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The Impact of Gatekeepers on Evaluation Use

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The Impact of Gatekeepers on Evaluation Use

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
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in Education

by

Minerva Avila

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Impact of Gatekeepers on Evaluation Use

by

Minerva Avila
Doctor of Philosophy in Education
University of California, Los Angeles, 2012
Professor Marvin C. Alkin, Chair

By examining the development of a local school reform that was meant to be teacher-driven, this multiple case study explored the limits on evaluation use in a hierarchical setting in which multiple audiences exist. This study was a comparative analysis of the actions and evaluation philosophies of two district administrators responsible for overseeing the same reform at different times. A mixed method approach was employed to analyze secondary data to answer the overarching research question of how evaluation gatekeepers facilitated the use of evaluation findings.

Qualitative data suggested that a myriad of factors influenced the actions taken by each of the directors, whom were identified as the main gatekeepers of evaluation information. The director administering the grant in its last two years appeared to be the most committed to the evaluation and most influential in driving use. This was supported by qualitative data on his administrative style, how he navigated the school bureaucracy, his personal beliefs of the SLC initiative, how he monitored and/or prescribed evaluation use, and the amount of time he dedicated to professional development on evaluation use. Additional factors influencing use were also identified.

Survey data suggested that school organizational structure influenced utilization by potential users. In general, leadership position at the school level influenced evaluation attitudes and awareness. Principals and SLC leaders were the most aware of the evaluation and its findings. While teachers expected principals to be the main users of evaluation findings, principals themselves did not necessarily hold the same expectation of themselves. Use was reported primarily as leading to direct changes to the SLC programs and, secondly, for planning purposes. There were also some minor references to the use of the evaluation findings for generating conversations/discussions.

The findings generated from this multiple case study provide lessons that need further in-depth exploration. The factors identified in this study as the most influential to evaluation use can be studied either individually in simulations or as a group case study. Doing so would bring greater awareness to practitioners about how to encourage evaluation use and, perhaps, greater appreciation for evaluations to stakeholders.

The dissertation of Minerva Avila is approved.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The race to increase student achievement and improve public education has led schools and school districts to live in a constant state of reform (Linn, 2000; Tyack & Cuban, 1995) with multiple initiatives and interventions any given year. Many of these educational initiatives being implemented in schools are sponsored with the help of public and private funds. It is no surprise that accountability requirements, often in the form of evaluation, come attached to those initiatives, in particular to those funded by federal agencies. This is not new as history has pointed out that evaluation demands increased substantially during the 1960s, when programs in education and other social areas increased in numbers (Patton, 1997; Yarbrough et al., 2004) and often came with an "evaluate me" tag (Weiss et al., 2008). However, what has gradually changed since, in the United States Department of Education's (ED) accountability formula, has been a growing interest and focus on evidence-based research in evaluations (Mills, 2008; Donaldson et al., 2008). While the controversy over this emphasis on a particular preferred type of methodology by ED continues to brew (Donaldson and Christie, 2005; Julnes and Rog, 2007), one has to wonder if and how it affects evaluation use at the programmatic level.

Background

ED's culture is one that places value on evaluation. A quick visit to ED's website (www.ed.gov) will shed light on the importance it has placed on program evaluation. The subheading of "Program Evaluation and Performance" can be found under "Research and Statistics," along with what one would traditionally expect to find there: a) Facts and Figures,

and b) Research and Best Practices. Each year, ED produces a performance and accountability report that includes individual performance reports for the programs it funds (http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/evaluation.html). These reports provide comprehensive information about each program, without detailing any one particular grantee. It appears that ED produces accountability reports for quite a number of its programs. ED also supports evaluations of federal education programs.

No one doubts that ED has clearly established that evaluations are important. The question, here, is: to whom are those evaluations important? ED's evaluations and accountability reports seem to be aimed at the public to raise awareness of the educational policies and programs sponsored by the federal government. Other than for legitimizing its own programs, it is unknown if and how ED uses its own evaluations. It is also unclear how the evaluations produced at the grantee level should be used. Grantees are generally required to submit an evaluation report as part of their program's Annual Performance Report (APR). Who is the audience of those evaluations? Is it ED staff or the grantees or the general public? While grantee may understand this requirement and comply with it, it is unknown whether they actually use the evaluation report's findings to improve their programs. Evaluations can easily be dismissed as just a requirement necessary to receive federal funds because, after all, ED has no process in place to monitor if and how evaluation findings are used.

It is very likely that in most cases evaluation findings are indeed used to some extent by grantees, at least one would hope so. The question here is who at the grantee level uses evaluation findings? Shulha and Cousins (1997) note that use of evaluation findings is influenced by complex bureaucratic structures, lines of communication within and across the levels within those structures, and the mechanisms for framing evaluation information. It is no

surprise then if district administrators, being high in the bureaucracy, are more likely to use evaluation findings. As supervisors of the ED grants who often serve as the primary contact for the evaluator, administrators influence the lines of communications with their control of information pertaining to the evaluation. Generally, district leaders play agenda-setting roles and decide which formal data are available to teachers (Young, 2008). They can share information (data) or limit awareness about the program, its evaluation, and the evaluation findings. District leaders are also in the position to be able to monitor use of evaluation findings. Although unintentional, they can limit awareness and use despite the benefits a program may have if those lower in the chain of command, i.e. teachers, learn about and use the evaluation findings. This is especially true when the root of a reform involves curricular changes or is supposed to be primarily spearheaded by teachers. Thus, to be used to its fullest potential, when an evaluation has multiple audiences, it should also have multiple users.

The first step towards achieving evaluation use by a multiple audience is to raise awareness about the evaluation findings. All potential users should be made aware of the evaluation findings because, otherwise, how can they make use of the evaluation? Awareness must take place before use. As one would expect, the same bureaucratic structures and line of communications that affect use also influence basic awareness of programs and evaluations. Again, district administrators play an important role in school bureaucracies as they control the flow of information from the central office to school sites and their staff. If evaluation findings are not reaching teachers, then how can they make programmatic or curricular changes? It is important for all potential users to be aware of the evaluation and make use of the findings. In an era in which schools live in a constant state of reform, it is critical for both administrators AND

teachers to make informed decisions about their programs, especially when millions of dollars and, most importantly, the education of their students are at stake.

Purpose of this Study

This study examined the limits placed on evaluation use in a hierarchical setting in which multiple audiences exist. The goal was to investigate the role of school district administrators in facilitating evaluation use by those who play a pivotal role in education reform: teachers. Administrators should be proactive about reassuring teachers that their opinions do matter and a way to do so is to keep teachers informed about program evaluations, provide opportunities for discussion on evaluation findings, and educate them on how to use evaluation results for program improvement. Doing so may improve teacher morale and may lead to something lacking these days with most education reforms: teacher buy-in.

While it is easy to imagine the benefits of having school administrators engage teachers in using evaluation findings for program improvement, it is difficult to dictate how this should be done. In theory, it seems that district administrators, as gatekeepers[1] of (evaluation) information with the power to call teachers into action, *should* serve as brokers of evaluation use. It is unknown, however, how feasible this is and whether it generally takes place in practice. Could the most enthusiastic and committed administrator succeed in getting teachers to use evaluation findings? If so, what does it take? If not, why not? Does the administrator's level of commitment to evaluation use matter in terms of getting teachers to make decisions based on evaluation findings? Answers to these important questions are needed when attempting to

[1] From this point forward, the term "gatekeeper" will be used to refer to those school district administrators who control access to evaluations.

maximize evaluation use, especially in the context of an evaluation that has multiple intended users.

To address some of the previously mentioned questions, this multiple case study was proposed. Specifically, this is a multiple case study of an evaluation of a school reform initiative at a local school district. This study provides a comparative analysis of the actions and evaluation philosophies of two district administrators responsible for overseeing the same reform at different times. High school staff survey data from three sites, as well as teacher and administrator interview data, was collected and analyzed to answer the overarching research question of how evaluation gatekeepers facilitate the use of evaluation findings. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What were each of the gatekeepers' general perceptions of evaluation? What were the gatekeepers' perceptions of the purpose of their evaluation?

2. How did gatekeepers differ in their interactions with potential evaluation users?

3. During the leadership of each gatekeeper, what were the extent and differences in evaluation awareness and use at the different levels of organizational structure?

    a. What was the extent of use by school site administrators (second level) of potential users?

    b. What was the extent of use by school lead teachers (third level) of potential users?

    c. What was the extent of use by teachers not holding a leadership position (fourth level) of potential users?

4. During the leadership of each gatekeeper, was there variation by school on the extent and differences in evaluation awareness and use at the different levels of organizational structure?

    a. At the second level (school site administrators), did each school share a similar pattern of evaluation awareness and use irrespective of gatekeeper?

b. At the third level (school lead teachers), did each school share a similar pattern of evaluation awareness and use irrespective of gatekeeper?

c. At the fourth level (teachers not holding a leadership post), did each school share a similar pattern of evaluation awareness and use irrespective of gatekeeper?

The goal of this study was to investigate if and how the actions of a gatekeeper contributed to a greater awareness and use of evaluation findings by stakeholders at the lower ranks. The intent of this dissertation was to increase knowledge about the potential influence some primary users (gatekeepers, administrators, lead teachers) have in encouraging evaluation use by teachers. This information could be critical for school administrators as they could learn how to better train leaders so they can engage teachers in using evaluation findings for program improvement and/or to improve their own practice. Maximizing evaluation awareness and use could lead to a greater likelihood of successful education reforms. Evaluators could also benefit from learning about the essential skills gatekeepers need to maximize use of evaluation findings. There are times when gatekeepers limit evaluators' access to some potential users who would benefit from knowing and using evaluation findings. Having a better understanding of a gatekeeper's role could enhance an evaluator's efforts in maximizing use as the evaluator can either work with the gatekeeper to gain access to other potential users or train the gatekeeper to facilitate use among colleagues. Overall, it is critical to know the kind of influence a gatekeeper has on evaluation use.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

To provide a framework for this study, this section will present a review of key literature in the relevant areas pertaining to evaluation use and the policy-making process in bureaucracies. First, however, it is necessary to briefly point out particular aspects of evaluation that served as a foundation for this study. Evaluation in this study refers specifically to program evaluation, defined simply as a systematic inquiry leading to an understanding about a program involving participants (Alkin, 2011). Theorists and practitioners may differ in how they define evaluation but most would agree that an important goal, if not the main goal, is social betterment. Without the actual use of evaluation, however, social betterment cannot take place. Use, therefore, is the manner in which evaluation achieves social betterment (Henry, 2000). Given that education reform was the reason behind the formative evaluation in which this study was based and that, presumably, this reform was for the better good of everyone, it is implied that use must have taken place in order for both reform and social betterment to have occurred. This study, therefore, lied on a theoretical foundation that looked upon use as a major characteristic of evaluation.

A novice unfamiliar with the evaluation field may erroneously assume that evaluations are designed with use in mind. In fact, there are many different theories behind evaluation, as noted by Alkin (2004) in his research on the views and influences of 22 different evaluation theorists. Furthermore, evaluation use in itself is also a broad concept in theory and practice. The definition of use can differ substantially and may depend on the theoretical background and experiences of academics and practitioners. Interest in use first developed in the United States in

the 1960s with the multitude of mandated end-of year evaluations of large social programs. Alkin and Taut (2003) report that at that time, heated discussions surfaced in the evaluation profession over what was meant by the term "use." Today, it is generally understood that evaluation use can be divided into two broad categories: findings use and process use. Findings use has been long established and generally refers to evaluative information, an 'it', that has been systematically collected and utilized (Alkin et al., 1979). Process use, a newer concept, refers to the knowledge gained from participating in the evaluation process itself (Patton, 1997; Hofstetter & Alkin, 2003; Alkin & Taut, 2003).

When use is referenced in this study, it is associated with the older, more established meaning of evaluation use: findings use. This is the case whether the evaluation is formative or summative in nature. Like the other evaluation use concepts already discussed, findings use can also be a broad term with multiple meanings. For example, evaluation findings use can be instrumental or conceptual (Rich, 1977). Instrumental findings use refers to direct action taken based on the knowledge generated by the evaluation, essentially for program decision-making (Leviton & Hughes, 1981; Alkin & Taut, 2003). Conceptual findings use is when no direct actions were taken but conceptual understandings about a program were altered. Furthermore, when evaluation findings are used to legitimize or justify a prior decision, it is said that they served a persuasive (Leviton & Hughes, 1981) or legitimative (Owen, 1999) use. One of the founding fathers of the concept of evaluation utilization, Patton (1997), summarizes these three evaluation findings concepts by stating that evaluation findings can be used to render judgment, for program improvement, and/or to generate knowledge.

After gaining an understanding of what is meant by evaluation use, it is necessary to look at factors that influence when and how use takes place. As previously mentioned, Shulha and

Cousins (1997) noted that use of evaluation findings is influenced by bureaucratic structures, lines of communication within and across the levels within those structures, and the mechanisms for framing evaluation information. Patton (1997) also argues that in the political practice of evaluation, information (i.e. findings) translates to power only for those who know how to use it or are willing to use it. This translation is more extensive in the literature on social research use as it applies to the policy-making process. With respect to that policy research area, Broadhead and Rist (1976) define as "gatekeepers" the "small group of managers and administrators within a formal organization" who screen prospective researchers and control entry or access to the organization and its data. Sundquist (1978) refers to these bureaucrats as research brokers. There is agreement among academics that these individuals have great influence on how social research will be used for the purpose of policy-making (Sundquist, 1978; Boradhead and Rist, 1979; Coburn et al., 2009).

A model presented by Sundquist (1978), which illustrates the transmission of social knowledge from researcher to policy maker, can also be applied to the flow of evaluation findings from evaluator to policy makers. Sundquist argues that in the policy-making process the following three links allow for the movement of social knowledge from production to use:

A B C D
Researcher → Academic Intermediary → Research Broker → Policy Maker

Academic intermediaries (those who process information and deal directly with the producers) and research brokers (those who prepare and present information to policy makers in usable form) are key links in the movement of social knowledge. Similarly in the context of evaluation, the client (academic intermediary) and main contact (research broker) serve a crucial role in

facilitating the evaluator's (researcher) efforts in getting evaluation findings to potential users (policy makers).

In a school district settings, district leaders serve as brokers of ideas, knowledge, research evidence (evaluation findings), and general resources (Burch and Spillane, 2004; Honig, 2006; Honig and Coburn, 2008). Research brokers (program directors or leaders) are primarily responsible for disseminating evaluation findings to the appropriate policy makers, which in most cases are school board members and superintendents but, in some cases, can also be principals and teachers. Sundquist argues that the research broker is the key link in the transmission of social knowledge and, most importantly, its use. Thus, program directors/district leaders play a critical role in both district-wide and school-level reforms (Daly and Finnigan, 2011).

