



# The Foundations Project

## Fayette County Public Schools

***Building Safe and Productive Learning Environments  
through Schoolwide Instructional Discipline and Support***

Status Report – June 2007

Like a strong foundation in a house, a safe and productive learning environment is the structure that supports student learning. The *Foundations Project*, based on the work of Dr. Randy Sprick and the Effective Schools Research, has been a major initiative of Fayette County Public Schools since 2003. The district-level goal of the *Foundations Project* is to establish a “best practices” network of schools in Fayette County that effectively deals with student behavior and discipline, using a proactive, positive, and instructional approach. Training, coaching, and technical assistance are offered by the district to build skills and capacity of school-based leadership teams, whose focus is then on developing structures for teaching and supporting expected behaviors throughout the school.

Historically, school disciplinary practices have been reactive, which involved waiting until a problem occurred and then reacting by punishing students for behavior infractions. A punitive approach to discipline is problematic in that punishment alone does nothing to explicitly teach students more socially accepted behaviors. Ironically, punitive consequences tend to be least effective for students with the most challenging behavior problems. In some instances punishment can actually reinforce and therefore increase negative behaviors rather than having the desired effect of decreasing or eliminating them.

Positive, proactive discipline plans involve: 1) overtly teaching desired behaviors through a variety of methods; 2) giving more attention to these desired, positive behaviors rather than to negative behaviors; and 3) utilizing consistent, corrective feedback for behavior infractions. Instances of misbehavior are viewed as an opportunity to teach an appropriate replacement behavior, thus shifting the emphasis from punishment to “instructional” discipline.

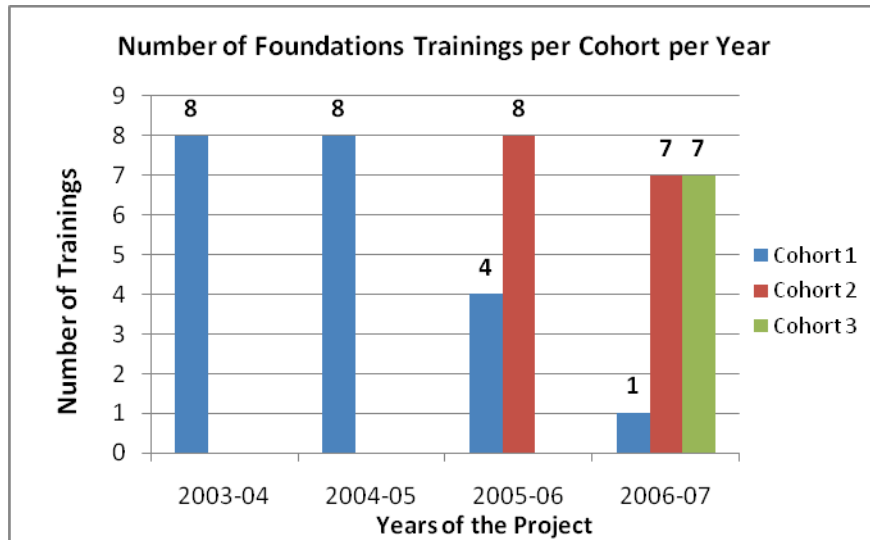
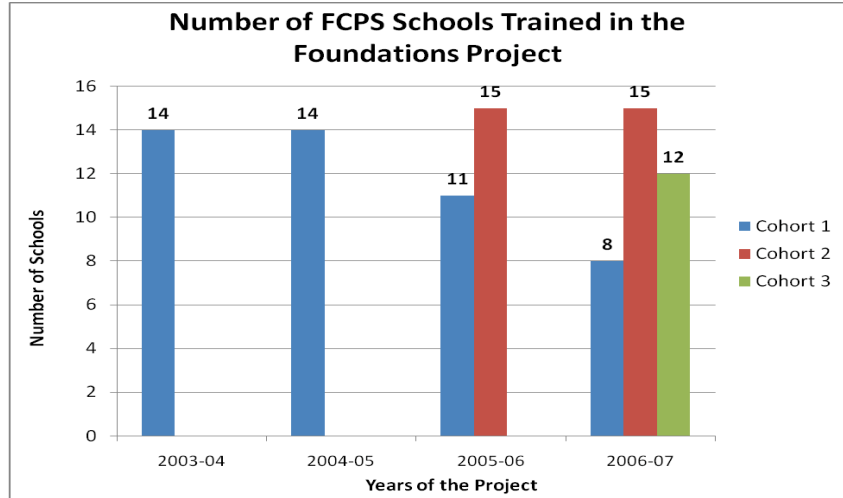
### **Evolution of the Project**

In the mid-1990’s, the Kentucky Department of Education established a Behavior Task Force made up of educators from across the state. One of the recommendations of the task force was that the state set up school-based model programs that demonstrate how to effectively address student discipline and behavior. Ten schools from across the state participated in this Model Schools Project. The Model Schools Project later evolved into the Kentucky Instructional Discipline and Support (*KIDS*) Project, which expanded the Model Schools effort to fifty schools across the state, including four schools from Fayette County. Because of the success of the *KIDS* Project, in 2003 Fayette County Schools, under the direction of then-Superintendent Ken James, Elementary Director Bob McLaughlin and the Safe Schools Office, adopted a similar district-wide initiative – the *Foundations Project*.

