

Importance and Implementation of Selected Middle Level Programmatic Practices (We Tend to Implement that Which Is Important to Us)

	Very Important		Full Implementation	
	Highly Successful	National Sample	Highly Successful	National Sample
Interdisciplinary teams of 2-5 teachers sharing common students, common planning time, housed in close proximity	96	77	81	55
Exploratory course offerings which provide required (not elective) curricular opportunities for all students	78	72	75	66
Advisor-advisee program regularly scheduled for 15 minutes or more during each classroom day	61	48	47	32
Co-curricular program separate from regular graded courses, but occurring during the school day, designed to provide students with the opportunity to pursue leadership roles, special interests, and socialization	56	42	43	26
Intramural activities offered for all students during or immediately after the regular classroom day	60	48	47	37

* Importance: Little/No, Somewhat, Very *Implementation: None, Partial, Full

- All Highly Successful principals value these common middle level programmatic characteristics significantly more.
- All Highly Successful schools implement these common middle level programmatic characteristics significantly more.

School Schedule Serving Most Students

	Highly Successful	National Sample
Daily Disciplinary Schedule (6, 7, 8 periods daily)	23	46
Daily Interdisciplinary Schedule (6, 7, 8 periods implemented as blocks of time)	55	38
Alternating-day Disciplinary Schedule (3 or 4 periods daily)	14	11
Alternating-day Interdisciplinary Schedule (3 or 4 periods implemented as blocks of time)	7	4
Self-contained Classroom Schedule (one teacher for all core classes)	1	1

- Non-traditional schedules significantly more common in Highly Successful schools.

Schools with One or More Interdisciplinary Teams by Grade Level

	Highly Successful	National Sample
Anywhere in the School	95	79
At Grade 5	90	59
At Grade 6	96	79
At Grade 7	95	76
At Grade 8	94	69
At Grade 9	100	22

- Highly Successful schools are significantly more likely to have interdisciplinary teaming somewhere in the school.
- Teaming is significantly more prevalent in Highly Successful schools at each grade level.

Characteristics of Interdisciplinary Teams

	Highly Successful	National Sample
Team has at least One Common Planning Time Daily	93	89
Team works together >4 hrs per week during planning times	35	22
Classrooms of Team Teachers are Adjacent	45	26
Team has designated Team Leader	86	71
Students Taught Core Classes only By Team Members	79	83
Students Assigned to Teams Heterogeneously	100	93

- Teams in Highly Successful schools slightly more likely to have common planning times.
- Teams in Highly Successful schools significantly more likely to plan >4 hours per week.
- Classrooms of teams in Highly Successful schools significantly more likely to be adjacent.
- Students having all core instruction within same team slightly more common in national sample.
- Students assigned heterogeneously to teams slightly more common in Highly Successful schools.

Curriculum Design

	Highly Successful	National Sample
Discipline Centered (most instruction in departmentalized settings)	25	38
Topic Centered (content linked between disciplines but instruction mostly departmentalized e.g. “Civil War”)	33	27
Theme Centered (interdisciplinary themes; instruction is truly interdisciplinary e.g. “Changes”)	27	21
Student Centered (teachers and students identify themes/units. Instruction almost entirely in interdisciplinary teams)	15	14

- Three-fourths of Highly Successful schools design curriculum in formats that support interdisciplinary learning.

Organizational Format for Delivery of Core Curriculum

	Highly Successful	National Sample
	Language Arts Grade 7	Language Arts Grade 7
Self-contained Classroom	7	8
Interdisciplinary Teaming	78	48
Disciplinary Teaming	4	7
Departmentalized Instruction	11	35

- Language Arts presented as typical of core content areas of Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Grade 7 presented as typical of middle level grades.
- Principals reported actual percentages taught in these formats...these are the averages of the percents reported for each school.
- Students in Highly Successful schools significantly more likely to receive instruction in the core content areas via interdisciplinary teaming than in typical schools.

Organizational Format for Delivery of Exploratory (Non-Core) Curriculum

	Highly Successful		National Sample	
	Grade 7		Grade 7	
	Required	Elective	Required	Elective
Self-contained Classroom	6	9	10	12
Interdisciplinary Teaming	35	22	15	17
Disciplinary Teaming	2	1	6	5
Departmentalized Instruction	33	46	63	64

- Grade 7 presented as typical of middle level grades. Principals reported actual percentages taught in these formats...these are the averages of the percents reported for each school.
- Required exploratory (non-core) courses delivered equally in teaming and departmentalized approaches in the Highly Successful middle level schools;
- Elective exploratory (non-core) courses delivered most often in departmental formats.

Grouping of Students by Academic Ability

	Highly Successful	National Sample
No form of grouping by academic ability	17	15
Students grouped into specific classes by academic ability (e.g., reading or math)	61	72
Students not grouped into specific classes by academic ability but teachers group within classes	23	13

- Grouping by academic ability into specific classes less common in Highly Successful schools.
- Grouping by academic ability by teachers within the teacher's classrooms more common in Highly Successful schools.

Gifted and Talented Programs

	Highly Successful	National Sample
No gifted/talented program	9	16
Released time for special classes	49	45
Heterogeneous classes with individualized assignments	46	35
Clusters of gifted/talented students in heterogeneous classes, with individualized assignments	36	26
After school, evening, or weekend programs	24	22
Summer programs	14	6
Cooperative program with another school/organization	8	8

- Students in Highly Successful schools are more likely to have access to G/T programs.
- All of the varied forms of delivery of G/T programs were more common in Highly Successful schools.

