

Appendix E

Sampling Design for the Site Visits

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In our initial proposal, we indicated that we would conduct 25 site visits to schools but did not specify how these schools would be selected. Based on the information gathered during the initial weeks of the evaluation, we have developed a specific plan for selecting the site visit schools.

Purpose

The site visits will be designed to look more closely at some critical components of the reform effort, gathering information in greater depth than can be accomplished through the survey format. We will examine what is happening from the standpoint of the school as a unit, including the viewpoints of multiple players. This will be done through classroom observations and interviews with principals, teachers, other school staff, and others involved in reform efforts such as parents and business partners. The visits will be used to provide information both for addressing critical evaluation questions and providing recommendations for continued refinement of services and strategies.

Sampling Plan

A purposive sample will be used to select site visit schools, that is, schools will be selected for particular reasons. A total of 25 schools will be visited. The nine schools that are slated to close and the seven newly named reconstitution-eligible schools will be excluded from consideration as recommended at the Joint Advisory Committee meeting on March 15, 2001. The following criteria will be used to make the sample selection:

- School level (elementary, middle, elementary/middle, high school, special education, and alternative)
- Area (NO, NE, NW, SO, SE, SW, DI, MC, CA)
- Schoolwide reform models (Direct Instruction, Achievement First, New Schools Initiative)
- Other reform initiatives (summer school, after-school programs, full-day kindergarten, and full-day and half-day pre-kindergarten)
- Mentoring programs (BLUM Mentoring, REACT, Teach for America, and Resident Teacher Program)
- Reconstitution eligible
- School performance index (SPI)
- Change index (CI)

Rationale for Chosen Criteria

School Level. Table 1 shows the number of BCPSS schools in each of the categories and the number of schools we propose to select in each category. Since the number of elementary schools is considerably higher than the number of schools at the other levels and the initial reforms were concentrated at the elementary level, we propose visiting the greatest number of schools at that level. In addition, we will look at these reforms in some of the elementary/middle schools that we visit. In total, about half of the schools that we propose to visit serve the elementary grades. Since there are approximately the same number of middle, elementary/middle, and high schools, we propose visiting the same number of each. At the high school level, we propose visiting both the zoned high schools and the city-wide schools, but most of the visits will be to the zoned schools because most of the reform efforts have been directed to them. In addition, we propose to include one special education center and one alternative school in the sample. There are a few schools that serve other grade-level configurations, and we propose excluding them from the sample.

Table 1.—Proposed Site Visit Sample, by School Level

School Level	Number of schools in BCPSS	Number of schools in proposed sample
Elementary.....	97	8
Middle	26	5
Elementary/middle	18	5
High schools - Total	20	5
Zoned.....	12	4
City-wide	8	1
Special education	7	1
Alternative	7	1
Elementary/middle/high	1	0

Area. We propose to visit at least two schools in each of the nine areas (table 2). Since all of the schools in the Direct Instruction area use the Direct Instruction reform model, which is one of the specific reforms we were asked to investigate, a total of three schools will be chosen from this area. Similarly, all of the schools in the Central Administration area participate in whole-school reform models, so at least four schools will be selected from this area. In addition, three schools will be selected from the Southern area because it has two of the three schools that have participated in Achievement First the longest. Three schools will be selected from both the Mid-City and the Northwest areas because they have schools participating in the New Schools Initiative and Achievement First.

Table 2.—Proposed Site Visit Sample, by Area

Area	Number of schools	Number of schools in proposed sample
Northern (NO)	18	2
Northeast (NE).....	21	2
Northwest (NW)	20	3
Southern (SO).....	21	3
Southeast (SE)	19	2
Southwest (SW).....	20	2
Direct Instruction (DI)	17	3
Mid-City (MC)	20	3
Central Administration (CA)	20	4

Schoolwide Reform Models. The schoolwide reforms that we have been asked to evaluate are Direct Instruction, Achievement First, and New Schools Initiative (table 3). To a large extent, this criterion overlaps with area office because the schools with Direct Instruction are in the DI area and many of the schools with Achievement First are in the Central Administration area. Most of the schools selected will be those which have used the reform model for the longest time, so that we will be looking at mature programs.

Table 3.—Proposed Site Visit Sample, by Schoolwide Reform Model

Reform	Number of schools	Number of schools in proposed sample
Direct Instruction (DI)	18	3
Achievement First (AF).....	25	5
New Schools Initiative (NSI).....	5*	1

*One school is both DI and NSI.

Other Reform Initiatives. Other reforms to be evaluated are the summer school and after-school programs and full-day kindergarten, and full- and half-day pre-kindergarten. Except for full-day pre-kindergarten, these programs are available in a large percentage of the schools in the district, so we are providing a minimum number that we propose to visit (table 4). Since we propose to visit eight elementary schools (and five elementary/middle schools), we want to visit at least one school without either a full-day kindergarten or a half-day pre-kindergarten class.

Table 4.—Proposed Site Visit Sample, by Other Reform Initiatives

Reform initiative	Number of schools	Number of schools in proposed sample
Summer school	82	11 at least
After school	139	19 at least
Full-day K.....	73	7 at least
Full-day Pre-K	7	2
Half-day Pre-K	93	7 at least

Mentoring Program. Four mentoring programs have been established by BCPSS. However, they have not been established in many schools. In addition, six schools (excluding one that is closing) have two mentoring programs each. We propose visiting two schools per program (table 5). In addition, we propose visiting one school specifically because it has two mentoring programs.

Table 5.—Proposed Site Visit Sample, by Mentoring Program

Mentoring program	Number of schools	Number of schools in proposed sample
BLUM Mentoring.....	5	2
REACT.....	15	2
Teach for America (TfA).....	11	2
Resident Teacher Program (RTP).....	5	2

Reconstitution Eligible. Approximately 45 percent of the BCPSS schools are reconstitution eligible. However, many of the reforms have been directed at these schools. Therefore, more than half of the schools we propose to visit will be reconstitution eligible.

School Performance Index (SPI). We propose to select schools with a range of SPIs, based on the most recent results available. BCPSS schools will be put into three equal groups (low, middle, and high) based on SPIs for the district. One-third of the site visit sample will be selected from each group. The analysis will be done separately by level (elementary, middle, and high school).

Change Index (CI). We propose to select some schools that have large change indexes in both positive and negative directions.

Selection Priorities

Priorities among the criteria will vary by school level. At the elementary and elementary/middle levels, the criterion receiving top priority is the presence of a whole-school reform model. The second priority will be the presence of other reform initiatives, followed by status as reconstitution eligible, School Performance Index, and Change Index.

At the middle and high school levels, top priority will be if the school has been identified as reconstitution eligible. Second priority will be the presence of other reform initiatives followed by SPI and CI.