### **Details of the Project**

Schools that participate in the Foundations Project receive two to three years of intensive training and technical assistance to help develop effective schoolwide discipline plans. A schedule and description

of the training content through the close of the 2006-07 school year is included in Appendix A. Since the 2003-04 school year, three of five high schools, all but one middle school, and 23 of the 33 elementary schools have participated in this process. Three different cohorts are currently running in the project, with participating schools at varying stages of implementation. Charts showing the years of participation in the project for each cohort and the number of trainings each cohort received per year are shown below.



**Expectations**

Schools who participate in the Foundations Process join in partnership with the district (through the Safe Schools Office) to develop effective schoolwide discipline plans. Expectations for the schools and the district are outlined below.

*School Role and Responsibilities:*

- Develop a school-based team, including a building administrator (administrator attendance is required – one administrator per school commits to being permanent Foundations team member for the year), that will attend regularly scheduled (approximately monthly) district-level trainings and demonstrate active participation at regularly scheduled (at least monthly) on-site school-based team meetings. Building an effective team is a critical first step that, if accomplished

successfully, should lead to long-term school-based management of instructional discipline and support.

- Impart information to staff between trainings by being a regular component of agenda for faculty meetings, newsletters to staff, etc.
- Complete “homework” between trainings including data collection, which includes administering Foundations surveys annually, reviewing office disciplinary referrals on a regular basis and conducting common area observations (at least annually)
- Create school-based materials for schoolwide use and implementation, and develop portfolios or evidence boxes that contain these materials (“artifacts”) to share at the district level.
- Be prepared to report, at least annually, on the status of their school’s schoolwide discipline plan and accompanying data.

#### *District/Safe Schools Office Role and Responsibilities:*

- Facilitate intensive training in schoolwide discipline, which is conducted by nationally recognized experts in the “Safe and Civil Schools” approach to positive behavior support.
- Assist participating schools in developing an effective school-based team comprised of a school administrator, and any of the following: teachers, counselors, school social workers, school psychologists, FRYSC Coordinators, etc., to guide their school through a structured process or “blueprint” for school improvement.
- Provide technical assistance in administering and compiling survey data as well as guidance in data analysis
- Provide financial support for participating schools, including: cost of trainer, training site, printing, Foundations materials (including survey materials), and funding for up to three subs per training per school.
- Provide systemic, district-level support, which includes a Safe Schools Office contact who serves as a “coach” for each school. An additional district-level goal is the formation of a district-level Foundations Advisory Committee to help with integration of Foundations into other districtwide initiatives and priorities.

#### **Anticipated Outcomes**

According to Dr. Randy Sprick, the author of the Foundations materials, the anticipated outcomes from implementing the Foundations process may include:

- Reduction of unnecessary discipline referrals
- Increased staff coordination and consistency when dealing with severe behavior problems
- Improved school climate
- Enhanced school safety
- Improved staff communication and coordination when managing student behaviors
- Increased positive interaction between staff and students
- Improved staff skill in effective supervision and positive behavior support
- Use of data-based decision-making regarding behavior and discipline practices

However, it is important to note that the Foundations Project is not a prescriptive program but a structured process whereby schools use data to make decisions about their specific schoolwide discipline needs. Therefore, schools’ outcomes may vary, depending on their identified and prioritized needs and the subsequent time and resources devoted to those needs. For example, one Cohort 2 school was surprised to learn from their baseline survey data that many of their students did not feel a sense of pride and belonging to the school. That then became a prioritized need for that school and much of their focus for the next year was increasing their students’ sense of pride and belonging. While many schools in the Foundations process will initially target reducing discipline referrals and suspensions, this was not an area of need for this particular school, so their focus lay elsewhere.

## Evaluation Questions

Two essential questions lie at the heart of determining the effectiveness of Fayette County Public Schools' Foundations Project:

1. To what extent are participating schools implementing the components and principles of the Foundations process? (i.e., implementation integrity and fidelity) *and*
2. What impact has Foundations professional development (training and technical assistance) had on the participants and their schools?

## The Model for Evaluation of the Impact of the FCPS Foundations Project

Appendix B illustrates Thomas Guskey's five-level process for evaluating professional development in education. Guskey's model is based on the work of Donald Kirkpatrick, whose four-level model is used for evaluating training in business and industry. Guskey added a new level in the middle of the model, labeled "organizational support and change," when he found that Kirkpatrick's model did not seem to explain why many well-researched professional development efforts failed to yield the intended results. Guskey discovered that things were often done right from a training perspective, but educators were then sent back to organizations not ready or incapable of supporting them in what they had learned, so things broke down at the organizational level.

In brief, Guskey's five levels for evaluating professional development in education are as follows:

1. Participants' Reactions (*Did they like it?*)
2. Participants' Learning (*Did they learn from it?*)
3. Organizational Support and Change (*Is the knowledge gained supported by the system? Did it lead to organizational change?*)
4. Participants' Application of New Knowledge (*Did they use it?*)
5. Results and Student Outcomes (*Did it make a difference?*)

## Application of Guskey's Model

Based on Guskey's work, as described above, the following expected outcomes, measures, and (currently available) results have been identified for Fayette County Public Schools' Foundations Project at each of the five levels.

