

# Alternative School Administration Study

Jefferson County Public Schools

Leading Educational Achievement in Districts (LEAD), a Wallace Foundation initiative

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Date: October 11, 2005

The Wallace Foundation asks its grantees to identify and remove barriers that keep principals from more effectively advancing student achievement gains for all students. The Alternative School Administration Study (ASAS), begun during the 2003-2004 school year, addresses *the question of time*. Does the principal have the time to be an effective instructional leader or do management duties take precedence? Is the principal's job "doable" as currently defined? Specifically, the study attempts to answer five questions:

- 1) Can management duties be separated from the elementary principal's job?
- 2) Can a School Administration Manager (SAM) take on management duties successfully?
- 3) Will the principal spend more time on instructional improvement?
- 4) Will this focus on instruction improve relations with teachers?
- 5) Will student achievement increase at a greater rate?

The study established a job description for School Administration Managers (SAMs) requiring business management, rather than education, preparation. Responsibilities of the SAM include all school administrative work not directly connected to instruction, or student learning. Most importantly, the SAM is charged with ensuring that the principal is able to spend the majority of his/her time on activities connected with instruction and student achievement.

Specific duties include: budget, student behavior management, student supervision, scheduling, cleaning, maintenance, food service, transportation, before and after hours use of the school, supervision of non-instructional staff and tracking principal use of time.

Questions 1-4 have been answered *in the affirmative* by the study, using time/task data collection shadowing and surveys of parents, students and teachers. Results, addressed in prior reports, are summarized at the end of this document. (Addendums A, B, C)

This report addresses the fifth question, impact on student achievement, by using Kentucky’s Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS). CATS is a series of annual measures, including standardized and criterion referenced tests, designed to track each school’s progress toward proficiency. CATS uses a 140 point scale with all schools intended to reach 100, or proficiency, by 2014. Goals which address gap closure and reduction of “novice” performing students are also set for each school. Scores are released by the Kentucky Department of Education in late September each year.

*Did the three schools increase the rate of improvement, or gain, on CATS?*

**Yes.** To answer this question we look at each school’s CATS Accountability Index average point gain data prior to 2004\* and compare it with 2005:

School	Point Gain Trend	05 Point Gain	Increase
Blue Lick	3.1	6.2	100%
Cochran	2.1	4.4	110%
Fern Creek	1.9	4.6	143%

\*trend is the average annual gain for five years (1999-2003)

School	Accountability Index Score									
	1999	00	99-00	01	02	01-02	03	04	03-04	2005
Blue Lick	50.8	52.8	51.8	53.9	59.6	56.8	62.8	65.2	64.0	70.2
Cochran	51.8	51.6	51.7	55.8	54.8	55.3	60.4	63.0	61.7	66.1
Fern Creek	76.9	76.6	76.8	79.9	84.1	82.0	84.2	93.2	88.7	93.3

*Did the three schools outperform the district and state rates of gain?*

Yes.

District 05 point gain (all elementary schools)	3.0
State 05 point gain (all elementary schools)	2.7

School	05 CATS Point Gain	increase over district	increase over state
Blue Lick	6.2	107%	130%
Cochran	4.4	47%	63%
Fern Creek	4.6	54%	71%

*Did the three schools make progress in closing the racial/ethnic achievement gap?*

Yes. All three schools reduced racial/ethnic performance gaps. Cochran eliminated its racial performance gap.

<b>Cochran</b>	2003		2005	
	White	AA	White	AA
Reading	62.3	60.5	65.6	76.9
Science	66.3	63.7	54.5	67.1

Math	53.7	48.9	56.0	71.1
Social Studies	58.0	53.0	67.6	83.1
Practical Living	59.9	61.5	69.1	82.1
Arts/Humanities	32.4	32.3	42.5	69.1

	2003	2005
Reading	21	-6
Science	27	-4
Math	35	-11
Social Studies	28	-4
Practical Living	20	-10