Multi-Year Instruction (Looping)

	Highly Successful	National Sample
Multi-year Looping Practiced in Some Format	20	15
Multi-year Looping Not Practiced	80	85
Formats of Looping if Practiced:		
All grade levels, all students involved	8	4
All grade levels, only some students at each grade level involved	10	5
Some grade levels only, all students at those levels involved	2	6

- Looping more common in Highly Successful Schools
- Looping all students in the school twice as common in Highly Successful schools.
- Looping some students in each grade level most common form of looping.

Educational Technology

Type of Educational Technology	Used by Teachers		Used by Students	
	Highly Successful	National Sample	Highly Successful	National Sample
No educational technology used in our school	0	< 1	0	1
Internet support of instruction (internet used to obtain information for reports and projects)	90	91	88	90
Computer-assisted instruction	83	89	84	91
Electronic mail	83	81	64	64
Media-enhanced project demonstrations	79	74	87	81
Educational television channels/programs	74	68	71	69
Computer-managed instruction	59	56	58	61
Web pages for courses	64	47	N/A	N/A
Internet-based instruction (web-based coursework)	45	37	44	38
Interactive video (within school)	31	26	28	26
Media-enhanced exit performances	24	18	35	24
Distance education (remote access combining several technologies)	17	17	14	16
Interactive video (remote access)	10	9	13	8

- Nearly every school uses technology in some form.
- Highly Successful and Typical schools use Internet equally to obtain learning information.
- Electronic mail used similarly in Highly Successful and Typical schools.
- Web pages for courses used more frequently in Highly Successful schools.
- Media-enhanced exit performances much more common in Highly Successful schools.

Assessment Practices

	Highly Successful	National Sample
Student Projects	19	11
Essay Tests	13	12
Demonstrations to Peers	11	8
Portfolios	10	7
Mastery Checklists	7	4
Demonstrations to Adults	6	4
Multiple-Choice Tests	16	22
Short-Answer Tests	14	13
Fill-in-the-Blank Tests	9	10
Matching Tests	7	9

- Authentic, higher-order, engaged, demonstration forms of assessment more common in Highly Successful schools.
- Traditional forms of assessment more common in National Sample schools.

Percent of Students Retained in Past Year by Grade

% Retained	Grade 5		Grade 6		Grade 7		Grade 8		Grade 9	
	HS	NS	HS	NS	HS	NS	HS	NS	HS	NS
0 %	73	64	61	44	51	39	63	43	75	38
1-2 %	20	28	30	39	40	39	23	39	25	43
3-4 %	7	2	4	7	4	10	6	8		10
5-10 %		5	6	9	5	10	6	8		8
>10 %		2		1		1	1	1		1

HS: Highly Successful

NS: National Sample

- **At every grade, Highly Successful middle level schools retain significantly fewer students.**
- **Students are more likely to be retained at grade 7 in Highly Successful schools than in other grades.**
- **Students in the National Sample of schools are more likely to be retained in grades 7 or 9.**

Elementary to Middle Level Transition Practices

	Highly Successful	National Sample
Middle level counselors/administrators actively solicit information about incoming elementary students who may be at risk academically or socially	98	81
Incoming students come to middle school in spring of prior year for orientation activities	89	81
Activities or events specifically designed for parents of incoming students are implemented	89	74
Middle level counselors go to sending school to meet/work with incoming students	86	72
When incoming students come to middle level school for orientation, current students play significant roles in the process	77	58
Current middle level students go to the sending school to meet/orient incoming students	64	43
Incoming students come to middle level school in the fall without older students present for orientation activities	44	37
When incoming students come to middle level school for orientation, counselors conduct orientation process without significant assistance from teachers or students	19	26

- Highly Successful schools are more likely to implement transition programs into the Middle Level grades.
- Highly Successful schools also more likely to implement transition programs out of Middle Level grades.

Comparison of Co-curricular Programs and Intramural Sports For Grade 7

	Grade 7	
	Highly Successful	National Sample
Student Government	91	86
Student Clubs	84	71
Music Groups	77	58
Service Clubs	76	58
Drama	74	54
Publications	71	55
Mini Courses	33	20
Honor Society	33	33
Intramurals Sports	70	54

- Highly Successful schools significantly more likely to have Co-curricular and Intramural programs for their students.

Interscholastic Sports in Grade 7

	Highly Successful		National Sample	
	Grade 7 Boys	Grade 7 Girls	Grade 7 Boys	Grade 7 Girls
No Interscholastic Sports	15	14	14	14
Have Interscholastic Sports	85	86	86	86

- No difference in the presence of interscholastic sports in Highly Successful and National Sample schools.

At What Grades Should More Emphasis be Placed on Intramurals than on Interscholastic Sports?

	Highly Successful	National Sample
Grades 5-6-7-8-9 (All Middle Level Grades)	37	39
Grades 5-6-7-8 (Grades 8 and below)	11	6
Grades 5-6-7 (Grades 7 and below)	12	15
Grades 5-6 (Grades 6 and below)	39	36
Grade 5 (Grade 5 only)	0	4

- Very little differences in the thinking of principals in Highly Successful and Typical Schools about what grades to begin to emphasize Intramural Programs more than Interscholastic Sports.
- Nearly half of the principals believe Intramurals should be emphasized more than interscholastic sports at grades 8 and below.