



High School of Telecommunication Arts & Technology

Brooklyn, New York

A Case Study of School Leadership

Purpose of the Research

To learn about factors associated with inclusive high schools whose students are achieving exemplary results, the Beacons of Excellence project at the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, (in collaboration with the Council for Exceptional Children) implemented a three-year, project funded by the Office of Special Education Programs. The project was designed to study how curricula, instruction, leadership, and other factors contribute to exemplary results for *all* high school students. The conceptual model used to guide the research was built on the framework established by the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award for education, which was established in 1998 to recognize performance excellence in schools (National Institute of Standards and Technology [NIST], 1998). Additional input for the model was gathered from a broad group of constituents interested in youth and educational concerns, and school completion and post-school outcomes established by the National Center for Educational Outcomes at the University of Minnesota.

Introduction: A Case Study of School Leadership

When stakeholders (20 focus groups and 12 interviews) at four inclusive high schools producing exemplary results for students with and without disabilities were asked what factors they associated with the successful outcomes of their school, 75% of the groups and individuals replied with statements associated with leadership. Because of this frequency, *Leadership* became a particularly important focus for the Beacons research study.

To understand what stakeholders defined as important leadership factors associated with their schools, each interview and focus group session was transcribed. These transcriptions were then coded for statements that were directly or indirectly linked to the school-based leadership system and/or the actions of the school leaders. This process was conducted by two people who established high reliability in their consistent classification of leadership statements. Once identified, these statements were analyzed, school by school. The themes that emerged from the statements were checked and validated by Beacons staff who were familiar with the interview text and schools. Lastly, the resulting case studies for each school were given to school administrators to be shared with relevant stakeholders for further validation. A cross-school description of leadership themes can be found in the

document *The Leadership Factor: A Key to Effective Inclusive High Schools*, located on the Beacons of Excellence web site (ici.umn.edu/beacons).

Leadership Themes Defined

This case study describes the leadership themes that emerged through interviews with stakeholders at High School of Telecommunication Arts and Technology. It should be noted that the themes presented are not exhaustive of what school administrators and school leadership systems are doing, but are based only on the statements stakeholders. Leadership was defined as the "school-based leadership system and actions of the leaders." Only stakeholder statements that could be identified as explicitly related to this leadership description were included in the themes that are reported here.

This process, we believe, stayed true to stakeholder intent, and the emergent themes represent what stakeholders highlight as important leadership actions and systems within their school - actions and systems that support exemplary outcomes for students with and without disabilities.

High School of Telecommunication Arts & Technology Summary

High School of Telecommunication Arts and Technology (Telecom) is a comprehensive 9-12th grade high school, located in Brooklyn, New York. Telecom is housed in an old, brick, three story building that fills a small city block. Serving about 1,350 students, it is a school that is physically pushed to - and some people would say *beyond* - its capacity. A couple of small, temporary buildings have been erected across the street to absorb some of the overflow of students. Every square foot available is being maximally used in a city that puts a premium on space.

The student population at Telecom is largely Hispanic (60%), with about equal proportions of African American and Caucasian. Nineteen percent of Telecom's students have disabilities. Half of the students are chosen by the city, using a lottery process. The other half apply to and are selected by the school. Telecom can boast of a 91% graduation rate in a city where 49% graduation rate is the norm.

Telecom has a focus on integrating the classic liberal arts education with an awareness of technology while celebrating its diverse population in a sort of "global village." There is special emphasis on learning tolerance, understanding, cooperation and mutual respect; these are supported through a Conflict Resolution program, the bilingual poetry journal, a leadership training class, and multicultural festivals, among other diversity oriented programs. Telecom also offers students an independent study program, a cooperative education program (with paid work experiences), a teacher assistant program in which students tutor at elementary schools, and the Executive Internship Program that provides students with opportunities to serve as interns to executive sponsors in government

and industry. Telecom offers differential leveled courses in all subject areas - from study strategy courses to Regents level courses.

Over the past six years Telecom has incrementally expanded the inclusion of students with disabilities in their core curriculum. Sixty-six percent of Telecom's students with disabilities spend more than 75% of their day in the general education setting. Telecom relies on collaborative teaching between general educators and special educators and substantial assistance from paraprofessionals in general education classes.