- *Level 1: Participants' Reactions*
  - **Expected Outcome:** Participants will regularly attend district-level trainings and report satisfaction with delivery and utility of training content.
  - **Measured by:** Formal and informal evaluations administered following trainings
  - **Evaluation Results:**

## EVALUATION RESULTS – LEVEL 1

### What the Data Says

*Results of Participant Feedback Surveys indicate the following:*

#### Cohort 1:

- **98% of participants report being satisfied or very satisfied with the training provided by the Foundations Project**
- **87% of participants report being satisfied or very satisfied with the technical assistance they received from the Foundations Project**

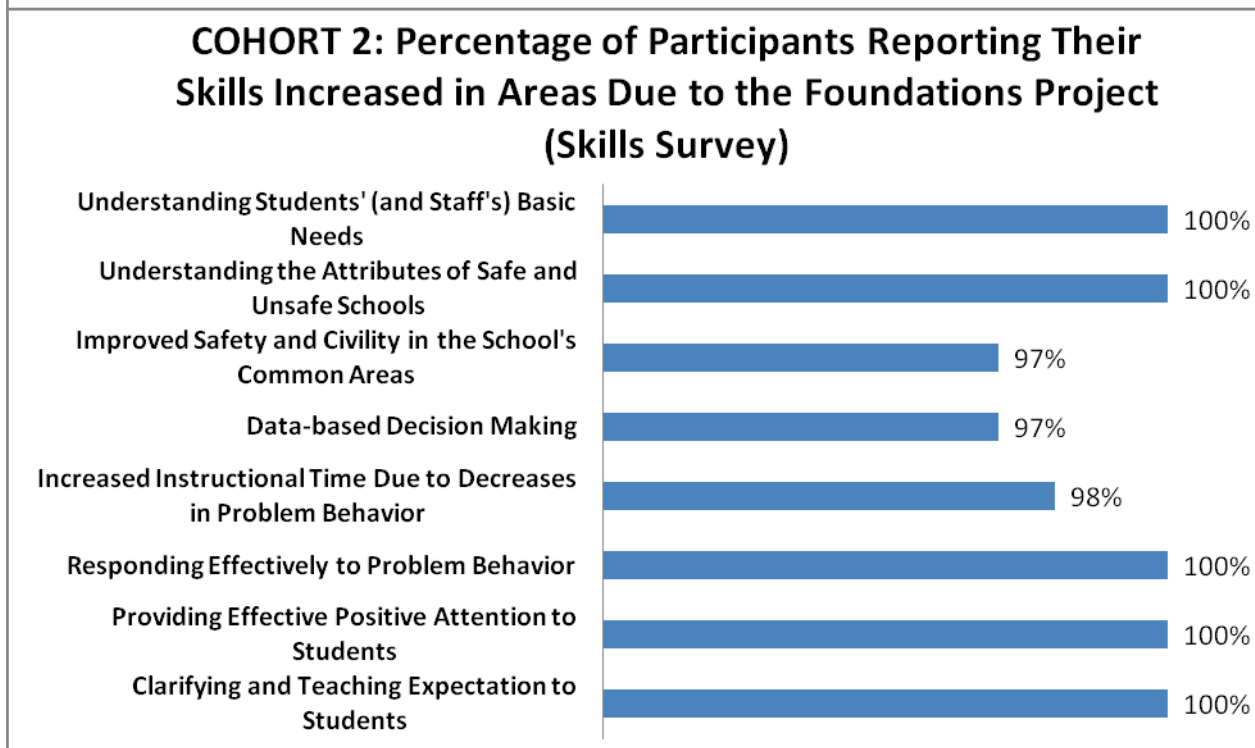
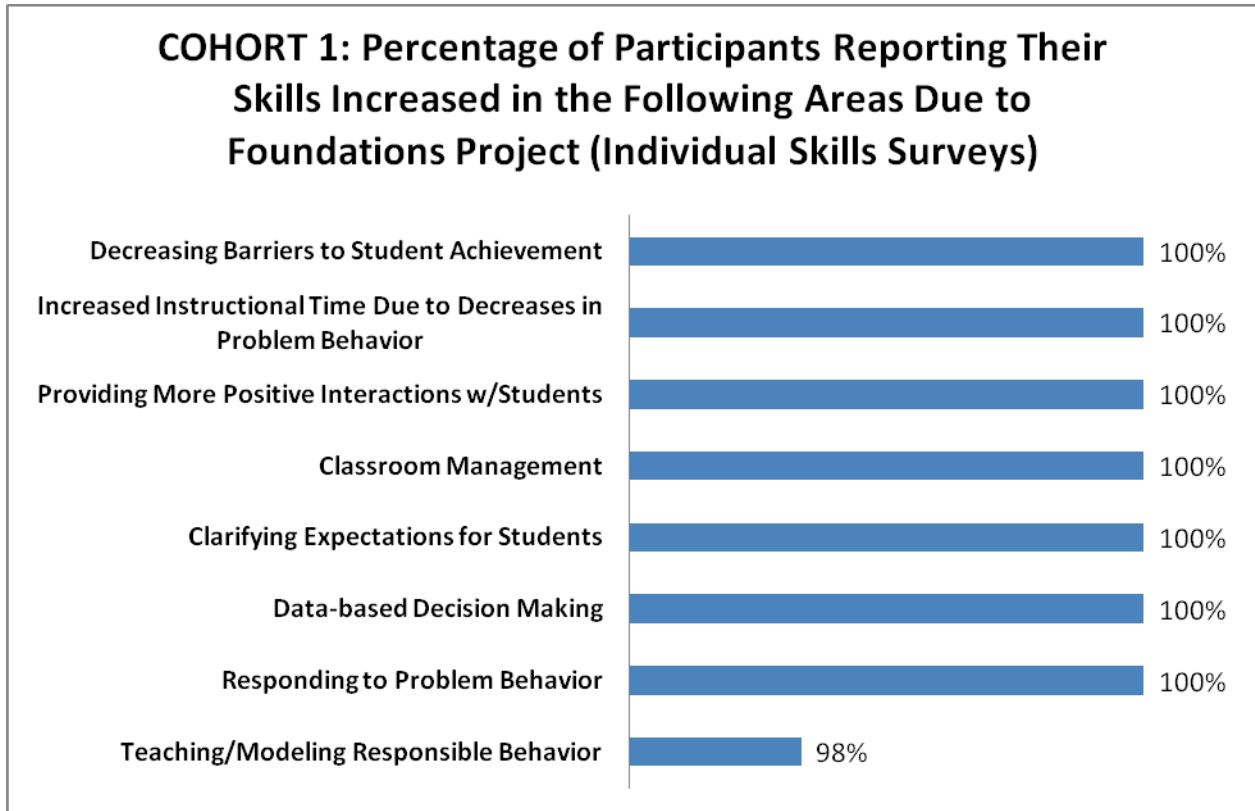
#### Cohort 2:

