

Appendix II: Data Request and Interview Protocol for the School Case Studies

The following list includes specific data queries or documents Education Resource Strategies requested from the nine case study schools in order to examine their resource use.

I. Contracts or Documents	✓
Union agreements (teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators) and salary schedule	
Your school improvement plan or strategic plan	
Your school professional development plan	
Your school mission/vision statement	
A summary of the bell schedules/master schedules for your school	
Faculty and student handbooks	
The annual school calendar	
The school organizational structure	
Report(s) of student mobility	
Documents describing budget process and staffing or budget formulas	
Requirements for students' promotion and graduation	
II. Database Requests	✓
School Budget – A line-item by line-item detail of all funds (federal, state, local, and private) in your annual operating budget for your school and associated full-time employees	
Student Database – Detailed grade-by-grade enrollment data, including the total number of students, total students per grade, total number of students under English as a second language, special education, free and reduced-priced lunch, ethnicity and gender, and other relevant data as collected	
Student/School Performance, three-year trend – Performance categories (watch list, high performing, etc.), attendance rates, test pass rates, dropout rates, college-going rates, average SAT scores, expulsions and suspensions, etc. (disaggregated where possible). Please include other disaggregated or value-add student performance data as available.	
Standardized Test Scores, three-year trend – State or district assessment results, (disaggregated by content area, grade level, and demographics wherever possible)	
Course Schedule Data – A snapshot of all of the courses offered in the school, by teacher, enrollment for each class (teacher name, subject name, total students, grade, days met, period, etc.). Special education classes should be included in this file whenever possible, or else reported in a separate file.	
Human Resource Data – The name, ID, job title, active certification subject, type of certification (provisional, probationary, uncertified, etc.), additional certification subject(s), hire date, years of teaching experience (or proxy, if available), salary code, education level (BA, MA, etc.), subject of degree for all teaching staff.	
Payroll Data – A snapshot of the school's payroll data with enough detail that we can separate out how much of each teacher's base salary is for experience, how much for salary credits, and, if possible, how much for fringe and base. Where possible, stipend data should be separated from base salary data or provided in a separate report.	
Special Education Student Data – For each grade level, provide the number of students receiving special education services, listed by type and/or category of disability (resource/mainstreamed, self-contained total, autistic, blind, etc.).	

Interview Questions

The following questions provide an outline of the topics discussed with school leaders during the case study interviews. Each school was unique, but in most cases Education Resource Strategies (ERS) interviewed the principal, assistant principal(s), and instructional coach(es). In addition to the questions listed here, ERS asked clarifying questions that arose from document review and the initial data analysis.

The questions are organized around the school budget and three key resource principles that ERS analyzed: teaching quality, individual attention, and strategic use of time. For more information on the ERS Design Principles, please visit www.educationresourcestrategies.org.

School budget: *In what ways does the school utilize resources to invest in student achievement?*

- Are there funds that the school receives that are not reflected on the budget, such as grants and private donations? If so, how much and how are these funds used?
- What services and activities are at the school but not found on the school budget because they may be funded externally (e.g., substitutes, security, custodians, athletics, social workers)?
- Does your budget reflect any additional start-up or transition costs that you anticipate will not be recurring after the start-up/transition period? If yes, please describe. Are there external funds devoted specifically to start-up or transition activities? If yes, please describe.
- If your school shares a facility with another high school, describe any shared space and costs and the decision-making process. Please detail if you share students or teachers.
- What positions are you required to have by the state, district, or accreditation agency?
- What constraints and challenges exist in state and local education laws and regulations, union contracts, or administrative policies that impact your ability to organize and use resources?
- What partnerships and/or special programs does the school have in place and what do these partnerships provide?

Invest in teaching quality: *In what ways does the school continuously improve teaching quality through hiring, professional development, collaborative time, and job structure?*

- Do teachers have collaborative planning time? If so, please describe teacher grouping, frequency, duration, and purpose.
- Describe the professional development for your teachers:
 - What is the content?
 - When is it offered?
 - How is it funded?
 - How much time is spent on professional development?
 - Do teachers receive a stipend?
- Describe the professional development for the principal.
- How do you provide individual professional development support to each teacher? How do you support teachers new to your school? How do you support struggling teachers?
- Are you able to hire staff to fit school needs in terms of expertise and philosophy? If not, what obstacles do you face in hiring? What is your hiring process?
- Do teachers have the opportunity for additional roles and responsibilities as they become more experienced (e.g., lead teachers, mentors, etc.)?
- How do you evaluate teacher performance?
- To what extent do faculty and staff play multiple roles?
- What is the leadership structure at the school and in what ways is leadership shared?

Use student time strategically: *How does the school use time strategically and link it to student needs?*

- How long is the student school day? How much time does the average student spend on academic subjects each day (math, English language arts, social studies, science, foreign language)?
- Has the school adopted a “theme”? If so, how is the theme integrated into core academic courses? Non-core academic courses?
- What tradeoffs did your school make to create your current schedule? What would your ideal schedule look like?
- Please describe your graduation requirements. Are they proficiency based? How do you monitor student progress toward graduation? Do they differ from the district?

Create individual attention and personal learning environments: *In what ways does the school invest resources to create individual attention and personalized learning environments for all students?*

- How are students grouped and assigned to classes at the school?
- How does the school individualize instruction, assess, and meet particular students' needs? Is the school able to vary class sizes, teacher loads, and sizes of student groups based on educational needs or academic area?
- What supports does the school provide to build relationships between students and teachers (e.g., looping or advisory)?
- How does the school provide special services, such as special education and second language support? What percentage of your students qualify for special education and English language support?