A Partial List of School Programs/Initiatives

- The Humanities Program links English and social studies classes; and in the ninth grade the program is also linked to technology classes.
- The Advanced Placement Program allows students to receive college credit for courses taken in high school.
- The College Early Intervention Program, prepares special education students for post-secondary education by linking students up with the College of Staten Island.
- The College Now program provides students to earn up to eight free college credits during their senior year at the Kingsborough Community College.
- Citizenship and community involvement is a top priority at the school.
- There is an overall philosophy that cooperative learning, critical thinking exercises, discovery learning, and hands-on instruction is essential to success.

For more information, visit the Beacons Web site at <http://ici.umn.edu/beacons>

Reference

National Institute of Standards and Technology (1998). Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award: 1998 Education Criteria for Performance Excellence. Gaithersburg, MD: Author.

The Significant Factor of Leadership

Leadership, according to stakeholders, has been a pivotal factor in the success of High School of Telecommunication Arts and Technology (Telecom). In connection with this success, three school administrators are frequently referenced - the principal and two assistant principals - one of which is in special education. Each of these administrators brings something unique to Telecom's leadership. The principal is supportive, flexible, and receptive to new ideas while he holds strong values in relation to clarity, direction, and creativity for staff and students. The special education assistant principal is a very social and assertive individual - a visionary - who strongly believes that inclusion is the best approach for all students, and who will work at great lengths to make her vision happen. And lastly, the general education assistant principal is described as a "forward thinker" who is receptive to new ideas and has a propensity toward systematic thinking about the logic and details of program implementation.

Although these three administrators have different characteristics, they are similar in their relentless focus on better services and outcomes for all students. Their non-hierarchical working relationship is an open, dialectical process - where new ideas are pitched, discussed, debated, revised, and formulated. These administrators are accessible and trusted by stakeholders. And they involve staff, students, and parents in their decision-making. Together as leaders over the past six years, they have (with the help of the superintendent) redefined Telecom from a relatively low performing, unfocused high school, to a school where expectations and standards are high and clear and apply to all students. Students are integrated under the same system of differentiated educational services, where staff feel supported and work collaboratively, and where innovation and improvement flourishes.

"I came from an intermediate school that had very dedicated staff but an administration that was very closed to the staff and not open to new ideas. It was a very different experience [than here]. It was not a happy place to work... [T]he leadership here... has really made this happen. Because of her [assistant principal of special education's] foresightedness and dedication and listening to us and hearing what we had to say, I think this is why we're where we are. If we didn't have the leadership, I don't think we would have come that far."

- Special Educator

"... I think, number one [in making inclusion successful] was her [assistant principal of special education] energy, her enthusiasm, and her vision. That was number one. Someone who was young-- What I mean by that is she wasn't wedded to the past. She didn't have a vested interest in perpetuating something because she wasn't part of that past... [Secondly,] you had [a principal] who was relatively new in the job when we started this... and was willing to do things differently because they made sense... So you had an AP who was all gungbo, [and] you had a principal who was willing to say the [kids in special education] are part and parcel of my school and they're not separate."

- District Administrator

Administration Promotes High Expectations for all

During the principal's first year at Telecom, in 1993, he raised the expectations of students. Prior to his arrival, the school's direction was not standards-based and objectives were individualized and abstract. The direction of the school was unclear and the academic objectives of many students were low and unchallenged. The new principal rapidly recognized that the students and staff needed standards based on high and clear expectations. As he states, "the problem is that if students don't know what the top is, they don't know what they should be aspiring to." Honor classes were developed, hierarchical curriculum was instituted, and graduation standards were raised and clarified.

Staff responded positively to the changes, with a renewed sense of excitement and mission. High standards were something that the staff could organize around. As a result, the principal says, "a whole culture of very high expectations developed, which carried over to all things" - including the special education department. High expectations became a unifying, inclusive, school-wide perspective. "To say that special education students were only going to study foundations of math was no longer acceptable. Why aren't they doing regent supplement? Why aren't they doing sequential math? Why aren't they going on to sequential math 2? Why weren't they taking the PSAT?" asked an administrator. This type of questioning is indicative of the thinking that led to Telecom's move to include all students in a common curriculum and common set of standards.

As a result, teachers were expected to expect more from students, and students were expected to expect more from themselves. The questions about how the school would help staff and students reach those expectations stimulated ideas, innovation, and reform.

