

Narrative:

Project Title: Excellence for All: Improving Schools through Instruction, Character, Curriculum and Data

Type of Grant Requested: Scale-Up

Target number of students to be served in the project: Year 1 target: 35,000, year 2 target 6 million +

List of official and other partners: ACOE Reading Institute and Professional Development; 150 community business and member signatures on file in support.

Brief project description including project activities: The Amador County Office of Education is applying for a i3 Scale Up Grant in order to expand and increase the reach and capacity of our existing junior high school program to all of the schools in our county and then in our region and beyond. This program, “Excellence for All”, was noted as a “State of California Promising Practice” for helping to close the achievement gap for our most at risk students, a component of the program won the Character Education Partnership National Schools of Character Promising Practices Award and helped to earn several California Distinguished Schools Awards – an award reserved for less than 10% of the schools in California.

Excellence for All is a program that is relevant, cutting edge, cost effective and easily duplicated. It can be implemented pre-K through 12 (and beyond) is research grounded, serves all students, helped close our achievement gap and is based on the concept of standards-based education that prepares students to be college and career ready. The focus is on teaching the whole student, using research-based and research validated best instructional practices and holding the achievement bar high for all students and *teachers*. Excellence for All is centered on data driven teaching – student data and teacher data – and individual instruction plans for students and teachers alike.

At its core is job embedded professional development based on the student achievement results for individual teacher's students.

The absolute priority we are focusing on is *improving achievement in persistently low-performing schools*. The competitive preferences priorities we are focusing on include *college access and success, serving students with disabilities, serving all students, serving students in rural LEAs*.

Sometimes the most innovative ideas are the simplest. Sometimes the answer is overlooked because ideas become too complicated and the actual goals are lost in the convulsion. This is the case with education; however, we, the community of Amador County Unified School District, have eliminated the convulsion and achieved success for all students by nurturing a simple plan to attain the goal of teaching all students to their full potential. The systematic way at which we achieve these goals can be replicated and disseminated at little cost.

Amador County Office of Education houses a single district in Amador County, California – a rarity in California and one that puts us at a disadvantage financially. Our county population is approximately 38,000 and our student population is approximately 4500. Our free and reduced lunch rate is 30%; however, our census poverty rate is 11%. We are an agricultural county that is rural in nature where there are limited opportunities for our students. We are a community of haves and have-nots. Our census poverty rate is indicative of an aging population. Our free and reduced lunch rate is due to the lack of opportunity and low income level of our school age families; however, our large population of retirees tilt the census data scale and deem us ineligible for certain categorical money that is needed in our schools.. Within the last

five years our major industry, timber, has ceased to exist. Our largest employers – Prospect Motors and Amador Motors are casualties of the recession and the last major employer, The Jackson Rancheria, is in the process of mass reductions.

Our demographics do not garnish us much “special populations” money. We receive about \$5,500 per student total from both the State and Federal governments and our teacher and administrator salaries are depressed for our area, yet, through it all we thrive by following a simple yet effective plan: hire and nurture good teachers who love what they do and are willing to go the extra instructional steps for their students, provide out-of-the box programs and curriculum that provides growth of the whole child, treat each student as an individual, and drive all standards-based instruction on the results of both student and teacher data.

Not only is our program is simple...easily replicated and the future of education. Amador County Unified School District can boast what few others have attained here in California – we no longer have any schools in Title 1 Program Improvement and we have improved the achievement in persistently low achieving populations and with this grant – we will expand our program out region-wide, state-wide and nation-wide to implement it in persistently low achieving schools. Our program is a formula for success and is the future of education.

Amador County Office of Education, with the help of the i3 grant, will roll our program out to all of our schools – and our principals and leaders and parents and all other stakeholders are eagerly awaiting its arrival. We will then work to expand beyond our county lines. Likewise, Amador County Office of Education will show results quickly. With i3 help Amador County Schools will be 80% proficient or advanced by 2014-2015 –

from the current 55% in English Language Arts and 45% math, and the achievement gap will decrease by 50% no later than 2014-2015.

The program we will be replicating has proven to be effective and has increased student achievement, decreased the achievement gap and increased student success in high school and beyond. Our data system captures longitudinal information about students and teachers and can analyze and track the performance of any teacher's students over time, can track how students perform in high school and can link teachers to credential type, subject matter proficiency and curriculum and instructional training. This extensive longitudinal data provides the catalyst that drives our performance. Extensive and timely data allows us to track progress, monitor and adjust programs and determine who and what is working and at what level.

Amador Schools is the perfect venue to expand our success program and roll it out beyond our walls because our size is manageable. With approximately 5000 students we are large enough to have statistically significant samples, yet small enough to work face to face with all of our stakeholders.

With all of this in mind, Amador County Office of Education is set to pursue transformational change and snowball it out for others to accomplish the same.

Summary of project objectives and expected outcomes: This Excellence for All Program is easily replicated. Our short term goals include expanding the reach of our program out to all of the schools in our county. Our long term goals include rolling our program out to high risk, low performing schools in California and beyond. The simplicity of our program results in extreme sustainability. Finally, our program is turnkey and with some necessary adjustments for scale and time to incorporate the

Common Core Standards into benchmarks and our data system – Excellence for All can be rolled out on a large scale within a matter of months. Our objectives include: rolling out a useful model for testing, data gathering and disaggregation for both teachers and students and packaging and rolling out the Character Education, professional development and achievement curriculum portions in all of Excellence for All by year one, all of our region and beyond in year two as we market it for free roll out to all schools in the US by year three. Continue to expand roll out and monitor data in year four. We have a program that works; we know how to use data; and we are eager to share our program.

In short, Excellence for All supports effective teachers and principals; will improve the use of data to accelerate student achievement; will further to implement of standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and careers; and turn around persistently low-performing schools if we are awarded this grant to scale our program up to reach beyond our district boundaries.

Program Practice 1: Rational/Basis of the Practice: Six years ago, Lone Junior High gathered a team of extraordinary teachers, parents and students, brought in District Office administration (formally administration at Lone Junior High School) and set out to make a good school great. With an API stagnant at 751 overall and 666 for the school's the socio-economically disadvantaged population (our persistently low achieving population)-- a ConApp suspension rate of 9.9% and multi-disciplinary team or counselor referral rate spanning over 18% of the school's population – the IJH team discussed ways to raise API, temper the often volatile junior high environment and create a school culture where learning was not impeded by fear, bullying, poor

relationships or any other factor that related to a negative school culture. This area of need corresponded with the Developmental Responsiveness chapters of Taking Center Stage, Act Two – specifically, relevance, relationships, transitions and character education. With this in mind, IJH and the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction set out to formulate a plan to help students, teachers, parents and stakeholders embrace tolerance, respect and themselves – thus clearing up some major obstacles and paving the way toward academic success.

Understanding that relationships are critical to learning, but difficult at all stages of human development and according to student risk-factors, we set out to create a comfortable environment where students feel safe and find success and support all year long. We worked from the perspective that careful consideration must be heeded in middle schools, where hormones, gawky physical growth, and a need for peer bonding replaces an earlier reliance on adults – thus we set up groups of teachers (leadership teams, professional learning communities by grade level and by subject, and friendships), extended learning opportunities for students, peer groups, as well as clubs and sports teams to provide students the tools necessary to foster positive relationships and then better concentrate on learning. To be successful we understood that all of these groupings and teams function best with explicit norms, objectives, training, and facilitation to achieve the goal of a positive school climate, to resolve conflicts, and to ensure effective communication are all in place.

When talking about increasing rigor, researcher William Daggett emphasizes the importance of both relevance and relationships: “. . . in addition to rigor and relevance, they (students) need relationships. Relationships are very, very important in these

schools.” (Taking Center State, II). We took this very seriously. Our anticipated outcome was/is a school environment where students and adults care, where acceptance and respect is the norm and where academic success necessarily follows.

Description of the Practice 1: The plan developed and implemented by all stakeholders, including parents, community members, staff, faculty, high school mentors, students and district office administration included: a comprehensive anti-bullying, leadership and conflict resolution program, re-establishing the requirement of our Skills classes for every seventh grader and cleaning up and beautify the school plant and hiring and retaining only those dedicated teachers who were willing to instruct to all students and who had the ability and drive to generate results. The aforementioned first part of the program mesh incorporates the hallmark practices of:

- Relationship building
- Academic rigor and respect that all students can achieve
- Celebrations of student achievement in academics, behavior, and service
- Respect for diversity and multicultural sensitivity
- Service projects
- Leadership building
- Honesty policies

Research indicates that students join gains to feel connected to something. Our most at-risk students feel isolated, often have marginalized home/family lives and long for a connection. By providing that connection at school we have eliminated gang activities in our schools and are closing the achievement gap that is ceasing to exist. Furthermore, we have helped all students reach beyond today and value and work for a successful future.