To expand on what Sundquist (1978) reported by explaining the challenges faced by research brokers, Feldman (1989) paints a realistic portrayal of bureaucratic analysts. These individuals generally work in a demanding, highly political and procedurally complicated environment in which tensions often arise from their assigned duties. Many times they work under intense pressure and tight deadlines within an unpredictable context. Currently in school district bureaucracies with even tighter budgets, the constraints placed upon these individuals are even greater.

In school district bureaucracies, it is sometimes difficult to identify the research broker as many times more than one individual is responsible for overseeing programs, initiatives, or reforms. Thus, in a multilevel system with multiple stakeholders, it is essential to identify the hierarchy of key stakeholders to find that gatekeeper of information, that essential research broker, if policy-making (use) is to take place (Guzman and Feria, 2002). Knowing and

understanding the hierarchy may also shed light on the political dynamics that also affect if and how policy-making, evidence-based decisions, including those involving evaluation findings, will be made (Honig and Coburn, 2008). Other external factors that Honig and Coburn found to influence evidence-based decisions in school districts include individual and collective working knowledge; social capital (within and beyond district office); district central office organization; and, institutional norms. These external factors mirror what Shulha and Cousins (1997) pointed out: that bureaucratic structures, lines of communication, and the mechanisms for framing evaluation information influence evaluation use.

While there is an expanding body of research literature explaining how various organizational structures and interpersonal factors affect data-driven decisions at schools, the same cannot be said about the literature on evaluation use. Literature informs us that the intricacies of the bureaucracy (hierarchical structure and lines of communication) affect if and how (norms and framing of evaluation findings) information (evaluation findings) is transferred. But how does actual use take place if findings are indeed shared? Where is the social betterment taking place? Henry and Mark (2003) argue that the evaluation use literature has failed to provide adequate attention to intrapersonal, interpersonal, and societal change processes that explain how evaluation findings translate into steps toward social betterment. Patton (1997) argues that different socialization, education, and experiences affect whether an individual will be a user of information. These factors need to be explored further in practice to study what aspects of socialization or education or experience may encourage or inhibit use. It assumed that these factors would apply to both the higher ranks (school district leaders) and lower ranks (teachers) of a hierarchical school district structure. There is a need for more research to explore if and how district leaders can influence use at the teacher-level. It is important to determine the

extent to which influence on use at the teacher-level is controlled by the gatekeeper or if social structures in it by themselves have that power.

The need to study how gatekeepers influence use at the teacher-level is even more critical now in the era that has experienced a shift to comprehensive school reform (CSR) models. Datnow (2005) report that the CSR movement has changed the notion that reform should develop organically within a school; instead, reform takes place in multiple schools and comprehensively within the whole school. Given the CSR movement, the participation of teachers in implementing change is essential. This is particularly true with the school reform that serves as the context for this study: the Small Learning Communities (SLC) Initiative. SLCs have become popular as the reform seeks to break down large, urban school structures to create smaller units that increase personalization as they give voice to students, teachers, and parents (David, 2008). The five main domains associated with the SLC initiative involve identity, personalization, support for teaching, self-determination, and functional accountability (Cotton, 2001). SLCs are supposed to be heavily supported by teachers, as the goal is to improve academic achievement by breaking down obstacles that hinder communication with colleagues, students, and parents. Furthermore, teachers play a critical role in the reform as they are responsible for developing SLC identity and collaborating with colleagues to make curricular changes to achieve vertical (across subjects within the same grade) and horizontal (across grade levels within the same subject) alignment that enhance the SLC academic or career themes. This makes for an interesting scenario as the SLC initiative is designed as a bottom-up approach in an organizational context in which information (evaluation findings and change) flow from the top down.

Literature pertaining to evaluation, public policy, and school administration informs us that factors affected by organizational structures play an important role in the use of information, research, or evaluation findings. The literature, however, seems to suggest that this is primarily due to an issue of awareness more than anything else. This multiple case study seeks to contribute to the literature by venturing into the unexplored area of specific factors that may influence actual use. How are gatekeepers getting teachers to make use of evaluation findings? Are administrators keeping teachers engaged and informed throughout the evaluation process? Are they, or should they, assist teachers in using evaluation findings? How is social betterment taking place? As previously discussed, we know school districts are highly hierarchical and that district leaders have a direct influence in the dissemination of information, research or evaluations findings. District administrators, as gatekeepers of evaluation information, directly affect evaluation use and, indirectly, social betterment. Therefore, it is critical to know and understand the role these individuals play in either fostering or hindering the potential use of evaluation by those for whom they are the gatekeepers.

CHAPTER 3

Methods

This study was designed to investigate if and how a key contact, a gatekeeper, of an initiative undergoing a formative evaluation, influenced the use of evaluation findings by intended users. In particular, this study sought to examine the manner in which the key contact, as the gatekeeper of the evaluation and its findings, facilitated use. To frame this investigation, I present a multiple case study of an evaluation of a federally-funded Small Learning Communities (SLC) initiative involving three high schools. The data used in this study was collected as part of the formal evaluation conducted by the external evaluator, The ABC Evaluation Group. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to analyze the data. To provide the necessary details to understand the context, data and methods used in this study, this chapter is divided into the following sections: 1) Context: The Site, SLC Initiative, and Evaluation; 2) Procedures and Measures; 3) Subjects; and 4) Data Analysis.

Context: The Site, SLC Initiative, and Evaluation

The Site

This study took place in a large, urban school district in California that in the 2009-10 academic year served about 86,000 students and employed 4,100 teachers. To protect its identity, the district will be referred to in this study as the Public Unified School District (PUSD). District-wide enrollment in 2009-10 by ethnicity showed that students in PUSD were comprised of about 52% Latinos, 17% African Americans, 8% Asians, 16% Whites, 4% Filipinos, 2% Pacific Islanders, and 0.2% Native Americans. Approximately 23% of the total

enrollment was English language learners.[2] Despite being challenged by limited resources, low student academic achievement, and a low socioeconomic status student population, the district nevertheless received national accolades for improved student achievement. It was a five-time finalist for a prestigious national award.[3] The district, which has a research, planning, and evaluation unit, was recently described by The National Staff Development Council as a district with a deep commitment to professional learning and the "widespread use of data."

This study focused on three PUSD high schools – Brown High School (BHS), Davis (DHS), and Wilson High School (WHS).[4] Despite being nestled in the same district, the three schools differed substantially in their history, reputation, and teacher culture. The similarities they did share pertained to serving a diverse student population that included significant populations of students from high-poverty backgrounds. The evaluation reports described each school as challenged by low student achievement and high mobility; each also with a high teacher attrition rate. To gain a better understanding of the context of each school as this influences teachers' use of evaluation findings, a brief profile of each school is provided below in Table 3.1. WHS was perceived as the academic jewel and sports powerhouse of the district. Both BHS and DHS served a large immigrant population, with DHS also serving the majority of the district's students with special needs. BHS was a relatively new campus. DHS, viewed as the school with the most challenges, had a very active teachers' union. These are just some factors described by the lead evaluator mentioned here to bring light to substantial differences that existed between schools.

[2] District demographic information retrieved from the CA Department of Education's website at http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/

[3] This prize is awarded to the urban school districts with the greatest overall student achievement performance and improvement while reducing the achievement gap among poor and minority students.

[4] Pseudonyms used to protect the identity of each high school.

Table 3.1. Population and API score of High Schools by First and Last Year of Initiative.

	2009-10			2005-06*		
School	**Student Population**	**Staff**	**API**	**Student Population**	**Staff**	**API**
BHS	3,532	161	628	3,743	153	617
DHS	4,056	191	612	4,279	185	592
WHS	4,899	209	747	4,835	203	714

*The year in which the SLC initiative was launched.

The SLC Initiative

The evaluation reports provided insight into how the SLC initiative came to be in the district. In 2004, PUSD was in the midst of a major local reform aimed at improving student achievement and closing the achievement gap while also building the capacity of teachers to lead. This reform also sought to improve the culture and climate of the high schools. To support this local reform, the district applied for and received in Fall 2005 a five-year grant from the DOE Small Learning Communities (SLC) Initiative to implement and support small learning communities at BHS, DHS, and WHS. PUSD administrators perceived the SLC initiative as the vehicle to help achieve the goals of the local reform given that SLCs were generally believed to raise student achievement through the personalization of education by developing structures and processes that encourage deeper and more meaningful relationships among teachers, between teachers and students, as well as among students themselves (David, 2008).

Although the grant was written primarily by PUSD administrators, the SLC initiative was sold to each high school site as a bottom-up rather than top-down reform. BHS, DHS, and WHS teachers were encouraged to design and implement SLCs as best fit for their respective school's context and staff commitment. It is critical to make a note of this as it points to the policy-making role that administrators assigned to teachers. When implementation was launched in Fall 2005, the position of SLC director was created at the district level as was the position of an SLC

coordinator at each of the three high schools. While district and school administrators were to assist in the development of SLCs, the burden of design and implementation fell primarily on teachers. Thus, teacher participation in the development of SLCs was crucial for the success of the SLC initiative.

During the five years of its life, the SLC initiative experienced staff turnover at both the school and district levels. In five years, three different individuals served as SLC coordinators at BHS and DHS, respectively, while two served in that capacity at WHS. At the district, two directors supervised the grant – one from Fall 2005 through Spring 2008 and another from Summer 2008 through Summer 2010. Because their roles allowed them to control access to evaluation information, as they decided if and how and about what school leaders and teachers would be informed, these directors are referred to as gatekeepers. Specifically, in this dissertation, the individual who first served as director is referred to as Gatekeeper 1 while the second one serving in that capacity is referred to as Gatekeeper 2. Prior to taking the reins as directors, each served as an SLC coordinator at other high schools within the district. The SLC director who served from 2005-08 left her position to serve as a principal at a district high school. Thus, in addition to looking at the gatekeeper role for the SLC director, we have two SLC directors and, therefore, can expand the study and make comparisons.

The Evaluation

Tied to this SLC initiative was a formative evaluation with an annual reporting requirement to be conducted by an external evaluator. PUSD selected an external evaluator, The ABC Evaluation Group, prior to officially submitting the grant proposal, which was to include the evaluation design. Thus, The ABC Evaluation Group designed the evaluation based upon

what PUSD proposed to do as a recipient of the SLC grant. Upon receiving news in late Spring/early Summer 2005 of being awarded the grant, PUSD officially hired The ABC Evaluation Group as the external evaluator.

The evaluation served several purposes. One was to study how SLCs were being implemented to: monitor progress, understand what aspects may have contributed to effects, note what lessons were being learned, and make any needed mid-course corrections. Another purpose was to understand the effects of SLCs on: achievement, school culture and climate, and, the structure and process of developing leadership capacity. Therefore, data for this evaluation were collected in five general areas: 1) SLC development and implementation, 2) personalization, 3) equity and access, 4) student achievement, and, 5) school/community collaboration. Data pertaining to administrators, teachers, parents and students were collected via surveys, interviews, and observations. The ABC Evaluation Group wrote a total of six evaluation reports – five annual reports and one summative report. Each year, the evaluators formally presented evaluation findings to SLC district and school leaders. The evaluation of the SLC initiative officially concluded in August 2010. This multiple case study focuses on examining the extent of use of the findings found in these six evaluation reports.

The context of this evaluation lends itself to the study of evaluation use. Specifically, this multiple case study examines how communication pertaining to the evaluation flows through the hierarchical structure of the organization (school district). The many layers of stakeholders at different sites provide an opportunity to investigate what contextual factors influence evaluation awareness and whether such knowledge of the evaluation and its findings translate into actual use. Most importantly, this multiple case study seeks to examine whether gatekeeper actions under different contextual scenarios are shown to ultimately influence evaluation use.

Procedures and Measures

Survey Administration and Protocols

In this study, data pertaining to evaluation awareness, knowledge of evaluation findings, and actual evaluation use was taken from staff surveys used as part of the evaluation. For the purposes of the evaluation, staff surveys were originally designed to capture data pertaining to SLC implementation and development, personalization, equity and access, student achievement, and school/community collaboration. Each of the surveys also collected demographic data. For the purposes of general research, a few items pertaining to evaluation were also included in five staff surveys. Of the seven staff surveys administered during the evaluation period, the three most relevant to this dissertation were administered in Fall 2007, Spring 2008, and Spring 2010. The relevance was due to key demographic items as well as items pertaining to evaluation awareness and use. The Fall 2007 and Spring 2008 surveys were developed in their entirety by The ABC Evaluation Group. Evaluators doing research on evaluation use placed approximately 15 items on the Spring 2010 staff survey, eight of those are used in this dissertation.