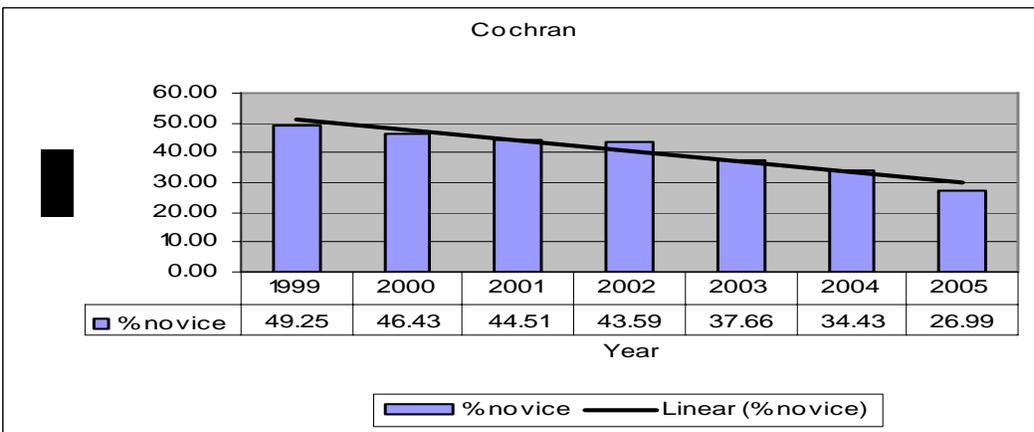
AA= African American

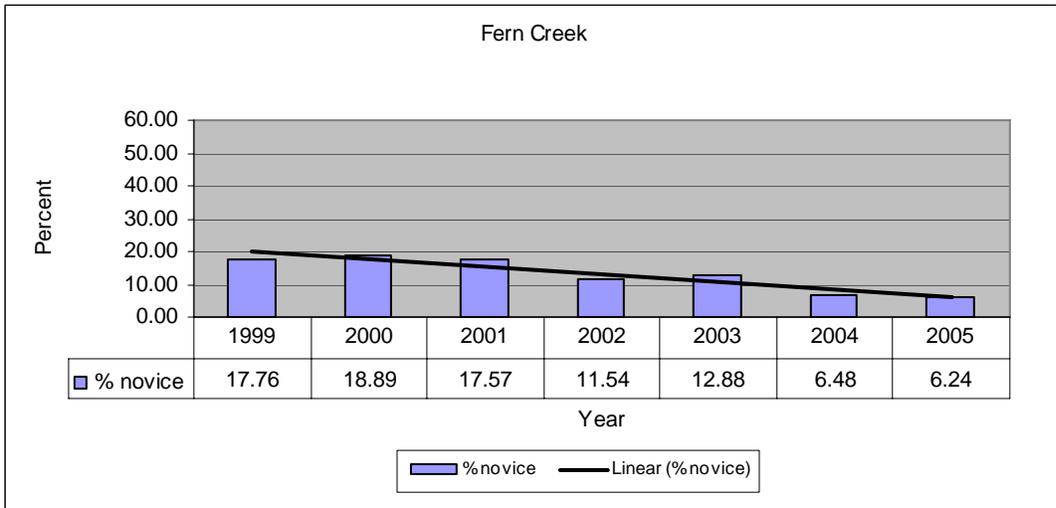
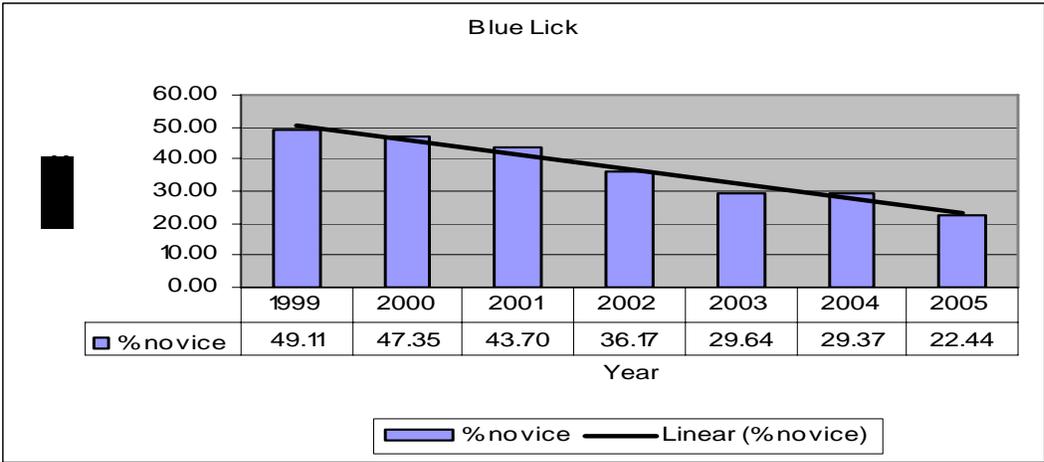
Did the three schools make progress in reducing the percentage of “novice” performing students? (*overall KPR*)

Yes.