Program Part 1: Tomorrow's Leaders Today: Risk and persistently low achieving students need confidence and something to connect to. They need programs that are tailored to their needs and that provide more than academics. Taking into consideration the checkpoints of Successful Schools to Watch (TCSII) we set up a program that received an award from the national Character Education Partnership for being a national Schools of Character Promising Practice. Our program was highlighted at the national awards ceremony and disseminated to junior high schools nationally as a way to foster achievement through character education, leadership, team building skills and positive relationships.

We titled the program **Tomorrows Leaders Today or TLT for short.** TLT is a junior leadership program whereby our high school leadership students are trained in conflict resolution, team building and peer counseling and then used to support and mentor our junior high school students. The high school leadership students go through a rigorous training process developing skills to help their younger peers. The philosophy behind TLT is based on the notion that junior high school students look up to and try to emulate high schoolers, so why not provide them with positive examples and foster relationship building along the way?

After high school students are trained -- they work with grade levels of IJH students playing team building games, working in small groups -- counseling and talking and sharing similarities and differences -- the whole process leads the junior high students towards the understanding that even the captain of the football team or student body president was in junior high, perhaps was bullied and still feels insecure, but that it is ok and that no one exists in isolation. Students learn how to direct their feelings and

emotions towards positive non-violent resolution and a culture of caring can begin. Now armed, older junior high students are trained to work with their younger peers and the whole process starts all over again.

A positive catalyst for change, TLT seeks to empower students to work towards tolerance, acceptance and inclusion in the everyday lives of participants. TLT is a hands-on, team building program that helps to strengthen the school community and environment, combat bullying and foster unity in the confines of the junior high school world. TLT incorporate **t.p.i.f.** – Humm... **t.p.i.f.** what does it mean...perhaps 86₃5₃3₂7₃26₂23 will help. Not really? Still don't get it? That's all right - -by March with the help of our eighth grade students our seventh graders will be able to enlighten you as they strive towards becoming positive roll models for their peers, underclassmen and the community at large.

When these students leave Junior High School they are supported in high school by LEADS. (NOTE: **LEADS** (**Leadership, Excellence, Academics, Direction, Self-Esteem**) is a school community-building program, whereby the experience of successful upperclassmen helps to guide, nurture and support younger students. At the same time these upperclassmen gain advanced leadership and motivational skills. The program aims to teach upperclassmen to foster self-esteem, increase academic achievement, motivate and nurture high school newcomers. The upperclassmen chosen for the LEADS program are selected based on communication skills, responsibility, self-confidence, compassion, organization, enthusiasm and that special something that makes them strive to be the best. The goal is to provide a structure in which students make real connections with each other, that every student matters and that all students are given the tools they need to succeed. Students

learn that people care about them, their successes and even – sometimes -- their “un”-successes matter.

We have tracked both student and teacher academic data from 2004 to present to demonstrate our short term and long term success. This data is available in the research section of this narrative.

Program Part 2: Skills Courses for All. Once upon a time all students at Lone Junior High School participated in Skills classes; however, due to budget cuts and academic demands - -the classes were dissolved – which resulted in– a drop in API scores coupled with a rise in discipline problems. So, the stakeholders at LJH took a long look at current and past practices and reimplemented a new and improved skills curriculum. This program is essential for student connection. Our students come from the far corners of our county, many riding the bus over an hour to school and then over an hour home from school. This scenario leaves little time for extracurricular activities and mandates that our school provide ways in which students can positively connect to others in order to deter high risk activity like gang involvement.

Skills at a Glance: The first fourteen days of Skills incorporates the Cornell Notetaking and study skills process into an overall orientation of junior high life. Next, the program covers an expanded version of The Tiger Woods Action Plan. Tiger’s Action Plan is a program that helps students realize they each can act on their goals, make a difference and achieve their full potential – in the context of junior high. Instrumental in our choice of The Action Plan as a schoolwide program was a study conducted in January 2004 by Quality Education Data (QED) that showed that the Tiger Woods Foundation’s (TWF) character education program generated measurable

improvements in students' self-esteem, attitudes toward school, and overall attitudes and behaviors relating to goal-setting and achievement. The program fit into our Skills classes and acts as the perfect compliment to Tomorrow's Leaders Today. We discovered that our most at risk students do not have the role models of access to information and techniques to help them with the Skills to get ahead academically. That the persistently low achieving students in our schools did not have the means or access to skills that will help them organize and prepare and learn in order to be college ready. Our Total Excellence for All program provides this necessary component.

An essential component for Skills is The Action Plan curriculum is interactive, engaging and walks students through the lives of people who make a difference, helps students discover, appreciate, accept and even like who they are, helps them find the power to reach beyond their world and make a difference, while looking back at where they came from at the same time as looking forward to who they can become. Through the entire process students work towards the aforementioned ends together – in an environment that is safe and through a process of trial, error and discovery.

The next program component consists of the LifeSkills purple binders. Again, in an interactive fashion and with much team building, students work through the causes and effects of drug use and violence, decision making, media influence, coping with anxiety and anger, communication skills, social skills, conflict resolution and resisting peer pressure. The bonus of this is that when coupled with TLT and when students are given the chance to share what they learn with their peers and with younger students – the lessons become more than classroom work, but life skills that exist in a real and usable context.

Program Part 3: Service Learning. The final program component is a group service learning project. We, at Lone Junior High School, feel that community service is a powerful tool for youth development. It has the ability to facilitate the transformation of a young person from passive recipient to an active service provider and consequently helps to redefine the perception of youth in the community from a cause of the problems to the source of the solution. When combined with State Standards and formal education and when thoughtfully organized to provide concrete opportunities for youth to acquire knowledge and skills to make a meaningful contribution – students become empowered to act positively and engage in the learning process.

Service learning enables our teachers to employ a variety of effective teaching strategies that emphasize youth-centered, interactive, experiential education. Service learning here at Lone Junior High School integrates curricular concepts with real life situations and motivates youth to analyze, evaluate and synthesize these concepts through practical problem-solving as they plan and initiate their projects. Finally, the awareness and acceptance of the significant role service learning plays allows our students to plan in the community, and across the globe and feel the influence of making a difference. This becomes a powerful force in dispelling the sense of isolation and alienation so many junior high school students suffer today.

When developing our plan/program, we knew that it was imperative to analyze and include ways that would help bridge the achievement gap that exists between our white student population and that of our only statistically significant subgroup: socio-economically disadvantaged. While we have always held the same high expectations for the success of all students – we knew it was imperative for our planning process to

consciously take this into consideration and to work around the four ACES themes of: Access (how would all of our students gain access to what they need); culture/climate (how can we offer the best learning environment for everyone around); expectations and strategies (what practices have proving affective and/or promising for closing the achievement gap). Through our TLT/Skills program, that we developed and changed and tweaked over time as we struggled to access all students and to help every group reach its potential, we have done just that.

With regard to ACES, access was easy – everyone participates and we work to make sure that our activities, team building games, curriculum and instructional strategies are broad based and relevant to all subgroups. We continually work, tremendously hard, at leveling the playing field and bringing in high school mentors, team builders and counselors that cross the same socioeconomic spectrum as our junior high school students. We worked towards cultural relevance and modify our benchmarks when necessary as we journey on our way to using school culture to help close the achievement gap.

Our targeted outcomes for TLT, LEADS and Skills included closing the achievement gap by a rate of 5 points per year, decrease our suspension rate by 3% overall and by 6% for our socio-economically disadvantaged subgroup and by decreasing our multi-discipline referrals and counselor referrals by 10 percent.

API Growth			
	2007	2008	Point Growth
Overall	764	800	36
White	783	818	35

Gap: The results of this aspect of our program are evident in all aspects of Lone Junior High School – from the pride students take in our immaculate campus, to the way students treat each other, to the value our students place on education and each other, to the concrete achievement data that provides evidence of success – our students are achieving and the achievement gap is diminishing. With a 2007 base API of 764 overall and 666 for our socio-economically disadvantaged subgroup – the programs and practices implemented and executed by all stakeholders at Lone Junior High School helped the school attain a 36 point growth overall and a 69 point growth in our only statistically significant subgroup – said socio-economically disadvantaged – and help to bridge our

achievement gap as is evident in the chart above. Likewise, in the percent proficient on the California Standards test, not only

Percent Proficient + Combined Subjects			
	2007	2008	Growth
Overall	43	54	11 points
White	48	58	10 points
Disadvantaged	25	40	15 points

was overall growth evident, but evidence of a closing of the achievement gap was marked by our socio-economically disadvantaged population growing by more than five percentage points when compared to the growth of the white population.