Because staff surveys were modified each year and served slightly different purposes, items do not appear consistently across the four surveys used for this study. However, the items selected are useful in addressing the research questions posed in this dissertation, albeit, unfortunately, not necessarily to provide a longitudinal statistical analysis. Copies of all three surveys can be found in Appendix A. The following is a brief description of the staff surveys and how they were used for this study:

- ***Fall 2007 Staff SLC Survey*** ~ This 39-item survey was distributed separately to each school and administered to staff by paper. It was comprised of five sections labeled A through E. Sections A (demographic section) and D (attitudes towards evaluation practice) were the only

two of relevance to this study. In addition to school membership, the item inquiring about position/role was the other demographic item used in this study. Only one item from the attitudes towards evaluation practice was relevant to this study. This item, along with the other items from the attitudes towards evaluation section, was drawn from a similar survey developed and administered by Goh et al. (2006) to educators in a study aimed at examining the views, perception, and importance placed on evaluation practice and activities. The Goh et al. survey asked participants to rate the extent to which they disagreed/agreed (on a scale from 1 to 4, with strongly disagree = 1 and strongly agree = 4) with several statements. To summarize, the following are the survey items:

Demographic items:

1. School membership (*CHS, DHS, WHS*)
2. Position (*teacher, counselor, or administrator*)

Evaluation attitudes:

3. Our programs could use evaluation to learn how to be even more effective. (*strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree, N/A*)

- ***Spring 2008 Staff SLC Survey*** ~ This 51-item survey was distributed separately to each school and administered to staff by paper. It was comprised of four sections labeled A through D. Sections A pertained to demographic information while Section D inquired about evaluation awareness, activities, and use. Items from these two sections were pulled for use in this study. In addition to school membership, the item inquiring about position/role was the other demographic item used in this study. Six items from Section D were relevant to this study. These items, along with the others in this section, were in part based on surveys developed, tested, and validated by King et al. (2007) for a project on evaluation use funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF). The survey asked participants to indicate in the affirmative (yes) or negative (no), or to indicate whether they knew at all, about issues pertaining to evaluation awareness, activities, and use. The following are the survey items used for this study:

Demographic items:

1. School membership (*CHS, DHS, WHS*)
2. Position (*teacher, counselor, or administrator*)

Evaluation awareness:

3. I am aware that there is an SLC evaluation being conducted. (*no/yes*)
4. If not aware, I would like to be informed about this evaluation. (*no/yes*)
5. Are you aware of any results that have come from the SLC evaluation? (*no/yes/don't know*)
   6. If no, would you like to be informed? (*no/yes*)
   7. If aware of the results, how did you hear of these results? (*ABC Evaluation Team, SLC coordinator, SLC Lead Teacher, Other*)
8. Have you made any decisions regarding SLC implementation based on the evaluation results? (*no/yes/N/A*)
9. I used the SLC evaluation to make changes to my SLC. (*no; yes, a little; yes, some; no, not yet, maybe in the future*)

- ***Spring 2010 Staff SLC Survey*** ~ This 51-item survey was comprised of three sections. Unlike the other three surveys, the Spring 2010 survey was administered online. The first section pertained to demographic information while the last section inquired about awareness of the evaluation and its findings, as well as evaluation use. Items from these two sections were pulled for use in this study. The demographic items used in this study pertained to: school membership, position/role, leadership position/role, the years of service in position/role. The items pertaining to the evaluation were developed by researchers interested in studying evaluation influence and use. Eight of the items from that last section were relevant to this study. The survey asked participants to indicate when and how they first learned about the evaluation, when and how they learned about the evaluation findings, when and how they used the evaluation findings, and who used evaluation findings and how. The following are the survey items used in this survey:

  <u>Demographic items:</u>

  1. School membership (*CHS, DHS, WHS*)
  2. Position (*teacher, counselor, administrator, SLC lead teacher, other*)
  3. Served as SLC coordinator at any point? (*yes/no*)
     4. If yes, what academic year(s)? (*2005-2006; 2006-2007; 2007-2008; 2008-2009; 2009-2010*)
  5. Served as SLC lead teacher at any point? (*yes/no*)
     6. If yes, what academic year(s)? (*2005-2006; 2006-2007; 2007-2008; 2008-2009; 2009-2010*)

  <u>Evaluation awareness/use:</u>

  7. When did you first learn that the SLC Initiative was being evaluated? (*2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09, can't recall, never knew)*
  8. If you did know that the SLC Initiative was being evaluated, how did you find out? (*Open-ended*)
  9. What years were you aware of the SLC Initiative evaluation findings? [*Y1, Y2, Y3, Y4, can't recall, never knew*]
  10. If you were aware of the evaluation findings, how did you learn about them? (*Open-ended*)
  11. What years did you use any of the evaluation findings to make changes to your SLC? [*Y1, Y2, Y3, Y4, can't recall, never knew*]
  12. If you did use the evaluation findings to make changes to your SLC, how were the results used? (*Open-ended*)
  13. To your knowledge, who has used the evaluation findings to improve SLCs? (*Open-ended*)
  14. In what ways did this/these individual(s) use the evaluation findings? (*Open-ended*)

These three staff surveys all included items that addressed evaluation awareness, knowledge of evaluation findings, and evaluation use. The Fall 2007 and Spring 2008 surveys asked staff about their experiences at the time they took the survey. While the Spring 2010 survey staff survey did so as well, it also asked them to think retroactively to their experiences in previous years. The Spring 2010 survey was administered online while the staff surveys in the previous years were administered on paper.

Interview Procedures and Protocols

In addition to the surveys, interviews and focus groups were also conducted to gather data pertaining to evaluation awareness, knowledge of evaluation findings, and evaluation use. These interviews and focus groups were conducted in Spring 2010. Those interviewed were school principals, the SLC coordinator(s) at each of the three sites, the SLC director (Gatekeeper 2), the former SLC director (Gatekeeper 1), and a former lead evaluator. At BHS and WHS, three focus groups were conducted – two comprised of SLC teachers and one of SLC lead teachers (those responsible for managing a particular SLC). At DHS, five focus groups were conducted – two comprised of SLC lead teachers and the other comprised of SLC teachers. In Spring 2011, the former lead evaluator of the SLC initiative was also interviewed.

The interview and focus groups protocol were designed to engage participants in conversations about their awareness of the evaluation, knowledge of findings, and use of the evaluation results. In particular, the protocol asked lead and non-lead teacher participants whether they had been aware of the evaluation and, if so, if they also had knowledge of the findings. If they answered affirmatively, they were asked to elaborate when and how they learned about them. They were asked if leadership changes affected how evaluation findings

were communicated and used. Furthermore, they were asked if any of the evaluation's findings promoted changes to SLCs or their implementation by themselves or school/district administrators and, if so, what those changes were. Finally, they were asked to expand on their thoughts about those changes. The SLC coordinators were asked to describe the type of impact the SLC evaluation had on the implementation of SLCs. In particular, they were also asked to describe how evaluation findings were disseminated and to explain if this process had changed with time. In addition, they were asked how the findings were used and by whom, as well as if and how use of evaluation findings was monitored. Lastly, SLC coordinators were asked to explain if the evaluation use monitoring process they described had changed with time.

Both SLC directors participated in interviews. These individuals were asked to describe their personal philosophy on evaluation and their understanding of the purpose behind the SLC evaluation. They were also asked to indicate the type of impact the evaluation had on the implementation of SLCs. The SLC directors were asked to describe the process for disseminating evaluation findings to others. In addition to being asked how they used evaluation findings, they were asked how they had envisioned evaluation findings to be used by SLC coordinators, lead teachers, and teachers not holding a leadership position. SLC directors were also asked to indicate what actions they took to encourage evaluation use. If a monitoring process was in place, directors were probed to describe how use was monitored and whether it was necessary to monitor it. Lastly, they were asked to indicate what challenges they faced in encouraging evaluation use.

Document Review

A document review of five years worth of agendas and information disseminated at meetings was conducted. The agendas were for SLC coordinator meetings, site SLC leadership meetings, and district-wide SLC lead teacher workshops. The evaluators collected these agendas and supporting documents when they attended these meetings. It should be noted that while evaluators attended a substantial number of meetings, they did not attend every single one and, therefore, did not have access to all agendas. A total of 25 meeting agendas were reviewed, along with the supporting documents that were disseminated with each agenda. Seven of the agendas were for meetings under the leadership of Gatekeeper 1 and 18 were for meetings under the leadership of Gatekeeper 2. The goal behind the document review was to investigate the evaluation-related issues the SLC directors thought necessary to discuss at these meetings.

Subjects

Staff Survey Participants

Staff survey participation varied significantly throughout the lifetime of the grant, as noted below in Table 3.2. Participation was as high as 65% in aggregated form (Fall 2007) and as low as 39% (Spring 2008). In disaggregated form, participated was as high as 86% (Fall 2007 at BHS) and as low as 23% (Spring 2008 at DHS). With the exception of Fall 2007, in which it achieved 86%, BHS had close to 50% survey participation consistently throughout the years. Unlike WHS, which surpassed 50% participation on two occasions (Fall 2007 & Spring 2010) and came close to it in Spring 2008, DHS never got close to achieving 50% survey participation among staff except for Fall 2007 (52%).

Table 3.2. Staff survey participation by school, Fall 2007, Spring 2008, and Spring 2010.

	School			
	Brown HS*	Davis HS*	Wilson HS*	Total*
Fall 2007	86%	52%	60%	65%
	(123)	(89)	(109)	(321)
Spring 2008	48%	23%	48%	39%
	(68)	(39)	(86)	(193)
Spring 2010	45%	37%	59%	49%
	(81)	(67)	(124)	(272)

*Percentages based on survey participation over total staff.

It was important to review survey participation by position/role as this was an important factor in this study. The disaggregated data by position/role is presented in Table 3.3. As noted, SLC lead teachers were only identified in Spring 2010. As expected, teachers comprised an overwhelming majority of the survey participants in all surveys. This is of course given the nature of a school, where the ratio of administrators to teachers is very high.

Table 3.3. Staff survey participation by school, Fall 2007, Spring 2008, and Spring 2010.

	Position							
	Administrator	Counselor	Teacher	SLC Lead Teacher	Other	Did not state	Total	N
BHS								
F2007	0%	7%	88%	-	-	5%	100%	123
S2008	3%	3%	93%	-	-	1%	100%	68
S2010	2%	1%	79%	5%	10%	2%	99%	81
DHS								
F2007	1%	6%	83%	-	-	10%	100%	89
S2008	3%	0%	95%	-	-	3%	101%	39
S2010	6%	4%	69%	4%	12%	4%	99%	67
WHS								
F2007	3%	6%	85%	-	-	6%	100%	109
S2008	0%	1%	99%	-	-	0%	100%	86
S2010	6%	4%	78%	2%	7%	2%	99%	123
Total								
F2007	1%	7%	86%	-	-	7%	101%	321
S2008	2%	2%	96%	-	-	1%	101%	193
S2010	5%	3%	76%	4%	9%	3%	100%	272

Staff Interview/Focus Group Participants

As previously mentioned, principals, SLC coordinators, SLC lead teachers, and SLC directors were interviewed in March 2010. A total of three principals (one at each of three high schools) and four SLC coordinators were interviewed. There were four SLC coordinators because DHS functioned with two co-coordinators instead of one. The SLC director (Gatekeeper 2) at the time and the former SLC director (Gatekeeper 1) were also interviewed. A total of 38 teachers participated in 11 focus groups. At both BHS and WHS, 12 teachers participated in three focus groups, two comprised of SLC teachers and one of SLC lead teachers (those responsible for managing a particular SLC). At DHS, a total of 14 teachers participated in five focus groups – two comprised of SLC lead teachers and three of SLC teachers. Furthermore, the former lead evaluator of the SLC initiative was also interviewed in Spring 2011.

Data Analysis

A descriptive analysis and analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed with survey data and a qualitative analysis was done with the themes found in open-ended survey responses and interview responses. The survey data was first disaggregated by position/role, as this was critical to the study. Because more survey respondents reported being SLC coordinators than could have been possible, these individuals were combined with lead teachers. It is most likely that these individuals misinterpreted the term and identified themselves as coordinators instead of lead teachers. Lead teachers and coordinators indicating have served under the leadership of Gatekeeper 1 were combined into one category (G1 SLC LT/Coordinator) while those serving under Gatekeeper 2 were organized into another (G2 SLC LT/Coordinator). Some lead teachers reported having served under the leadership of both gatekeepers and, therefore, were combined

into a mixed gatekeeper category (Both SLC LT/Coordinator). These categories were used for the analysis of all relevant survey items in this study. An ANOVA could only be performed with one survey item. This item, inquiring when survey participants first learned that the SLC initiative was being evaluated, pertained to the 2010 survey. The ANOVA was performed in both aggregated form and in disaggregated form (by schools).

In general, qualitative data was organized into relevant categories and organized by school. Survey results for open-ended items were organized into relevant categories and reported in both aggregated and disaggregated form. The same categories pertaining to position/role were used to report the findings. Focus group data was organized into relevant categories and reported by position/role (principals, SLC coordinator, SLC lead teachers, and SLC teachers) and school. Focus group data applied primarily to staff serving under the leadership of Gatekeeper 2, although there were instances in which staff referred to Gatekeeper 1. In previous years, focus group participants were not asked to describe their experiences with the evaluation, its findings, or uses.

The interview data gathered from the SLC directors was analyzed to study the theories, philosophies, and practice of evaluation. A rich description of their beliefs was presented and compared to each other. Furthermore, a document review of meeting agendas provided additional data that was analyzed to shed light on what evaluation issues gatekeepers viewed as important. It was crucial to understand the SLC directors' general perception of evaluation to identify if this might have motivated their actions.

This study sought to investigate how evaluation use was influenced by gatekeepers (SLC directors). While there were some limitations, to be discussed in Chapter 5, this study, nevertheless, benefitted from four years worth of data gathered from surveys and meeting

agendas. Data gathered from interviews and focus groups of important players also contributed substantially to this study. Furthermore, the participation of the lead evaluator greatly benefited this study.

CHAPTER 4

Findings and Analyses

The results of this study are presented by research question. One may recall that the research questions posed in this study were designed with the purpose of investigating if each gatekeeper's perception of evaluation may have played a role in stakeholder use of evaluation findings. The first two research questions aimed to capture personal philosophies of, and commitment to, evaluation by studying each of the gatekeepers' perceptions of evaluation and their interactions with potential evaluation users. The third and fourth sets of research questions sought to investigate the gatekeepers' influence on potential evaluation users by comparing evaluation-related experiences reported by these stakeholders under the leadership of each gatekeeper, in aggregated form (Research Question 3) and disaggregated by school (Research Question 4). Together, these research questions seek evidence that may explain the degree to which gatekeepers' philosophies may have influenced stakeholders' evaluation use.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, data for this study were collected through various methods. Staff surveys were used to collect data on evaluation, specifically on perceptions, awareness, knowledge of findings, and actual use. Data on these issues were also collected through interviews, focus groups, and document review. The following are the results presented in two sections: the first section pertains to gatekeepers' personal evaluation philosophies as explored through Research Question 1 and Research Question 2 and the second section addresses gatekeepers' influence on potential evaluation users as proposed to be investigated through Research Question 3 and Research Question 4. The data presented in this chapter will form the basis for a "lessons learned" summary in Chapter 5.

Section 1: Gatekeepers' Evaluation Philosophies

1. What were each of the gatekeepers' general perceptions of evaluation? What were the gatekeepers' perceptions of the purpose of their evaluation?

2. How did gatekeepers differ in their interactions with potential evaluation users?

Data from interviews and document review were analyzed to address this first set of research questions. As previously mentioned, these research questions sought to explore gatekeepers' philosophies of evaluation. Meaning was brought to these philosophies through the exploration of each gatekeeper's perception of evaluation, expectations, personal use, and opinions about successes and challenges in achieving evaluation use. Actions taken by gatekeepers were also studied to further inform the philosophies emerging from the data. Specifically, the actions analyzed pertained to gatekeepers' interactions with stakeholders and their selection of agenda items for meetings. The following findings brought meaning to each gatekeeper's evaluation philosophy.

