study requires additional planning, yet it generated much enthusiasm.

The operating context for any of the schools implementing Cornerstone is the district, and as the Initiative has matured, so has its work with districts. According to teachers, coaches and principals, most districts had cultures that supported their work within schools. There was some uncertainty about most districts' involvement and long-term commitment to Cornerstone, but changes in the way Cornerstone staff work with districts is attempting to address both real and perceived dissonance.

Cornerstone has been successful in providing support to schools in most areas of its Initiative, although there are two components that we found to be more challenging to implement. While Foundation schools were positive about their experiences showcasing and spreading their work to other schools, the foundation-partner school models has had some difficulties in its early stages. Districts and schools were not always able to marshal the resources necessary to have adequate coaching or common planning time. The model requires the convergence of supportive conditions at the Foundation school as well as the Partner school, and an attentive district supporting the work. More attention needs to be focused on helping the schools and districts in this area.

Staff in many schools reported that their Cornerstone-related work on parent and

community engagement has had a positive impact on the level of involvement in their school, particularly in schools that have been in the Initiative the longest. Overall, however, parent involvement at most of the schools was described as weak or needing improvement and despite Cornerstone's efforts to strengthen schools' work with parents through a grant process and by dedicating a staff member to the work, many schools' efforts remained about getting more parents and community members into the school and having them help with schoolwork at home. Contextual difficulties at each school such as transportation, or language and cultural issues, also posed challenges to growing this aspect of the Initiative.

The 2005-06 school year was the sixth year of Cornerstone implementation in schools across the country. Although the overarching goal of the Initiative is to promote professional capacity and student literacy is a constant, schools and districts have taken different paths to reach this goal. Because of the different contexts in which the Initiative operates, it is natural to expect different results in different locations. This finding is illustrated throughout this report. Among the schools implementing Cornerstone, we find that implementation of the reform improves with time. At the highest levels of implementation, teachers, coaches and principals continue to report a positive impact on school culture, classroom instruction and student literacy growth. In terms of final impact, the analyses presented above demonstrate that given time, schools participating in the Initiative see overall improvement in student performance, particularly among particular subgroups of students.

APPENDICES

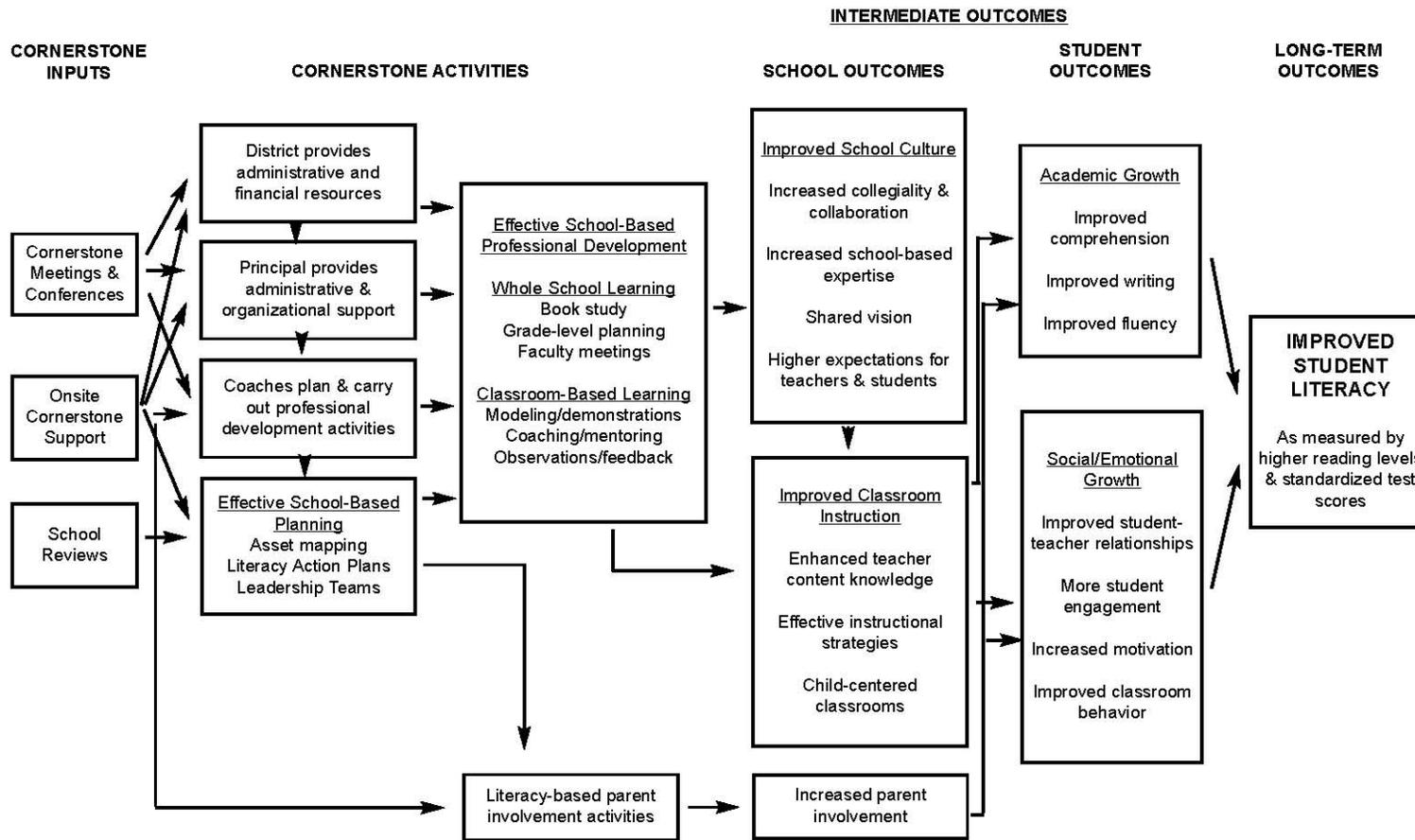
APPENDIX A. CORNERSTONE LOGIC MODEL

The Cornerstone staff team works to build school-based expertise throughout the four years of program participation. The logic model presented in Figure A1 describes Cornerstone's intended program inputs, activities, outputs and resulting benefits. The model makes explicit the expected links between program investments and intended outcomes and helps further articulate Cornerstone's theory of action by showing exactly how the Initiative is expected to produce the desired results.³¹ The links between professional development and student achievement in the logic model are not direct. Within each school, Cornerstone literacy coaches, supported by the school principal, are the key actors in planning and implementing the various professional development activities. Professional development influences teacher knowledge and practice and helps build a shared philosophy about teaching and learning within the school. Improved teacher knowledge and practice, in turn, results in more effective classroom instruction that brings about increased student knowledge and skills leading to better student achievement.

Two types of variables can facilitate or hinder program implementation and the accomplishment of program goals. Antecedent variables are influences present before the program intervention. They include teacher and administrator knowledge of literacy instruction and philosophies about teaching and learning, school or district reading approaches, existing school culture, and previous experience with embedded professional development. Mediating variables operate at the same time as the intervention. These can include district-level support for Cornerstone; teacher, coach and principal turnover; competing priorities within the district or school; and student mobility. We consider the influence of these variables in the following sections.

³¹ The logic model has been updated from the one presented in our *Fourth Year Evaluation Report* to include Cornerstone's work with districts.

Figure A1. Cornerstone Logic Model



All of the work above occurs against the backdrop of the school district context.

APPENDIX B. FIFTH YEAR REPORT METHODOLOGIES

The analyses presented in our *Fifth Year Evaluation Report* draw on data from four primary sources: interviews, surveys, student level test scores from each Cornerstone district, and outcomes on the DRA, which was universally administered in Cornerstone schools this year. The five sections below provide more detailed information about these data sources and their analyses as presented in the report.

Interview Data

During the 2005-06 school year, IESP staff conducted a total of 112 interviews. Ninety-seven interviews were conducted with school and district-level personnel across the Cornerstone districts. At the school level, we interviewed coaches (55), principals (26), and one teacher. At the district level, we interviewed seven district strategy managers, six superintendents, one chief academic officer, and one district coach. These numbers include interviews with school-level personnel at Partner schools. As in previous years, interview questions explored specific elements of Cornerstone implementation and more general perceptions of the Initiative's impact on student literacy.

In summer 2006, the evaluation team interviewed 15 Cornerstone program staff members (including Literacy Fellows and District Liaisons) who work directly with the Cornerstone schools and districts. The interviews elicited information about the interactions between program staff and school-based personnel, the continuing development of the Cornerstone Initiative, challenges related to implementation, and the impacts and outcomes within Cornerstone schools.

All interviews were transcribed and added to our existing database. Each interview was coded by two research team members to assure consistency, using a coding scheme that has evolved over the course of the five years of the evaluation. Interview material was analyzed using QSR NUD*IST, a software program designed to assist in the management and analysis of qualitative data. Teams of researchers developed school and district memos examining the implementation of Cornerstone at each site and the operating context of the reform.

Online Survey Administration and Response Rates

The survey data contains the responses from 803 teachers from 28 Cornerstone schools in eight districts (Table A1); eighty-four percent of these were from teachers at Network and Foundation schools. Response rates are high in most cases. The overall response rate for all schools in 2005-06 was 69%. For the Network and Foundation schools combined, the response rate was 68% while the response rate at the Partner schools was 74%.

Description of Respondents

Almost all the teachers who took our survey are full-time teachers (98%) and teach literacy in their classroom (94%). Most are regular classroom teachers (72%). Almost two-thirds of the teachers who took our survey teach grades K-3 only, 22% teach grades four and above only and 13% teach in grades K-8. Of those who took the survey, 53 identified themselves as Cornerstone coaches.

In terms of educational attainment, 35% of the teachers' highest degree is a Bachelor's degree, 30% have a Master's degree and 26% have credits above and beyond a Master's degree. Nine teachers indicated that they have Ph.D.s, and 17

teachers' highest degree is a high school diploma. Ninety-seven percent of the teachers have a regular certificate (or standard form of licensure). Our survey respondents are fairly

<u>District and School</u>	<u>School Response Rate</u>
<u>Bridgeport</u>	
Garfield	.0
Maplewood Annex	.6
Marin	.0
<u>Horry County</u>	
Aynor	.9
Kingston	.0
NMBE	.9
NMBP	.6
S Conway	.3
Waccamaw	.1
<u>Jackson</u>	
Brown	.7
Lake	.9
Raines	.7
Watkins	.8
<u>Muscogee County</u>	
Downtown	0.0
Key	.3
Rigdon Road	0.0
St. Mary's	.8
<u>New Haven</u>	
Bishop Woods	.0
Stanford	

experienced teachers, although there is variation. On average, they have 14 years of experience, with a quarter of the teachers having 20 years or more teaching experience. Respondents have been in their current school, on average, for seven years; nine percent have been at their current school for over 20 years, including one teacher who has been in her current school for over 30 years. Eight percent of the respondents are in their first year of teaching.