- **100% of participants report being satisfied or very satisfied with the training provided by the Foundations Project**
- **87% of participants report being satisfied or very satisfied with the technical assistance they received from the Foundations Project**

### What the Participants Say

- *“It (the Foundations Project) has been wonderful. It has helped us know how to get the school focused and excited about creating a safe, civil, and productive school.”*  
(Elementary PSA)
- *“The (district-level) support is extremely helpful. A quick email/phone call and you can receive honest answers, helpful information, and resources that our school might not have.”*  
(Middle School Teacher)
- *“Excellent opportunity for professional development – it gives you the time and resources for reflecting on the effectiveness of your practices. Susan Isaacs is great and a real asset. She amazes me; she has such a gift. She’s been there and she knows what she’s talking about.”* (Elementary Principal)

- *Level 2: Participants' Learning*
  - **Expected Outcome:** Participants will acquire knowledge and skills about behavior management and schoolwide discipline.
  - **Measured by:** Pre- and post-tests designed to assess participants' knowledge of training content and successful completion of content-specific "homework" activities.
  - **Evaluation Results:**



- *Level 3: Organizational Support and Change*
  - **Expected Outcome:**
    - District-level: Recognition and ongoing support of the Foundations Project or similar schoolwide instructional discipline approaches will be evident across the district.
    - School-level: Participating schools will develop and implement clear policies and procedures for staff regarding instructional discipline and managing student behavior. Participating schools will develop and sustain an effective school-based team, including an actively participating building administrator, whose purpose is to continually monitor schoolwide safety and instructional discipline issues. Participating schools will report positive gains in staff, student, and parent perceptions of school safety and student-school “connectedness” (i.e., improved school climate); staff members will report improved consistency, coordination, and communication across the school regarding managing student behaviors.
  - **Measured by:**
    - District-level: Inclusion of Foundations or other instructional discipline approaches in the Consolidated District Improvement Plan, the One Community/One Voice Action Plan, and other district plans.
    - School-level: staff handbooks; annual Foundations Surveys; direct observations; Foundations Implementation Rubric (FIR)
  - **Evaluation Results:**
    - District-Level:
      - Component G of the Foundations Implementation Tool (FIT) assesses district-level support as a factor of organizational support for the project. The majority of both Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 schools scored high on this component, indicating the availability of both a district-based liaison (typically a Safe Schools Specialist) and monies for positive behavioral support activities. In addition, Appendix C illustrates two action items related to Foundations that are included in Fayette County Public Schools’ current (2006-2008) District Improvement Plan. Also included in Appendix C are recommendations from the Ad Hoc Discipline Subcommittee section of the One Community/One Voice Action Plan. This plan was the predecessor of the current District Improvement Plan and cites the Foundations Project as a vehicle for schools to develop and implement schoolwide instructional discipline strategies.
    - School-Level: Evidence of school-based organizational support and change, as a result of the Foundations Project, is outlined in the table below.