Perception of the Evaluation

Gatekeepers' philosophies on evaluation first began to take shape when discussing their perception for the SLC evaluation. Both gatekeepers shared similar beliefs as they reported that they originally understood the evaluation to be a requirement. Gatekeeper 1 noted that she "originally" thought the evaluation "was required but beyond that, it was to evaluate the development of SLCs, and the influence, and the impact upon students." Thus, her perception of the evaluation evolved from seeing it as requirement to understanding it as a practical study on the SLC reform. Somewhat similarly, Gatekeeper 2 reported the following about his perception:

> Initially, my understanding was that it was a mandate that we had to submit. [Evaluators] were from the outside coming in to judge us on how well we were doing this work and then submit it to the federal government to verify our self report. My understanding has

> changed dramatically. I came to understand that [the evaluators] were partners in the work… and were to help us move forward by giving us an opportunity to look at the data.

Gatekeeper 2 elaborated that while standardized test data was available to him and school staff, he relied on the evaluators to provide unique and important data on "student and parent perceptions" and "staff experience" so he "could see the gaps." He specified that the evaluation had "given [him] a way to quantify the [SLC] effect." He further noted that outside of the evaluation, there was no way to measure the effect of SLCs. Specifically, he stated:

> I mean how do we measure culture? How do we measure effect without the evaluation? And so, it really does help us match what we think is happening to what the student thinks is happening. And when we identify gaps, to actually address them in an intelligent way that's data-focused and informed.

As noted above, Gatekeeper 2 discussed in detail both how his perception evolved and why he realized the evaluation played a vital role within the SLC reform. He realized that "the evaluation has been a great way to create conversation" and it has served as a "bridge between the gap between [his] perception and the reality." Thus, while both gatekeepers noted that their perceptions changed, it was Gatekeeper 2 who described a closer relationship with the evaluators by referring to them as "partners" and enthusiastically discussing why he considered their work so critical.

These findings concerning gatekeepers' perceptions of evaluation suggest that one significant difference existed despite both sharing similar beliefs and experiences. They both indicated that their perceptions evolved from viewing the evaluation as a requirement to a realization that the study would be practical and assist with the implementation/ development of SLCs. It is clear, however, that Gatekeeper 2 perceived the evaluators as insiders, as he referred to them as "partners." This seems to suggest that Gatekeeper 2 may have been more trustful of the evaluators and appreciative of the evaluation than Gatekeeper 1. Indicating that the

evaluators were "partners" also implies that they provided support in the work associated with the development of SLCs. Thus while both gatekeepers' perceptions of the evaluation might have been similar, Gatekeeper 2 reported a closer relationship with the evaluators and more faith in the findings. This closer relationship should have led to a greater appreciation for the evaluation and should have positively influenced evaluation use. This is, after all, a prime example of the "personal factor" that Patton (1997) identifies as critical in achieving evaluation use. Whether Gatekeeper 2 achieved greater appreciation for the evaluation and succeeded in getting findings used when compared to Gatekeeper 1 is debatable and will be touched upon as each research question is addressed. The discussion on this issue will culminate with a discussion in Chapter 5 exploring how gatekeepers' philosophies may have influenced stakeholders' actual use.

Expectations of Staff

Both gatekeepers had certain expectations of staff based on their perceptions of the evaluation's purpose. Gatekeeper 1 noted the following when asked how she envisioned evaluation findings to be used:

> It was the idea that the coordinators would take the information back, of the areas of concern and of the areas that they were doing well, and relate those back to the SLC leads [teachers], who would then take it back to the members of the department and tell them, 'yes, we're doing this really well but there are some concerns here, how can we take these concerns and make changes so that we can address them?'

Gatekeeper 1 appeared to envision the SLC coordinators as functioning as distributors of information. Gatekeeper 2, on the other hand, had greater expectations. He noted that:

> I think of the coordinators, I was hoping that [the evaluation findings] would inform their action plans on site for how they were going to address some of the gaps and how they were going to celebrate some for the strengths. That's really the bottom line.

Gatekeeper 2 expected the SLC coordinator at each site to incorporate evaluation findings into their school's SLC action plan, the official manner in which SLC leaders planned and managed activities aimed at developing SLCs. He had the same expectations of SLC lead teachers, as he reported anticipating "a lot of" the evaluation findings to be "reflected in [lead teachers'] action plans." While he noted that he encouraged that integration at lead teacher workshops, at the site-level, "it's their coordinator that has to navigate that work, as well as their principal." Slightly differently, Gatekeeper 1 noted that she expected lead teachers to use the evaluation findings to inform their outcome charts, which, unlike the action plans, were directly related to the California Technical Education (CTE) standards. Thus, Gatekeeper 1 seemed to expect evaluation findings to be used in a broader sense, with the CTE standards in mind, while Gatekeeper 2 pushed for a narrower approach, one directly related to the SLC reform.

As for teachers not holding a leadership position, there was no evidence that either gatekeeper necessarily expected them to be active users of the evaluation findings. Gatekeeper 1 noted that she left it "up to lead teachers" to keep them informed about the evaluation findings while Gatekeeper 2 indicated that it was "up to the discretion of the administration and the SLC coordinator" as to how involved they wanted non-lead teachers in implementing changes. There were different expectations for principals. Gatekeeper 2 noted that in addition to sharing the evaluation report with principals, he "called them, asked them to look at certain pages that [were] cause for concern" and expected action to take place. In describing his expectations of lead teachers, Gatekeeper 2 also noted that he had envisioned principals taking an active role in pushing evaluation use at this teacher level. Thus, Gatekeeper 2 envisioned principals as both active users of the evaluation and as overseers of evaluation use. Gatekeeper 1, on the other hand, indicated that she did "not know how much [principals]" fit in the evaluation process. She

noted that "principals did not really know what was happening because they only hear what's happening from the coordinators." Thus, Gatekeeper 1 did not seem to interact much with the principals; instead, it appears that Gatekeeper 1 had greater expectations of the SLC coordinators as users of the evaluation and as overseers of use at the lead teacher level.

Gatekeepers also had expectations for themselves. They were both aware of the role they played within the reform and understood their limitation for encouraging evaluation use. While both gatekeepers expected the evaluation to be used by school site staff for SLC development, Gatekeeper 2 acknowledged that the unavoidable autonomy granted to staff at each school site dictated if and how evaluation use took place. He noted that while he encouraged use:

> I don't have the authority to evaluate principals and I don't have the authority to evaluate coordinators. I'm not in that – I don't function in that capacity. Therefore, my opportunities to enforce are limited. And, I don't necessarily know that forcing it is useful.

While Gatekeeper 1 did not discuss challenges related to the SLC coordinators or principals, she did note that it "was not [her] role to" force teachers to participate in the reform efforts or require them to implement changes based on the evaluation findings. Thus, both gatekeepers had expectations for staff but were also aware of the limitations they faced in getting evaluation findings used.

Gatekeeper Personal Use

The manner in which gatekeepers reported using the evaluation findings also sheds light on their philosophies and priorities. During their interviews, both gatekeepers shared how they personally used the findings to help with the implementation of the SLC initiative. Gatekeeper 1 noted that the evaluation findings shed light as to how her office could support each sites' efforts in developing weak areas. Specifically, she noted the "data showed that the schools really

needed someone to work individually with the coordinators." Thus, learning that staff at each school site needed more individual support than what she could provide herself led to the development of an SLC coach position. The coach helped foster use of the evaluation findings, as well as provided support in the development of SLCs. Gatekeeper 1 also noted that the schools differed substantially in their SLC implementation and development. In particular, the "outcomes [of the first evaluation] that were so different for every school that [it] made [the SLC director] realize that [SLC coordinators] needed to talk to each other." Because there were no opportunities for the SLC coordinators of the three schools to collaborate, she decided to have regular SLC coordinator meetings to create a space where discussions could take place about experiences implementing SLCs. Thus, the SLC coordinator meetings, in the words of Gatekeeper 1, "stemmed from looking at the data." The SLC coordinator meetings eventually led to the incorporation of SLC lead teacher workshops.

Gatekeeper 2 indicated that he read the reports very closely and made sure the administration, SLC coordinators, and lead teachers addressed the gaps. He stated the following:

> I called every single one of the principals personally and talked to them about their evaluation and areas of concern. All the coordinators, I met with them, talked it over with them at a coordinator meeting, talked to them about it at lead teacher meetings, followed up with personal phone calls, on certain times when there was cause for concern.

Interestingly, Gatekeeper 2 utilized the evaluation report primarily as a resource to push for use at the site level. To him, the evaluation report served as a vehicle to help move along the reform. It was evidence of the areas that needed change. Thus, he provided opportunities for potential evaluation users to think of how the gaps could be addressed and granted the autonomy as to how this would done. Gatekeeper 2 noted that two types of issues arose from the evaluation findings and efforts to encourage use. He described them in the following manner:

> I think that certain things are site-based and other things are structure-based. I think site based issues I can't address because I'm not at the site to constantly monitor and adjust and that has to be at the discretion of the principal and the coordinator. However, I'm held accountable for the implementation of the grant. If I know that a major part of the grant is not even remotely being addressed, then I push, and I encourage, and I charge. And, I point out that when we report on our APR to the federal government, we report by objective not by general status.

Thus, Gatekeeper 2 personally used the evaluation findings to address structure-based concerns. He noted that there were some gaps across the three sites that needed to be addressed. Thus, he "created an action plan for [himself] based on the biggest gaps and [he] began to target professional development" for SLC coordinators and lead teachers. Gatekeeper 2 was guided by this action plan. In concluding his description of how he used the findings, Gatekeeper 2 noted that the evaluation "really shaped [his] thinking." He summarized that the evaluation had:

> Given [him] a tool to see if [his] best intentions, the administration's best intentions, the teachers' best intentions translated into the student experience. Or, is it remaining a best intention? And, if it's actually translating into the student experience, what' yielding the right fruit?

According to him, the evaluation provided a context for understanding some of the impediments to the implementation of SLCs. It appeared that his "buy-in" of the evaluation may have influenced his persistent push for use at the site-level, as well as his own personal use.

As a starting point, it is imperative to note how gatekeepers used the evaluation findings themselves as this highlights priorities or types of uses considered important and may provide a glimpse into personal philosophies. Gatekeeper 1 indicated that the evaluation findings led her to: 1) hire an SLC coach to provide guidance to SLC coordinators at each site, 2) launch SLC coordinator meetings, and, 3) initiate SLC lead teacher workshops. These were what Gatekeeper 2 referred to as structural-based issues as they cut across sites and were very much under the purview of the SLC director. The three uses mentioned by Gatekeeper 1 were important solutions to concerns that can often rise at the implementation stage of a large initiative: the

need for guidance, professional development, and monitoring. The initiative's administrative structure was already in place when Gatekeeper 2 took leadership of the initiative, and as a result, he used the findings primarily to learn of professional development needs for SLC coordinators and lead teachers, something also done by Gatekeeper 1 but to a lesser degree. However, Gatekeeper 2 reported being more structured in his use as he addressed those needs. In other words, he created a personal action plan based on evaluation findings and noted how he would tackle each goal. He essentially mapped out his personal use of the evaluation findings pertaining to professional development needs. This seems to exemplify the manner in which Gatekeeper 2 addressed evaluation use – a more structured, in-depth approach that included focusing on mapping personal use and exploring professional development needs that included training on data/evaluation use. Gatekeeper 1, on the other hand, focused on breadth – incorporating several uses of the findings and sharing the findings with a broader audience. More evidence of this is found in a later discussion of the agenda items presented during each of their leadership terms. In addition, Gatekeeper 2 utilized the evaluation as a tool to assertively push for use at the site-level, something done to a lesser degree by Gatekeeper 1.

The above discussed approaches seem to suggest that the gatekeepers had two very different administrative styles. It is unknown whether their approach was the nature of the period in which they managed the grant, a personal strategy, or a combination of both. One could assume that there would be more room for breadth at the initiation of a program, as this is the period when there should be the most room to grow, and less so towards the end when a program should be fairly established. One could also assume that gatekeepers' personal philosophies on evaluation would have the most influence on their own personal use. Therefore, it is most likely that their respective approaches, breadth versus depth, were influenced by both

their personal philosophies and the period in which they managed the grant. In general, the findings seem to suggest that Gatekeeper 2 placed more value in the evaluators and had a greater interest in exploring issue in-depth, while Gatekeeper 1 seemed busy building trust among stakeholders within the organization and addressing the breadth of issues that arose in the implementation phase of the initiative.

Opinions about Successes and Challenges

In describing successes and challenges, gatekeepers shared what they considered important and, in doing so, revealed more about their feelings toward the evaluation. Both gatekeepers noted that despite some challenges, the evaluation findings were indeed used. As previously mentioned, both gatekeepers described how they personally used the evaluation successfully in the development of the SLC initiative. Gatekeeper 1 indicated that she believed "the data was used by the schools in looking in the areas that they needed to improve on." She noted that the evaluation findings were:

> Pretty useful in that [school site staff] had some hardcore data, hard data analysis to say what they needed to focus more on certain aspects than what they were doing.

Unfortunately, Gatekeeper 1 did not share specific examples of how staff used the findings. Gatekeeper 2 did provide examples of how school-site staff utilized the evaluation. As noted earlier, he explained that the evaluation helped identify gaps, which he expected staff to address in an informed manner. He elaborated that "in some schools, it did happen" as evaluation findings were incorporated into action plans and weaknesses addressed. As an example, Gatekeeper 2 reported the following taking place at DHS:

> I met with their coordinator. I met with their principal. I met with our assistant superintendent. And, we created a plan for every student to belong to an SLC. And, now, they are wall-to-wall. Every student is in an SLC.

Thus, the success came with a push from the top -- district administrators. Gatekeeper 2 did acknowledge that he had to be persistent in encouraging use. He summarized it in the following manner:

> And so the data [evaluation findings] has actually informed policy decisions at the site. It's just… it's been through encouragement and it's when I have the administrative support from my assistant superintendent that it actually happens. And, I do have that support. It's just that we have to choose… what issues to target at each site.

Gatekeeper 2's persistence in pushing for informed change at the site-level exemplified his commitment to the development of SLCs, and indirectly, to achieving evaluation use. He clearly placed a lot of value on the evaluation findings. This type of persistence and commitment was not evident in the information provided by Gatekeeper 1 during her interview.

While Gatekeeper 1 did not provide details explaining what may have precluded more extensive use, Gatekeeper 2 did. Gatekeeper 2 described the context under which the evaluation findings were delivered. He explained "some of the challenges were that [the SLC initiative] is not [their] only focus in the district." In stepping back and looking at the big picture, he reported that:

> We have to strategically align our efforts to make sure that we're getting the biggest bang for the buck, especially as resources deplete, as human capital depletes, as we lose staff. That's very challenging. And, so it's one of the many tools that we use; it's not the only tool that we use.