Response Rate for Coach and Principal Surveys

We mailed surveys to principals and coaches at each of the 28 Cornerstone Network, Foundation, and Partner schools. A total of 57 surveys were mailed to coaches and the response rate was 70%; a total of 28 surveys were mailed to principals and the response rate was 67.9% (see Table A2 for a breakdown by type of Cornerstone school).

Table A2. Coach and Principal Survey Response Rates by Cornerstone School Type

	Total	Returned	
		N	%
Network Coach	39	28	71.7
Foundation Coach	10	8	80.0
Partner Coach	7	4	57.1
Total Coach	57	40	70.2
Network Principal	18	11	61.1
Foundation Principal	5	3	60.0
Partner Principal	5	5	100.0
Total Principal	28	19	67.9

As Table A3 shows, most districts had high response rates for both the coach and principal surveys. The lowest responses were received from principals and coaches in Horry County, where we received fewer than 50% of either coaches or principals’ surveys.

Table A3. Coach and Principal Survey Response Rates by Cornerstone District

District	Coach		Principal		All Returned	
	Total	Returned	Total	Returned	N	%
Bridgeport	6	3	3	2	5	55.5
Horry County	16	7	6	2	9	40.9
Jackson	6	3	4	3	6	60.0
Muscogee County	8	8	4	4	12	100.0
New Haven	1	1	1	1	2	100.0
Springfield	4	4	2	2	6	100.0
Stamford	8	7	4	2	9	75.0
Talladega	8	7	4	3	10	83.3

Implementation Ranking Methodology

This section describes the ranking methodologies used in the two types of rankings presented in the implementation section of our report: implementation components and school-level factors.

Implementation Components

Implementation in Cornerstone schools was measured along seven components: asset mapping, leadership team meetings, coaching, book study, grade level meetings, K-3 uninterrupted literacy block, and positive views of Cornerstone. Data for the implementation index were drawn from the following sources: teacher, coach and principal surveys, and interviews with coaches and principals.

Particular components were measured based on available data. Most components relied on information drawn from both interview and survey material, others relied more heavily on one than another. Interview material was assigned a score based on criteria set below and combined with scores derived from survey measures for each component. An overall score for each school was then calculated and schools were assigned to one of four implementation categories using numeric cut-off points: Low Implementing, Partially Implementing, Implementing, and Fulfilling. Each element is also presented within these four categories using the same cut-off points.

Differences in the 2005-06 Methodology

For the analysis of Cornerstone implementation levels in the *Fifth Year Evaluation Report*, we refined the methodology used to assess implementation in the previous year. The major difference is the development of a more replicable scoring strategy for the interview material and representing the implementation of each component on a four-part scale (as opposed to the three part scale used in the previous report). Other differences include the reduction of elements from eight to seven, which was a result of combining “coaches released” and “coach contact/quality.” Questions were added to the survey in 2005-06 to try and capture some useful information and others were excluded because they were not reliable measures or they did not provide the right information.

Criteria for Scoring Qualitative Interview Data

Interviews were analyzed for answers to each question in column three of Table A4. Each answer received a **C** or a **D** (“**Confirm**” or “**Disconfirm**”), regardless of its length. A **C** confirmed the presence of the feature in question (e.g., asset mapping), or confirmed its effectiveness (as perceived by the respondent). The categories are mutually exclusive. If the responses did not clearly disconfirm a working implementation of the feature, the answer was scored **C**.

Our presumption in this coding process was that implementation was basically working, so if a respondent said ‘Yes, we’re doing it, but it’s not working,’ it received a **D** not a **C**. However, if the respondent said, ‘Yes, we’re doing it, but there are still a lot of issues that need to be sorted out,’ this was coded as a **C**. If we were unable to decide, we did not score the response. This was rare.

An example of **D** (in response to a question about the asset mapping process) was: ‘It’s a waste of time, but, uhm, I just think a lot of these little things that take up time where you could just sit with people and discuss it.’ In our view, this did not point to a working implementation.

For each school, we listed respondents, and computed an Interview Implementation Score (IIS) based on the total number of “C”s divided by the total number of coded responses, for each of the elements.

Criteria for Scoring the Survey Data

Responses to teacher, coach, and principal survey items (where appropriate, some items are only asked of teachers or principals) were also used to construct implementation scores for each element within each school (see columns one and two in Table A4). The mean percentage of responses to each survey item was calculated. Survey items within each element were then averaged to yield an element score for each school.

Individual item scores were calculated according to the following criteria:

Score = % Yes.

Score = % Very Useful + % Useful.

Score = % Strongly Agree + % Agree

Score = % Very useful + % Somewhat useful

For the survey items that measured frequency, responses that indicated an event took place less frequently were given less weight than those indicating greater frequency. For example, in the case where responses ranged from ‘Once or twice a week’ to ‘Once or twice a year’, the responses were given the following weights (see the Scoring of Individual Element Indexes Section for details on how individual items are weighted):

‘Once or twice a week’ * 1

‘Once or twice a month’ * .5

‘Once or twice a semester’ * .25

‘Once or twice a year’ * 0

‘Not at all’ * 0

‘Not applicable’ – Not included

Combined Score

For each of the elements, the level of school implementation was calculated on a 0-100 point scale. The average of the seven elements indicates the implementation level of either Low (0-49.9), Partial (50-69.9), Implementing (70-84.9), or Fulfilling (85-100).

Scoring of Individual Element Indexes

The following section describes the specific data sources used to measure the level of implementation of each component.

Table A4. Measurement of Implementation Components

	1. Teacher Survey items	2. Coach & Principal Survey items	3. Coach & Principal Interview data
PLANNING			
Asset Mapping	<p>Have you participated in the Cornerstone asset mapping process in your school? (% 'Yes')³²</p> <p>The goals from the asset map created by our staff are prominently displayed. (% 'Strongly agree' + 'Agree')</p> <p>The asset mapping process was useful for creating common goals for my school. (% 'Somewhat useful' + 'Very useful'.)</p> <p>The goals established by the asset map are often discussed in staff meetings. (% 'Strongly agree' + 'Agree')</p>	<p>How useful you think asset mapping is in improving literacy practice in your school. (% 'Somewhat useful' + 'Very useful'.)</p> <p>The goals from the asset map created by our staff are prominently displayed (% 'Strongly agree' + 'Agree')</p> <p>The asset mapping process was useful for creating common goals for my school (% 'Strongly agree' + 'Agree')</p> <p>The goals from the asset map are often discussed at staff meetings (% 'Strongly agree' + 'Agree')</p>	<p>Did you do an asset map this year in your school?</p> <p>Was the entire staff involved?</p> <p>Was it perceived as useful?</p> <p>Were the results or goals used?</p> <p>Were the goals of the asset map visible?</p>
Leadership Team		<p>How often, this school year, did you attend Cornerstone leadership team meetings? (frequency)</p> <p>How useful do you think Cornerstone leadership team meetings are in improving literacy practice in your school? (% 'Very useful' + 'Useful')</p>	<p>Are leadership team meetings representative?</p> <p>Are meetings held once a month or more?</p> <p>Are leadership team meetings used to guide school work and/or set school the school agenda?</p>

³² In scoring each of the survey items, all of the positive or affirmative response options were coded as 1. All of the non-positive or affirmative response options were coded as 0 with the exception of “Not applicable” which were not recoded.

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COACHING			
	1. Teacher Survey items	2. Coach & Principal Survey items	3. Coach & Principal Interview data
	<p>At least one of the Cornerstone coaches gives me valuable advice/feedback on my literacy instruction. (% 'Strongly agree' + 'Agree')</p> <p>I have had consistent communication focused on teaching literacy with one or both Cornerstone coaches this year. (% 'Strongly agree' + 'Agree')</p> <p>My work with the Cornerstone coaches has led me to change my teaching practice. (% 'Very much' + 'Quite a bit')</p> <p>To what extent have the Cornerstone coaches helped your literacy teaching this year? (% 'Very much' + 'Quite a bit')</p> <p>Please indicate how often: You have observed a Cornerstone coach's classroom (1-2/per week, month, or semester)</p> <p>A Cornerstone coach has come to your classroom to do a demonstration lesson. (1-2/per week, month, or semester)</p> <p>A Cornerstone coach has visited your classroom while you were teaching literacy. (1-2/per week, month, or semester)</p>	<p>How often did you provide demonstrations or modeled lessons for other teachers at your school. (1-2/per week, month, or semester) (C only)</p> <p>How often did you discuss student work with other teachers. (1-2/per week, month, or semester) (C only)</p> <p>How much influence do the Cornerstone coaches have on your understanding of literacy teaching practice? (% 'A great deal') (P only)</p>	<p>Does the school have 2 or more coaches dedicated to Cornerstone? (% yes/total)</p> <p>Were there any significant interruptions in coaching activities this year? (% No/ total)</p> <p>Did coaches have a certified co-teacher or share a room? (% Yes/total)</p>

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PROFESIONAL LEARNING			
Book Study	1. Teacher Survey items	2. Coach & Principal Survey items	3. Coach & Principal Interview data
	<p>Please indicate how often you participate in a Cornerstone book study group and/or literacy study group in your school. (1-2/per week, month, or semester)</p> <p>The Cornerstone book study groups are useful for learning about best practices in literacy instruction. (% 'Strongly agree' + 'Agree')</p> <p>The Cornerstone book study groups led me to make changes in my teaching practice. (% 'Strongly agree' + 'Agree')</p>	<p>Please indicate how useful you think book study groups are in improving literacy practice in your school (% 'Very useful' + 'Useful')</p>	<p>Did the school have regular book study meetings once a month or more throughout the whole year?</p> <p>Did all or most teachers in the school participate?</p> <p>Were book studies perceived as useful?</p> <p>Was leadership in the book studies shared among faculty members?</p>
Grade Level Meetings	<p>Please indicate how often: You have formal, mandatory grade-level meetings 1-2/per week, month, or semester)</p> <p>Please indicate how often: You have informal grade-level meetings (1-2/per week, month, or semester)</p>	<p>Please indicate how often your school has formal mandatory grade level meetings (1-2/per week, month, or semester)</p> <p>Please indicate how often your school has informal grade level meetings (1-2/per week, month, or semester)</p>	<p>Are grade-level meetings held regularly (at least once or twice a month?)</p> <p>Do grade-level meetings address literacy instruction?</p>
Uninterrupted K-3 Literacy Block			<p>Does an uninterrupted literacy block of 90 minutes or more exist school wide?</p> <p>There are no major challenges to implementation of the literacy block.</p>
Positive Views of Cornerstone	<p>The majority of teachers in this school support Cornerstone implementation. (% 'Strongly agree' + 'Agree')</p>	<p>The majority of teachers in this school support Cornerstone implementation. (% 'Strongly agree' + 'Agree')</p>	

Staff Perceptions of School Environment

Within each component, we examined four school-level factors that may contribute to or hamper implementation such as leadership and any staff turnover. The measurement of school level factors that influenced implementation is described below.