## Evidence of School-Based Organizational Support and Change (Level 3)

<b>Indicators:</b>	<b>Perceived impact on the school as an organization</b>	<b>Policies and Procedures regarding Schoolwide Discipline and Managing Student Behavior</b>	<b>Effective School-based Team (which includes an actively participating administrator) that monitors schoolwide discipline issues</b>	<b>Positive gains in perception of School Safety</b>	<b>Improved Consistency by Staff in Managing Student Behavior</b>
<b>Measures:</b>	<i>Structured Interviews with administrators; Comments from Participant Feedback forms</i>	<i>Foundations site visits by district-level personnel</i>	<i>Foundations Implementation Rubric (FIR)-team self-assessment(1/07)</i>	<i>Foundations Surveys</i>	<i>Foundations Surveys</i>
<b>Results:</b>	<p>Participants consistently noted the positive impact of the Foundations Project on their school's culture and climate.</p> <p>Anecdotal remarks can be found in <b>Appendix D.</b></p>	<p>Schools in both cohorts were at widely-varying stages of developing and implementing schoolwide policies and procedures regarding discipline and behavior.</p> <p>Some schools have fully-developed staff handbooks which communicate these policies and procedures, while other schools are only in the beginning stages of this activity.</p>	<p><u>Cohort 1:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 88% (7/8) of teams report having an effective team</li> <li>• 63% (5/8) of teams report having an actively-involved administrator</li> </ul> <p><u>Cohort 2:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 66% (10/15) of teams report having an effective team</li> <li>• 60% (9/15) of teams report having an actively-involved administrator</li> </ul>	<p>Most schools increased perceptions of safety in at least one area of the school.</p> <p>Students at all grade levels overwhelmingly identify the <b>classroom</b> as the area in the school where students feel safest.</p> <p>Elementary-level students identify the <b>playground</b> as the area of the school where students feel least safe.</p> <p>Secondary students are split about half and half between <b>restrooms and hallways</b> as the areas where they believe students feel least safe.</p>	<p>Foundations Surveys indicate that 73% of Foundations schools (for which there is comparative data) have made positive gains in staff perceptions of consistency in managing student behavior.</p>

- **Level 4: Participant's Application of New Knowledge (Implementation)**
  - **Expected Outcome:** Participating school teams will demonstrate effective use of data, including disciplinary referrals, surveys, and observations, to draft school policy and procedures regarding discipline. Participating schools will develop and maintain guidelines for student success, as well as expectations for student and staff behavior in the common areas of the school. Staff will demonstrate skills and increased consistency in articulating and implementing school rules, expectations, and mission regarding behavior and discipline. Staff will demonstrate effective supervision skills in school common areas, skills in effectively correcting minor misbehavior, and proficiency in building positive behavior supports to reduce the probability that students will misbehave.
  - **Measured by:** Posted school expectations/guidelines for student success; minutes/agenda from Foundations team meetings; annual Foundations surveys; direct observations (FIT); structured interviews (FIT); self-assessments (FIR)
  - **Evaluation Results:**

**LEVEL 4: Application of Knowledge/Implementation Indicators**

COHORT 1	Team Attendance Over Time Criterion: 75%	Team Membership Stability Criterion: 50%	Admin Attendance Over Time Criterion: 50%	Team Effectiveness (FIR) Criterion: 75%	Admin Support (FIR) Criterion: 75%	FIR Overall Avg Spring '05 Criterion: 50% Winter '07 Criterion: 70%	FIT General Index Score Spring 2005 Criterion: 70%
Arlington Elementary	83%	50%	67%	75%	50%	55%	66%
Breckinridge Elementary	93%	60%	58%	75%	50%	59%	66%
Deep Springs	87%	83%	70%	75%	75%	56.8%	88%
Harrison Elementary	75%	66%	25%	75%	50%	65.9%	79.5%
J. R. Ewan Elementary	78%	50%	40%	50%	50%	45.4%	84%
Bryan Station MS	85%	73%	90%	75%	75%	50%	82%
Crawford Middle	81%	33%	30%	50%	75%	40.9%	67%
Tates Creek Middle	87%	66%	88%	100%	75%	61.3%	93%
Jessie Clark Middle	94%	100%	95%	50%	75%	61.3%	77%
Paul L Dunbar HS	79%	50%	26%	50%	75%	40.9%	59%
Tates Creek HS	98%	83%	100%	100%	100%	65.9%	70%

COHORT 2	Team Attendance Over Time	Team Membership Stability	Admin Attendance Over Time	Team Effectiveness (FIR)	Admin Support (FIR)	FIR Overall Avg	FIT General Index Score
	Criterion: 75%	Criterion: 50%	Criterion: 50%	Criterion: 75%	Criterion: 75%	Winter 07	Spring 07
						Criterion: 50%	Criterion: 70%
Ashland Elem	88%	44%	73%	50%	75%	55%	84%
Athens-Chilesburg	80%	50%	40%	25%	25%	28%	67.9%
Dixie Elem	91%	86%	87%	75%	75%	61%	91%
James Lane Allen	91%	63%	93%	25%	75%	58%	87.5%
Johnson Elem	85%	86%	93%	75%	50%	66%	73.2%
Julius Marks Elem	80%	15%	47%	50%	25%	28%	83%
Linlee Elementary	79%	100%	53%	50%	75%	47%	81.4%
Mary Todd Elementary	72%	40%	20%	75%	100%	64%	77%
Russell Cave	62%	50%	13%	75%	75%	94%	85.7%
Southern Elementary	76%	64%	40%	100%	25%	61%	87.5%
Yates Elementary	80%	55%	47%	100%	75%	61%	84%
Edythe J. Hayes MS	93%	100%	71%	75%	100%	89%	87.5%
Lexington Traditional	77%	71%	27%	75%	25%	53%	67%
SCAPA Bluegrass	83%	100%	33%	75%	25%	31%	73.2%
Southern Middle	90%	66%	93%	75%	100%	78%	88%