Overall California Standards Test achievement for Lone Junior High have also increased and are well above the District and State levels with regards to students scoring proficient and/or advanced.

District Algebra			
Proficient or Advanced			
	2007	2008	2009
IJH	88%	93%	88%
JJH	31%	21%	17%
Amador	20%	35%	36%
Argonaut	10%	10%	8%

California	24%	25%	28%
District ELA			
Proficient or Advanced			
	2007	2008	2009
IJH	54%	58%	61%
JJH	52%	56%	56%
Amador	58%	59%	59%
Argonaut	48%	51%	53%
California	43%	46%	50%

Targeted Outcome 2 -- Suspension Rate: Directly prior to the implementation of Tomorrow’s Leaders Today and Skills re-introduction our overall school suspension rate was 9.9% as reported on the ConApp, Part II. For the 2008-2009 school year our ConApp, Part II reported suspension rate was 4.7% -- a decrease of 5.2 points or about 50% and our ADA was up by 2.6% -- thereby increasing essential program revenue. For the same time span, the calculated suspension rate for the socio-economically disadvantaged students was 10.6%; however, the 2008-2009 calculated suspension rate for the socio-economically subgroup was 5.1% -- again a decrease of approximately 50%.

Targeted Outcome 3 – Referrals: In the 2003-2004 school year, directly prior to the implementation of the aforementioned programs, the IJH referral rate of students to multi-disciplinary team meetings and to our school psychologist and counselors for issues that were not academic related was over 18%. Last year the referral rate for the same non academic related issues decreased by 6 percentage points to 12% overall.

These results are continually monitored and incorporated into our planning and review process. Likewise, we are continuing to search for ways to accelerate the impact of our program. For example, after reviewing the success our students feel from TLT and witnessing the calm that has settled over our campus and the less volatile student interactions – we decided to expand the program and train our students to

implement the team building and anti-bullying workshops conducted with them using high schoolers as their models – down to the elementary schools – using our junior high school students as the models. The unanticipated outcomes abound. Our campus is cleaner, our students settle into classes more ready to learn than they previously had and there is a sense of compassion - -as evident in the community outreach that spans raising money for hurricane victims to peer tutoring to general tolerance and acceptance.

Program Practice 2 Rational/Basis of the Practice

Embracing the first of the four criteria for high performance development set forth by Taking Center Stage II and keeping in mind our goals of improving the achievement of the most persistently low-performing populations and schools and getting all students career and college ready we have developed a program the incorporates the following elements.

1. hold high expectations for all students and then provide support;
2. align instruction and curriculum to state standards;
3. provide depth and real-world, connected learning;
4. provide a variety of challenging and engaging learning activities;
5. employ a variety of assessments;
6. provide time and flexible scheduling to ensure mastery;
7. provide supports for students; and
8. conduct regular professional development based on student learning needs.

The program is fluid, as it is constantly monitored and updated based on the needs of our students and staff as related to achievement data, school environment, academic achievement (for both students and teachers) and the like – all in the quest for our ultimate goal of attaining high-impact school status. To do this we understand that the main characteristic of high-impact schools is necessarily more time spent in academic

study and that the rigor must exist across the board – thus working to bridge achievement gap. Not only does it require monitoring and adjusting of instructional techniques for all students, but it requires individual, job embedded professional development for all teachers based on student performance data and teacher needs. Help teachers get better by looking at gaps in their student learning. It is a simple concept that generates results.

Capitalizing on the rationale put forth in *Academic Achievement in the Middle Grades: What Does the Research Tell Us* we have created a program for all of our students to achieve under high expectations and for our teachers and other professional staff to grow through rigorous, targeted and meaningful professional development. *Academic Achievement in the Middle Grades: What Does the Research Tell Us* is a study that included results from an in-depth survey of test scores from more than 28,000 sixth- and eighth-graders. After reviewing the survey responses, researchers reported that student achievement resulted from both academic rigor **and** social/personal support, regardless of students' backgrounds and school demographics. They also found that "no matter how strongly a school caters to students' affective and social needs, achievement depends on academic expectations and demands." We implemented the program and discovered the same.

With this in mind, and to complement the aforementioned Tomorrow's Leaders Today and Skills, we at Lone Junior High created a program that recognizes that standards-based learning is part of a collaborative strategy that will help to close the achievement gap and that requires a large human investment of both time and energy. We understand that many of our students come to school facing numerous challenges

in their personal lives (poverty, discrimination, learning English as a second language, various disabilities, inadequate parenting, or learning gaps due to past ineffective teachers). With this in mind we developed learning communities that combine our collective ingenuity to help these students succeed by:

- Using assessment and accountability results and targeting curriculum and instruction to meet students' needs
- Using teacher data to find strengths and weaknesses in teacher knowledge and instruction and then help individual teachers overcome these gaps
- Devising instructional strategies that give all students multiple opportunities to master standards – we are currently incorporating the Common Core Standards in with our California State Standards
- Creating challenging enrichment activities to engage advanced and gifted learners as well as at-risk learners
- Providing students with extended time in class and outside the classroom
- Teaching writing in every subject

Our anticipated outcomes include bridging the achievement gap by 5 proficient points annually on the California Standardized tests and by 10 percentage points annually on district assessments as well as continuing to make AYP and retain our cadre of highly qualified and motivated teachers.

Description Program Practice Two: Academic excellence for all centers around: what do we want students to know -- which forms the basis of what we teach and how we instruct; how will we know when they learn it – which guides professional development and assessment; and how do we respond when students experience difficulty or need challenges — which help us focus on discussions of professional development for teachers and enrichment and intervention/remediation for students.

At the cornerstone of our program is the concept of *rigor*. It is at the heart of all we do here at Lone Junior High School. Thus rigor is a critical component of our student academic success and our proficient and highly effective teachers. It is also a

necessary component in preparing all at lone Junior High School to succeed in high school and in the global community beyond and is an important tool for helping us to close the achievement gap. To these ends, we look towards the three criteria used by the forum in its [Schools to Watch™](#) program when we continually modify our program – specifically that:

1. All students are expected to meet high academic standards.
2. Curriculum, instruction, assessment, and appropriate academic interventions are aligned with high standards.
3. The curriculum emphasizes deep understanding of important concepts and the development of essential skills.

This academic rigor and the high expectations our teacher have for students are evident and applied across the board. Academic excellence through student learning and professional development of our faculty and staff are key elements to our success and exercised in daily lessons and instruction, course offerings, intervention that is precise and individualized and professional development that is targeted and standards-based. We collaborate regularly to devise and hone instructional strategies that give all students multiple opportunities to master standards and ensure that each student is in the proper program and is getting the tools necessary for his or her success. Our teachers articulate at grade, site and district level to curriculum map, check standards alignment, disaggregate data and bounce ideas off of one another. District coaches are provided for teachers who would like help with standards implementation, classroom management, new ideas or who just want to have someone observe their work and offer advice. Likewise, our teachers are encouraged to observe other teachers – on our campus or on any one of our district sites. Subs are provided and follow-up includes

meetings and further coaching. Articulation proves essential in creating activities that engage learners of all types – from gifted to those requiring extra help to succeed.

Our departments meet to discuss the individual needs of every student and discuss ways in which we can bridge the achievement gap. We discuss STAR and district data, family life of students, school involvement, social involvement, textbooks, curriculum, program effectiveness and teaching strategies. We are fortunate to have one of the original authors of our current math series teaching our 8th graders. He is gifted at best practices and student motivation – as is evident in by 80% of our 8th grade Algebra students scoring proficient or above. This teacher helps other teachers in the department, and the district, modeling group collaboration and individual work. As with all departments, the math department meets as soon as the STAR data is in and again when benchmark data is in. Armed with lists of individual scores – broken down by content strands – each student is analyzed and an individual program is constructed and or modified.

At district and school visitations or collaborations, as well as at site articulations, our teachers work through the data and their ideas to the ends of engaging our students with challenging lessons and opportunities to think critically and demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways – such as through hands-on chemistry projects or chalk geometry lessons that turn our entire campus to a geometric canvas to the poetry slams of our English Departments. We plan and work to differentiate strategies in order to deliver standards-based, grade-level instruction that reflects individual student needs and results from ongoing common assessments – CST, district benchmarks and school benchmarks. Again, we articulate around data, often with the help of our Office of

Curriculum and Instruction, on individual students' progress to deliver appropriate, accelerated classroom and schoolwide academic interventions and enrichment opportunities – such as after school tutoring or enrichment classes that help to prepare our students for life beyond school and include independent learning opportunities such as taking courses online or via distance learning from colleges and high school programs as well as in house offerings. This is all essential work to bridge the achievement gap and provide equal access to all students.