Principal as Instructional leader was measured using the responses of teachers from the online teacher survey to the question: the principal in this school is an instructional leader. A rating of high was 75% and above agreeing or strongly agreeing, medium was 65-75% and low was below 65%.

Principal and Coach Stability were measured by examining the number of times the principal or coaches had changed since the introduction of Cornerstone to the school. Low Stability indicated that a principal or coach had changed in 2004-05, Medium indicated that there had been coach or principal turnover in a previous year (since implementing Cornerstone), and high stability indicated that the principal and/or coach had not changed since beginning the Cornerstone work. New schools were not ranked on coach and principal stability unless there was turnover mid-year in 2004-05.

Teacher Stability was measured using data provided by principals and coaches about the number of new teachers on staff in each grade in 2005-06. High stability indicated limited turnover (0-14.9% of teaching staff), medium (15-24.9% of teaching staff), and low stability indicated more than 25% turnover of staff. New schools were not ranked on teacher stability.

Fixed Effects Regression Methodology and Tables

The centerpiece of the empirical work is a model in which an indicator for student participation in a Cornerstone school is included in a model that predicts student performance.

$$(1) TEST_{igst} = \alpha + \beta CS_{it} * TIME_t + GRADE_g + TIME_t + \gamma X_{igst} + \theta_s + e_{igst}$$

where $TEST_{igst}$ refers to the performance of student i in grade g in school s at time t . Test scores are generally reported as raw or scale scores, and districts may administer different reading and/or language tests in different years. To make these tests comparable, we convert them into Z scores, for which changes are expressed in units of standard deviation.³³

Time (and $TIME_t$) refers to year or term, depending on how the data are reported.³⁴ CS_{it} is a dummy variable that takes a value of one if student i attended a Cornerstone school at time t . In Springfield and Talladega, this variable is interacted with the time variable, and the coefficient on this interaction captures the impact of Cornerstone on the performance of the students in Cornerstone schools, by comparing it to that of students in non-Cornerstone schools at the same time. In Horry County, the Cornerstone indicator is interacted with a variable indicating how many years a school has been implementing the Initiative, to reflect an interesting feature of that district, which is developed below. $GRADE_g$ refers to the grade in which each student is tested. X_{igst} is a set of student characteristics, which varies across districts depending on data availability and may include race, sex, free lunch status (a proxy for poverty) and immigrant status. The school fixed effects, θ_s , are a set of dummy variables indicating which school a student attended, and they capture the impact on student performance of unobserved, time-invariant school characteristics, so that the impact of Cornerstone on performance is net of the effect of school variables. Notably, student mobility allows us to move into and out of the Cornerstone schools. e_{igst} is an error term with the usual properties.

In this model, the coefficient on the interaction, β , provides an estimate of the impact of Cornerstone participation on the performance of students, controlling for student and school

³³ As explained in previous reports, we used the mean and standard deviation of test scores for the group of students who took the test to standardize scores, which is analogous to changing value scales, such as converting yards to meters.

³⁴ We have years in Springfield and Talladega, term in Horry County.

characteristics. This model is estimated using data on cohorts of students that include both students who attended Cornerstone schools and those who did not.

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Table A5. Horry County Grades Two through Five, MAP Test, Black Students Only

	Language Δ Score
Cornerstone school, first year of implementation	-0.109* (0.058)
Cornerstone school, second year of implementation	-0.154** (0.060)
Cornerstone school, third year of implementation	-0.061 (0.103)
Spring 2004	-0.030 (0.030)
Spring 2005	0.027 (0.034)
Fall 2005	0.076** (0.032)
Winter 2006	0.133*** (0.045)
Spring 2006	0.017 (0.037)
Free or reduced-lunch student	-0.546*** (0.067)
Female student	0.316*** (0.029)
Constant	0.108 (0.068)
Observations	9464
R-squared	0.09
Robust standard errors in parentheses	
* significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%	

Notes: The model is adjusted for clustering of students within schools, and includes school fixed effects. The fall of 2003 is left out. Coefficients discussed in the text are bolded.

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Table A6. Jackson Grades Two through Five, MCT Test

	Score	Reading Z
Cornerstone school, year 2001, grade 2	0.104	(0.138)
Cornerstone school, year 2002, grade 2	0.247	(0.151)
Cornerstone school, year 2003, grade 2	0.289*	(0.157)
Cornerstone school, year 2004, grade 2	0.302***	(0.083)
Cornerstone school, year 2005, grade 2	0.299**	(0.120)
Cornerstone school, year 2006, grade 2	0.232*	(0.120)
Cornerstone school, year 2001, grade 3	0.076	(0.072)
Cornerstone school, year 2002, grade 3	0.062	(0.101)
Cornerstone school, year 2003, grade 3	0.208	(0.126)
Cornerstone school, year 2004, grade 3	0.071	(0.111)
Cornerstone school, year 2005, grade 3	0.136	(0.100)
Cornerstone school, year 2006, grade 3	0.156	(0.131)
Cornerstone school, year 2001, grade 4	0.037	(0.122)
Cornerstone school, year 2002, grade 4	0.098	(0.092)
Cornerstone school, year 2003, grade 4	0.101	(0.156)
Cornerstone school, year 2004, grade 4	0.244**	(0.103)
Cornerstone school, year 2005, grade 4	-0.006	(0.140)
Cornerstone school, year 2006, grade 4	-0.056	(0.083)
Cornerstone school, year 2001, grade 5	0.110	(0.088)
Cornerstone school, year 2002, grade 5	0.113	(0.095)
Cornerstone school, year 2003, grade 5	0.095	(0.091)
Cornerstone school, year 2004, grade 5	0.002	(0.081)

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Table A6 (Continued). Jackson Grades Two through Five, MCT Test

	Reading Z score
Cornerstone school, year 2005, grade 5	0.049 (0.102)
Cornerstone school, year 2006, grade 5	-0.027 (0.124)
Year 2002	-0.020 (0.019)
Year 2003	-0.308*** (0.077)
Year 2004	-0.299*** (0.078)
Year 2005	-0.352*** (0.084)
Year 2006	-0.301*** (0.084)
Black student	-0.517*** (0.074)
Hispanic student	-0.828*** (0.224)
Asian student	-0.041 (0.122)
Native American student	-0.558** (0.269)
Free or reduced-lunch student	-0.215*** (0.022)
Female student	0.246*** (0.011)
Constant	0.536*** (0.100)
Observations	58704
R-squared	0.10
Robust standard errors in parentheses	
* significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%	

Notes: The model is adjusted for clustering of students within schools, and includes school fixed effects, and indicators for missing free lunch and sex data. Coefficients discussed in the text are bolded.

Table A7. Springfield Grades Three and Four, MCAS Test

	Reading Z Score
Cornerstone school, year 2003	-0.304*** (0.078)
Cornerstone school, year 2004	-0.074 (0.083)
Cornerstone school, year 2005	0.102 (0.161)
Cornerstone school, year 2006	-0.083 (0.067)
Grade 4	0.002 (0.061)
Year 2002	0.040 (0.027)
Year 2003	0.051 (0.037)
Year 2004	0.049 (0.037)
Year 2005	0.051 (0.055)
Year 2006	-0.016 (0.063)
Black student (2005 and earlier)	-0.227*** (0.038)
Non-Hispanic black student (2006)	-0.231*** (0.070)
Hispanic student (2005 and earlier)	-0.465*** (0.050)
Hispanic student (2006)	-0.325*** (0.052)
Asian student (2005 and earlier)	-0.041 (0.054)
Non-Hispanic Asian student (2006)	0.139 (0.130)
Native American student (2005 and earlier)	-0.326** (0.156)
Non-Hispanic Native American student (2006)	0.019 (0.236)
Multiethnic student (2006)	-0.210*** (0.076)
Poor student	-0.312*** (0.038)
Female student	0.132*** (0.015)
Immigrant student	-0.541*** (0.140)

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Table A7 (Continued). Springfield Grades Three and Four, MCAS Test

	Reading Z Score
Constant	0.443*** (0.074)
Observations	21219
R-squared	0.18
Robust standard errors in parentheses	
* significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%	

Notes: The model is adjusted for clustering of students within schools, and includes school fixed effects, and an indicator for missing immigrant data. Springfield changed the way it reports ethnicity data in 2006, in a way that was not possible for us to reconcile across years, which is why we report ethnicity separately for 2005 and earlier, and for 2006. Hispanic students in 2006 include white, black, Asian and Native American Hispanics. Multiethnic students include all students checking at least three racial categories. Non-Hispanic whites are left out. Coefficients discussed in the text are bolded.

Table A8. Talladega Grades Three through Five, ARMT Test

	Reading Z Score
Cornerstone school, year 2006	0.008 (0.042)
Grade 4	-0.012 (0.051)
Grade 5	0.032 (0.038)
Grade 6	0.035 (0.051)
Year 2006	0.045 (0.052)
Black student	-0.433*** (0.035)
Hispanic student	-0.051 (0.196)
Asian student	0.551 (0.761)
Native American student	1.069*** (0.044)
Female student	0.376*** (0.044)
Constant	-1.404*** (0.039)
Observations	3181
R-squared	0.10
Robust standard errors in parentheses	
* significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%	

Notes: The model is adjusted for clustering of students within schools, and includes school fixed effects, and an indicators for missing race and sex data. Coefficients discussed in the text are bolded.

Universal DRA Administration

Beginning in 2004-05, all Cornerstone Network, Foundation, and Partner schools were asked to administer the DRA to all students in grades K-3. The evaluation team asked for this change to provide greater consistency and accuracy in the data collected at each Cornerstone school. In previous years, the DRA was given to a small sample of students in those Cornerstone schools where the DRA was not required by the district or state. The sample was extremely small and the results of few students could be tracked over time due to high student mobility. Moreover coaches were administering the assessment to each sample of students, which took time away from their work with other teachers. This also meant that classroom teachers were not receiving the benefits of an assessment designed to provide them with useful information about their students' reading abilities.

During fall 2005, the evaluation team set up DRA training sessions provided by Pearson, the publisher of the DRA, for new schools in districts that do not administer the DRA. Thus trainings were offered to four schools in Muscogee County, GA, for the new Partner school in Jackson, MS, and for two new schools in Horry County, SC. Although the DRA is given in Horry County, the district does not require the administration of the comprehension portion of the exam. The Pearson training helped familiarize teachers with the administration of the full assessment. Training was not required for new schools in Stamford, or New Haven, CT, which administer the DRA district-wide. DRA kits, providing all the necessary components of the assessment, were purchased for each K-3 teacher in the new schools.