Furthermore, Gatekeeper 2 noted that the SLC initiative "[was] not a comprehensive evaluation; it's specific to SLC effect and implementation." The evaluation did not address all the needs of the schools. As such, Gatekeeper 2 respected the fact that staff at the school sites had the discretion to change what was most critical for them while still adhering to the requirements of the numerous grants they had received. He believed that principals at each site should decide what priorities had to be addressed. This also shed light on how Gatekeeper 2 perceived the SLC

initiative itself. By relying primarily on the SLC coordinators and principals as policy-makers, he clearly viewed the initiative as a top-down rather than bottom-up reform. He expected evaluation use to be managed at the administrative levels and, when structure-based issues were at play, there was a fair amount of follow-up on his part to ensure use was taking place. This was opposite of what Gatekeeper 1 believed. Gatekeeper 1 indicated that she "did not think that you build ownership, and you don't build belief in things when you tell [teachers] what they have to do." She believed that changes had to "come from a team" because a more collaborate approach with input from teachers and the principal would yield more successful policies. Yet she noted that non-lead teachers generally did not know how to use data and, thus, were not expected to use the evaluation findings to make changes to their SLCs. Instead, she viewed the SLC coordinator and lead teachers as more savvy in this area and as the leaders for implementing change. However, there was no follow-up or monitoring of evaluation use as it would take "huge amount" of time, unlike the case with Gatekeeper 2. Thus, while both gatekeepers expected use to take place at the discretion of site staff, Gatekeeper 2 verbalized why school administrators may have chosen not to act upon some of the evaluation findings and Gatekeeper 1 related the reasons for which she believed non-lead teachers did not use such information.

Although evaluation use did take place at the staff-level, according to both gatekeepers, it was not to the extent expected. Both gatekeepers expressed frustration with the autonomy granted to school site staff given the nature of the organizational structure of the institution. They both expected action but allowed the autonomy to dictate how that action would surface. Both gatekeepers reported not having the authority to enforce use by any staff members at the school-level. As mentioned by Gatekeeper 2, they did not supervise principals, SLC coordinators, lead teachers, or non-lead teachers. They were limited to simply different

approaches “encouraging use,” a term used by both gatekeepers. As Gatekeeper 2 noted, use of site-based findings were much more difficult to monitor because it was difficult to assess if use was indeed taking place. Gatekeeper 2 related that there was no reliable way to know the extent to which use was actually taking place as it could have been but not with the “quality” necessary to trigger the change needed to serve as evidence. It is challenging to document when use does take place due to informal uses and difficult to connect any change directly to the evaluation (Leviton & Hughes, 1981). Thus, both gatekeepers acknowledged that their expectations of staff at the sites were not met or were met with limited success and part of the blame was the organizational structure of the school district. While the organizational structure was an obstacle, Gatekeeper 2 managed to work around it by the calling out for the support of the assistant superintendent, the principals’ supervisor. However, Gatekeeper 2 could not call for the involvement of the assistant superintendent on a regular basis; instead, he used pursued such support only in the extreme situations. Gatekeeper 1 did not report going through such measures to push for evaluation use at the site-level.

Both gatekeepers were not defensive over the lack of use of the evaluation findings. In fact, as previously mentioned, Gatekeeper 2 was clear that he could not impose use anyway because he did not know the priorities principals had with regard to all the reforms taking place at their respective sites. As long as the major goals of the grant were being adhered to, Gatekeeper 2 deferred to school site administrators to use their judgment in deciding which evaluation findings could be used to develop SLCs at their sites. Gatekeeper 1 implied something similar with regard to the autonomy administrators had at their sites and their discretion in using the evaluation findings. There could be conflict with other programs regarding priorities. This brings up the point of whether one can call use making the conscious

decision to not act upon an evaluation finding because human and financial resources need to be invested elsewhere. While limited research exists on nonuse as a valid alternative, Larsen (1985) refers to research in other fields as well as her own study to suggest that nonuse of information can have a positive effect and may be preferable than misuse. Of course, even if one can make argue that strategic nonuse is a form of use, it would be difficult to identify what might be a conscious decision to not use an evaluation finding versus simply altogether ignoring the findings themselves. Nonuse takes place implicitly or explicitly (Larsen, 1985). Overall, the autonomy granted to site administrators by the organizational structure of the school district led to a lack of accountability with regard to evaluation use. As documented earlier, Gatekeeper 2 did a better job of navigating around the organizational structure to establish a form of accountability to achieve evaluation use. In general, however, by respecting this autonomy, both gatekeepers inadvertently allowed administrators to avoid evaluation use, of course with the exception of the times when there might have been blatant disregard for the grant's goals.

Another problem with the autonomy granted by the organizational structure of the school district to school-based administrators was that teachers faced the disadvantage of potentially never learning about the findings. Just as the SLC directors served as gatekeepers for school-based administrators, school-based administrators served as gatekeepers for teachers. If school-based administrators felt they could not act upon some findings and, therefore, did not share them with teachers, then there was no expectation of use at the teacher-level. This was the case under the leadership of both gatekeepers. Given that this initiative was a bottom-up approach, despite being managed as a top-down reform under Gatekeeper 2, it was necessary for teachers to, at the very least, be aware of the findings.

Interactions with Potential Evaluation Users

Both gatekeepers interacted with staff, the potential evaluation users, in a similar manner with some minor exceptions. The manner in which Gatekeeper 1 interacted with staff varied throughout her leadership as the program evolved substantially from inception, when no structure existed, to the mid-course point, when structure had been established. In an interview, Gatekeeper 1 described her initial managerial strategy as one in which she worked separately with each school's SLC leadership team, a group comprised of the SLC coordinator, SLC lead teachers, and, on occasion, an administrator. She would do so by attending each school site's monthly SLC leadership team meetings and providing guidance and support. However, as previously mentioned, through the evaluation findings she learned that the SLC leadership teams were tackling similar challenges and, in some cases, sites were achieving successes from which others could learn. In her attempts to facilitate dialogue among staff from the different sites, she implemented regular SLC coordinator meetings, initially scheduled every other month, and quarterly leadership workshops for SLC leadership teams. These eventually developed into monthly SLC coordinator meetings at the district office and quarterly SLC lead teacher institutes/ workshops.

Gatekeeper 2 interacted with staff in a similar manner as Gatekeeper 1 had done towards the end of her leadership. While Gatekeeper 2 continued with the monthly SLC coordinator meetings and quarterly SLC lead teacher institutes/workshops, the number of participants at these meetings grew under his leadership. The addition of a new grant, which shared goals with the SLC initiative, called for coordinators from other sites to participate in the monthly meetings. Thus, while both gatekeepers interacted with staff in a similar manner, Gatekeeper 2 supported and guided more SLC coordinators than Gatekeeper 1.

How did gatekeepers attempted to encourage use? They did so in the manner they interacted with school-based staff, which differed significantly between them. The difference might have been due primarily to the stage of development of the initiative. Developing the program meant that Gatekeeper 1 had to explore how best to deal with the sites. She had the burden of establishing structure where no structure existed and getting buy-in for a new program. Gatekeeper 1, like evaluators, had to put into practice the personal factor Patton (1997) discusses with regard to establishing trust and gaining buy-in. This explains her monthly interactions with school-based SLC leadership teams and why she spent more time than Gatekeeper 2 at the school sites. When Gatekeeper 2 was promoted to SLC director, he could not invest as much time at the school sites given that the number of SLC coordinators he had to manage increased substantially. Interestingly, while Gatekeeper 2 had a closer relationship with the evaluators than Gatekeeper 1, it was Gatekeeper 1 who had a closer relationship with stakeholders at the school sites. It is debatable whether the closer relationship led to greater use. The closer relationship might have led to greater awareness of the evaluation in general but not necessarily to greater awareness of findings or more use. The fact that Gatekeeper 1 interacted more often and directly with site staff might have been influenced primarily by the stage of development of the grant. As previously mentioned, she had to guide the implementation as well as get buy-in for the new program.

Both gatekeepers discussed the limitations they encountered in terms of their interactions with stakeholders at the school sites. Gatekeeper 2 noted that he did not have the authority to evaluate principals or SLC coordinators and, therefore, had limited opportunities to enforce evaluation use. He admitted that forcing use would not have been productive in any case. However, areas of deep concern were taken to his supervisor who did address them directly with

the principals. Gatekeeper 1 also noted that she did not follow up or monitor directly how the evaluation findings were used, although she did encourage use.

Selection of Agenda Items for Meetings

Gatekeeper 1 and Gatekeeper 2 also differed on what they addressed at meetings. The agenda items for the SLC coordinator meetings and the lead teacher institutes shed light on issues that each gatekeeper chose to emphasize. Under the leadership of Gatekeeper 1, agenda items for meetings focused primarily on the logistics of, and resources for, developing SLCs. In Year 1, the issues addressed were primarily on professional development on SLC theory, research, and practice. In Year 2, agenda items focused primarily on discussions of actual SLC implementation such as administrative procedures (how to request funding for meetings, professional development, SLC promotional items for student, etc) and leadership development. Meeting agenda items in Year 3 continued in a similar fashion as in Year 2 but with more emphasis on SLC action plans (plans and outcomes for the year) and leadership development (how to plan a meeting, understanding the lead teacher role). Issues pertaining to the logistics of data collection activities were also included as part of the agendas of the SLC coordinator meetings each year.

The SLC coordinator and lead teacher workshop agendas served as evidence of the priorities emphasized by the gatekeepers. Understandably, Gatekeeper 1 had to initially focus on the logistics of and resources for developing SLCs, general professional development on SLCs, administrative issues related to SLCs, and leadership development. In Year 3, her last year as director, Gatekeeper 1 finally started focusing on each site's action plan. Thus, the first three years of the grant were spent primarily on getting the program established, organized, and focused. Not much was done to highlight the evaluation, other than to address logistical issues

pertaining to data collection. There was no evidence to suggest why Gatekeeper 1 did not place more emphasis on the evaluation. One can speculate that she was either too busy or perhaps she did not want to frighten school staff who had not completely bought into the new reform. Timing may have also played a role. The evaluation report for Year 1 was officially submitted towards the end of Year 2 and Year 2's findings were submitted towards the end of Year 3. Both of these reports were submitted towards the end of the school year when teachers and administrators are busy preparing for standardized testing and the end of the academic year. Furthermore, the evaluation findings may have been perceived as irrelevant at that point given that staff would have to plan for Year 3 using Year 1's evaluation findings and for Year 4 using Year 2's findings.

The agenda items selected by Gatekeeper 2 did differ slightly from what Gatekeeper 1 chose to address. Agenda items under Gatekeeper 2 focused primarily on action plans, aligning schools' goals with those of the district, data analysis, professional development on core subjects, the needs of the evaluation, and strengthening career pathways as they related to SLCs. Like Gatekeeper 1, Gatekeeper 2 also addressed logistics pertaining to the SLC evaluation primarily during SLC coordinator meetings. In addition to discussing general logistics, a conversation pertaining to "data analysis and use" took place during one SLC coordinator meeting in Year 4. Supplemental reading assigned to the SLC coordinators for the meeting included excerpts from *Education Week*. At this particular meeting, Gatekeeper 2 initiated a conversation about the "types of data" available to staff and how that data could be used. Gatekeeper 2 went further by also asking staff about the "types of data" needed or wanted from the evaluators and the internal district research unit to continue with the development of SLCs. He probed staff to discuss how this anticipated and much needed data would be used. This was

Gatekeeper 2's attempt to make the evaluation relevant to them. Leviton & Hughes (1981) concluded, when comparing several studies on relevance of information, that evaluations relevant to needs of certain stakeholder groups yielded more frequent use than less relevant. This attempt to bring relevancy to the evaluation continued in a subsequent meeting addressing the same subject (data needs and use), supplemented by a conversation about how to change the timeline for delivering evaluation findings to maximize use. As a result of this conversation, Gatekeeper 2, SLC coordinators, and evaluators agreed to a change in the timeline so that evaluation reports were to be submitted and made available to staff in August, prior to the start of the academic year, rather than in December, as it had been customary to do under the leadership of Gatekeeper 1. Also in Year 4, at another SLC coordinator meeting there was an agenda item labeled "Data Best Practices Share-Out: How do we use data to shape SLC practice?" The goal was to discuss how data, including evaluation findings, were being used to develop SLCs.

During the leadership of Gatekeeper 1, the SLC evaluation findings appeared as an item on the SLC lead teacher workshop agenda twice -- once in Year 2 and once again in Year 3. In each case, approximately 30 minutes were set aside for discussion of the evaluation findings. During this time, the external evaluators briefly summarized the evaluation findings to an audience comprised of SLC leadership staff from the three school sites. After discussing the findings, the evaluators privately approached staff from each school site at their assigned table to answer any specific questions regarding the evaluation. The 30-minute presentations in Year 2 and Year 3, under the leadership of Gatekeeper 1, were the extent to which the evaluation findings were discussed formally in SLC coordinator meetings and lead teacher workshops. In addition, at the end of Year 3, Gatekeeper 1 led a lead teacher workshop in which participants were asked to discuss or brainstorm weak areas that needed further development. Please refer to

Appendix B. While these issues were never discussed as evaluation findings, they were indeed identified in the evaluation report as weaknesses. It is unclear, however, whether the evaluation findings triggered the discussion or whether these issues were concerns identified prior to the evaluation.

Gatekeeper 1 did make an effort to discuss evaluation findings. The 30 minutes scheduled for such discussion were to address findings for all three schools. Thirty minutes to present findings and discuss them may not have been enough time for those present at the meeting, especially if it was the first time lead teachers saw the findings, which most likely was the case. While having the evaluators available to answer questions may have been valuable, there was simply too much information to share in such a short window of time. In some cases, lead teachers may have been just familiarizing themselves with the information and may not have had enough time to come up with questions. It was noted that Gatekeeper 1 did have a workshop at the end of Year 3 in which three of the five discussions points were identified in the evaluation report as challenges for each school. While these three points did relate to evaluation findings, there is no evidence to suggest that the move to discuss them was influenced by the evaluation findings. In fact, the agenda made no reference to the evaluation at all. This may suggest, again, that Gatekeeper 1 focused primarily on breadth – sharing the findings with everyone but at a superficial level.