Academic Excellent for All includes setting consistent and high standards for each of our students – from general to special ed, from English Learners to English Only, from remedial to GATE. Our clear vision, collective mission and program plan is to ensure that all students leave our school armed with critical thinking and listening skills, artistic appreciation, a sense of citizenship, communication skills, problem solving skills and a desire to constantly learn. All students use the same CORE materials, such as the McDougal Littell Language to Literature series for English Language Arts and Glencoe/McGraw Hill Math Concepts and CPM Algebra 1 for math. Each student is instructed using the core curriculum and the RTI intervention tiers are utilized if extra help is needed. Enrichment is individualized as students are encouraged explore their interests. Our district GATE team is utilized to help students take extra courses, gain college credit and pursue other educational opportunities.

After the first progress report of the year – we identify at risk students and offer innovative remediation – during lunch, before school and after school. We use best practices programs and the RTI model to support individual students. Our remediation programs are standards based with both bridging the achievement gap and CAHSEE

success in mind and are available before and after school. We counsel students about what is going to be on the CAHSEE and then offer after school clinics and informational meetings. We work as a team to ensure that CAHSEE standards and critical thinking skills are woven through all of the curriculum – including our lab science, social studies and technology programs. To these ends, we work with our county and district, as well as our feeder high school teachers, to ensure that all students have the tools they need to pass the CAHSEE and close the achievement gap. We offer special enrichment, to these ends, for our small English Language Learner population, our struggling students and our Gifted and Talented students. Our special education population is mainstreamed and our academic courses often include two teachers – the regular education classroom teacher and a special education counterpart to help individualize instruction. In this way, we ensure that all students have access to the rigorous standards and instruction – no matter what their status.

The final component to be discussed herein is the transition piece of our Academic Excellence for All program. Not only do our teachers meet to articulate and ensure that transitions from elementary and to high school are as seamless as possible, but our students and parents meet with teachers and counselors to help with the process. After surveying teachers and analyzing data – we are expanding our professional development program to include vertical articulation that is beyond what we do and are consulting with College Board to these ends.

Results Program Practice Two: The monitoring and assessment process of the aforementioned practices include disaggregating school, district and state data and modifying the program based on data results. Informal and formal observations coupled

with surveys for all relevant stakeholders and the general climate of our campus also play key rolls in program implementation, continual improvement and future practice.

Targeted Outcome 1 – The Achievement Gap

Achievement Gap Bridging/ELA				
	2006	2007	2008	Growth
All	50	51	57	7
SED	27	34	39	12
White	54	53	62	8
Achievement Gap Bridging/Math				
	2006	2007	2008	Growth
All	48	44	54	6
SED	31	24	40	9
White	51	48	58	7

Essential and monitored outcomes include overall growth, growth by subgroup and bridging the achievement gap. Evidence of program success exists in the data from the two plus years of program implementation. The overall growth of students who

performed proficient or above on the ELA portion of the California Standards Test was 7 percentage points compared to 8 percentage points for the white subgroup and 12 percentage points for students in the socio-economically disadvantaged subgroup. Similar data exists for the Math portion of the CST with 6 percentage point growth overall, nine percentage point growth for the SED subgroup and 7 percentage point growth for the white subgroup.

Targeted Outcome 2 – High Achievement Success

The achievement of breaking 800 for our overall student population and bursting through the 700 mark for our SED population is evidence of the success of our program; however, it is also evidence that there is much work to be done.

API Growth			
	2007	2008	Point Growth
Overall	764	800	36
White	783	818	35
Disadvantaged	666	735	69

Unanticipated impacts of our program are evidenced, in part, from data provided by the high schools which we feed into showing that the students who attend IJH are better prepared for the high school course expectations and do an average of 36% better on standardized tests than students from the other feeder junior high school.

All aspects of our program are discussed at staff meetings, at site counsel meetings, at teacher collaborations and the like as we search for ways in which to improve and change our program to not only further bridge the gap – but to continue to raise overall achievement of all of our students.

Program Practice 3

Bottom Line – End of Story – It is all about teacher effectiveness.

Rational/Basis of Practice: One can have the brightest, most cared for students or the neediest, most at-risk student and neither will reach full potential without the expertise of a highly qualified and highly effective teacher. Amador County Office of Education works closely with our teachers union to make certain that only the most effective teachers stay.

World class standards and detailed data are only valuable if they are supported by stellar classroom instruction and data driven decision making by effective educators. Thus, the success of our Excellence for All program must necessarily focus on our teachers and leaders and the recruiting, retaining, developing and supporting great teachers and leaders – especially where they are needed the most.

Teachers are like students and just as we must have high expectations for students – so is the same for teachers. Our evaluation tools and processes have clear and rigorous teacher standards at the core and require teachers to show levels of proficiency and effectiveness and also provide support for individual growth and learning.

We have a strict evaluation process that, last year alone, resulted in the non-reelection of three out of 250 teachers last year – all with the support of our teacher's union. While, it is not a source of pride that we were able to non-reelect teachers – it is

merely mentioned as it can sometimes seem an impossible task. We have found however, that our teachers are professionals and want to be treated as such, they want to achieve and they want to be viewed as relevant, competent individuals capable of attaining student growth. All teachers are eligible for release if student performance and growth is not realized. We are experts of working within the system. We know the laws and we know how to generate effective teachers, help struggling teachers and move along those who are better suited to other professions. We train our administrators on what to look for, how to coach and mentor teachers, how to be strong instructional leaders and how to eliminate ineffective teachers with compassion and expediency. We have packaged this training into a trainer of trainer format that can be rolled out on mass scale at any given time. It is relevant, packed with useful turnkey information and tools and extremely motivational.

Our evaluation process includes cutting edge, individualized, classroom embedded professional development that is teacher focused and results oriented. We understand that as students have individual needs – so do teachers – and it is possible to develop IEP plans for teachers. Our process includes data supported student growth and has generated results.

Additionally, our teachers participate in extensive textbook, subject matter and instructional strategies training opportunities and we pay teacher for participation.

Teachers are provided with running data of their student scores, benchmark and California Standards Test, for example and then receive individual training in areas of weakness and tapped into when areas of strengths are discovered. For example, if a teacher's students constantly scored high on the reading comprehension portion of the

CSTs but low in Writing Strategies – he/she would receive individual classroom training related to Writing Strategies. She would also visit and observe classrooms where teachers scored consistently high in the area of his/her weakness.

All teachers participate in ongoing Essential Elements of Instruction training as well as training to use data to drive instruction and to drive the training they need.

Research

The aforementioned practices were studied as put forth above and longitudinally to determine their effects with relation to *improving achievement in persistently low achieving schools* and their ability to *serve all students – especially students with disabilities and English Learners and to meet our rural needs*, in the following manner:

Students: *Participants:* With the permission of the Amador County Office of Education, two local co-horts of low-achieving, high poverty students were studied between 2005 and 2007. The study included one group of (N=132) students, hereinafter N, who were filtered through the system randomly and the other group (N=132), hereinafter N₁ participated in a specifically designed 7th grade class that used research to positively motivate students, help them develop a strong sense of self-efficacy, was taught by a highly qualified teachers (by NCLB definition) experienced in both student and teacher centered pedagogy and given peer support once they transitioned into high school. Counseling, teaching, positive motivation and the theories of Harry and Rosemary Wong (2005) regarding motivation and self-efficacy were implemented.

Once in high school, N1 students participated in an award winning peer mentoring program L.E.A.D.s (NOTE: **LEADS** *Leadership, Excellence, Academics, Direction, Self-*

Esteem) is a school community-building program, whereby the experience of successful upperclassmen helps to guide, nurture and support younger students. At the same time these upperclassmen gain advanced leadership and motivational skills. The program aims to teach upperclassmen to foster self-esteem, increase academic achievement, motivate and nurture high school newcomers. The upperclassmen chosen for the LEADS program are selected based on communication skills, responsibility, self-confidence, compassion, organization, enthusiasm and that special something that makes them strive to be the best. The goal is to provide a structure in which students make real connections with each other, that every student matters and that all students are given the tools they need to succeed. Students learn that people care about them, their successes and even – sometimes -- their “un”-successes matter. Students in N_1 were eventually given leadership roles and motivated to make a difference. Students in group N were treated like every other student – no better or worse. They learned within the confines of public education – with standard set remedial programs and limited real resources geared towards closing the achievement gap. Students in both co-horts were of mixed race and chosen based on the socio-economic percentage of their feeder schools – basically the highest portion of Title 1 students in our county.