Data from the administration of the DRA was sent to IESP either from the districts or from spreadsheets that teachers filled out. The results for each of their students were entered and the data were cleaned of missing cases and cases where teachers did not accurately score their students.

An important consideration that affects the DRA results is the time of administration. The DRA is a sensitive assessment designed to measure growth within a school year. The timing of the DRA administration in 2005-06 was much more consistent within each Cornerstone school and across the schools than in years prior to 2004-05. Teachers in Cornerstone schools administered the assessment within a four-week period, generally in mid-April to mid-May. Teachers in Horry County, where the school year ends later, administered the assessment in mid-May to mid-June. Because teachers were asked to record the date of

administration for each child, we were able to remove those cases where students had not been tested within an appropriate window.

DRA data from the universal administration in Horry County, Muscogee County, Jackson, and Talladega are presented in this report. The criteria we used in the analyses of the DRA results for these Cornerstone schools were the spring benchmarks suggested in the *DRA K-3 Teacher Resource Guide* published by Pearson and provided to each teacher with their DRA kit. These are the May/June expected reading levels for students to be considered on grade level. Data are also presented for Bridgeport, New Haven, Springfield, and Stamford using their districts' benchmarks when they differ from Pearson's.

APPENDIX C. SELECTED RESULTS FROM ONLINE TEACHER SURVEY

Below is a portion of the survey results from the online teacher survey. These survey items were selected because of their use in the implementation ranking, the impact section and sustainability sections of our report. The numbers within each of the tables indicate the percentage of respondents that fall within each respective category.³⁵

Table A9. Asset Mapping

Items	Response to question	Fulfilling N=256	Implementing N=276	Partial N=105	Low N=53
Have you participated in the Cornerstone Asset Mapping process in your school?	Yes	84.4	82.6	59.1	56.6
	No	9.8	6.9	22.9	20.8
	Do not know	5.9	10.5	18.1	22.6
The asset mapping process was useful for creating common goals for my school.	Agree or Strongly agree	78.4	71.6	52.3	48.1
	Disagree or Strongly disagree	7.5	9.2	9.4	17.3
	Do not know	14.1	19.2	38.3	34.6
The goals from the asset map created by our staff are prominently displayed	Agree or Strongly agree	85.5	77.4	50.0	34.6
	Disagree or Strongly disagree	2.8	6.7	15.1	34.6
	Do not know	11.8	15.9	34.9	30.8
The goals established by the asset map are often discussed in staff meetings	Agree or Strongly agree	76.1	59.6	42.5	25.0
	Disagree or Strongly disagree	12.9	23.6	21.7	44.2
	Do not know	11.0	16.8	35.9	30.8

³⁵ For all of the items, respondents who did not indicate their school were excluded from the analysis, as were sixth through eighth grade teachers from Marin in Bridgeport. Only respondents who indicated that they taught literacy in the classroom are included in the analysis items related to Cornerstone coaching and teaching practices, Tables A12, A13, and A20. Respondents who indicated that they are Cornerstone coaches were also excluded from analysis of those items.

Table A10. Book Study Groups

Items	Response to question	Fulfilling N=256	Implementing N=276	Partial N=105	Low N=53
How often did you participate in a Cornerstone book study group in your school?	Once or twice a month or more	66.7	69.5	41.8	28.6
	Once or twice a semester or year	29.7	21.1	27.9	28.6
	Not at all	3.6	9.4	30.4	42.9
Cornerstone book study groups are useful for learning about best practices in literacy instruction.	Agree or Strongly agree	90.2	78.8	54.6	51.6
	Disagree or Strongly disagree	3.9	6.1	8.0	6.5
	Do not know	5.9	15.1	37.5	41.9
The Cornerstone book study groups led me to make changes in my teaching practices.	Agree or Strongly agree	88.6	75.4	51.1	51.6
	Disagree or Strongly disagree	4.7	8.7	12.5	3.2
	Do not know	6.7	15.9	36.4	45.2

Table A11. Frequency of Cornerstone Coach Activities

Combined responses to the following three questions:
 How often have you observed a Cornerstone coach’s classroom?
 How often has a coach come to your classroom to do a demonstration lesson?
 How often has a coach visited your classroom while you were teaching literacy?

Responses	Fulfilling N=224	Implementing N=245	Partial N=96	Low N=50
Once or twice a month or more	18.4	11.1	15.3	18.4
One or twice a semester or once or twice a year	46.1	43.1	25.9	46.1
Not at all across the school year	35.5	45.8	58.8	35.5

Notes: Only respondents indicating they teach literacy in the classroom are included in the analysis. Respondents indicating they are Cornerstone Coaches are excluded from the analysis.

Table A12. Coaching

Item	Response to question	Fulfilling N=224	Implementing N=245	Partial N=96	Low N=50
At least one of the Cornerstone coaches gives me valuable advice/feedback on my literacy instruction.	Agree or Strongly agree	77.6	77.2	57.8	51.7
	Disagree or Strongly disagree	13.2	11.0	24.1	17.2
	Do not know	9.2	11.8	18.1	31.0
I have had consistent communication with one or both Cornerstone coaches this year focused on teaching literacy.	Agree or Strongly agree	69.0	67.7	47.0	51.6
	Disagree or Strongly disagree	22.6	20.6	39.8	19.4
	Do not know	8.4	11.8	13.3	29.0
My work with the Cornerstone coaches has led me to change my teaching practice.	Agree or Strongly agree	71.4	71.3	44.6	48.4
	Disagree or Strongly disagree	20.7	17.1	37.4	22.6
	Do not know	7.9	11.7	18.1	29.0

Notes: Only respondents indicating they teach literacy in the classroom are included in the analysis. Respondents indicating they are Cornerstone Coaches are excluded from the analysis.

Table A13. Support for Cornerstone

Items	Response to question	Fulfilling N=256	Implementing N=276	Partial N=105	Low N=55
The majority of teachers in this school support Cornerstone implementation.	Agree or Strongly agree	87.1	68.0	59.8	50.9
	Disagree or Strongly disagree	9.8	22.1	25.2	34.0
	Do not know	3.1	10.0	15.0	15.1

Table A14. Principal Leadership

Items	Response to question	Fulfilling N=256	Implementing N=276	Partial N=105	Low N=55
The principal in this school is an instructional leader.	Agree or Strongly agree	91.4	88.3	73.5	69.2
	Disagree or Strongly disagree	6.6	10.3	22.6	28.9
	Do not know	2.0	1.4	3.9	1.9
The principal in my school supports and promotes Cornerstone.	Agree or Strongly agree	98.4	96.1	94.3	86.5
	Disagree or Strongly disagree	0.4	2.1	1.9	7.7
	Do not know	1.2	1.8	3.8	5.8
The principal has a clear vision for this school that she/he has communicated to the staff.	Agree or Strongly agree	94.1	90.0	80.8	75.0
	Disagree or Strongly disagree	5.1	9.6	14.4	21.2
	Do not know	0.8	0.4	4.8	3.9
The principal has confidence in the expertise of teachers.	Agree or Strongly agree	92.2	89.0	91.4	82.7
	Disagree or Strongly disagree	5.5	9.2	3.9	11.5
	Do not know	2.3	1.8	4.8	5.8
The principal lets teachers know what is expected of them.	Agree or Strongly agree	96.9	91.5	89.3	84.6
	Disagree or Strongly disagree	3.1	7.5	9.7	11.5
	Do not Know	0.0	1.1	1.0	3.9

Table A15. School Culture

Items	Response to question	Fulfilling N=256	Implementing N=276	Partial N=105	Low N=53
Teachers respect colleagues who are expert teachers.	Agree or Strongly agree	93.0	92.5	80.0	75.5
	Disagree or Strongly disagree	5.1	5.4	15.2	18.9
	Do not know	2.0	2.1	4.8	5.7
Most teachers are continually learning and seeking new ideas from each other at this school.	Agree or Strongly agree	93.7	88.6	80.2	73.6
	Disagree or Strongly disagree	3.9	8.6	11.3	20.8
	Do not know	2.4	2.9	8.5	5.7
Experimentation and occasional mistakes are seen as a normal aspect of teaching at this school.	Agree or Strongly agree	88.3	82.9	80.0	79.3
	Disagree or Strongly disagree	9.0	11.7	9.5	11.3
	Do not know	2.7	5.3	10.5	9.4
Teachers set high expectations for students' academic work at this school.	Agree or Strongly agree	96.1	94.3	89.5	84.9
	Disagree or Strongly disagree	3.1	4.6	7.6	9.4
	Do not know	0.8	1.1	2.9	5.7
Teachers are involved in making important decisions at this school.	Agree or Strongly agree	77.9	73.4	62.3	56.6
	Disagree or Strongly disagree	20.2	24.8	31.1	41.5
	Do not Know	2.0	1.8	6.6	1.9
There are formal arrangements that provide opportunities for teachers to discuss and critique their instruction with each other.	Agree or Strongly agree	83.9	68.6	49.5	58.5
	Disagree or Strongly disagree	11.0	25.0	41.9	32.1
	Do not Know	5.1	6.4	8.6	9.4
In this school there is a feeling that everyone is working together toward common goals.	Agree or Strongly agree	91.4	86.8	89.7	67.9
	Disagree or Strongly disagree	7.8	11.4	7.5	28.3
	Do not Know	0.8	1.8	2.8	3.8

Table A16. Parent Involvement

Items	Response to question	Fulfilling N=256	Implementing N=276	Partial N=105	Low N=55
Parents regularly attend literacy events.	Agree or Strongly agree	44.4	48.2	27.4	23.5
	Disagree or Strongly disagree	50.2	37.4	53.8	54.9
	Do not know	5.5	14.4	18.9	21.6
Teachers and parents are partners in educating students.	Agree or Strongly agree	71.3	71.9	50.9	52.8
	Disagree or Strongly disagree	24.4	22.3	34.9	37.7
	Do not know	4.3	5.8	14.2	9.4
My school holds regular literacy-related events for parents	Agree or Strongly agree	78.0	59.9	49.5	42.3
	Disagree or Strongly disagree	17.3	30.7	36.2	42.3
	Do not know	4.7	9.4	14.3	15.4
Parents of children in this school have influence on school decisions	Agree or Strongly agree	70.0	70.7	54.3	77.4
	Disagree or Strongly disagree	24.1	22.5	33.3	9.4
	Do not know	5.8	6.8	12.4	13.2
Cornerstone principles and goals have been discussed with parents	Agree or Strongly agree	86.7	72.1	64.2	42.3
	Disagree or Strongly disagree	6.3	12.7	17.0	21.2
	Do not know	7.1	15.2	18.9	36.5
Parents of my students support Cornerstone practices	Agree or Strongly agree	64.7	50.2	33.0	32.7
	Disagree or Strongly disagree	14.1	15.6	16.0	7.7
	Do not know	21.2	34.2	50.9	59.6

Table A17. Subject Areas in Which You Use Cornerstone Strategies

Subject Areas*	Fulfilling N=256	Implementing N=276	Partial N=105	Low N=55
English Language Arts	91.1	87.8	90.1	82.5
Science	57.1	56.1	38.7	49.1
Social Studies	64.5	56.8	45.9	50.9
Math	44.0	36.9	42.3	26.3
Arts (Music/Visual Arts)	12.7	15.7	6.3	8.8
Other	12.7	7.3	13.5	10.5

* Teachers were asked to check all that apply.