*"[Before I arrived] the philosophy was that students were grouped heterogeneously and there was not tracking. I'm philosophically opposed to tracking, but the problem is that if students don't know what the top is, they don't know what they should be aspiring to. Students are very content to get their 65. That was it... Seniors were leaving after four periods. The college selection - well, if they went to college it was okay; if they didn't go to college it was okay. Whatever made them feel good. That's not me and it wasn't the staff either. So we started the honor classes and a whole culture of very high expectations developed, which carried over to all things."
- Administrator.*

*"[The shift to high standards -]
That's what made integrated settings so easy to start and to follow through with - because the whole school was upgrading in terms of what they expected of the students."
- Administrator*

Foster a School Culture of Innovation and Creativity

Innovation is, perhaps, the most powerful resource available to Telecom. The school building is filled to over-capacity, money is scarce, and the principal has little-to-no control over who is hired. It is largely the leadership's ability to sustain a culture of innovation that has led to Telecom's success - an improved and integrated curriculum, a large increase in teacher collaboration, more support services and opportunities for students, clearer goals, and greater school unity.

When administrators at Telecom increased their school's focus towards high standards, it fundamentally changed the way the school worked. Rather suddenly, administrators, staff, and stakeholders needed to redirect their efforts toward new goals. Changes demanded new ideas and innovation. And questions like *What if...?* and *Why not...?* began to infuse the school community with energy and momentum. This change in school goals laid the base for Telecom's culture of innovation.

Maintaining a culture of innovation is not only a by-product of a school-wide push for higher standards, but it continues to be a specific goal of Telecom's administration. The administration supports it in several ways.

- The administration provides staff with autonomy and leeway to innovate. *Autonomy* gives staff a level of control that enables them to believe they can change their environment. *Leeway* gives staff room to experiment.
- The administration encourages staff to think creatively, experiment, and take risks. New ideas are welcomed and recognized. The administration is receptive to ideas concerning school-wide issues and supportive of ideas concerning instructional programming.
- The administration minimizes the negative connotations associated with unsuccessful efforts. *Risk-taking* is defined as necessary steps toward improvement. Unsuccessful efforts are viewed as learning opportunities and do not - personally or professionally - discredit the person who is trying something new.
- The administration nearly always puts resource support behind requests - even if it requires reaching outside the school to the district, parents, community, or searching out grant opportunities. The administration views itself as serving teachers, helping them

"The philosophy of enabling people to experiment and take risks without there being a punitive part, but rather it being a very positive thing is something that I believe in and certainly has been embraced here. But it's 'let's try something and if it doesn't work, let's not abandon it but let's make it better. You're going to do your job. It just means we have a little more work to do."

- School Advisory Group Member

"[Regarding the implementation of inclusion, the administration made sure that staff understood that it was] a safe, harmless program... If you were going to be involved, that was a positive. If things didn't work out as we anticipated and hoped, it didn't mean you were a failure. It means 'let's go back and look at it together and try and make it better.'"

-School Advisory Group Member

"We've been very fortunate because we [the staff] have a tremendous amount to say. We're not [hearing from the administration], 'Oh, this is what you're doing' - we're asked. This is what's happening and [we're] not afraid to try something even if it doesn't work. And if it doesn't work, you don't feel like, 'Oh my goodness.' You're not afraid to try. And I think a lot of ideas have come from the faculty and they have been implemented because the leadership has allowed us to grow."

- Special Educator

"Well, what we do try to do in the building is we try to make sure they

actualize their objectives.

- The administration models risk-taking by introducing new ideas to the staff.
- Students are invited to discuss and assess new initiatives - through leadership positions, school activities, and classrooms activities. Students see that the school is focused on improvement and this can have its own effect on student engagement and performance.
- The administration supports a reciprocal relationship with staff regarding new ideas and initiatives. Staff are invited to discuss and assess administrative ideas. Conversely, this invitation encourages staff to include administrators in discussion and assessment of their new ideas. The reciprocity facilitates open communication and sharing.

Telecom's focus on innovative improvement has attracted the attention of its district. When the district has new opportunities, it approaches Telecom because Telecom has the ability to process these ideas and take advantage of them. This can generate financial and other kinds of support for Telecom's teachers and students.

The administration's support of school innovation has resulted in innovation reaching a critical mass at Telecom. Teachers appear excited, open, and optimistic about their objectives. And with the emergence of new instructional approaches and programs, students are better able to succeed.