Under Gatekeeper 2, the evaluation findings also appeared twice on agendas – once in Year 4 and again in Year 5. In Year 4, the evaluation team was granted 20 minutes to present evaluation findings to the SLC leadership teams of the three schools. In Year 5, a two-hour work session was set aside at an SLC lead teacher institute to discuss the Year 4 evaluation findings. The evaluators distributed guiding questions to each school's SLC leadership team (comprised of

the SLC coordinator and lead teachers) while Gatekeeper 2 distributed his own worksheet. Both set of guiding questions are found in Appendix B. The front side of Gatekeeper 2's worksheet asked SLC leaders to identify strengths, practices that supported those strengths, and strategies for building on those strengths. The back side instructed participants to identify areas for improvement, barriers (site and district), and support needed (site and district). Of the two-hour work schedule, Gatekeeper 2 noted:

> We broke them [SLC coordinator and lead teachers] up into their school lead groups. We had them actually read through the document. We had them actually react to the document, deal with the document. We had a template for them to evaluate the content. And then talk about what the next steps were going to be. So multiple levels. And then at the site, the coordinators were charged with dealing with the information with the actual site teams.

These actions were the most prevalent that focused on evaluation or data use during Gatekeeper 2's leadership. Discussing data needs is a way to be involved in the evaluation process and such involvement can increase the likelihood of use. Gatekeeper 2 facilitated such discussions and, in doing so, invited SLC coordinators and lead teachers to be active participants in the evaluation.

Interestingly, in Year 4, the first year of leadership for Gatekeeper 2 only 20 minutes were set aside for discussion of the Year 3 evaluation findings. While 20 minutes was less than the time Gatekeeper 1 allotted to such discussions, Gatekeeper 2 used Year 4 primarily for professional development on how to utilize data. It is unknown whether the move to focus on data use was influenced by a reaction to the 20-minute session. In any case, the term data was inclusive of evaluation findings. As mentioned, discussions took place on types of data available to staff from evaluators and the district's research unit, as well as on data analysis and use. The goal seemed to be to get SLC coordinators comfortable with requesting data and using it.

Most important about Gatekeeper 2 was that he discussed in-depth how the anticipated data could be used. This may be perceived as coaching site leaders on how to use data, including

evaluation findings, to develop SLC programs. Thus, Gatekeeper 2 went a little further than scheduling the presentation and discussion of findings. While Gatekeeper 1 may have tried to do the same by presenting the three discussion points previously mentioned, the discussion focused on content and not how the information could be realistically used to develop the SLC programs at each school site. In general, while Gatekeeper 1 focused on the "what," Gatekeeper 2 focused on the "how." Discussing the "how" to use findings triggered a critical change that led to findings being delivered at a prime time – when teachers and administrators were planning for the academic year. Moving the deadline to submit the evaluation report from December to August was important as at the beginning of the academic year is the ideal time for new policies to be proposed or amended and for scheduling changes. As previously mentioned in chapter 2, evaluation theorists note that mechanisms, such as timing, for framing evaluation information influence evaluation use (Shulha and Cousins, 1997; Patton, 1997). The move was solely done to accommodate use as the evaluation reports were to be submitted to the district in August but Gatekeeper 2 was not required to submit them to the federal government until December. Sacrifices were also made at the teacher and administrator level in the way that they had to accommodate changes in data collection activities. These activities were moved one month earlier to allow evaluators the necessary time to collect data and write the evaluation report by August.

Gatekeeper 2 went as far as holding SLC coordinators accountable in Year 4 for using the evaluation findings. Agenda items indicated that SLC coordinators were asked to share how they used data to shape SLCs. The point here was that they were asked not "if" but "how," meaning that use was expected and the interest in the exercise was to learn how findings were being used. The critical question here was if, once taught, the SLC coordinators were using the

findings? Gatekeeper 2 placed such intense efforts in encouraging use but only at the SLC coordinator level. Lead teachers and non-lead teachers did not benefit from such intense training on data or findings use. However, in Year 5, SLC coordinators and lead teachers participated in the 2-hour workshop in which an in-depth discussion of evaluation findings allowed SLC coordinators and lead teachers to address how they would use findings to make changes to their SLCs. Thus, it seemed that Gatekeeper 2 set the stage by providing the needed training to SLC coordinators in Year 4 so that in Year 5 they could facilitate the 2-hour discussion with lead teachers on how to use the evaluation findings. Unfortunately, this took place the last year of the grant and, therefore, it was impossible to assess if the 2-hour session was successful in achieving evaluation use at the teacher-level. With regard to evaluation use, the data seems to suggest that Gatekeeper 2 might have been a bit more strategic than Gatekeeper 1.

While the discussion above points to all the efforts Gatekeeper 2 made to achieve evaluation use, it is questionable whether such efforts would have appeared under him during the first three years of the grant. In other words, would Gatekeeper 1 have been ready for such discussions on use in the earlier stages of the initiative? Most likely not. Agendas imply that Gatekeeper 1 was busy in Year 1 and Year 2 launching the program. Perhaps Gatekeeper 1 might have initiated such conversations on use in Year 4 or Year 5 had she had continued in her leadership role. It is unknown. It is known that Gatekeeper 2 moved away from the logistical issues and specific programmatic problems to focus more in-depth on leadership skills and data use. In summary, as previously noted, Gatekeeper 1 focused on breadth – wanting to inform lead teachers, professional learning communities at school sites, and school board members addressing a variety of programmatic needs while Gatekeeper 2 focused on depth – emphasizing

professional development workshops and calling for serious discussions on findings and use at the site level.

The gatekeepers' general communication with site leaders about evaluation findings was fairly similar. Every time the evaluators would submit an annual evaluation report to the gatekeepers, they in turn would distribute the reports to the school site principals and SLC coordinators. As previously mentioned, they also organized sessions in which the evaluators presented findings to lead teachers and coordinators. Gatekeeper 1 noted that she reviewed the evaluation findings with the SLC coordinators but not the principals. In Year 2, Gatekeeper 1 asked the evaluators to do a 10-15 minute presentation of the evaluation findings to the professional learning community (PLC) of each school. Also in Year 2, Gatekeeper 1 invited the evaluators to share the evaluation findings directly with the superintendent and the school board members. Gatekeeper 2, on the other hand, reported sharing the findings with his supervisor and colleagues at the district office. Gatekeeper 2 also indicated that he had the SLC coordinators, lead teachers, and evaluators read through the document, react to it, and deal with it at a lead teacher workshop. As previously mentioned, he developed a special worksheet to have the participants evaluate the content of the reports. According to Gatekeeper 2, he met with principals and coordinators when necessary to offer himself as a resource in efforts to address the weaknesses highlighted in the evaluation report. Both gatekeepers noted that they believed that SLC coordinators shared the evaluation findings with the lead teachers at their respective sites.

The two gatekeepers noted that it was the responsibility of the SLC lead teachers to share evaluation findings with their SLC teachers. Gatekeeper 1 indicated that generally, however, SLC teachers did not know what to do with the findings. She noted that "they don't really want to" use findings and "they don't really take the feedback that's given to them to make changes."

Teachers who knew how to use data (i.e. evaluation findings) or were interested in doing so were generally promoted to leadership roles, such as being lead teachers because "that's what leaders do." Thus, there were no expectations at the district level for non-lead SLC teachers to actually use the evaluation findings, although Gatekeeper 1 wanted these teachers to have an interest and to do so. Gatekeeper 1 further noted that teachers who did not hold a leadership position generally saw the administrators as those who should use evaluation findings to make programmatic changes. According to Gatekeeper 1, these teachers did not see themselves as active participants, but rather, they acted like passive ones who waited for supervisors to tell them what to do. Gatekeeper 2 simply noted that the evaluation report was a public document and that non-lead SLC teachers were informed at the discretion of the school administration and SLC coordinators, as he was not in the practice of inundating email boxes.

Both gatekeepers placed a lot of responsibility on SLC lead teachers for disseminating information about evaluation findings to non-lead teachers at their respective sites. As previously mentioned, Gatekeeper 1 went into details as to why it might not have been critical for teachers to know about findings and why teachers may not have used the findings anyway. This was due to her experience that teachers who were more likely to use data are generally promoted to higher positions. The literature does support this claim (York-Barr and Duke, 2004). As will be noted later in this chapter, survey and focus group data does suggest that lead teachers were more likely to use findings but the data does not identify whether this was a cause or an effect. It is known that while Gatekeeper 1 wanted teachers to use findings, there was no expectation, as has already been discussed in this chapter, for this to have taken place. Gatekeeper 1 argued that teachers expected administrators to use the evaluation findings, as was also supported by the focus group data which pointed to teachers indicating that it was not in

their place to use findings. While this might have been the case traditionally, this initiative required active participation by teachers. Without expectation from district- or site-based administrators or themselves, then evaluation use was not going to take place at the teacher-level.

Gatekeeper 2 did not seem to place too much concern on the lack of evaluation findings awareness on the part of non-lead teachers. Instead, Gatekeeper 2 attempted to establish a culture in which leadership staff looked upon data, including evaluation findings, favorably and used it for programmatic improvements. He also moved to establish loose accountability measures for keeping SLC coordinator accountable for using evaluation findings for SLC development. It is unknown whether his strategy was to influence leadership staff so that they in turn would influence non-lead teachers. Thus, while his efforts affected SLC coordinators and lead teachers, they did not seem to have trickled down to non-lead teachers. Gatekeeper 2 was clear that he informed the key players about the findings and left it to site administrators to inform teachers. Clearly, informing non-lead teachers was not a priority.

In general, one can conclude that Gatekeeper 1 focused on ***awareness*** of findings by a broader audience while Gatekeeper 2 focused on ***use*** of findings but only with those at the top of the hierarchy (principals, SLC coordinator, and lead teachers). In both cases, however, there was little to no efforts in getting non-lead teachers to understand and use findings. Ironically, there was concern with the lack of teacher buy-in of the program throughout all five years of the initiative.

Recap. Gatekeeper 1 and Gatekeeper 2 defined their philosophies on evaluation through their descriptions of their perceptions, experiences, and interactions. Their perception of the SLC initiative evaluation was fairly similar but the context of the program under each of their

leadership did differ. In general, their perception of the evaluation as merely a grant requirement evolved quickly to a realization that the evaluation was meant to study the development and impact of SLCs. Perhaps the only evident difference in the gatekeepers' perception of the evaluation was that Gatekeeper 2 considered the evaluators "partners." Gatekeeper 1 did not refer to the evaluators as "partners" but, instead, indicated that their role was to provide an assessment of the SLC initiative. Both gatekeepers acknowledged that while they expected staff at the school sites to use the evaluation findings to move the SLC initiative forward, the organizational structure of the district and schools precluded them from establishing accountability measures with regard to use. With the exception of the large, structurally-based grant requirements, the school site staff had the autonomy to decide if and how the evaluation findings were to be used.

While both gatekeepers shared similarities in their interactions with staff, there were also some notable differences. Gatekeeper 1's interactions with staff varied more than Gatekeeper 2's given that the program evolved substantially throughout her leadership. It went from a decentralized structure, in which she supported staff at their sites, to a more cohesive, centralized structure in which she brought SLC leadership staff from all three sites to the district office. While Gatekeeper 2 continued with the centralized approach he inherited from Gatekeeper 1, his responsibilities grew with the addition of a new grant and, as a result, he supported more SLC coordinators than Gatekeeper 1. The gatekeepers emphasized different agenda items. Gatekeeper 1 focused primarily on professional development on SLC theory, SLC practice, administrative procedures associated with the implementation, evaluation needs, and general leadership development. Gatekeeper 2, on the other hand, focused on action plans, institutional goals, data analysis/use, professional development on core subjects, evaluation needs, and

strengthening career pathways. While each had two formal discussions with SLC leadership staff on evaluation findings, Gatekeeper 2 provided more depth in one of those formal discussions. Furthermore, while both reported sharing the results with principals, SLC coordinators, and lead teachers, only Gatekeeper 1 arranged for the evaluators to share the results with a broader audience (each school's professional learning community and the school board). Both gatekeepers described the sites' autonomy in terms of raising awareness about the evaluation findings. While both expected lead teachers to share the findings with other teachers, they were pessimistic about whether this was actually accomplished. Both gatekeepers indicated that the autonomy at each site precluded them from enforcing use of the evaluation findings, unless, according to Gatekeeper 2, the goals of the grant were being blatantly ignored or violated.

Section 2: Gatekeepers' Influence on Potential Evaluation Users

3. During the leadership of each gatekeeper, what were the differences in evaluation awareness and use at the different levels of organizational structure? By school site administrators? By school lead teachers? By teachers not holding a leadership position?

4. During the leadership of each gatekeeper, was there variation by school on differences in evaluation awareness and use at the different levels of organizational structure? At the school site administrative level, did each school share a similar pattern of evaluation awareness and use irrespective of gatekeeper? At the level of lead teachers? At the teachers not holding a leadership position level?

In order to explore evaluation use, it is first critical to understand the state of evaluation awareness among staff. It is foolish to expect stakeholders to use the evaluation to make informed decisions about the SLC initiative if they were unaware of it and/or had no knowledge of the evaluation findings. Therefore, the results for Research Question 3 and Research Question 4 presented in this section are organized into three subsections: evaluation awareness, awareness of evaluation findings, and evaluation use. Doing so will provide a needed reference point regarding awareness about the evaluation and its findings to then allow for a more in-depth

analysis on evaluation use. Data from surveys, interview/focus group, and document review were analyzed to address this section. The results are presented within each subsection first in aggregated form and then disaggregated by school. To avoid being repetitive, the qualitative data from interview and focus groups will be presented once in disaggregated form but conclusions will be drawn in both aggregated and disaggregated format to properly address the two research questions that comprise this section.

Evaluation Awareness

It is first important to get a sense of the staff's perception and awareness of the ongoing SLC evaluation before reviewing how they learned about findings and how they used the evaluation. Data from surveys and interviews/focus groups were analyzed to get an understanding of the level of evaluation awareness among staff. The staff survey first explored evaluation awareness issues in Fall 2007 (Year 3), the last year of Gatekeeper 1's term, and again in Spring 2010 (Year 5), during the leadership of Gatekeeper 2. Focus group and interviews on the issue were only conducted in Year 5. Evaluation attitudes were only measured in Year 3.

The survey results highlight that in Year 3 there was a general positive attitude towards the evaluation as approximately 215 out of 269, or 80%, of staff (teachers, counselors, and administrators) survey respondents agreed that programs could use evaluation to learn how to be even more effective. All four administrators who took the survey were in agreement, followed closely by teachers (80% of 246). Unfortunately, lead teacher attitude towards evaluation was unknown as leadership position was not identified in this survey. Lead teachers could only identify themselves as teachers. The main difference across schools with regard to attitudes towards the evaluation was that DHS (69% of 65) had the least positive teachers. This finding is aligned with how Gatekeeper 1 described DHS staff – resistant as having "had a history of SLCs

that had failed." Gatekeeper 2 also reported having to fight a negative mentality at DHS. In general, administrators were more positive than teachers, at least at DHS (n=1) and WHS (n=3). Given low participation, however, these results are not very reliable. Evaluation attitudes were aligned with the school's organizational structure, at least at DHS and WHS. This could not be verified at BHS as administrators did not participate in the survey. This was the only measure of evaluation attitudes that took place throughout the lifetime of the grant. These findings reflect the attitudes present in Year 3, the last year of Gatekeeper 1's leadership, and suggest that evaluation attitudes were aligned with the organization's social structure. Administrators, at the top of the hierarchy, were the most positive about the evaluation.