Table A18: Combined Responses for Frequency of Classroom Literacy Practices Associated with the Cornerstone Literacy Framework

Category	Frequency	Fulfilling N=224	Implementing N=245	Partial N=96	Low N=50
Student activities	Once or twice a week or more	93.0	90.2	90.8	85.1
	Once or twice a month or once or twice a semester	6.5	8.7	7.9	14.3
	Not at all across the school year	0.5	1.1	1.3	0.6
Teacher activities	Once or twice a week or more	95.3	91.6	93.0	90.3
	Once or twice a month or once or twice a semester	4.0	7.2	5.9	7.1
	Not at all across the school year	0.7	1.2	1.2	2.6
Comprehension topics	Once or twice a week or more	92.5	88.4	90.1	83.2
	Once or twice a month or once or twice a semester	6.6	10.4	9.2	15.8
	Not at all across the school year	1.0	1.2	0.8	1.0

Notes: Frequencies include only respondents who indicated that they teach literacy in the classroom and excluded respondents who indicated they are Cornerstone Coaches.

Items were combined as follows:

Student Activities: Please indicate how often most students in your class engage in these activities when you are teaching literacy: Read aloud; Have shared writing time; Share/teach others; Focus on a surface structure strategy; Read texts that vary in genre; Read texts that vary in difficulty.

Teacher Activities: When you are teaching literacy, how often do you: Provide opportunities for students to work in small groups and individually; Craft for students; Group students according to their ability for some activities; Integrate trade books into your lessons; Take time to reflect with the students on what you’ve covered and its future applications; Provide opportunities for students to compose meaning when reading and writing; Use invitational groups; Think aloud and model comprehension strategies for students

Comprehension Topics: How often were the following comprehension topics a primary focus of instruction in your class this year: Activating prior knowledge or making personal connections to text; Making predictions, previewing, or surveying text; Students generating their own questions; Summarizing important or critical details; Examining literary techniques; Identifying the author; Using concept maps, story maps and/or graphic organizers; Answering questions that require inferences.

Table A19. Cornerstone Impact on Teaching Practice

Items	Response to question	Fulfilling N=224	Implementing N=245	Partial N=96	Low N=50
Cornerstone has improved your classroom environment	Very much or quite a bit	71.0	53.5	43.2	41.9
	Some or a little bit	26.2	40.0	47.7	41.9
	Not at all	2.8	6.5	9.1	16.3
Cornerstone included opportunities to work productively with my colleagues	Agree or Strongly agree	87.1	78.0	63.7	76.1
	Disagree or Strongly disagree	10.3	14.9	29.7	10.9
	Do not know	2.7	7.1	6.6	13.0
Cornerstone has altered approaches to teaching in this school	Agree or Strongly agree	87.9	83.1	74.5	65.2
	Disagree or Strongly disagree	8.5	8.3	11.7	13.0
	Do not know	3.6	8.7	13.8	21.7
How much has participation in Cornerstone activities made work as a teacher more or less enjoyable?	Much more or somewhat more	67.1	49.1	44.4	45.0
	The same	29.5	42.2	46.7	50.0
	Somewhat less or much less	3.3	8.7	8.9	5.0
Cornerstone has improved your literacy teaching practice	Very much or quite a bit	71.5	55.5	42.4	40.9
	Some or a little bit	26.2	39.8	52.9	50.0
	Not at all	2.3	4.7	4.7	9.1
Cornerstone has improved your understanding of student literacy learning	Very much or quite a bit	75.2	57.9	46.0	46.5
	Some or a little bit	22.0	37.5	48.3	44.2
	Not at all	2.8	4.7	5.8	9.3
How much influence does Cornerstone have on your teaching practice?	A great deal	91.9	84.0	83.2	70.2
	Some or a little bit	7.6	15.6	15.8	27.7
	None	0.5	0.4	1.1	2.1
Cornerstone has deepened my understanding of how students learn literacy	Agree or Strongly agree	87.6	79.8	60.6	65.2
	Disagree or Strongly disagree	9.3	14.0	25.5	19.6
	Do not know	3.1	6.2	13.8	15.2

Notes: Only respondents indicating they teach literacy in the classroom are included in the analysis. Respondents indicating they are Cornerstone Coaches are excluded from the analysis.

Table A20. Cornerstone Impact on Student Literacy

	Response to question	Fulfilling N=224	Implementing N=245	Partial N=96	Low N=50
Cornerstone has improved students' test scores	Very much or quite a bit	57.6	44.4	33.9	30.3
	Some or a little bit	37.7	46.6	57.6	54.6
	Not at all	4.7	9.0	8.5	15.2
Cornerstone has improved students' literacy skills	Very much or quite a bit	61.5	47.1	34.5	38.5
	Some or a little bit	35.6	47.5	59.5	53.9
	Not at all	2.9	5.4	6.0	7.7

Notes: Only respondents indicating that they teach literacy in the classroom are included in the analysis. Respondents who indicated that they are Cornerstone coaches are excluded from the analysis.

Table A21. How is Cornerstone Viewed in Your School?

Cornerstone is viewed as:	Fulfilling N=256	Implementing N=276	Partial N=105	Low N=55
An innovation, with its value for the school still under consideration	16.7	32.1	35.2	50.9
An innovation, but its value no longer questioned.	7.8	6.5	9.5	5.5
A regular, on-going, but limited part of our literacy program.	6.6	15.5	11.4	10.9
A fundamental part of our regular approach to literacy.	65.8	41.5	31.4	16.4
Viewed differently (open response)	3.1	4.3	12.4	16.4

Table A22. The Future of Cornerstone in Your School

What do you think is the probable future of Cornerstone at your school?	Fulfilling N=256	Implementing N=276	Partial N=105	Low N=55
It will remain an enduring part of our school's educational program	57.3	29.3	26.4	18.9
It will remain but will be adapted to our school's needs	21.6	37.9	34.0	30.2
It will give way to more traditional ways of teaching literacy	2.4	1.4	1.9	0.0
It will give way to another innovative approach to teaching literacy	7.5	7.5	13.2	11.3
Its future is unclear at this time	9.4	22.1	18.9	33.9
Something else will probably happen (open response)	2.0	1.8	5.6	5.7

Table A23. Major Challenges to Implementing Cornerstone in Your School

Challenges*	Fulfilling N=256	Implementing N=276	Partial N=105	Low N=55
Resistant teachers	35.5	42.2	51.4	61.4
Competing district/state mandates	23.2	39.7	35.1	26.3
High-stakes testing	42.9	57.8	44.1	36.8
Teacher turnover	39.4	25.1	15.3	45.6
Student mobility	33.2	28.2	27.9	24.6
Principal support	3.9	7.3	14.4	15.8
Teacher support	10.8	22.6	18.9	35.1
None of the above	14.7	11.8	12.6	8.8
Other (Please Specify):	6.6	6.3	17.1	17.5

* Teachers were asked to check all that apply.

Table A24. Cornerstone’s Fit with Other Literacy Initiatives

Items	Percentage of teachers that Agree or Strongly Agree by Implementation level			
	Fulfilling	Implementing	Partial	Low
	N=256	N=276	N=105	N=55
Cornerstone fits well with other district/state literacy initiatives.	85.0	72.4	70.3	61.8

Table A25. Major Challenges to Implementing Cornerstone in Your School by District

Challenges*	Bridgeport N=40	Horry County N=196	Jackson N=93	Muscogee County N=110	New Haven N=18	Springfield N=57	Stamford N=86	Talladega N=114
Resistant teachers	40.0	36.7	33.3	54.5	38.9	19.3	60.5	49.1
Competing district/ state mandates	25.0	44.4	21.5	26.4	66.7	17.5	38.4	23.7
High-stakes testing	35.0	59.2	24.7	59.1	66.7	33.3	48.8	49.1
Teacher turnover	25.0	17.3	28.0	37.3	22.2	57.9	24.4	42.1
Student mobility	55.0	16.8	37.6	37.3	44.4	57.9	15.1	23.7
Principal support	10.0	3.1	11.8	8.2	11.1	0.0	17.4	7.9
Teacher support	12.5	13.3	17.2	32.7	11.1	1.8	25.6	22.8
None of the above	7.5	15.8	16.1	7.3	16.7	15.8	9.3	12.3
Other (Please Specify):	17.5	7.1	7.5	9.1	0.0	1.8	18.6	7.9

* Teachers were asked to check all that apply.

Table A26. Teacher, Coach, and Principal Perceptions of District Support

Your school district:	Response to question	Bridgeport N=46	Horry County N=202	Jackson N=96	Muscogee County N=120	New Haven N=20	Springfield N=62	Stamford N=93	Talladega N=122
Understands and is responsive to my school's instructional/literacy needs	Agree or Strongly agree	68.9	87.1	84.4	66.7	75.0	83.9	51.6	83.6
	Disagree or Strongly disagree	22.2	7.9	8.3	11.7	20.0	9.7	25.8	13.1
	Do not know	8.9	5.0	7.3	21.7	5.0	6.5	22.6	3.3
Is open to change	Agree or Strongly agree	65.2	81.6	79.2	57.1	80.0	70.0	64.5	85.2
	Disagree or Strongly disagree	26.1	12.9	14.6	19.6	15.0	13.3	15.1	8.2
	Do not know	8.7	5.5	6.3	23.2	5.0	16.7	20.4	6.6
Fosters communication among schools in the district	Agree or Strongly agree	54.5	82.0	86.2	58.8	25.0	65.0	29.3	76.0
	Disagree or Strongly disagree	29.5	9.5	7.4	20.2	50.0	23.3	55.4	14.0
	Do not know	15.9	8.5	6.4	21.0	25.0	11.7	15.2	9.9
Provides sufficient professional development opportunities	Agree or Strongly agree	78.3	93.6	93.8	85.6	80.0	93.5	54.9	92.6
	Disagree or Strongly disagree	21.7	4.0	4.2	7.6	20.0	3.2	35.2	4.1
	Do not know	0.0	2.5	2.1	6.8	0.0	3.2	9.9	3.3
Collects and uses student achievement data to improve its support for schools	Agree or Strongly agree	80.4	95.0	94.8	76.1	80.0	88.5	62.6	90.2
	Disagree or Strongly disagree	17.4	1.0	2.1	4.4	15.0	4.9	22.0	5.7
	Do not know	2.2	4.0	3.1	19.5	5.0	6.6	15.4	4.1