\*suspensions in elementary schools are too small to assess significant changes  
Notes: Shading indicates significant progress. FIR = Foundations Implementation Rubric.  
FIT = Foundations Implementation Tool.

- **Level 5: Results and Student Outcomes**
  - **Expected Outcome:** Students will report increased affiliation with school. School records and other data will reflect reductions in classroom disruptions, overall office discipline referrals, and in-school and out-of-school suspensions. Increases in classroom instructional time, student attendance, and student achievement will be noted.
  - **Measured by:** Structured interviews with students and staff; annual Foundations surveys; office referral data; student achievement data; other student and school records.
  - **Evaluation Results:**

## LEVEL 5: Student Outcomes

COHORT 1	Academic Index  Index Change Since Beginning Foundations  District Change over same period: +5.1	Days Suspended  Percent Change Since Beginning Foundations
Arlington Elementary	+17.7	*
Breckinridge Elementary	+21.9	*
Deep Springs	+6.9	*
Harrison Elementary	+14.3	*
J. R. Ewan Elementary	+7.3	*
Bryan Station MS	+6.1	4.5% reduction
Crawford Middle	----	46.5% increase
Tates Creek Middle	----	.5% reduction
Jessie Clark Middle	+4.8	24.7% reduction
Paul L Dunbar HS	+.4	4.4% reduction
Tates Creek HS	+7.1	36.1% reduction

\*Suspensions in elementary schools are too small to assess significant changes  
 Note: Shading indicates significant progress

COHORT 2	Academic Index	Days Suspended
	Index Change Since Beginning Foundations	Percent Change Since Beginning Foundations
	District Change over same period: +1.2	
Ashland Elementary	+12.0	*
Athens-Chilesburg	+13.7	*
Dixie Elementary	+13.8	*
James Lane Allen	+9.8	*
Johnson Elementary	+3.2	*
Julius Marks Elementary	-2.3	*
Linlee Elementary	-4.1	*
Mary Todd Elementary	+9.3	*
Russell Cave	-5.1	*
Southern Elementary	+1.8	*
Yates Elementary	+5.3	*
Edythe J. Hayes MS	+7.7	45.5% reduction
Lexington Traditional	-5.2	60% reduction
SCAPA Bluegrass	+8.7	20% reduction
Southern Middle	-1.1	70% reduction

\*Suspensions in elementary schools are too small to assess significant changes  
Note: Shading indicates significant progress

## Level 5 – Anecdotal Remarks

*Elementary Principal:* “We had a 12-point gain in test scores last year. We don’t know if we’ll do that again but we do believe that, because of Foundations and CHAMPs, we are keeping children in the classroom and not missing instruction.”

*MS Principal:* “I feel like our test score increase last year....Foundations was totally responsible. It’s the only thing we did differently.”

*MS Principal:* “Because of the structural changes we made through Foundations (fewer and staggered transitions) and fewer suspensions, we have kids in class more and more instructional time. Our learning checks and PASS scores indicate our KCCT scores will be up this year.”

*Elementary FRC Coordinator:* “Improved climate and behavior management has lead to improved academics.”

*Elementary General Ed Teacher:* “Students have an increased sense of ownership at our school. “

*Elementary PSA:* “Improving the climate and culture in our school has made our staff and students more focused on academics. Less disruptions = more teaching time. “

*Elementary General Ed Teacher:* “The improved climate has left more time for teaching, which has increased our test scores. “

*Elementary Special Ed Teacher:* “We are meeting kids’ needs (social, emotional, basic) so they can be available to learn. “

*Elementary School Counselor:* “Our schoolwide initiatives have increased student achievement by adding motivation and fun. “

*Elementary School Counselor:* “Our school environment is much calmer which supports academics.”

## Implementation Issues

Several issues arise when attempting to assess the efficacy of any prevention or intervention efforts within the fields of education, mental health, social psychology, etc. Inherent in the very nature of the concept is the improbable task of trying to measure the absence of something, such as measuring the violent incidents that **didn’t happen**, as well as the degree to which those incidents didn’t happen due to a particular set of changes that were made.

One consideration is the methodological aspect of evaluating how well a program has been implemented. Researchers in this area advise that issues of acceptability, adherence and integrity of interventions are critical in the process of assessing effectiveness. Briefly, *acceptability* is whether a program or intervention is judged to be reasonable, appropriate and fair to the target audience. This concept has also been referred to as social validity. *Adherence* concerns the willingness of the participants to engage in certain behavior changes and to continue interventions to their completion. *Integrity* refers to whether an intervention is implemented as designed or intended. (Best Practices in School Psychology, Zins and Erchul, 2002).