School	Percent Novice, 03	Percent Novice, 05	Percent Novice point decrease
Blue Lick	30%*	22%	<b>-8</b>
Cochran	38%	27%	<b>-11</b>
Fern Creek	13%	6%	<b>-7</b>
District	29%	22%	<b>-7</b>
State	23%	18%	<b>-5</b>

-percentages are rounded





**Pilot School Demographics (2004-2005 school year)**

School	# of students	% Black	Federal Lunch Program	Mobility Rate	Special Ed.
Blue Lick	541	22.2%	67.3%	7.6%	14.4%
Cochran	409	50.9%	89.3%	15.4%	11.4%
Fern Creek	822	27.3%	29.9%	3%	10.5%
District(K-5)	46,536	37.2%	61%	9%	14.3%

## ***Conclusion and Lessons Learned***

All three schools increased the rate of academic achievement gain with the School Administration Manager model. All three schools outperformed the district, Jefferson County Public Schools, and the state of Kentucky's rates of gain. All three schools made significant progress on gap closure with one school eliminating the racial academic achievement gap.

Five major lessons have been learned:

### ■ ***Time is a barrier***

The most important lesson that has been documented by ASAS is that principals do not have enough time to provide the highest quality of instructional leadership when operating in a traditional school structure. When a majority of the day is spent dealing with managerial tasks it is not possible to make instructional leadership the priority. ***Interrupt driven*** best describes the minute by minute life of an American school principal. This is nothing less than a dysfunctional situation for leadership. Much anecdotal data exists that supports this claim. ASAS provides scientific time/task data that proves that time is a major barrier for principals as schools are currently organized.

### ■ ***Data, Data, Data***

Nothing changed until the SAMs took over scheduling principal time and reporting each week on progress. The three pilot school principals agree that it was the data that made the difference in changing the way they used time. "It was the hardest and best thing I ever did." Said Principal Cindy Adkins. This illustrates how hard it is to change behavior and the great reward for doing so. ASAS confirms that educators must use data about their own practice, not just their students', in order to make significant change.

### ■ ***Professional Development***

Professional development for the SAMs was necessary and was also critical for the principals. All six leaders meet regularly in the study and participated in focused professional development. This time centered on reflection and how to

best increase the amount of time spent on instructional activities. The professional development sessions allowed principals to concentrate on communications skills, an areas sorely lacking in university preparation. Principals who are asked to deeply engage teachers about practice must be adept at working with people in a positive manner. These skills are necessary if principals are to develop and lead professional learning communities of teachers.

### ■ *Principals can change their own behavior*

Although difficult, each of the principals was able to overcome past practice and routine and change behavior. Reviewers of the original ASAS study design correctly tagged this issue as the most challenging. Pilot principals have expressed the sense of responsibility they have had for making the change from a manager to a learning leader. Anecdotally, there appear to be far fewer immediate rewards for principals who make the change. A principal dealing with management issues all day receives frequent positive feedback. “*Thanks for getting the pencil sharpener fixed.*” and “*Thanks for watching my students on the playground.*” are immediate rewards for a principal-manager. It takes longer for teachers to develop similar appreciation for curriculum, assessment and instruction assistance. The principal-learning leaders at the three pilot schools, however, have established a much deeper relationship with and appreciation from teachers as evidenced by survey data.

### ■ *Students, parents and teachers appreciate the difference*

It was remarkable to hear parents, students and teachers report appreciation for the pilot principals’ focus on instruction. The fact that this was noticed by all three groups is impressive. The fact that it was appreciated and resulted in near immediate improvement in instruction and learning gains is remarkable.