Table A27. Teacher, Coach, and Principal Perceptions of District Support for Cornerstone

Your school district:	Response to question	Bridgeport N=46	Horry County N=202	Jackson N=96	Muscogee County N=120	New Haven N=20	Springfield N=62	Stamford N=93	Talladega N=122
Is actively involved in the Cornerstone work	Agree or Strongly agree	58.1	72.3	67.7	43.3	50.0	62.3	32.3	89.3
	Disagree or Strongly disagree	23.3	11.4	4.2	14.2	35.0	14.8	22.6	4.1
	Do not know	18.6	16.3	28.1	42.5	15.0	23.0	45.2	6.6
Provides sufficient resources (including release time and staff) to support Cornerstone work	Agree or Strongly agree	54.5	74.4	66.3	57.5	45.0	68.3	28.0	74.4
	Disagree or Strongly disagree	36.4	12.6	16.8	26.7	45.0	20.0	39.8	18.2
	Do not know	9.1	13.1	16.8	15.8	10.0	11.7	32.3	7.4
Is involved in spreading Cornerstone practices across the district	Agree or Strongly agree	45.5	69.7	54.3	30.3	40.0	55.7	23.7	85.8
	Disagree or Strongly disagree	27.3	9.5	6.4	20.2	30.0	13.1	21.5	4.2
	Do not know	27.3	20.9	39.4	49.6	30.0	31.1	54.8	10.0
Is planning to sustain Cornerstone in the district after the initial four years of support	Agree or Strongly agree	51.1	33.3	44.1	26.3	35.0	61.3	20.9	73.0
	Disagree or Strongly disagree	13.3	19.9	2.2	1.7	20.0	3.2	8.8	1.6
	Do not know	35.6	46.8	53.8	72.0	45.0	35.5	70.3	25.4

APPENDIX D. CORNERSTONE SCHOOL CONTEXT AND OTHER LITERACY PROGRAMS

Table A28. Selected Descriptive Statistics

District	School	Enrollment	Grade Range	African American	White	Hispanic	Asian	Native American	Free/ Rded Price Meals	ESL
Bridgeport	District	22,828	PreK-12	42.4%	9.6%	44.8%	3%	0.1%	>95%	15.5%
34 schools	Garfield	287	PreK-6	24.4%	2.4%	70.4%	2.8%	----	>95%	29.9%
(31 elem.)	Maplewood Annex*	215	K-3	49.6%	9.1%	37.9%	----	----	>95%	2.5%
	Marin	867	PreK-8	22.3%	3.1%	72.2%	2.4%	----	>95%	33.9%
Horry County	District	34,477	PreK-12	24.1%	68.7%	4.9%	1.2%	0.5%	57.7%	3.5%
47 schools	Aynor	638	PreK-5	11.2%	85.5%	2.5%	0.4%	----	56.5%	1.8%
(25 elem.)	Kingston	581	PreK-5	20.9%	75.2%	3.1%	0.8%	----	74%	1.2%
	NMBE	633	2-3	25.9%	66.7%	6.1%	0.7%	----	53.9%	6.1%
	NMBP	789	PreK-1	32%	~60%	6%	----	----	**	**
	South Conway	638	PreK-5	41%	56%	2.2%	0.7%	----	74.5%	0.4%
	Waccamaw	616	K-5	27.1%	63.1%	7.6%	0.3%	1.3%	69.7%	5.7%
Jackson	District	32,403	PreK-12	97%	2%	----	----	----	78%	<1%
59 schools	Brown	322	PreK-5	100%	----	----	----	----	**	0%
(38 elem.)	Lake	631	PreK-5	99%	----	----	----	----	**	0%
	Raines	354	PreK-5	100%	----	----	----	----	**	0%
	Watkins	482	PreK-5	100%	----	----	----	----	**	0%
Muscogee County	District	31,985	PreK-12	59%	31%	4%	2%	----	60%	<1%
61 schools	Downtown	429	K-5	79%	12%	3%	1%	----	83%	0%
(34 elem.)	Key	301	K-5	66%	15%	5%	3%	----	87%	0%
	Rigdon Rd.	206	K-5	99%	1%	----	----	----	87%	0%
	St. Mary's	470	K-5	91%	3%	1%	----	----	79%	0%
New Haven	District	20,273	PreK-12	53.7%	11%	33.9%	1.4%	.1%	61.7%	23%
45 schools (29 elem.)	Bishop Woods	267	PreK-4	39.7%	13.1%	41.2%	6%	----	44.9%	8.9%
Springfield	District	25,206	PreK-12	25.4%	17.6%	50.8%	3%	----	76.2%	13.7%
47 schools	Freedman	219	K-5	26%	16.4%	39.7%	1.4%	1.4%	80.8%	14.2%
(32 elem.)	Harris	610	PreK-5	18.9%	31.1%	44.8%	1.5%	----	73.1%	18.5%
Stamford	District	15,130	PreK-12	23.2%	42.3%	28.4%	6.1%	----	44.1%	17.1%
20 schools	Hart	490	K-5	31.2%	30.4%	30.8%	7.6%	----	54.7%	13.3%
(12 elem.)	Springdale	567	K-5	15.3%	44.1%	34.6%	5.5%	0.5%	56.6%	15.7%
	Stark	608	K-5	31.9%	27.5%	33.9%	6.7%	----	57.7%	18.9%
	Stillmeadow	605	PreK-5	36%	35.2%	18.5%	9.9%	0.3%	45.3%	9.5%
Talladega	District	7871	K-12	40%	59%	0.6%	0.2%	----	62.4%	<1%
18 schools	BB Comer	655	K-6	25.3%	72.8%	1.4%	----	----	65.5%	0%
(8 elem.)	Munford	639	K-5	28.5%	70.9%	0.6%	----	----	63.1%	0%
	Stemley	524	K-6	68.1%	30%	1.7%	----	----	79.8%	0%
	Sycamore	239	K-4	56.1%	43.5%	0.4%	----	----	84.5%	0%

* 2005-06 data not available. Information shown is from 2004-05 CSDE Public School Profile

** Data not available

Note: Ethnicity percentages do not add up to 100% because "Multiracial" and "Other" classifications are not included in this table.

Bridgeport

In June 2005, a new superintendent assumed leadership of the Bridgeport School District. Also in 2005, the National Urban Alliance began working with the district. NUA conducted a district-wide instructional assessment during the school year and has been providing professional development based on their assessment.

In 2004-05, Bridgeport adopted the Harcourt Brace Trophies basal series to support the district's 2003-04 literacy plan, which replaced their Houghton Mifflin series. The district also has full-time reading coaches at each school, who provide training to teachers through modeling and coaching. At both Maplewood Annex and Marin, this role is filled by one of the Cornerstone coaches. The district literacy coaches lead workshops at their schools three times a year. The district has been involved with the Institute for Learning (IFL).

Bridgeport has received a state grant to fund "Priority Schools." These schools receive funds for drop out prevention, parent centers, full day kindergarten programs, professional development, and Tops, a home school program supporting literacy in the home for children up to age seven.

In addition to the Houghton Mifflin series, schools also use Fountas and Pinnell's *Firsthand Phonics*. Other programs in the district include Direct Instruction, Reading First, Consortium on Reading Excellence (CORE), and Early Reading Success, which is being implemented district-wide. At Maplewood Annex, teachers are using Lucy Calkins' work, decodable books, and anthologies.

The Bridgeport Public School District has a total enrollment of 22,828 students (42% African American, 10% White, 45% Hispanic, 3% Asian, and 0.1% Native American) in 34 schools (31 elementary). Over 95% of students qualify for free or reduced-price meals, while 16% participate in Bilingual Education and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes.

Garfield School enrolls 287 students across grades Pre-K to six (24% African American, 2% White, 70% Hispanic, and 3% Asian). Over 95% of students qualify for free or reduced-price meals. Thirty percent participate in Bilingual Education and ESL classes.

Luis Munoz Marin School enrolls 867 students across grades Pre-K to eight (22% African American, 3% White, 72% Hispanic, and 2% Asian). Over 95% of students qualify for free or reduced-price meals. Thirty-four percent participate in Bilingual Education and ESL classes.

Maplewood Annex Elementary School enrolls 298 students across grades K to three (50% African American, 9% White, and 38% Hispanic). Over 95% of students qualify for free or reduced-price meals. Three percent participate in Bilingual Education and ESL classes.*

*2005-06 enrollment and demographic data not available for Maplewood Annex. Data shown is from CSDE Public School Profile, 2004-05.

Horry County

The district's literacy model (Five Block Model) is based on a modified version that the district developed from the four-block model created by Pat Cunningham. For over the past ten years the district has worked to develop a balanced literacy approach with a literature-based program. Teams of teachers are still working to refine the district's literacy model, develop lesson plan formats, and a scope and sequence. The district provides each school with a curriculum coach who is supported by two district literacy specialists. The district literacy coaches visit schools, model lessons, observe teachers, and provide feedback. Corrective Reading and Reading Mastery are used with special education students.

All of the schools in Horry use basal readers and Rigby books, but the district expects these to be used as a resource and not as the primary texts. Aynor uses Reading Recovery and many computer programs including STAR reading and Head Sprout, an early reading program for K-2 students and struggling readers. At North Myrtle Beach Elementary, struggling students benefit from additional instruction in an extended day program on Thursdays. At Waccamaw, teachers use Lucy Calkins' books, Working with Words, and 6-Traits Writing.

The Horry County School District has a total enrollment of 34,477 students (24% African American, 69% White, 5% Hispanic, 1% Asian, and 0.5% Native American) in 47 schools (25 elementary). Fifty-eight percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals and 4% participate in Bilingual Education and ESL classes.

Aynor Elementary School enrolls 638 students across grades Pre-K to five (11% African American, 86% White, 3% Hispanic, and 0.4% Asian). Fifty-seven percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals and 2% participate in Bilingual Education and ESL classes.

Kingston Elementary School enrolls 581 students across grades Pre-K to five (21% African American, 75% White, 3% Hispanic, and 0.8% Asian). Seventy-four percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals and 1% participate in Bilingual Education and ESL classes.

North Myrtle Beach Elementary School enrolls 633 students across grades two and three (26% African American, 67% White, 6% Hispanic, and 0.7% Asian). Fifty-four percent of students are eligible for free or reduced price meals and 6% participate in Bilingual Education and ESL classes.

North Myrtle Beach Primary School enrolls 789 students across grades Pre-K to one. Thirty-two percent of students are African American, just under 60% White, 6% Hispanic, and less than 1% other.

South Conway Elementary School enrolls 638 students across grades Pre-K to five (41% African American, 56% White, 2.2% Hispanic, and 0.7% Asian). Seventy-five percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals and 0.4% participate in Bilingual Education and ESL classes.