The survey findings for Year 3 and Year 5 seem to suggest that Gatekeeper 1 shared more similarities than differences with Gatekeeper 2 with regard to evaluation awareness. Under both gatekeepers, close to 23% of staff remained unaware of the evaluation at the end of their leadership term. Under both gatekeepers, administrators were the most aware while teachers were the least aware. Forty out of 171 teachers (23%) were unaware in Year 5, two percent less more than in Year 3 (40 out of 160). This seems high, especially considering that the initiative was a bottom-up reform. As for administrators, all three in Year 3 were aware of the evaluation but in Year 5, one of the ten administrators who took the survey reported not knowing about it. It is possible that greater survey participation from administrators in Year 5 contributed to this minor difference. One would have expected awareness to improve throughout the years and, therefore, it is incomprehensible why 21% of staff in Year 5 would not know about the evaluation in the final year of the initiative.

Administrators and lead teachers shared similar patterns under both gatekeepers. Under Gatekeeper 2, lead teachers (86%) and administrators (90%) seemed fairly close in their

awareness, albeit administrators reporting a slightly higher percentage that may have been influenced by lower survey participation. Lead teacher awareness under Gatekeeper 1 was more challenging to put into perspective as their survey results, as reported in Year 5, could not be compared to Year 3. This, of course, is due to no lead teacher identification in Year 3. However, in Year 5, those who reported having served as lead teachers (100%) under Gatekeeper 1 were just as aware as administrators (100%). This is consistent with what Gatekeeper 1 reported with regard to how she interacted with school site staff. As discussed earlier in this chapter, Gatekeeper 1 met consistently with school site SLC leadership teams, comprised of lead teachers and administrators. Thus, she shared evaluation-related information equally with lead teachers and administrators at these site meetings. This administrative approach may help explain the similar and high percentage of awareness among administrators and lead teachers under Gatekeeper 1 and Gatekeeper 2, as it is logical that those who learned about the evaluation during Gatekeeper 1's leadership carried that information into Gatekeeper 2's leadership period. This information carryover may apply more so to administrators who experience less turnover than lead teachers. Thus, the only significant difference between the gatekeepers was that lead teachers serving under Gatekeeper 2 seemed to be less aware than their counterparts serving under Gatekeeper 1. There was no data to explain this slight decline.

In Year 5, during the leadership of Gatekeeper 2, staff were also asked to indicate when they first learned about the SLC evaluation. Regardless of position, as Table 4.1 illustrates, more staff reported learning about the evaluation during Gatekeeper 1's leadership than that of Gatekeeper 2, as was the case across schools. This may not necessarily be related to Gatekeeper 1's efforts in raising evaluation awareness, but, instead, it may have been due to the fact that staff in general were more likely to have learned about the evaluation during the earlier stages of the

initiative. This is the period when staff may have first learned about the initiative and may have participated in evaluation-related activities, such as the survey or focus groups. There was more room for growth with regard to evaluation awareness during Gatekeeper 1's leadership. Gatekeeper 2 must have inherited staff members who were either not interested in learning about the initiative or with whom it may have been more difficult to communicate. This may explain the low percentage of staff who learned about the evaluation during Gatekeeper 2's leadership. Interestingly, it is worth noting that the highest percentage of those having learned about the evaluation during Gatekeeper 2's leadership were lead teachers who served within that period. In focus groups discussions in Year 5, all lead teachers reported being aware of the evaluation. This hints at a relationship in which leadership position may have influenced awareness. This may also help explain the exceptionally high percentage of awareness reported during Gatekeeper 1's leadership by lead teachers who served within that period. It is unknown why 14% of lead teachers under Gatekeeper 2 reported never knowing about the evaluation. It is understandable that some staff members could not recall exactly when they first learned about the evaluation, as the initiative had been around for some years.

Table 4.1. Percentage Distribution of Initial Awareness of Evaluation by Survey Participants' Position.

	N	Gatekeeper 1 Leadership	Gatekeeper 2 Leadership	Can't Recall	Never Knew
Administrator	10	50%	0	40%	10%
G1 SLC LT/Coord	7	100%	0	0	0
G2 SLC LT/Coord	21	29%	24%	33%	14%
Both SLC LT/Coord	10	90%	0	10%	0
Teacher	171	35%	6%	36%	23%
Other*	24	33%	8%	25%	33%
Total	243	39%	7%	33%	21%

**Other includes administrative assistants, counselors, technicians, and nurse.*

The Year 5 disaggregated data showed some moderate differences across schools, one of which was also found in Year 3. First, BHS staff were the most aware of the evaluation under Gatekeeper 1 (81% of 62) and Gatekeeper 2 (82% of 74). Secondly, WHS staff reported the least awareness under Gatekeeper 1 (72% of 75 aware) but under Gatekeeper 2, DHS staff was the least informed (72% of 57 aware). The low percentage at DHS can be explained by the low number of staff who reported positive attitudes (67%) towards the evaluation. Alkin et al. (1982) noted that the interest and attitude of those responsible for making decisions play a critical role in determining use. One can speculate that interest and attitude also affected evaluation awareness. The weak approach employed to inform staff was fairly consistent across schools. In Year 5 focus groups discussions, teachers reported being aware of the evaluation primarily as a result of their own survey participation and administering the survey to their students. Specifically, when asked if they were aware of the evaluation, a BHS teacher mentioned that "there was a survey last year" while another one indicated "and, there was this [focus group]." At DHS, one teacher mentioned that she "gave [surveys] to [her] kids and [she] did one, so yeah, [she] was aware of [the evaluation]." One teacher, at DHS, was able to describe the situation accurately by stating that, "Oh, I know that we're, we were on a grant from a few years ago and I know that we do our yearly evaluations." Thus, in focus groups, only one teacher in Year 5 seemed to have been properly informed about the evaluation. As expected, all principals reported in interviews being aware of the formal evaluation. Because survey participation among administrators was so low in disaggregated form, it is difficult to conclude that awareness followed the organization's social structure under both gatekeepers. It appeared that this might have been the case at BHS and DHS.

When looking closely at the evaluation awareness of those who served as SLC lead teachers, survey results seem to suggest that they were more likely to find out about it during the leadership of the gatekeeper under whom they served. Results from a one-way ANOVA identified a statistically significant difference, $F(2, 24) = 13.29$, $p<0.0001$, between Gatekeeper 1 lead teachers when compared to Gatekeeper 2 lead teachers and between Gatekeeper 2 lead teachers and the lead teachers who served under both gatekeepers. In general, lead teachers serving under Gatekeeper 2 were likely to have found out about the evaluation approximately 1.9 years later ($p<0.000$) than those serving under Gatekeeper 1 and 1.6 years later ($p<0.001$) than those serving under both gatekeepers. Thus, those who served as lead teachers under Gatekeeper 1, were more likely to have learned about the evaluation within the first three years of the SLC initiative. This seems to suggest that having a leadership role increased the likelihood of awareness as teachers were more likely to find out about the evaluation once they became leaders. This finding also applied to WHS. Results from a one-way ANOVA suggested that there was also a statistically significant difference, $F(2, 6) = 11.96$, $p<0.0081$, between Gatekeeper 1 WHS lead teachers when compared to Gatekeeper 2 WHS lead teachers and between WHS Gatekeeper 2 lead teachers and the WHS lead teachers who served under both gatekeepers. In general, WHS lead teachers serving under Gatekeeper 2 were likely to have found out about the evaluation approximately 2.3 years later ($p<0.011$) than those serving under Gatekeeper 1 and 2.1 years later ($p<0.017$) than those serving under both gatekeepers. There was no statistically significant difference with regard to the other two schools. However, the pattern suggesting that awareness improved when a leadership status was acquired may be of practical significance at each of the schools.

These results just discussed provided some details of when evaluation awareness was acquired but, to dig deeper, it is important to investigate how they learned this information. Who was responsible for raising awareness? And, how was this done? In Year 5 only, staff who knew about the evaluation were asked to indicate how they learned about it. A total of 114 staff members responded to this open-ended item. They addressed it by identifying either the person who informed them about the evaluation or the manner in which they learned about it. With regard to who informed them, staff identified the SLC coordinator, lead teacher, and administrator as the source of information while the top three most popular responses with regard to how staff learned were meetings, through participation in the survey/focus group, and e-mail. It was unexpected that staff learned about the evaluation as a result of their participation in the survey/focus group.

Not surprisingly, staff identified the top three positions in the organizational structure and the manner in which those individuals are most likely to communicate as the primary source of information about the evaluation. The fact that the SLC coordinator was the most common response is consistent with the duties associated with that position, which included dealing with the logistics of the evaluation's data collection activities. The SLC coordinator and administrators were popular responses among teachers, as were finding out at a meeting or through survey/focus group participation. Lead teachers were not a source for teachers, which is unexpected given that lead teachers were responsible for disseminating SLC-related information to teachers on their teams. The SLC coordinator and meetings were the main source for administrators and lead teachers serving under Gatekeeper 2. Lead teachers serving under Gatekeeper 1 identified the SLC coordinator, meetings, and e-mail as the source for their

knowledge about the evaluation. It is important to know how staff learned about the evaluation because, most likely, these were the ways in which they also learn about the findings.

Disaggregated results highlight that schools differed in terms of whom staff identified as most influential in raising awareness about the evaluation. The results suggest that staff at BHS placed greater importance on administrators and meetings, those at DHS on lead teachers and meetings, and WHS identified the SLC coordinator as the most influential in raising awareness about the evaluation. The SLC coordinator was the most important to lead teachers at WHS under both Gatekeeper 1 and Gatekeeper 2. Under Gatekeeper 2, WHS lead teachers also learned about the evaluation at meetings. For lead teachers at BHS, administrators were the most influential during the period under Gatekeeper 2's leadership; no one was identified during Gatekeeper 1's administration. Because no one was identified at DHS under the leadership of either gatekeeper, it is difficult to speculate who played that prominent role for lead teachers there. A critical point suggested by these findings is that there was no clear manner in which WHS teachers and BHS and DHS lead teachers learned about the evaluation, suggesting that perhaps staff learned about it randomly without guidance of a strong leader. Another point is that given the lengthy sessions Gatekeeper 2 arranged for discussion of findings, it is inexplicable why DHS lead teachers did not report learning about the evaluation through meetings or why more BHS teachers did not do so.

Recap. This subsection served as the first step in the study of evaluation experiences among staff. Specifically, it aimed to shed light on the state of evaluation awareness district-wide and at each individual school. The percentage of unaware staff at the end of Gatekeeper 2's leadership was fairly consistent with the percentage of unaware staff at end of the leadership of Gatekeeper 1. Survey results under both gatekeepers suggested that evaluation attitudes and awareness were

aligned with the school's organizational structure – with administrators being the most informed and teachers the least. In focus groups, only one teacher under Gatekeeper 2 seemed to have been properly informed about the evaluation. In Year 5, all lead teachers serving under Gatekeeper 1 indicated being aware of the evaluation while almost all of those serving under Gatekeeper 2 reported the same. Of statistical significance was that lead teachers serving under Gatekeeper 2 learned about the evaluation 1.9 year later than those serving under Gatekeeper 1 and 1.6 years later than those serving under both gatekeepers. This suggested a relationship between an SLC leadership role and the likelihood of evaluation awareness. Administrators and the SLC coordinator were identified as the source of information for teachers but, ironically, lead teachers were not. The two most popular responses with regard to how teachers learned about the evaluation were meeting and through survey/focus group participation. To conclude, both gatekeepers shared a similar pattern of evaluation awareness among staff, albeit with just more staff members reporting awareness during Gatekeeper 1's leadership, when there was more room for growth given the early stage of the initiative.

There were minor differences across schools with regard to attitudes towards the evaluation and awareness about it. As noted with the aggregated results, evaluation attitudes and awareness were aligned with the school's organizational structure fairly consistently during the leadership of both gatekeepers. The Year 5 disaggregated data showed some moderate differences across schools, one of which was also found in Year 3. First, BHS staff were the most aware of the evaluation under Gatekeeper 1and Gatekeeper 2. Secondly, WHS staff reported the least awareness under Gatekeeper 1 but under Gatekeeper 2, DHS staff was the least informed. There was a pattern suggesting that awareness improved at each of the schools when leadership status was acquired. Of statistical significance was that lead teachers at WHS serving

under Gatekeeper 2 were more likely to have found out about the evaluation 2.3 years later than those serving under Gatekeeper 1 and 2.1 year later than those serving under both gatekeepers. Lastly, staff at BHS placed greater importance on administrators, those at DHS on lead teachers, and WHS identified the SLC coordinator as the most influential in raising awareness about the evaluation. Meetings were the primary source for learning about the evaluation at all three schools.

Awareness of Evaluation Findings

After learning about the staff's level of awareness, it is important to proceed by examining the results for their knowledge of evaluation findings. Data from staff surveys and interviews/focus groups were analyzed to get an understanding of the level of awareness of findings among staff. The staff survey first explored this issue in Spring 2008 (Year 3), the last year of Gatekeeper 1's term, and again in Spring 2010 (Year 5), during the leadership of Gatekeeper 2. Focus group and interviews on this issue were only conducted in Year 5.

The survey findings for Year 3 and Year 5 seem to suggest that staff experiences under Gatekeeper 1 differed from those under Gatekeeper 2. Under Gatekeeper 1, 56% of the 159 survey respondents indicated being unaware of the evaluation results, while only 28% of 264 reported the same under Gatekeeper 2. Items were worded slightly different but were comparable in asking survey participants whether they knew about the evaluation findings. Like with the evaluation in general, administrators (33% of 3) were more likely to be aware of findings than teachers (23% of 154) under Gatekeeper 1, as also the case with administrators (80% of 10) and teachers (69% of 181) under Gatekeeper 2. Ironically, of the lead teachers, only some (33% of 21) of those serving under Gatekeeper 2 reported never knowing about the evaluation findings. It is unknown why awareness improved among staff in general under

Gatekeeper 2 but deteriorated among lead teachers. One can speculate that Gatekeeper 2's push at the SLC coordinator level to establishing a data-friendly staff culture may have led to improved awareness of evaluation findings among teachers. This will be explored in more detail shortly in the discussion of interview and focus group data.