All of these are factors at play when engaging in program evaluation in schools. Adding to this dilemma, particularly when the intervention is a district-wide initiative, is the variation in implementation

practices from school to school, from elementary to secondary, over several years. In any large school district, there are many changes that occur, both in personnel and philosophy, over the course of 4-5 years. Fayette County Schools is no exception. For example, from the inception of the Foundations Project in 2003 to present, we have experienced a myriad of changes: new superintendent, new school board members (only one of the original members remains), new district level administrators (none of the Instructional Directors who were in place when the project began are still in those positions). Thus, from a systems-level perspective, the opportunity to effect systematic organizational change over the life of the project is quite a challenge. Similar changes have taken place in our schools. Of the 14 schools who began in Cohort 1, two no longer exist, several more have experienced significant changes in their enrollment numbers and their student population (individual school information, including enrollment, SES, race, etc. is available in the appendix), and most have had at least one change in building administrators over the years. Cohorts 2 and 3 have experienced similar changes, several with the additional challenge of opening a brand new or “reconstituted” school in a new building during the course of participation in the Foundations Project. Finally, due to issues unique to our middle schools, the majority of our middle schools that began with either Cohort 1 or independently have become part of other cohorts: LTMS joined Cohort 2 along with Edythe J. Hayes Middle School in which the beginning Foundations trainings were done independently; Crawford, Bryan Station Middle and Tates Creek Middle have become part of Cohort 3.

One integral component of implementation is the training itself, which thus far has been kept relatively constant over the life of the project. Training has been delivered monthly by a national expert for the first two years of participation in the project for each of Cohorts 1 and 2 and for 1 year of Cohort 3, with follow-up and /or booster sessions as needed. The “expert trainer” model has allowed the support personnel (from the Safe Schools Office) to provide technical assistance on the training days, with coaching and support delivered on site at the schools during the rest of the school year. It has also kept the content that is delivered during training as consistent as possible, and with the highest possible degree of fidelity in using the Foundations materials and process as it was intended. This is in keeping with several of the tenets of best practices in professional development: professional development as an ongoing process as opposed to a “one shot approach”, providing ongoing coaching, systematic support and feedback to participants as well as opportunities for guided practice and group discussion, training directly connected to the real world of work, regular participation in self-evaluation activities related to professional development, provide regular opportunities to learn from their colleagues both from within and outside of their school, and with the involvement and support of the principal and other key administrators.

On a positive note, in keeping with the ever-changing needs of our schools, we have had the opportunity to experience some different approaches; particularly in the types of support we have been able to offer our teams. Examples of these changes include different coaching models used for team technical support, varying levels of administrative support for the project as well as varying expectations for administrator attendance at the trainings, and a gradual shift in the way schools are selected to participate in the Foundations Project. Hopefully, we have been able to identify variables that appear to impact the implementation of the Foundations Project over the years, and have described several of them in the conclusions section of this document below.

### **Anecdotal**

*Elementary Principal:* “I didn’t want to participate initially but now I could be the poster child (for Foundations). It would help with administrator involvement if directors would send out reminders to principals.”

*MS Principal:* “We know we’ve not fully implemented Foundations but we’re proud of where we are.”

## **Conclusions**

The following are conclusions based upon the information presented in this report, along with the previously stated expected outcomes for the Foundations Project.

### **Level 1: Participants' Reactions**

**Expected Outcome:** Participants will regularly attend district-level trainings and report satisfaction with delivery and utility of training content.

### **Level 2: Participants' Learning**

**Expected Outcome:** Participants will acquire knowledge and skills about behavior management and schoolwide discipline.

- Conclusion:** Based on feedback from over 200 participants during two to three years of professional development, the training delivered through the Foundations Project was clearly considered a success. Not only were the participants' reactions to the training itself extremely positive, over 95% of the participants reported their skills in all areas of behavior management had substantially increased.

### **Level 3: Organizational Support and Change**

#### **Expected Outcome:**

**District-level:** Recognition and ongoing support of the Foundations Project or similar schoolwide instructional discipline approaches will be evident across the district.

**School-level:** Participating schools will develop and implement clear policies and procedures for staff regarding instructional discipline and managing student behavior. Participating schools will develop and sustain an effective school-based team, including an actively participating building administrator, whose purpose is to continually monitor schoolwide safety and instructional discipline issues. Participating schools will report positive gains in staff, student, and parent perceptions of school safety and student-school "connectedness" (i.e., improved school climate); staff members will report improved consistency, coordination, and communication across the school regarding managing student behaviors

- Conclusion:** Data from surveys, self-assessments and structured interviews, as well as from unsolicited testimonials, indicate that the Foundations Project has had a significant impact on many schools' organizational structure; central to that is the issue of climate and culture. This finding is surprising similar to the conclusion of the Kentucky Department of Education, when they revealed that many of the common variance points that set successful schools apart from under-performing schools had to do with issues around school culture. Likewise, when studying eight high performing elementary schools with high percentages of disadvantaged students, the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence found the chief differences between high and low performing schools lie in the areas of academic environment and school culture.