Waccamaw Elementary School enrolls 616 students across grades K to 5 (27.1% African American, 63.1% White, 7.6% Hispanic, 0.3% Asian and 1.3% Native American). 69.7 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. 5.7% participate in Bilingual Education and ESL classes.

Jackson

In 2004-05, the Jackson Public School District overhauled their literacy plan. The district reading series, Scott Foresman, was supplemented with district-wide training from CORE and CORE was implemented as the overarching literacy program for the district. Jackson also provided each school with an off-site curriculum developer. This person is responsible for a number of elementary schools and therefore is not available to any one school on a daily basis. The district also continues to use the STAR model, a new method for professional development focused on literacy unveiled mid-year in 2003-04, the same year that district's professional development office was reinstated after a five-year hiatus due to budget cuts. The STAR model, CORE training and the reinstatement of the professional development plan are connected to the district's partnership with the Stupski Foundation.

District-wide, Jackson is also implementing Working on the Work (WOW) and High Schools that Work, which focus on student engagement in the classroom. Jackson also has the International Baccalaureate program in three high schools, two middle schools, and one elementary school. Several schools in the district have in the past taken on and/or are still implementing comprehensive school models such as Success for All, Modern Red Schoolhouse, America's Choice, and Co-nect but over the past three years the district has gradually not renewed the contracts for these models.

School staff at Lake use thinking maps. At Watkins, teachers use the Scott Foresman Celebrate Reading Series as their basal text for all grades and WOW. Both Lake and Watkins have Open Doors, a program for gifted students.

The Jackson Public School District has a total enrollment of 32,403 students (97% African American, 2% White, and less than 1% other) in 59 schools (38 elementary). Seventy-eight percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Less than 1% participate in Bilingual Education and ESL classes.

Brown Elementary School enrolls 322 students across grades Pre-K to five. One hundred percent of students are African American and none participate in Bilingual Education and ESL classes.

Lake Elementary School enrolls 631 students across grades Pre-K to five. Ninety-nine percent of students are African American and 1% other. None participate in Bilingual Education and ESL classes.

Raines Elementary School enrolls 354 students across grades Pre-K to five. One hundred percent of students are African American and none participate in Bilingual Education and ESL classes.

Watkins Elementary School enrolls 482 students across grades Pre-K to five. One hundred percent of students are African American and none participate in Bilingual Education and ESL classes.

Muscogee County

Muscogee County uses an “integrated” approach to literacy. The Muscogee County schools have been implementing the Georgia Performance Standards since 2004-05. Teachers in all schools have been involved in book study groups using materials provided by the state. Under Title I, schools have academic coaches to provide professional development and help implement the state performance standards.

Muscogee County teachers have two basal series for reading, McGraw Hill and Macmillan. The district offers teachers an array of site- based and centralized professional development opportunities based on the National Reading Panel research and the state standards.

About one-third of the elementary schools in the district are using WOW, which focuses on student engagement in the classroom. The district has a summer acceleration program for students who do not meet the third and fifth grade benchmarks on the state standardized test.

The district has magnet schools at all levels, and two of the Cornerstone schools are magnets. All four of the Cornerstone schools had been using Reading Recovery, which the district discontinued, and several of the coaches had been Reading Recovery teachers prior to becoming Cornerstone coaches.

The Muscogee Public School District has a total enrollment of 31,985 students (59% African American, 31% White, 4% Hispanic, 2% Asian, and 4% Multiracial) in 61 schools (34 elementary). Sixty percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Less than 1% participates in Bilingual Education and ESL classes.

Downtown Elementary Magnet Academy enrolls 429 students across grades K to five (79% African American, 12% White, 3% Hispanic, 1% Asian, and 5% Multiracial). Eighty-three percent are eligible for free or reduced-price meals and none of the students participates in Bilingual Education and ESL classes.

Key Elementary School enrolls 301 students across grades K to five (66% African American, 15% White, 5% Hispanic, 3% Asian, and 11% Multiracial). Eighty-seven percent are eligible for free or reduced-price meals and none of the students participates in Bilingual Education and ESL classes.

Rigdon Road Elementary School enrolls 206 students across grades K to five (99% African American and 1% White). Eighty-seven percent are eligible for free or reduced-price meals and none of the students participates in Bilingual Education and ESL classes.

St. Mary’s Video Communication and Technology Magnet Academy enrolls 470 students across grades K to five (91% African American, 3% White, 1% Hispanic, and 5% Multiracial). Seventy-nine percent are eligible for free or reduced-price meals and none of the students participates in Bilingual Education and ESL classes.

New Haven

The district has a comprehensive literacy model based upon the National Reading Panel's report. New Haven is also implementing several programs focused on reading and/or writing. They are: Cast a Spell, Empowering Writers, Fountas and Pinnell's Firsthand Phonics, Breakthrough to Literacy, and the Rebecca Sitten Spelling Program. In 2005-06, the district introduced Keys to Comprehension, a district-wide scripted literacy program.

Since 2003-04, New Haven has partnered with the Stupski Foundation on district-level capacity building efforts. The Foundation was instrumental in school staff district-wide receiving training from CORE, instituting data teams focused on data driven decisions in each school, and literacy calibrations, which are school-level walk-throughs focused on reading instruction, writing, planning, and differentiated instruction.

New Haven was also the recipient of a Comprehensive School Reform grant resulting in four schools choosing the following programs: Reading First, Haskins, and the Columbia Writing Project. Also, the district provides each school with a literacy coach who models lessons, coaches teachers, leads grade-level meetings, and provides professional development to teachers once a month for 90 minutes. In addition, all New Haven schools have a site-based management team based on the James Comer model.

Bishop Woods uses Rebecca Sitten Spelling and is involved with the Haskins Laboratories program. They also have Early Reading Success, which provides a specialist to the school on a weekly basis. The specialist works with special education and classroom teachers who have struggling students to improve the students' phonological awareness and phonics skills. In addition, Bishop Woods received a \$30,000 grant in 2004-05 for classroom libraries.

The New Haven School District has a total enrollment of 20,273 students (54% African American, 11% White, 34% Hispanic, 1% Asian, and 0.1% Native American) in 45 schools (29 elementary). Sixty-two percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals and 23% participate in Bilingual Education and ESL classes.

Bishop Woods Elementary School enrolls 267 students across grades Pre-K to four (40% African American, 13% White, 41% Hispanic, and 6% Asian). Forty-five percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals and 9% participate in Bilingual Education and ESL classes.

Springfield

The district has stressed guided reading and balanced literacy since 1997. A district Reading Plan has been in place since 2002 and Harcourt Trophies is the district wide reading series. There is also a basal reading series that schools can voluntarily choose to supplement with other materials. In the 2003-04 school year, the district introduced Collaborative Professional Development (CPD) teachers to each school. Their role is to provide embedded professional development to teachers for part of the day and to work with small groups of students for the remainder of the day. The CPD teachers meet every two weeks at the district and work on topics such as school improvement planning and MCAS tips.

In 2004-05, the district introduced Step Up Springfield, an initiative that engages the community in setting proficiency targets, in both academics and character development with quarterly benchmarks. The district is also implementing The First Steps Writing Continuum Program, a mandated student portfolio system that moves with the student to each grade, Read 180 in middle and high schools, Responsive Classroom, a classroom management/school community-building tool, and Read First.

At Freedman, teachers report using no additional programs but do use trade books and other literature to supplement the reading programs. At Harris, teachers are implementing Read First as well as Lucy Calkins' work focusing on writing in the primary grades. Additionally, Harris teachers are implementing Responsive Classrooms.

The Springfield Public School District has a total enrollment of 25,206 students (25% African American, 18% White, 51% Hispanic, 3% Asian, and 4% Multiracial) in 47 schools (32 elementary). Seventy-six percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals and 14% participate in Bilingual Education and ESL classes.

Frederick Harris Elementary School enrolls 610 students across grades Pre-K to five (19% African American, 31% White, 45% Hispanic, 2% Asian, and 4% Multiracial). Seventy-three percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals and 19% participate in Bilingual Education and ESL classes.

Freedman Elementary School enrolls 219 students across grades K to five (26% African American, 16% White, 40% Hispanic, 1% Asian, and 15% Multiracial). Eighty-one percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals and 14% participate in Bilingual Education and ESL classes.

Stamford

A new Superintendent assumed leadership of the Stamford School District in the summer of 2005. Stamford is in the process of developing a district-wide literacy program, and mandates the Houghton Mifflin series.

Stamford teachers were trained in two major initiatives prior to Cornerstone's introduction in the district: Responsive Classrooms, which promotes a supportive and positive social and learning climate, and the Columbia University Reading and Writing Workshops.

Stark Elementary uses 'Voyages,' a language based math program.

The Stamford Public School District has a total enrollment of 15,130 students (23% African American, 42% White, 28% Hispanic, and 6% Asian) in 20 schools (12 elementary). Forty-four percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals and 17% participate in Bilingual Education and ESL classes.

Hart School enrolls 490 students across grades K to five (31% African American, 30% White, 31% Hispanic, and 8% Asian). Fifty-five percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals and 13% participate in Bilingual Education and ESL classes.

Springdale School enrolls 567 students across grades K to five (15% African American, 44% White, 35% Hispanic, 6% Asian, and 0.5% Native American). Fifty-seven percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals and 16% participate in Bilingual Education and ESL classes.

Julia A. Stark School enrolls 608 students across grades K to five (32% African American, 28% White, 34% Hispanic, and 7% Asian). Fifty-eight percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals and 19% participate in Bilingual Education and ESL classes.

Stillmeadow School enrolls 605 students across grades Pre-K to five (36% African American, 35% White, 19% Hispanic, 10% Asian, and 0.3% Native American). Forty-five percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals and 10% participate in Bilingual Education and ESL classes.

Talladega

In 2000-01, Talladega began implementing the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI). All elementary schools in the district have adopted ARI. ARI is a multi-year initiative that provides schools with literacy professional development in the form of an initial 2-week training session focused on the five components of balanced literacy. A school-based reading coach who works with small groups of at-risk children is assigned to the school and walk-throughs of the school and classrooms are also a part of ARI. Re-certification of the training takes place every three years.

For the past two years, Talladega has also been involved in Curriculum Mapping with the intent of creating a K-12 curriculum for the district. In 2004 –05, Talladega adopted Passport Voyager (Voyager), an intervention program (a component of Reading First) targeting at-risk students. Voyager was adopted during the 2004-05 school year and has not yet been used universally. Training has been provided to school staff district-wide on both Voyager and Curriculum Mapping. In the past, the district has also provided training to teachers for other programs such as Talents Unlimited, WOW, and the 6-Traits writing system.

Both Stemley and Sycamore are using the Rigby reading series for early grades and McMillan McGraw -Hill text for grades three through six. Stemley has also adopted Right Skills (a phonic based instruction program that is being used occasionally), Write Skills (their intervention program for students needing additional help), and Lucy Calkins.