[teachers] have everything they need in the classrooms, from maps to textbooks to supplies. Whatever we can do to make their job easier is definitely one thing less they have to worry about."
- School Advisory Group Member

"If we want a program, you go to the principal - Charles, or whoever is principal - and say we would like to have this, is there room for it? The answer usually is 'yes.' Or if there isn't money - "We'll find a way.' ... I think that's also important, too, because there is that ability to put together the courses, and I think it filters throughout the building."
- General Educator

Administration Supports Professional Development

Along with setting clear standards and nurturing an innovative climate, administrators at Telecom view staff development as necessary for improvement. An administrator can encourage change, even push hard for it, but without staff training the skills are not commensurate with the requirements of the objective. Developments in technology, instructional strategies, student mediation, and interdisciplinary and "shared-teaching" collaboration, among other initiatives, require special skills. Although skills are developed experientially, learning from experts clarifies direction, accelerates progress, and increases the likelihood of successful program implementation. Administrators at Telecom quickly learned that staff development was an vital factor in their school's success.

There are three types of staff development that occur at Telecom:

Open sharing among teaching colleagues.

Telecom's school-wide focus on high standards and its culture of innovation and experimentation naturally supports collaboration between faculty. With their full-inclusion initiative, special educators and general educators work together to focus on all students. As departments innovate, curriculum is often interdisciplinary, requiring greater collaboration and overlap of skills. As a result, teacher skills are challenged, expanded, and developed.

Although this staff development is organic, it is nonetheless made possible by the administration's efforts to promote sharing and their facilitation of collaboration within the school design.

Open instructional advice and critiques by administrators.

Another form of staff development occurs through administrative advice and performance feedback. The trustworthy relationship that administrators have established with staff support performance critiques. Administrators are visibly involved in the work of teachers, assisting teachers in their classrooms and offering constructive suggestions for improvement. Again, it is offered and accepted as assistance and not criticism.

Training from outside sources - through observations or instruction.

Lastly, administrators place a high value on specialized training. Many school initiatives are driven by specific training. In addition,

*"[B]eing a central office administrator for a long time I thought maybe the key is just a whip sometimes. But [what] we really realized [during] the last three or four years is that without the staff development and that support of enabling and giving them the tools to do this, you can wish it forever. But once you give them the mechanics and the tools to do it [the goal becomes attainable]. We end up spending more and more of our time and energy and effort on staff development than just about any other area dealing with this."
- School Advisory Member*

*"If they come in and decide they want to go to specific staff development and they need to leave the building, we never say no."
- School Advisory Member*

*"We've tried very hard. In some schools, there's a lot of hostility attributed to it [administrators offering suggestions to teachers] and that really gets in the way of what you really need to have happen in classes. We've really tried. It's not supervision, that's not what we're about. You see something that doesn't work. You have a conversation about it. You go back and try it again, but it's not to get you."
- Administrator*

"When the supervisory walks in the room.... you might be nervous and

staff that want to attend a conference, workshop, or observe a program are nearly always supported. Skills and materials that are obtained outside of the school are formally and informally shared with other teachers inside the school. Furthermore, paraprofessionals (teaching assistants) are offered free courses within the district toward teacher licensure.

The administration has found that supporting this staff development is a large and critical piece of the improvement equation.

*[ask yourself,] 'Why are they here?'
When [the current assistant principal] walked in our room, it was just natural. The kids were happy to see her and it wasn't that we were being observed. She was always helping, and kind of advice she gave was just wonderful in helping me out, especially as a new teacher when I first started." -
Special Educator*

Build an Inclusive and Collaborative Community of Learning

Telecom is an inclusive learning community. Administrators consistently reinforce a school identity that is singular - a message that says all students, parents, and staff are involved in the same school, with the same expectations, and same opportunities. This singularity facilitates school-wide understanding of goals and expectations while at the same time it clarifies for members their place within the school. The same system that supports all students also supports students with disabilities and other student exceptionalities. For example, less advanced classes, often bolstered with shared-teaching or smaller sizes, are available to students who need them, regardless of exceptionalities. As all services support all students, the fragmentation among departments, programs, staff and students that can often be found in high schools, is replaced with a shared community perspective that reinforces direction, roles, and expectations.

The administration supports a culture of inclusion in several ways. One way is through an egalitarian approach to school management. The administration has made a conscious effort to eliminate the hierarchical structure that often exists between administrators, staff, and parents. Although each group has a different role, the administration strives to treat each other as equals. The administration has an "open-door policy" and welcomes whomever comes to their doors, while maintaining frequent communication with staff, parents, and students. Parents can be seen in classrooms collaborating with teachers, comfortably pitching their opinions and ideas.