Teachers: All teachers within the Amador County Unified School District were divided into six categories teacher certification, academic major/credential, highest postsecondary degree, years of experience, student growth and instructional methods. The pairs from California CBEDs reporting system were used to determine which category(ies) each teacher fell into. A difference-of-means test was performed on teacher data and the coefficients were assessed in multivariate models to determine if

there is any difference in the academic achievement overall and or in N1 students were statistically significant and if student data improved over time based on individualized training of the teachers. A multiple regression model was used to estimate the relationship between the measure of teacher qualifications and achievement. The model takes achievement as a linear function with teacher (T) and student and school (S). The distributed random error is ϵ : $Y = \beta T + \gamma S + \epsilon$. Here β estimates the influence of teacher quality measures and γ indicates the contribution of individual school and student background factors on achievement. The type of model used is the formula and model used by the American Institutes for Research (2004). One goal of this grant would be to replicate this study on a much larger scale.

Research Questions

Hypothesis 1: CST scores will increase significantly as a result of N1 participation in the Model program and the evidence of this will be conclusive when group N1 CST scores are compared with N CST scores at the end of grade seven. This will also be evident when N1 CST scores pre-Model will be compared with N1 CST scores post-model.

Hypothesis 2: N1 GPAs will increase as a result of participation in the Model program. This will be conclusive when N1 pre-Model GPAs (end grade six) are compared to N1 post-Model GPAs (end grade seven) and to N1 scores mid-year grade ten.

Hypothesis 3: Teacher knowledge and application of instructional strategies play a greater role in student achievement than do experience, major or certification.

Furthermore, that individualized job-embedded professional development will play a

significant role in student achievement. This will be conclusive when teacher data, via paifs are compared to student achievement.

Student Portion

Table 1 Description of Student Subjects

Demographic variable	N	%	Demographic variable	N1	%
Gender			Gender		
Female	64	43.8	Female	67	53.1
Male	68	56.3	Male	65	46.9
Disadvantaged *	100	75	Disadvantaged	100	75

* Based on Title 1, NCLB definition of socio-economically disadvantaged youth.

Subjects of N1 were all students enrolled in clustered CORE (combined oral reading and English) and math for three periods of day with the same teacher to equal a total class time of 135 minutes. The sample consisted of 32 subjects: 64 females and 68 females. These teachers were certificated, NCLB Highly Qualified, had an advanced degree and was a hand-on teacher who practiced varied and student specific instructional strategies and received job embedded professional development. Students had a mean age of 13.5 with a standard deviation of .745 and were all filtered from Title 1 schools to the same junior high school. Here a Title 1 school is defined as having a poverty rate of <30%: twenty of the students were defined as socio-economically disadvantaged. All students were defined as at-risk according to their 6th grade STAR test scores and socio-economic data. At-risk is defined as scoring within the Basic, Below Basic or Far Below Basic ranges, economic status, parent education level, prescribed learning disability and/or English Learner Status.

Subjects of N were all students enrolled in various CORE and math courses at the same junior high. They were randomly selected from the population of students also filtered from Title 1 schools with a mean age of 13.5 at the time the study began. They were selected and analyzed according to student number queries and were never

identified individually so as not to bias the results. The sample consisted of 132 students: 65 male and 67 female. One hundred of the students were defined as socio-economically disadvantaged. All students were defined as at-risk according to their 6th grade STAR test scores. At-risk is defined as scoring within the Basic, Below Basic or Far Below Basic ranges on grade level California Standards Tests.

Procedure: The superintendent of public instruction and the School Board President for Amador County Public Schools gave permission for this research.

The two groups of students chosen from Title 1 feeder schools were and labeled group N and N1.

Group N (n=132) traveled through 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th grades randomly as would any student in the K-12 public school system in California.

Group N1 (n=132) participated in a formal self-esteem building, self-efficacy fostering program, The Action Plan); a leadership building program, Tomorrow's Leaders Today; were taught and mandated to use technology based metacognitive strategies; were taught by a highly qualified teacher who had participated in coaching training; and had parents participate in parent development that helped them understand the standards and use them with their children on a daily basis.

In 9th grade group N1 students were assigned LEADs peer mentors.

Student STAR test and GPA data was gathered from each year – 2004 through 2007 and disaggregated.

Teacher data from both N and N1 was compiled from CDE (California Department of Education) required CBEDs paifs, LARs California Standards Test

reporting system, district benchmarks and based on instructional strategies tied to specific textbook curriculum and instructional strategies.

N1 subject GPAs were tracked and compared at four points: pre-study, at the end of 7th grade, at the end of LEADs in the 9th grade and then at the end of the study – mid-year 10th grade. T-tests were performed to determine if statistically significant differences occurred in the STAR CST scores and/or GPAs between both groups and in group N1 before and after Model completion.

Results of Student Portion

DATA :

Table 2: STAR California Standards Test (CST) Results

CST/Math			
Proficient and Above			
	N	N1	
2004	23%	19%	7th grade
2005	19%	26%	8th grade
2006	25%	34%	9th grade
2007	27%	36%	10 grade

Table 2 shows the percentages of students who scored at or above proficient from both groups N and N1 over a four span.

At initial glance, the data seems promising. While only 5% of group N increased above the proficient level, 17% of group N1 increased above the proficient level. Thus said, it is essential to note that comparing levels – here the break between proficient and not proficient – a one or two point increase could cause a student to move from Basic to Proficient; however, then the question becomes – is a one point increase statistically significant with regards to academic achievement? The answer becomes yes when growth is factored in. A California Standards Test is a criterion test based on a specific set of standards. A student who begins any given year basic or below is

below grade level by one, two or <three years. To move up one level is to grasp the standards from the previous year and current year – at least to some degree. With this in mind – actual scaled scores were analyzed.

Table 3: STAR N and N2 Group Math STAR CST Results

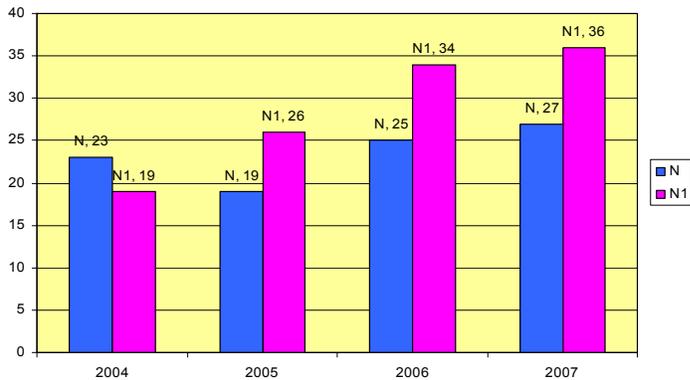


Table 1 and Table 2 show the percentages of students who scored Proficient or above on the California Standards Tests for math from 2004 through 2007 in chart form. Again, the increase looks

striking.

Table 5 shows the overall population of the students within the Amador Public Schools over the same period of time. While the percent of students proficient and advanced is greater than those of either group N or N1 – the growth of N1 is equal to that of the overall population. In other words N1, the experimental group, performed at the same growth rate

as their student counterparts who are not socio-economically challenged and at a greater rate than the comparison group N.

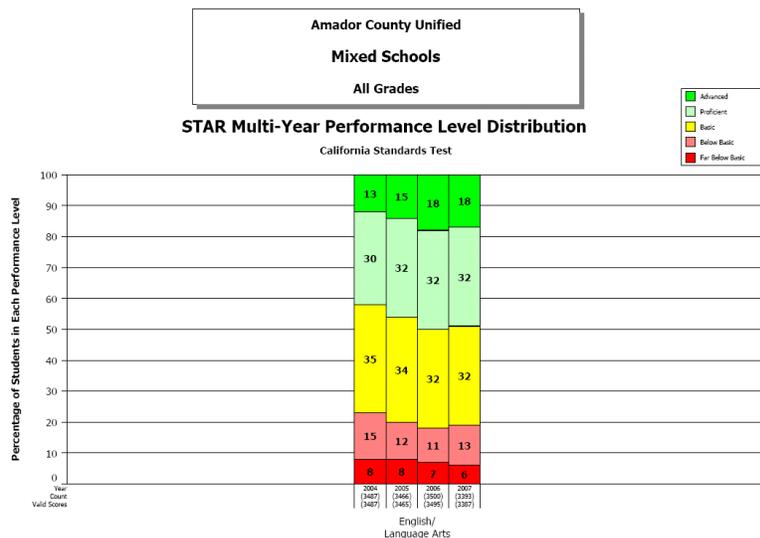


Table 5: All Students CST Scores 2004 to 2007

Hypothesis 1: CST scores will significantly rise as a result of N1 participation in the Model program and that evidence of this would be conclusive when group N1 CST scores are compared with N CST scores at the end of grade seven. This will also be evident when N1 CST scores pre-Model will be compared with N1 CST scores post-model.