The Talladega County Public School District has a total enrollment of 7871 students (40% African American, 59% White, 0.6% Hispanic, 0.2% Asian, and 0.1% other) in 18 schools (eight elementary). Sixty-two percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Less than 1% participates in Bilingual Education and ESL classes.

BB Comer Memorial Elementary School enrolls 655 students across grades K to six (25% African American, 73% White, 1% Hispanic, and 0.5% other). Sixty-six percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals and none participate in Bilingual Education and ESL classes.

Munford Elementary School enrolls 639 students across grades K to five (29% African American, 71% White, and 0.6% Hispanic). Sixty-three percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals and none participate in Bilingual Education and ESL classes.

Stemley Road Elementary School enrolls 524 students across grades K to six (68% African American, 30% White, and 2% Hispanic). Eighty percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals and none participate in Bilingual Education and ESL classes.

Sycamore School enrolls 239 students across grades K to four (56% African American, 44% White, and 0.4% Hispanic). Eighty-five percent of students are eligible for reduced-price meals and none participate in Bilingual Education and ESL classes.

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APPENDIX E. AVAILABLE TEST DATA FROM EACH CORNERSTONE DISTRICT

	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Jackson	Terra Nova grades 3-5 [Stu]	Mississippi Curriculum Test (MCT) in Reading and Language grades 2-5 [Stu and Sch]	Mississippi Curriculum Test (MCT) in Reading and Language grades 2-5 [Stu and Sch]	Mississippi Curriculum Test (MCT) in Reading and Language grades 2-5 [Stu and Sch]	Mississippi Curriculum Test (MCT) in Reading and Language grades 2-5 [Stu and Sch]	Mississippi Curriculum Test (MCT) in Reading and Language grades 2-5 [Stu and Sch]	Mississippi Curriculum Test (MCT) in Reading and Language grades 2-5 [Stu and Sch]
Talladega	Stanford Achievement Test (SAT-9) in Reading and Language grades 3 and 4 [Sch]	Stanford Achievement Test (SAT-9) in Reading and Language grades 3 and 4 [Sch]	Stanford Achievement Test (SAT-9) in Reading and Language grades 3 and 4 [Sch]	Stanford Achievement Test (SAT-10) in Reading and Language grades 3-5 [Sch and Stu]	Stanford Achievement Test (SAT-10) in Reading and Language grades 3-5 [Sch and Stu] Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test (ARMT) grade 4 [Stu]	Stanford Achievement Test (SAT-10) in Reading and Language grades 3-5 [Sch and Stu] Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test (ARMT) grades 3 and 4 [Stu]	Stanford Achievement Test (SAT-10) in Reading and Language grades 3-5 [Sch and Stu] Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test (ARMT) grades 3-5 [Stu] Alabama Direct Assessment of Writing grade 5
Bridgeport		DRA grades 1-3 [Stu] Connecticut Mastery Test Reading and Writing grade 4 [Stu and Sch]	DRA grades K-3 [Stu] Connecticut Mastery Test in Reading and Writing grade 4 [Stu and Sch]	DRA grades K-3 [Stu] Connecticut Mastery Test in Reading and Writing grade 4 [Stu and Sch]	DRA grades K-3 [Stu] Connecticut Mastery Test in Reading and Writing grade 4 [Stu and Sch]	DRA grades K-3 [Stu] Connecticut Mastery Test in Reading and Writing grade 4 [Stu and Sch]	DRA grades K-3 [Stu] Connecticut Mastery Test in Reading and Writing grades 3-5 [Stu and Sch]
New Haven			DRA grades K-3 [Sch] Connecticut Mastery Test in Reading and Writing grade 4 [Sch and Stu]	DRA grades K-3 [Stu] Connecticut Mastery Test in Reading and Writing grade 4 [Stu and Sch]	DRA grades K-3 [Stu] Connecticut Mastery Test in Reading and Writing grade 4 [Stu and Sch]	DRA grades K-3 [Stu] Connecticut Mastery Test in Reading and Writing grade 4 [Stu and Sch]	DRA Grades K-3 [Stu] Connecticut Mastery Test in Reading and Writing grades 3-5 [Stu and Sch]
Springfield		Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) grade 3	Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) grade 3 and 4 [Sch]	DRA grades K-3 [Stu] (data for one Cornerstone school is missing from file) Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) grade 3 and 4 [Stu and Sch]	DRA grades K-3 [Stu] (file is not complete, missing data for both Cornerstone schools) Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) grade 3 and 4 [Stu and Sch]	DRA grades K-3 [Stu] Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) grade 3 and 4 [Stu and Sch]	DRA grades K-3 [Stu] Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) grades 3 and 4 [Stu and Sch]
Horry County	Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test (PACT) grades 3-5 [Stu]	Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test (PACT) grades 3-5 [Stu]	Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test (PACT) grades 3-5 [Stu]	Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test (PACT) grades 3-5 [Stu and Sch]	Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test (PACT) grades 3-5 [Stu and Sch] Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) grades 2-5 [Stu and Sch]	Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test (PACT) grades 3-5 [Stu and Sch] Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) grades 2-5 [Stu and Sch]	Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test (PACT) grades 3-5 [Stu and Sch] Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) grades 2-5 [Stu and Sch]
Muscogee County						Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) grades 2-5 [Stu and Sch]	Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) grades 2-5 [Stu and Sch]
Stamford						DRA grades K-3 [Stu] Connecticut Mastery Test in Reading and Writing grade 4 [Stu and Sch]	DRA grades K-3 [Stu] Connecticut Mastery Test in Reading and Writing grades 3-5 [Stu and Sch]

Note: Gray shaded areas are years before Cornerstone was implemented in each district.

APPENDIX F. SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS FINDINGS

To date, we have produced four annual evaluation reports covering five years of Cornerstone work. Table A29 indicates which schools and districts were considered in the previous evaluation reports.

Table A30. Cornerstone Sites and IESP Evaluation Reports

<i>IESP Evaluation Report</i>	<i>1st Yr Report SP 03</i>	<i>2nd Yr Report SP 04</i>	<i>3rd Yr Report SP 05</i>	<i>4th Yr Report SP 06</i>	
Cornerstone District	00-01 Schools (Cohort A)	01-02 Schools (Cohort B)	02-03 Schools (Cohort C)	03-04 Schools (Cohort D)	04-05 Schools (Cohort E)
Cleveland, OH	2	2	2	2	
Philadelphia, PA	2				
Jackson, MS*	3	3	3	3	4
Talladega, AL	2	2	2	2	4
Trenton, NJ	2	2	2	2	
Bridgeport, CT		2	2	2	2
Greenwood, MS		2	2	2	2
Dalton, GA			2		
New Haven, CT			2	2	4
Springfield, MA			2	2	2
Horry County, SC **				2	4
Shannon County, SD**				4	
Total Cornerstone Schools	11	13	19	23	22
Total schools in evaluation	--	12	18	16	22

* Of Jackson’s three Cornerstone schools, only Lake has been consistently included in the IESP evaluation; Watkins was added to the evaluation in 2004-05. French withdrew from the initiative and thus the evaluation the same year.

** Horry County schools that began in 03-04 and remained in Cornerstone were added to the evaluation in 2004-05. Shannon County schools were never included in the evaluation.

Our *First Year Evaluation Report* (January 2003) focused on the first two Cornerstone cohorts in their first and second years of implementation, and indicated that the implementation of Cornerstone was proceeding on target. The report highlighted Cornerstone’s strengths, including the quality and depth of Cornerstone professional development opportunities, the commitment and capacity of Cornerstone staff in recognizing and addressing problems as they arose, and the attention paid to forming a network of Cornerstone colleagues across the country. Cornerstone’s impact on participating schools was indicated by reported changes in school and classroom environment, and by the extent of faculty participation in professional learning opportunities, such as book study groups.

A key challenge highlighted in the report was the issue of sustainability. Site team members were concerned that staff and site team turnover would impede the spread of Cornerstone practices, and were apprehensive about maintaining program momentum beyond the initial period of Cornerstone support. Changes in student achievement were not yet evident in terms of standardized test score results, but the report provided baseline data on student achievement in the Cohort A and B districts where such data were available.

Our *Second Year Evaluation Report* (January 2004) included a third cohort of schools that were brought on in the 2002-03 school year. Analyses of district- and state-administered standardized tests in the Cornerstone schools in the report showed mixed results—varying progress on tests, with many schools showing strong gains in certain grades in certain years, but no strong gains reflected across entire schools, and no clear continuation of gains across multiple years. In contrast to the district- and state-administered standardized tests, DRA results showed growth in reading levels among the Cornerstone students included in the small testing sample.

Our analysis of interview and survey data indicated three patterns: first, although implementation was not consistent within cohorts, Cohort A schools reported a higher level of implementation than their counterparts at schools in Cohorts B and C. Second, Cohort A and B schools reported an increased level of implementation over the previous year's effort in almost all areas. Third, Cornerstone practices were increasingly spreading through the K-3 grades and in some cases the upper grades (especially at Cohort A schools), and site team members were enthusiastic about the impact Cornerstone practices on students.

Our *Third Year Evaluation Report* (January 2005) continued to track schools from all three cohorts through 2003-2004. The results of the standardized test score analyses continued to be mixed, but was encouraging in some schools. Two Cornerstone schools in Jackson had significant positive results on their test results, others schools' results were not significant, and in one district negative and significant. The results of the DRA analyses for the Cornerstone sample suggested some positive changes in the number of students reading at grade level.

For the third year report we created an implementation index based on survey data to test the relationship of implementation to outcomes. Findings from the implementation index suggested that there was no direct relationship between level of implementation and test score outcomes in 2003-04. The implementation index did provide further evidence of the significant effect of

participation in Cornerstone over time. Schools that participated in Cornerstone the longest generally were implementing at higher levels relative to other schools newer to the Initiative.

In our *Fourth Year Evaluation Report* (March 2006), we again ranked the schools according to their level of implementation of the reform, and we found that the Initiative seems to have had a positive impact on students' test scores: The highest implementing schools had the best overall test scores, they experienced gains in test scores compared to the previous year, and regression analyses suggested that Cornerstone contributed to these positive outcomes. Results for other implementation levels were mixed.

Surveys and interviews credited Cornerstone with a number of intermediate outcomes as well: positive changes in the overall school culture, increased staff collegiality and collaboration, higher expectations for teachers and students, a deeper understanding of students literacy learning which helped improve teaching practice, and better teacher-student relationships, which led to higher motivation, better classroom behavior, and improved literacy skills. Successful principal leadership, a stable staff, compliant teachers, and the ability to integrate Cornerstone and other school or district initiatives were associated with higher levels of implementation. District support was identified as a paramount factor of success, and Cornerstone has been adapting by becoming an integrated bottom-up and top-down model with schools, districts, and Cornerstone working together for change.