*"[An important factor in Telecom's success] is the 'fact that everybody is really looking at the same goals."
- Administrator*

*"I have tried very hard to do away with the traditional hierarchy that exists in schools. My door's always open. Students are in. Parents are in... No one sees people according to their title. We all treat each other openly and very honestly. It's pretty bad [sometimes], there are times when you wish they wouldn't [say] certain things, but it's just a very open dialogue."
- Administrator*

"[I] think the staff gets along very well. Our mainstream and special education are one family. I know that's a cliché, to be one

School-wide decision-making at Telecom includes many individuals who are comfortable with voicing strong opinions. The egalitarian openness leads to discussions that include diverse perspectives. This sometimes heated interchange is constructive for several reasons: It encourages the involvement of staff and parents; it draws in new and useful ideas and opinions; and it nurtures the value of sharing different perspectives. When a decision is made in this open context, it is a decision that is well understood by the people involved.

The policy of school inclusion leads to integration of staff as well as students. The administration advocates for teacher collaboration across departments and within departments. When teachers work together in single classes, administrators have set a directive that they teach collaboratively, toward the same goals and objectives, as they both serve all of the students. For this reason, the collaboration is called "shared teaching." Special educators do not have a special curriculum. Subsequently, students can seldom detect if there is a special educator in the classroom, nor can they identify which students have disabilities. As a result, conceptual barriers that confuse learning and collaboration are reduced. Instead, staff and students simply focus on improvement, instruction, and outcomes.

Consistent with the administration's egalitarian approach, shared-teaching has been introduced as a voluntary opportunity. Based on class need and personal teacher characteristics, administrators will identify potentially compatible matches and introduce the idea of *working together* to the two teachers. Required commitments last only for a semester, but often continue beyond then. This voluntary approach gives staff greater ownership in the collaborative arrangement which increases the likelihood of success. In a similar way, paraprofessionals are given an opportunity to prioritize - based on interest and personality - which teachers they would like to work with most. These matches also increase the likelihood that the collaboration will be successful, and that the personal interests and talents of the paraprofessional will be utilized.

When making substantial decisions, the administration formally involves students in the decision-making. Through this process students are given opportunities to understand the issues, present their opinions, and offer ideas. The administration believes that student involvement is critical to substantial changes, as their support can provide the needed momentum to make the initiative

family, but we really are. I think we share a lot, and that's so important. That has a lot to do with [our success]...

[I]nnovative programs coming to the schools - the staff is very enthusiastic, and you will get full support of staff members getting involved. It's very supportive and I think it really starts from the top. The principal, the assistant principals, to the staff, to the support staff.

*[Paraprofessionals] are included in any kind of extensive outreach that we have. So there's no exclusion, I think that's what I want to say."
- Special Educator*

*"[Administrators allow you to] come at it from your own perspective... Everybody comes at it with a totally different agenda... But in the end, everybody is working for the same goal."
- Administrator*

*"[When a special educator works with an English teacher in the same classroom,] whether you're a special education teacher or not, you're an English teacher. You need to be in [the English] department and you need... to work on curricula together."
- Administrator*

"[When initiating integrated settings at one full grade level] [w]e particularly focused on the parents and on the kids because

successful. When the administration proposed the idea of school-wide inclusion, students became an critical contributor to the decision.

I think in high schools, kids will make this or break this... We particularly spoke to the kids, general ed kids and special ed kids. When we have visitors here... it's the kids that tell the best stories. The kids always tell the best story."
- District Representative

Changing To Inclusive Education: A Chronology of Administrative Decisions

The initiative to transform Telecom's system of segregated special education services to that of full inclusion and services for all was correlated with the presence of a relatively new administration that was solutions-oriented. This solutions-orientation compelled them to look around and beyond barriers to change - establishing a tendency to try to maneuver around bureaucratic norms to reach their goals. This "boot-strap" creative approach to problem solving was quickly embraced by school staff as it represented a leadership that put improvement above tradition.

At Telecom, the fundamental school changes to high and accountable standards raised questions about the standards for students with disabilities. The momentum behind this reform - a reassessment of what can be expected of students - quickly spread to higher expectations for students with disabilities. As there is a federal mandate (IDEA) that students with disabilities be placed in the least restrictive environment, the notion to have one supportive education system for all students was not inconsistent with the goals of special education.