Table 6: N Math CST Scores

Table 7: N1 Math CST Scores

Group N CST Math Listing					Group N1 CST Math Listing				
	2004	2005	2006	2007		2004	2005	2006	2007
	7th	8th	9th	10th		7th	8th	9th	10th
	23%	19%	25%	27%		19%	26%	34%	36%
Prof	387	392	356	419	Prof	404	392	411	357
	372	382	356	357		404	392	387	357
	367	354	356	357		398	392	382	357
	354	354	351	357		372	363	356	357
	354	354	351	353		372	363	356	357
	354	354	351	353		348	363	356	353
	354	349	351	348		348	354	356	353
Basic	328	349	351	348	Basic	348	354	356	353
	324	344	331	348		328	349	356	353
	324	344	331	348		328	349	351	348
	324	340	331	348		328	349	351	348
	319	340	331	348		328	349	331	348
	319	328	331	348		328	349	331	348
	319	328	331	348		319	349	331	348
	319	307	327	348		319	349	331	348
	311	303	327	348		319	344	331	318
	311	303	327	348		311	344	327	318
	311	303	327	348		311	344	327	232
	307	303	327	348		311	344	327	232
	307	303	327	318		311	344	327	318
	307	303	327	318		311	344	322	318
	307	303	327	318		311	328	322	318
	307	303	322	232		311	328	322	232
	307	303	322	232		311	328	322	232
	306	303	322	195		311	328	322	
	307	303	322			298	328	322	
BB	298	303	322		BB	298	328	322	
	281	303	322			298	328	322	
	276	303				262	328		
	262	248				262	242		
	262	237				263	237		
Mean	318.9	320.8	334.2	333.3		324.9	341.4	341.3	325.1
standard err	5.2	5.8	2.3	9.0		6.3	5.7	4.2	8.8

Table 8: t-test N CST Scores

Pre and Post N CST Scores		
t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances		
	Variable 1	Variable 2
Mean	324.87	325.13
Variance	1323.38	2011.77
Observations	31.00	24.00
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0.00	
df	44.00	
t Stat	-0.02	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.49	
t Critical one-tail	1.68	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.98	
t Critical two-tail	2.02	

Table 8 represents pre and post-CST Math scores for the N1 – Table 7 2004 and Table 7 2007 specifically. This t-test was used to compare the measurement to determine if there is a statistical difference between the initial CST tests and the CST tests conducted after students complete the 7th grade model and 9th grade LEADs programs (hereinafter Model). N1 variable 1 has a mean of 324.87 and a standard deviation (sd) of 6.3 and N1 variable 2 has a mean of 325.13 with sd = 8.8. By performing a two-tailed t-test we find $t=-0.02$ with $p=0.98$ for alpha 0.05. Critical $t= 2.02$ – which shows the t value I would need to exceed in order for the differences to be considered statistically significant.

Critical 1 was not met or exceeded, thus there was not a statistical difference.

Table 9: Means with added error bars with the standard deviation

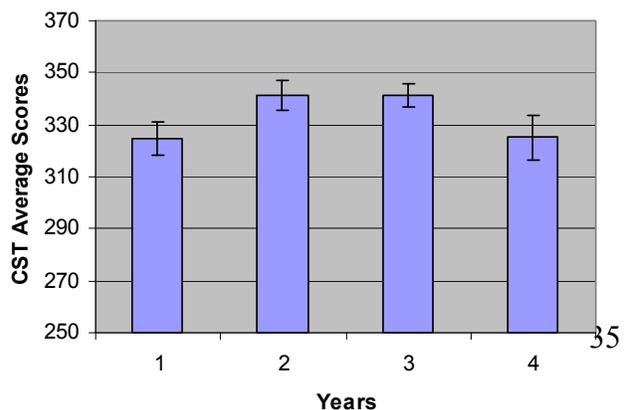


Table 10: t-test N1 CST Scores

Pre and Post N CST Scores

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances

	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	318.87	333.32
Variance	879.78	2206.98
Observations	31.00	25.00
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0.00	
df	39.00	
t Stat	-1.34	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.09	
t Critical one-tail	1.68	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.19	
t Critical two-tail	2.02	

Table 10.1: Means with added error bars with the standard deviation

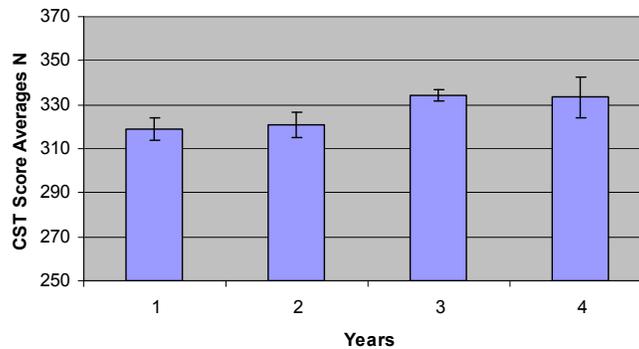


Table 10 represents pre and post-CST scores for group N1 -- Table 6 2004 and Table 6 2007 specifically. This t-test was used to compare the measurement to determine if there is a statistical difference between the initial CST test in grade seven math and the CST score after randomly filtering through the system. Alpha is 0.05. By performing a two-tailed t-test we find $t = -1.34$ with $p = 0.19$ for alpha 0.05. Critical $t = 2.02$ – which shows the t value I would need to exceed in order for the differences to be considered statistically significant. Since the hypothesis is that the means will be different, in that the post-CST means will be higher than the pre-CST means this t-test determines that there is a statistical difference between the two samples thus statistical growth was achieved.

Table 11 t-test N and N1 post CST scores

Post N CST Scores vs. Post N1 CST Scores

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances

	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	333.32	325.13
Variance	2206.98	2011.77
Observations	25.00	24.00
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0.00	
df	47.00	
t Stat	0.62	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.27	
t Critical one-tail	1.68	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.54	
t Critical two-tail	2.01	

Table 11 represents post-CST scores for groups N and N1: taken in the 10th grade --

Table 6 2007 and Table 7 2007 specifically. This t-test was used to compare the measurement to determine if there is a statistical difference between the N and N1 10th grade CST tests in math. By performing a two-tailed t-test we find t=0.62 with p=0.54 for alpha 0.05. Critical t= 2.01 – which shows the t value I would need to exceed in order for the differences to be considered statistically significant. Thus, t=0.62 is closer to critical t=2.01 – when compared to Table 9 and Table 10.

Table 4: STAR N and N2 Math STAR CST Change in %

CST/Math - Proficient and Above					
	2004	2005	2006	2007	Change in %
N	23	29	25	27	4
N1	19	26	34	36	17

Table 4 shows the progress of both groups. With all else being equal, over the course of the five years studied, N1 out performed N – raising their percentage of students proficient and above by 17% over four years compared to N rise of only 4%. While the scores ebbed and flowed – it seems evident that raising the bar, providing positive motivation and a support system, believing these students and providing them

with highly effective and providing qualified teachers who received job embedded professional development enabled students to perform at a higher level than their identical counterparts.

The percent proficient number used by the State of California to determine proficiency and adequate yearly progress may not provide the picture necessary to determine statistical significance. The percent proficient is a simple calculation taken by counting the number of students who achieved any score above proficient and dividing it by the whole. Individual numerical scores do not hold any value. A proficient score of 400 holds the same weight as the lowest proficient score of 300 (400 and 300 are examples as the cut –scores change every year).

After analyzing the data based on scaled scores and determining that no statistical difference existed, I decided to analyze the data based on the State of California measure of proficiency – by level. While I feel that this is not as accurate a reflection of student performance as a proficient score that is 400 is one point from an advanced of 401 and reflects that a student has a better grasp of the standards than a proficient score of 300 that is only one point above scoring below proficient.

Table 12 and Table 13 show student scores were assigned a number based on their CST level: Advanced = 5; Proficient = 4; Basic = 3; Below Basic = 1 and Far Below Basic = 2. This is similar to the way the State of California determines API (Academic Performance Index) scores only they assign a number in the 100s. In other words, to determine a school's proficiency based on the API one standard number is assigned to each level and the scores are analyzed based on subject test weights.

Table 14: Converted CST Score Pre and Post N and N1 t-test

t-Test
Post N CST Scores vs. Post N1 CST Scores

	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	3.21	3.29
Variance	0.26	0.39
Observations	24.00	24.00
Pearson Correlation	0.76	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0.00	
df	23.00	
t Stat	-1.00	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.16	
t Critical one-tail	1.71	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.33	
t Critical two-tail	2.07	

Table 14 represents post-CST scores for groups N and N1: taken in the 10th grade – Table 12 2007 and Table 13 2007 specifically. A t-test was performed on data converted from scaled to numerical leveled scores. Scores were leveled to imitate the State of California proficiency

level scores.

t-test N1 Pre and Post Converted Scores
t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances

	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	3.06	3.29
Variance	0.26	0.39
Observations	31.00	24.00
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0.00	
df	44.00	
t Stat	-1.45	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.08	
t Critical one-tail	1.68	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.16	
t Critical two-tail	2.02	

Table 15: t-test N1 Pre and Post Converted Scores

The converted CST scores for group N1 yielded similarly to the CST scaled scores and demonstrated no statistically significant differences between pre and post converted scores.