### ■ *Affordable, sustainable*

The SAM model is affordable. The average Louisville principal earns over \$90,000 each year. SAMs earn an average of \$30,000 each year. Policy makers would be hard pressed to find a less expensive way to improve principal effectiveness. The pilot school’s decision making councils have discussed covering the cost of the SAM by reallocating existing resources if grant money was unavailable. The fact that the new structure had such a visceral impact after one year is notable. Sustainability will be best measured at the study’s

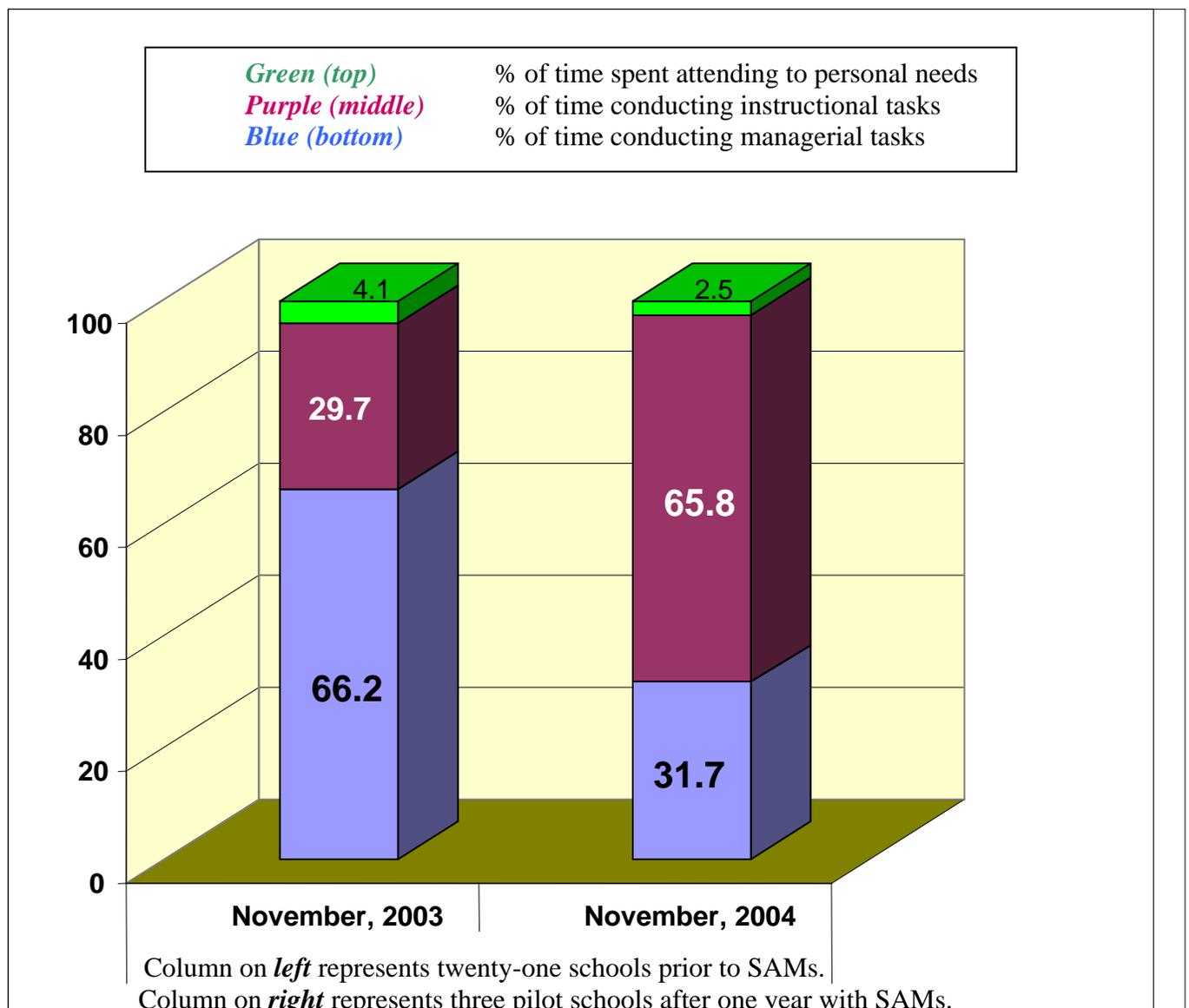
conclusion, October, 2007, by comparing CATs gains over time at the three schools.