"There was a culture in this school from [the current and past administrators] which said, 'We don't need to follow the rigid bureaucratized rules... [T]here was support, there was a culture, and [in regards to the idea of integrated settings] I think they were willing to say, 'Let's give it a try. If it works, let's run with it.' It took a lot of things to make it work, but I think they saw that there was support from [the principal, the assistant principals, and] support from the superintendent's office."
- District Representative

Furthermore, the district representative who worked most closely with Telecom was a strong proponent of the inclusive approach to educating the exceptional student. The district representative had already been promoting inclusion among district superintendents, having organized a program for superintendents to attend a conference on inclusion. He then added to this program opportunities for school administrators and approached Telecom. He stipulated, however, that for every special education administrator attending the conference an equivalent general education

"I don't define special ed as a special ed issue; I define it as a general ed issue."
- District Representative

"[T]hat [conference], I think, was a big turning point... because they heard and saw a lot of things that

administrator must also attend. Although Telecom's principal was not able to participate in the conference, two assistant principals went. They returned from the conference convinced that inclusion was the right direction for Telecom to take.

Telecom's staff viewed a state grant that was designed to promote inclusion within schools as the start. After an arduous process of conceptualizing inclusion at Telecom and the process to put it in place, staff completed the application and ultimately received the three year grant. As a first step, administrators began introducing "shared-teaching" to the school by doing the following:

- Focusing on one grade level,
- Beginning with non-academic classes, and
- Matching up likely successful teaching partners, one by one
 - Identifying general and special educators that would work well together
 - Introducing the idea and the opportunity to these teachers, individually
 - Maintaining the opportunity as voluntary, and not a commitment for more than a semester

In particular, the special education administrator coordinated this stage of the transition. Over several semesters, shared-teaching partners worked together, some eventually choosing to work alone, and some eventually choosing to work together again. Inclusion grew slowly, partially, class by class, and into other grade levels. Staff noticed the positive affect it had on the students, and these observations kept staff open to the possibility of participating.

A pivotal day in the transition occurred when the district representative met with key school administrators to push for faster change. He proposed moving inclusion to an entire grade level. The administrators' first response was that of serious apprehension, but finally they agreed. The administrators and district pitched the idea to the staff, parents, and students. Having already observed its positive affects on student performance, each stakeholder group agreed to the substantive change.

A structure of courses representing academic levels was organized. Voluntary shared-teaching was established in classes where students had particularly challenging objectives. In other classes, some appropriately smaller than others, a special or general educator would teach alone. In some classes a paraprofessional was added. Nearly all classes were open to all students, and all

were going on in the rest of the country, and the rest of the country was a little bit more reality-grounded than we were. I think a lot of them came back with the impetus to 'let's do it!'"
- District Representative

"[We] wanted to change the behaviors and we wanted to improve academic outcomes. You give a kid a scattered class, what was the point of that? If you go on a diet, do you go on a diet from 9 to 11 in the morning? You go on a diet for the whole day. But it was the idea that if you take a self-contained kid (and we still use the nomenclature and I hate it) whose been self-contained in special ed, if you take that kid whose been in that kind of setting for five and six years and give him one class, what can you expect as payback from that one class? But if you do it for a concentrated period of time, then the new setting becomes the normal setting and his behaviors will change and you'll have a chance to do something academically."
- School Advisory Member

"[The district representative] said, 'I want you to integrate a full grade. Let's go with the ninth grade coming in next year. I think you can do it.' And I sat there and went, 'No, can't do it.' I said, 'No, we can't.' And he said, 'Yes, you can - go out and find some people that will buy into it and let's move

distinctions between students with disabilities and students without - such as on class rosters - were removed for the first two weeks of classes. Students who were academically advanced in a subject would attend classes representing more advanced subject matter. In addition to these general classes, there were classes that offered particularly specialized assistance.

Over time, administrators found that collaboration began to flourish among staff and ideas began to flow as the barriers of specialization were reduced. Furthermore, student significantly improved performance. As the model sold itself to stakeholders, inclusion was eventually moved to another grade level, and then another grade level, until the entire school was transformed. As a result, a common or shared school identity began to emerge among students. The performance level for students without disabilities improved, as there were support services for all students who were having difficulties. Furthermore, the performance of students with disabilities rose as they became commensurate with the performance of the whole school.

*bigger because it's successful.' We had at that time about six or seven classes running but they... were based on personality and subject area, based on what we could move [by way of] marketing. It tended to be nonacademic. Right, except for one math class and one history class. Elective or nonacademic."
- Administrator*

*"What they also saw is that the kids, the suspensions they had, those were down. The behaviors improved. The attendance improved. The kids started to academically improve."
- District Representative*

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