This t-test was used to compare the

measurement to determine if there is a statistical difference between the N1 pre and post Model participation CST scores. By performing a two-tailed t-test we find $t=1.45$ with $p=0.16$ for alpha 0.05. Critical $t= 2.02$ – which shows the t value I would need to exceed in order for the differences to be considered statistically significant. While $t=1.45$ is much closer to critical $t=2.02$ – when compared to Table 9 and Table 10 – the differences alone are not statistically significant.

Hypothesis 2

N1 GPAs will increase as a result of participation in the Model program. This will be conclusive when N1 pre-Model GPAs (end grade six) are compared to N1 post-Model GPAs (end grade seven) and to N1 scores mid-year grade ten.

GPA: The null hypothesis is no difference in N or N1 GPAs; therefore, the hypothesis is that there will be a statistically significant difference between the pre-program N1 GPAs and the post-program N1 GPAs. The following t-test represents N1 GPAs from the end of the sixth grade with N1 GPAs from the end of participation in the Model program.

Table 16: N1 Pre and Post GPA:

	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>	
t-Test:			By performing a two-tailed t-test we find
Mean	1.82	3.50	t=8.32 with p=0.00 for alpha 0.05. Critical
Variance	0.66	0.50	t= 2.00 – which shows the t value I would
Observations	31.00	26.00	need to exceed in order for the differences
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0.00		to be considered statistically significant,
df	55.00		since t = 8.32 there is a statistically
t Stat	-8.32		significant difference between N1 pre-
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.00		
t Critical one-tail	1.67		
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.00		
t Critical two-tail	2.00		

Model GPAs and N1 post-Model GPAs. The mean of N1 pre-Model GPAs (end of year 6th) is 1.82, while the mean of N1 post-Model GPAs (end of 7th) is 3.50. This is a marked improvement.

Table 17: t-test N1 GPA End of Year 6th vs. N1 GPA 10th

t-Test	<i>Variable</i> 1	<i>Variable</i> 2	A similar t-test was performed on
Mean	1.82	2.90	N1 pre-Model GPAs (end of year 6 th
Variance	0.66	0.58	grade) and N1 GPAs three years later. By
Observations	31.00	26.00	performing a two-tailed t-test we find
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0.00		t=5.17 with p=0.01 for alpha 0.05. Critical
df	54.00		t= 2.00 – which shows the t value I would
t Stat	-5.17		need to exceed in order for the differences
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.00		
t Critical one-tail	1.67		
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.00		
t Critical two-tail	2.00		

to be considered statistically significant, since $t = 5.17$ there is a statistically significant difference between N1 pre-Model GPAs and N1 post-Model GPAs.

The mean of N1 pre-Model GPAs is 1.82. The mean of N1 10th grade GPAs is 2.90. While the mean differenced highlighted in Table 16 has decreased – a significant difference still exists – from 1.82 to a high of 3.50 to a final mean of 2.90.

Teacher Portion of the Results

The following results indicate that the most important factor of the entire program with relation to improving achievement in persistently low-performing schools.

Teachers: Teachers were categorized on six specific qualifications: teacher certification, academic major/credential, highest postsecondary degree, years of experience, student growth rate and instructional methods – n=26. The pairs from California CBEDs reporting system were used to determine qualifications. A difference-of-means test was performed on teacher data and the coefficients were assessed in multivariate models to determine if there is any difference in the academic achievement based on qualifications. A multiple regression model was used to estimate the

relationship between the measure of teacher qualifications and achievement. The model takes achievement as a linear function with teacher (T) and student and school (S). The distributed random error is ϵ : $Y = \beta T + \gamma S + \epsilon$. Here β estimates the influence of teacher quality measures and γ indicates the contribution of individual school and student background factors on achievement. The type of model used is the formula and model used by the American Institutes for Research (2004). A teacher for the Model was selected based on the above.

Table 18: Groups N and N1 Mean CST Scores by Teacher

<i>Math Co-Hort Instruction 04-07</i>		
	Mean CST	Stand Error
Instruction		
Teacher Centered	383.2	3.7
Student Centered	328.8	2.7

Table 18 shows the California Standards Test (CST) math scores for groups N and N1, for the period of 2004 through 2007, were disaggregated. The scores were averaged and the relationship between teacher-centered instruction (TCI) and student-centered instruction (SCI) were compared. There is much recent literature concerning instructional methods, specifically hands-on activities, cooperative learning, problem-based learning and offered countless demonstrations that properly implemented SCI leads to increased motivation to learn, greater retention of knowledge, deeper understanding, and more positive attitudes toward the subject being taught (Bonwell and Eisen 1991; Johnson Johnson and Smith 1991a,b; McKeachie 1986; Meyers and Jones 1993).

Table 19: Average CST Math Scores by Teacher Qualifications

Total	Mean Score of Total	
	Population	
Certification		<i>stand err</i>
<i>Certified SS Math</i>	316	5
<i>Certified MS</i>	267	3
<i>Certified IS Special w/ job embedded training</i>	365	8
Major/Minor		
<i>Math</i>	324	7
<i>Other</i>	351	5
Highest Degree		
<i>Master's</i>	319	6
<i>Less Than Masters</i>	259	5
Experience		
<i>Greater than 5</i>	326	1
<i>Less than 5</i>	320	7
Student Growth		
<i>One year</i>	351	5
<i>Less than one year</i>	320	7

Table 19 shows the California Standards Test in Math’s averages for all district 7th through 9th graders (N-1390). The data was disaggregated by teacher qualifications to determine an N1 teaching candidate.

The “certification” category refers to specific California Credentials held by teachers: *Certified SS Math* refers to teachers who possess Single Subject Math Credentials, *Certified MS* refers to teachers who have Multiple Subjects Credentials, and *Certified IS Special* refers to teachers who have participated in RSDSS or other Instructional Strategies to the degree that they can be classified as coaches regardless of credential and who have received job embedded professional training.

“Major/Minor” refers to teachers categorized by having a major or minor in Math as opposed to math teachers who have a major or minor outside of their teaching field of math. Both groups are Highly Qualified by NCLB definition.

“Highest Degree” refers to teachers categorized by whether or not they had a master’s degree, or higher, in any field of study.

“Teaching Experience” refers to teachers categorized by whether for not they had more or less than five years of teacher experience in math.

“Student Growth” refers to the number of scale score points students grew on the CSTs and district benchmarks over the course of a year greater than or equal to one year.

Table 19 looks at the relationship between teacher qualifications in isolation and student achievement. It is imperative to note that most teachers possess more than one of the qualifications analyzed. By including all measures for teacher qualifications in the same multiple regression model the estimated independent relationship can be determined.

Table 19 shows the mean math scores of students whose teachers were certificated specifically for math *Certificated SS Math*, scores of students whose teachers had Multiple Subjects credentials, but were not specifically certificated for math and the scores of students whose teachers had either credentials in addition to having additional training as instructional strategies coaches. Also, the mean math scores of students whose teachers had a math major or minor vs. any other major or minor, master’s degree vs. less than master’s degree and greater than or less than five years experience.

The greatest differences were found between teachers without single subject credentials, *Certificated MS*, with a mean = 267 and *Certified IS Special*, instructional specialists or teachers with job embedded training with a mean of 365 – a **98 point difference in the average of means**. The most significant difference, however, was between teachers with less than a master's mean = 259 and teachers with a master's or greater with mean = 319 – a 60 point difference in the average of means.

Based on this a teacher was selected who had been an instructional specialist, had a master's degree and had experience greater than 5 years. The most significant aspect of the entire Excellence for All Program appears to be highly effective teachers.

The next step for data: The next step for teacher generated growth data, one in which this grant will help us to accomplish, is to administer normed achievement tests to students for baseline data during the last week of school and monitor growth throughout the following year. The current CSTs are criterion based and not the best type of exam on which to gauge student growth. Each student's achievement test score must be analyzed, and individual plans for instruction must be generated. Each teacher must ensure growth that will be measured— on subsequent last week of school achievement tests.

Analysis of Model DATA

Our longitudinal data indicates that the most important factor to student achievement is teacher performance and while many things contribute to the overall success of a low performing school – the importance of effective instruction and effective teachers can not be overlooked but must be highlighted and moved to the

forefront of education – which is just what Amador County Office of Education will do with this i3 grant.