#### Level 4: Participant's Application of New Knowledge (Implementation)

**Expected Outcome:** Participating school teams will demonstrate effective use of data, including disciplinary referrals, surveys, and observations, to draft school policy and procedures regarding discipline. Participating schools will develop and maintain guidelines for student success, as well as expectations for student and staff behavior in the common areas of the school. Staff will demonstrate skills and increased consistency in articulating and implementing school rules, expectations, and mission regarding behavior and discipline. Staff will demonstrate effective supervision skills in school common areas, skills in effectively correcting minor misbehavior, and proficiency in building positive behavior supports to reduce the probability that students will misbehave.

- ☑ **Conclusion:** Effective team functioning, an involved administrator, and an open and positive school climate and culture (ready to accept the research-based practices surrounding the Foundations process) appear highly related to successful implementation (Level 4) and, in turn, positive student outcomes (Level 5). It's important to note, however, that schools prioritize their effort and resources based on their specific school data, so a school that reduces its suspensions dramatically may lag behind in increasing its academic achievement scores.

#### Level 5: Results and Student Outcomes

**Expected Outcome:** Students will report increased affiliation with school. School records and other data will reflect reductions in classroom disruptions, overall office discipline referrals, and in-school and out-of-school suspensions. Increases in classroom instructional time, student attendance, and student achievement will be noted.

#### **Student Achievement Outcomes:**

- ☑ **Conclusion:** After 4 years of participation in the Foundations Project, almost 90% of Cohort 1 schools have Academic Index gains which meet or exceed the district average over the same period.
- ☑ **Conclusion:** After 2 years of participation in the Foundations Project, 67% of Cohort 2 schools have Academic Index gains which meet or exceed the district average over the same period.
- ☑ **Conclusion:** Should the level of training and support continue for Cohort 2 schools to the degree of that for Cohort 1, there is a strong likelihood that Cohort 2 schools will experience the same level of academic achievement gains as Cohort 1 schools.

#### **Suspensions:**

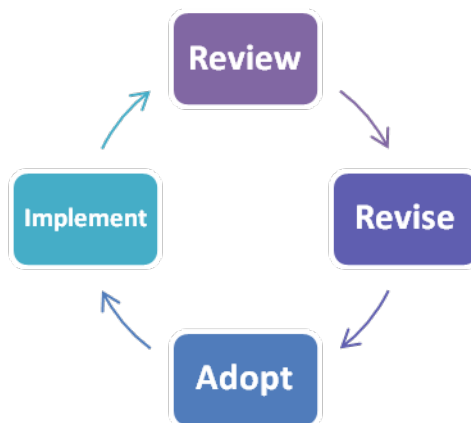
- ☑ **Conclusion:** After participating in the Foundations Project for four years, Tates Creek High School and Jessie Clark Middle School have made striking reductions in the number of days students are assigned to out-of-school suspension. Other schools in Cohort 1 also experienced some reductions.
- ☑ **Conclusion:** After two years of participation in the Foundations Project, all of the secondary schools in Cohort 2 experienced drops in the days students are suspended. Southern Middle School reduced their days of suspension by 70%.
- ☑ **Conclusion:** Because of significant differences from school to school in the ways in which disciplinary incidents and dispositions (consequences) are classified, suspensions are the only useful metric currently available to measure changes in student behavior incidents. And, because suspensions are rarely used at the elementary level, there exists little useful way to quantify changes in behavior incidents at that level.

**Other important outcomes:**

- ☑ **Conclusion:** Currently available data indicates that by reducing suspensions, the secondary schools who have participated in the Foundations Project have gained 1,630 instructional days. These days gained represent increased exposure to classroom instruction for students and therefore increased skills acquisition and student achievement
- ☑ **Conclusion:** While financial costs of a district-wide program like Foundations can be significant, these costs can be offset by considerable dollar savings realized when effective schoolwide discipline systems are in place and when schools have a positive climate. These include:
- ☑ **Conclusion:** Decreasing days of suspension represents significant financial gain to the district by increasing attendance numbers and ADA (average daily attendance) funds.
- ☑ **Conclusion:** Reduced administrative time devoted to office referrals and other disciplinary issues. Conservative estimates suggest it takes an administrator 20 minutes to deal with an office referral. At 20 minutes an incident, a reduction of 500 office referrals per year would yield an additional 10,000 minutes or 166 hours or 20+ days of administrator work time.
- ☑ **Conclusion:** Other possible monetary gains are: fewer students lost to private schools because of perceptions about “unsafe” or undisciplined public schools; a decrease in damages or other monetary payouts stemming from lawsuits related to discipline, bullying, and school culture.

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The old adage, “a woman’s work is never done,” must have been written by a teacher! This surely is never more true than when working in schools, and applies to all educators, male and female. Indeed, it is in this spirit that the Foundations Improvement Cycle illustrates continuous movement within the process:



**Foundations Improvement Cycle**

As we conclude our fourth year of the Foundations Project in Fayette County Public Schools, we appreciate this opportunity to celebrate the progress we have made in achieving our outcomes while enabling us to sharpen our focus on the work ahead.