#### Upcoming Study Events:

1. Time/task shadowing at the three pilot schools will be repeated in November, 2005 and November 2006.
2. Teacher surveys at the three pilot schools will be repeated in January, 2006 and January, 2007.
3. Parent interviews at the three pilot schools will be repeated in January, 2006 and January, 2007.
4. Student interviews at the three schools will be repeated in January, 2006 and January 2007.
5. Project may be expanded to eighteen additional schools in Louisville and twelve schools in other parts of Kentucky. (2006-2007 school year)
6. CATs (test score) analysis will be repeated in September, 2006 and September, 2007.
7. An analysis of teacher evaluations will be completed in March, 2007 comparing the three pilot schools with other district schools (random selection).
8. In depth interviews will be conducted with SAMs, principals and selected teachers at the three pilot schools in April, 2007.

## Addendum A: Principal Time/Task Analysis

Baseline data was established in 2003 on principal use of time. Twenty-one Jefferson County elementary schools were randomly selected for data collection. Principals in each of the twenty-one schools agreed to be shadowed for one week by data collectors. Data was collected every five minutes separating principal activities/actions that were primarily managerial in nature from those that were primarily instructional.



## Addendum B: Student Perception of Principal's Role

Student perception of the principal's role was established with interviews with sixty randomly selected fifth graders in January, 2004, prior to assignment of School Administration Managers (SAMs). Interviews were conducted a year later, February, 2005, to see if the presence of SAMs and the change of principal use of time impacted student perception.

### *What is your principal's main job?*

<b>Principal's Job</b>	<b>(1/04)</b>	<b>(2/05)</b>
<b>Discipline</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>22%</b>
<b>Safety</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>23%</b>
<b>Manage school</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>Supervise teachers</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>Supervise instruction</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>49%</b>

### *Have you ever had a conversation with your principal? If so, what was it about?*

<b><i>Student interaction with the principal</i></b>	<b>(1/04)</b>	<b>(2/05)</b>
Have you ever had a conversation with the principal? (other than "hello")	39% Yes 61% No	67% Yes 33% No
Discipline related?	65%	27%
Instruction?	35%	73%

## Addendum C: Teacher Perception of Principal’s Role

Teacher perception of the principal’s role was established by using anonymous surveys with all teachers in the three pilot schools in January, 2004, prior to assignment of School Administration Managers (SAMs). Interviews were conducted a year later, February, 2005, to see if the presence of SAMs and the change of principal use of time impacted student perception. Both surveys were administered by Jefferson County Teachers’ Association (JCTA) representatives.

Teacher Surveys, January, 2004	Teacher Surveys, January, 2005
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>57%</b> say principal observed them in the last week</li> <li>■ <b>7%</b> said they received feedback and direction</li> <li>■ <b>72%</b> say they discussed a lesson with the principal in the last week</li> <li>■ <b>64%</b> say principal assists with lesson planning, work analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>82%</b> say principal visited classroom in the last week</li> <li>■ <b>22%</b> said they received feedback and direction</li> <li>■ <b>95%</b> say they discussed a lesson with the principal in the last week</li> <li>■ <b>91%</b> say principal assists with lesson planning, work analysis</li> <li>■ <b>78%</b> say principal is more engaged with instruction</li> </ul>

Parent perception of the principal’s role was established by using anonymous surveys and interviews with randomly selected parents at each school (60) in January, 2004. Surveys and interviews were repeated in January, 2005, to determine if the presence of a SAM and the change in how the principal used time altered the perception of parents.

Parent Interviews, January, 2004	Parent Interviews, January, 2005
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>9%</b> reported having had a discussion about instruction with the principal.</li> <li>■ <b>6%</b> identified <i>student achievement</i> as the primary role of the principal.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>19%</b> report having had a discussion about instruction with the principal.</li> <li>■ <b>45%</b> identified <i>student achievement</i> as the primary role of the principal.</li> </ul>