An abundance of research on student achievement and the elements necessary to create a model for which all students can achieve exists – while some of it conflicting -- suggests that by concentrating on what motivates individual students and concentrating on individual learning styles and coupling that with teachers with strong backgrounds in instructional strategies – the achievement gap can be bridged. At Lone Junior High we have successfully practiced this and are now ready to expand the whole process out to our district, county and beyond. The formula is simple and one we have perfected.

In sum, by combining our program practices and focusing on both student and teacher performance, we have raised achievement, pulled our schools from low performing status and are closing the achievement gap. Excellence for all is simple and easy to replicate and, with the help of this i3 grant – we would like the opportunity to share our IJH model with all of our own school sites and beyond. We have the knowledge and the tools and this grant will help us build the capacity to develop training tools specific to our program, expand our database and roll out our program in a trainer of trainer format.

Through our program we will help others become high performing schools by helping them to:

- 1. Prioritize student achievement and providing the support to achieve:**

Teachers and principals in high-performing schools set high expectations for their students, especially compared with their colleagues in low-performing schools.

Our successful schools had specific plans for instructional improvement and focused on both teacher and student achievement.

2. **Provide support programs that offer students the tools they need to succeed and important connections such as:** Relationship building, academic rigor and respect that all students can achieve, celebrations of student achievement in academics, behavior, and service, respect for diversity and multicultural sensitivity, service projects that helps students find value in themselves and their ability to make a difference, opportunities for leadership building and honesty policies are essential (LEADS, TLT and Skills).
3. **Implement a coherent, standards-based curriculum and instructional program.** The school curriculum must be aligned vertically grade-to-grade and horizontally within the same grade level and must be aligned with state standards. This must also be aligned with State Standards and Common Core Standards
4. **Use assessment data to improve student achievement and teacher instruction.** Stakeholders in high-performing schools must test score data extensively to continuously improve instruction and evaluate teaching practices. Significantly, it is imperative to use multiple sources of test data, including tests administered by the district and classroom teachers as well as those by the state.
5. **Set high expectations for teachers and demanding performance:** Only qualified teachers should be hired and then continually trained and supported to ensure that all teachers are and stay highly effective.

6. **Ensure availability of instructional resources.** Have enough textbooks and other up-to-date instructional materials and be able to provide extra support to struggling students and teachers.
7. **Provide and manage data:** Provide relevant and detailed data on student and teacher performance and growth is a top priority.

Sidenotes:

Matching Funds: We have \$100,000 in our Reading Institute and Professional Development program from tuition that will be repurposed for our match. We are working on other community partnerships for matching funds. We have over 150 signatures of support from local businesses and individuals on file and available on request. This will be a community effort and we will indeed meet or exceed the matching funds necessary.

Common Core Standards Alignment: One goal of this grant is to align the Common Core Standards with our state of the art data disaggregation system.

Roll-Out: The roll out and training of trainer sessions for the entire program can be done in person and through internet training opportunities. The online component will consist of a series of courses, already developed, to help teachers and leaders become highly effective. A course of the Common Core Standards will also be developed. These courses will each have live instructions for continued support.

Budget Narrative

Budget Narrative Year 1

Personnel: \$360,000 – This is the cost of two trainers under a 10 month contract, a .5 data technician and .5 online curriculum specialist. During this first year, teachers will be selected as project trainers and our program training materials will be developed and repurposed on the Blackboard online teaching platform. These trainers will be responsible for onsite and online professional development. The .5 data technician will work with our Multiple Measures data disaggregation and curriculum specialist program and contractors to update our benchmarks and the data system to incorporate the Common Core Standards for both student and teacher growth and achievement data.

Benefits: \$32,000 – This is the cost of the benefits associated with the above positions.

Travel: \$3,200 – This amount incorporates mileage, air and hotel fees necessary to train up beyond our isolated county.

Supplies: \$500,000 – This is the cost of the initial teacher's workbook. The cost is based on the approximate number of regional teachers our regional counties each receiving an interactive training workbook, planner and portfolio. This is a state of the art guide that will roll out in PDF as we move beyond California.

Equipment: \$15,000 – Trainer laptops, projectors and portable Interactive Whiteboards.

Contractual: \$30,000 – This cost encompasses our data contractors as well as the Blackboard interactive online teaching platform.

Budget Narrative Year 2

Personnel: \$180,000 – This is the cost of two trainers/online instructors. These trainers will be responsible for training the trainers and manning the online teaching platform.

Benefits: \$18,000 – This is the cost of the benefits associated with the above positions.

Supplies: \$1, 500,000 – This is the cost of the initial teacher's workbook. The cost is based on the approximate number of teachers in the state of California (307,000) each receiving an interactive training workbook, planner and portfolio. This is a state of the art guide that will roll out in PDF as we move beyond California.

Contractual: \$10,000 – This cost encompasses our data contractors as well as the Blackboard interactive online teaching platform.

Budget Narrative Year 3

Personnel: \$180,000 – This is the cost of two trainers/online instructors. These trainers will be responsible for training the trainers and manning the online teaching platform.

Benefits: \$18,000 – This is the cost of the benefits associated with the above positions.

Contractual: \$5000 – This cost encompasses our data contractors as well as the Blackboard interactive online teaching platform.

Budget Narrative Year 4

Personnel: \$180,000 – This is the cost of two trainers/online instructors. These trainers will be responsible for training the trainers and manning the online teaching platform.

Benefits: \$18,000 – This is the cost of the benefits associated with the above positions.

Supplies: \$25,000 – This is the cost of the initial teacher's workbook. The cost is based on the approximate number districts each receiving an interactive training workbook, planner and portfolio. Copies will be available for download in PDF for all others. If hard copies are desired from a district a fee to cover only the costs of the material will be charged.

Contractual: \$5,000 – This cost encompasses our data contractors as well as the Blackboard interactive online teaching platform.

Beyond budget year four – a nominal cost for the training will help us to sustain the program.

The fidelity of program implementation will be overseen by the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction or Amador County Office of Education and Amador County Unified School District.

U.S. Department of Education Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-524)	OMB Control Number: 1894-0008 Expiration Date: 02-28-2011
---	--

Name of Institution/Organization Amador County Office of Education	Applicants requesting funding for only one year should complete the column under "Project Year 1." Applicants requesting funding for multi-year grants should complete all applicable columns. Please read all instructions before completing form.
---	---

SECTION A - BUDGET SUMMARY
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FUNDS

Budget Categories	Project Year 1 (a)	Project Year 2 (b)	Project Year 3 (c)	Project Year 4 (d)	Project Year 5 (e)	Total (f)
1. Personnel	\$360,000	\$180,000	\$180,000	\$90,000		\$810,000
2. Fringe Benefits	\$32,000	\$18,000	\$18,000	\$9,000		\$77,000
3. Travel	\$3,200	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000		\$33,200
4. Equipment	\$15,000					\$15,000
5. Supplies	\$500,000	\$1,500,000	\$25,000			2,025,000
6. Contractual	\$30,000	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$5,000		\$50,000
7. Construction						
8. Other						
9. Total Direct Costs (lines 1-8)						3,020,200
10. Indirect Costs* .0533						
11. Training Stipends						
12. Total Costs (lines 9-11)						

Indirect Cost Information (To Be Completed by Your Business Office):

If you are requesting reimbursement for indirect costs on line 10, please answer the following questions:

- (1) Do you have an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement approved by the Federal government? Yes No
- (2) If yes, please provide the following information:
Period Covered by the Indirect Cost Rate Agreement: From: 07/01/2009 To: 06/30/2010 (mm/dd/yyyy)
Approving Federal agency: ED Other (please specify): _____
- (3) For Restricted Rate Programs (check one) -- Are you using a restricted indirect cost rate that:
 Is included in your approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement? or Complies with 34 CFR 76.564(c)(2)?

ED 524

Name of Institution/Organization Amador County Office of Education	Applicants requesting funding for only one year should complete the column under "Project Year 1." Applicants requesting funding for multi-year grants should complete all applicable columns. Please read all instructions before completing form.
---	--

**SECTION B - BUDGET SUMMARY
NON-FEDERAL FUNDS**

Budget Categories	Project Year 1 (a)	Project Year 2 (b)	Project Year 3 (c)	Project Year 4 (d)	Project Year 5 (e)	Total (f)
1. Personnel	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000			\$150,000
2. Fringe Benefits						
3. Travel						
4. Equipment						
5. Supplies	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000			\$30,000
6. Contractual						
7. Construction						
8. Other						
9. Total Direct Costs (Lines 1-8)						\$180,000
10. Indirect Costs						\$9,594
11. Training Stipends						
12. Total Costs (Lines 9-11)						\$189,594