Table 4.2 illustrates the years staff were aware of the findings. Lead teachers serving during Gatekeeper 2's leadership did report significantly higher percentages of awareness in Year 4 than other staff. High awareness among lead teachers during this time is also supported, as previously discussed, by the findings from interviews and focus groups. Lead teachers serving under Gatekeeper 1, however, shared high percentages with administrators and, in Year 3, also with teachers who later served as leaders under Gatekeeper 2. It is possible that awareness of findings were fairly similar among administrators and lead teachers due to the manner in which Gatekeeper 1 interacted with staff. As mentioned previously, Gatekeeper 1 attended SLC leadership team meetings at the school sites. These were attended by administrators, SLC coordinators, and lead teachers. Thus, if findings were discussed, they were discussed in the presence of both administrators and lead teachers. Unfortunately, it is difficult to explain the results with more accuracy given that some staff members could not recall when they learned of evaluation findings. Also, because they were thinking back retroactively, one would have to question how well staff recalled when they first learned about the findings. Given that evaluation findings for Year 1 were not disseminated until Year 2, one has to wonder why Year 1 was selected as the period in which some learned about the findings. These limitations will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5. In general, however, lead teachers reported higher percentages in the years in which they served as leaders.

Table 4.2. Year of Awareness of Evaluation Findings by Survey Participants' Position.

	N	Gatekeeper 1 Leadership			Gatekeeper 2 Leadership	Can't Recall	Never Knew
		Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4		
Administrator	10	20%	30%	20%	10%	30%	20%
G1 SLC LT/Coord	8	25%	13%	0	0	38%	0
G2 SLC LT/Coord	21	5%	10%	29%	24%	14%	33%
Both SLC LT/Coord	13	8%	31%	38%	38%	0	0
Teacher	181	9%	8%	7%	10%	33%	31%
Other	31	13%	13%	13%	16%	16%	29%
Total	264	10%	11%	11%	13%	28%	28%

Participants could select more than one year so total percentages do not add to 100%.

The pattern that emerged from these findings suggests that there was less awareness of findings than the evaluation in general under both gatekeepers and that the organizational structure might have once again had an influence as more administrators than teachers reported awareness. It is clear that at the mid-point of the initiative, during the last year of Gatekeeper 1's leadership, awareness of evaluation findings was extremely low. It should be noted that survey participation among administrators, unfortunately, was fairly low in Year 3. While awareness improved substantially under Gatekeeper 2, it should be noted that teachers were still the most unaware. This should not have been the case given that the initiative was a bottom-up reform.

Under both gatekeepers, the pattern for the disaggregated results did not deviate much from what was reported district-wide. On average, 30% more staff were aware under Gatekeeper 2 at each school than under Gatekeeper 1. Important points to highlight are that under both gatekeepers, BHS teachers (27% of 56 in Year 3; 77% in Year 5) were the most aware of findings and those at DHS (71% of 24 in Year 3; 58% in Year 5) were the least aware. Both gatekeepers noticed this negativity among DHS staff. Gatekeeper 1 attributed it to the fact that "[DHS] had a history of SLCs that had failed and now had to restart again." Gatekeeper 2 described his challenge in working with DHS as "fighting a mentality that this reform is tied to a

grant and not tied to what's best for the kids." Thus, both gatekeepers were aware of the resistance to SLCs, and presumably to the evaluation, at DHS. In Year 5, WHS administrators were the most unaware of findings when compared to their counterparts in other schools. No comparison could be made to Year 3 as participation by administrators was extremely low. In general, lead teachers across schools serving under Gatekeeper 1 reported learning about the findings in the years in which they served as leaders. For BHS and DHS, it was also the case that those serving under Gatekeeper 2 learned of the findings in the later years of the grant. It was difficult to assess the organizational structure's influence as the number of administrators per school was so low. Thus, it can be concluded that awareness of findings grew from the end of Gatekeeper 1's leadership term to the end of Gatekeeper 2's leadership consistently across schools and that BHS staff were the most aware and those at DHS the least.

In Year 5, during the leadership of Gatekeeper 2, interviews and focus group discussions helped explain awareness among staff as it shed light on the dissemination process of the evaluation findings. In Year 5, the BHS and DHS SLC coordinators reported having shared the evaluation findings with their entire staff. The BHS SLC coordinator, who served under the leadership of both gatekeepers and presumably had the same procedure in place, stated the following about the findings:

> Usually, when they come in, we'll send them out via e-mail to the whole staff. Whether or not they read, that is another story. But we do send it out… It's put out there. We're very transparent. When the information comes in, we put it out. And whatever they do with it, they do with it. We hope that they skim through it.

At DHS, the SLC coordinator serving only under Gatekeeper 2 reported something similar:

> And I do distribute it to the entire staff… Some choose to read it, some choose not to read it. Unfortunately, you know, we haven't been able to address it at a faculty meeting. I mean I think that would be the… optimum.

The WHS SLC coordinator, who also served under both gatekeepers, and thus presumably followed the same protocol under both, reported that principals, counselors, and lead teachers received and discussed the findings but lamented that "unfortunately" the evaluation results were not formally discussed at staff meetings. Thus, while they were discussed at the site, they were done so in a "limited scope" by a select few. The interviews with the SLC coordinators revealed that while the findings may have been disseminated to the majority of staff, only those at the top of the SLC social structure (SLC coordinator, principals, and lead teaches) benefitted from serious discussions about them. It is no surprise, then, that in Year 5, 28% of the 264 staff members who took the survey reported never knowing about evaluation findings during the five-year period of the grant. Two of the 10 administrator respondents noted that they had no knowledge of the findings, a percentage better than what (non-lead) teachers indicated (31% of 181) but slighter lower than what the lead teachers (17% of 42) reported.

There was consensus among SLC coordinators that findings were discussed with lead teachers. Data from focus groups in Year 5 seemed to support the survey results that suggested greater awareness among lead teachers when compared to non-lead SLC teachers. In focus groups, lead teachers confirmed that they reviewed the findings. It was evident that lead teachers learned about the evaluation findings as a result of the duties associated with their leadership role. A BHS lead teacher, for example, acknowledged having "just seen [the report] this year as a lead teacher." While all lead teachers reported being aware of the evaluation findings, they described different ways in which they learned about them. Lead teachers at BHS reported being aware of the evaluation findings having reviewed their school's section at a district meeting. They also discussed them at a site SLC meeting among all lead teachers. One BHS lead teacher did not read the report but indicated having a "rough idea of the results" from talking to the SLC

coordinator about the findings. DHS lead teachers were also aware of the findings having reviewed them "at the very beginning of the year" at a district meeting. WHS lead teachers reported being aware of the evaluation findings having found out about them at a staff meeting. Thus, all lead teachers were aware of some evaluation findings and indicated having reviewed them in an SLC-related meeting.

While lead teachers across schools mentioned exposure to the findings, it is unclear what information about the evaluation results they understood or retained, at least at DHS. A DHS lead teacher summarized that although he could not necessarily "rattle them [findings] off," he was certain lead teachers "had been made aware." One DHS teacher noted having read the report last year, but another one revealed that she "didn't see the document so that was just a little bit of I guess you could say hearsay." Another DHS lead teacher elaborated by stating that "we need to do this, we need to do that, that's how it was related to me." Thus, only one DHS lead teacher revealed having actually read the report. As previously mentioned, all SLC coordinators mentioned sharing the findings with lead teachers but only two specified discussing the evaluation results with the SLC leaders. It appeared that while lead teachers across schools were aware of the evaluation findings, they may not have necessarily read the evaluation report.

The survey data previously discussed suggests that lead teachers across schools did not disseminate or discuss evaluation findings with their SLC teachers. Focus group data supports the finding that suggests that teachers were not informed about the evaluation results. The burden of sharing and discussing the findings with teachers was placed on lead teachers, who were, according the DHS SLC coordinator, "supposed to take the information to their SLCs." Similarly, SLC coordinators at BHS did note that the findings were e-mailed but that staff had the discretion on what to do with that information. While not all lead teachers mentioned

whether they shared findings with their SLC teachers, two at BHS acknowledged not having done so. One simply stated that "I have not shared it with anybody." A different BHS lead teacher admitted the following:

> I think it would be hard to ask all the other teachers below me to read it or reflect on it. But maybe pulling out something that stands out, some positives and some negatives from previous years, maybe sharing that with them would help them understand where we need change.

At DHS, lead teachers did not mention sharing evaluation findings with teachers in their SLC teams. One WHS lead teacher did report sharing evaluation findings with her SLC teachers but only "positive information, and not negative" to make teachers "feel more positive about their own academy." This action is not unexpected given that the evaluation literature notes that middlemen have a tendency to leave out negative findings when sharing the information with subordinates (Eaton, 1969; Guba, 1975). Given the dissemination process, it is no surprise, then that all teachers reported in Year 5 focus group discussions that they did not know about the evaluation findings. Thus, despite efforts reported by the SLC coordinators about disseminating evaluation results to all teachers, Year 5 focus group data support the survey results that suggest minimal awareness of the evaluation findings among non-lead SLC teachers.

While non-lead teachers at BHS were interested in learning about the evaluation findings, they admitted not being informed. When asked if they aware of the findings, one BHS teacher replied "no" while another stated "no, but do tell, I'm listening." Other BHS teachers, however, could not assert with authority whether administrators had distributed any information to them.

> "I'm sure it's here. Has it been put in front of us? Not that I can say that I saw it. I'm not going to say no…. I can't necessarily say that it's been handed to me."
> "I remember an e-mail from [the SLC coordinator] saying if anybody's interested in seeing the results, come over."

There were two references to "a survey last year" as evidence that they were aware of the evaluation but not the findings and one teacher also mentioned having participated in "this," the focus group. No one, however, could discuss the findings.

A concern that arose at BHS was that lack of information about findings was leading to misconceptions. A BHS teacher reported in the focus group that because "they keep having surveys, but I never know what the result is, but we keep having SLCs, so I can only assume the result is good." This may be a logical conclusion, albeit wrong of course, for teachers to make if they are aware of the ongoing evaluation but do not see any programmatic change. Another BHS teacher also mentioned being intimidated about reading through the evaluation findings. He noted that while interested in knowing the evaluation results:

> I'm not a researcher like you. So a lot of times, you'll get a piece of paper with all of these numbers on it, and I just want to know, what's the take-home story? You need to simplify it for me, and that way, I can make more sense of it, instead of just a page full of numbers. That's just me.

Perhaps intimidation might have also discouraged other BHS teachers from reading through any information handed to them that pertained to the evaluation. Leviton and Hughes (1981) did document that use is less likely to take place "if the incentive to read difficult reports is low."[5] Hence, previous experience may have been a factor precluding teachers from reading about the evaluation findings. The comments made by this BHS teacher also allude to the habit of confusing what a formal evaluation is with raw data, as mentioned previously in the discussion of the data use training conducted by Gatekeeper 2. It is possible that teachers may not be informed of what a formal evaluation means and may associate evaluation findings with raw data (i.e. test scores).

[5] Leviton and Hughes (1981), p. 538.

Teachers at DHS were aware of the evaluation and data collection activities but reported never having seen or heard about the evaluation findings. This lack of awareness is despite the fact that the DHS SLC coordinator e-mailed the evaluation findings to the entire school staff and instructed lead teachers to share the reports with SLC teachers. Not one lead teacher at DHS mentioned having share the findings with their SLC teachers. In his defense, one teacher did report that "in all fairness, I might have seen parts of [the report] or excerpts from it, but I never saw an actual report or anything." While a DHS teacher mentioned being aware of the findings, s/he confused the question about the formal evaluation and answered with an informal evaluation in mind. This informal evaluation conducted by her/his SLC colleagues led to a three-day summer workshop in which they "went through the evaluation numbers – attendance, behavior, and academics." This tendency to confuse evaluation with achievement testing data is not new (Lyon et al., 1978).

Only one teacher at WHS stated that "no, I haven't" received the findings. The rest indicated that they could not recall whether or not the evaluation findings were ever shared with them. The following are very telling comments made by WHS teachers when asked if they were aware of the evaluation findings:

> "I'm not gonna say no. Maybe I have been given it."
> "It probably was made available to us and it was one of those pick it up and read it if you want kind of thing."
> "We get it told to us, but you know, if you're not really involved in it you sat there and listened going, 'that's nice, I had nothing to do with it, but okay.'"
> "I'm on the fence."
> "I might have."
> "It might have been at one of the meetings; it would be something you just go 'oh, okay.'"
> "I'm sure it has been made available to us."

One teacher summarized for the group that because they were not directly involved with SLCs, they did not pay attention to SLC administrative issues at faculty meetings. Regardless, these WHS non-lead teachers had no knowledge of the evaluation findings.

Even if given the benefit of the doubt and it is assumed that teachers at each school were indeed provided with the findings, it is clear that they did not read anything handed to them nor paid attention if they were relayed to them at a meeting. While some teachers were clearly interested in knowing about them, they had no knowledge of the findings. Survey results in Year 5 support that there was low awareness among teachers as 31% of 181 reported never knowing about any findings. In general, focus group data seemed a bit contradictory. On the one hand, teachers were interested in learning about the evaluation findings but, on the other hand, they could not recall with certainty whether the findings were indeed shared with them. This seems to suggest that perhaps how the findings were relayed to them played a critical role in retention of the information. This point will be explored in detail shortly in the discussion of survey results pertaining to how staff learned about evaluation findings.

Interview data in Year 5 suggested that administrators had the highest degree of awareness of the evaluation findings among staff. The BHS principal was aware of the findings, as the report was "e-mailed to me… at some point earlier in the year and I remember reading sections of it." While he chose not to discuss it as a group with his staff, he informed them that school-wide goals were based on the evaluation findings, of which they should have knowledge given that the SLC coordinator disseminated the report to all staff. Specifically, the BHS principal noted that "this is an issue… this is why we're addressing it… based on the following data… we did quote the [evaluation] interview… findings." The principal at DHS received a hard copy from Gatekeeper 2 and "we discuss it, and then it's discussed with the lead teachers."

The DHS SLC coordinator concurred that the evaluation findings were indeed discussed at a lead teachers' meeting but not at a faculty meeting as lead teachers were instead instructed to share the information with their SLC teachers. At WHS, the principal also reported receiving a copy directly from, and discussing it with, Gatekeeper 2. He noted in detail how the process worked:

> I get feedback from [Gatekeeper 2]. 'We've got the report; we've read it. I'm sending you… your section of the report, you may wanna focus on these areas.' The [SLC coordinator] and I sit down and review it, and then we go from there.

Unlike at DHS, the WHS principal deferred to the SLC coordinator to share the evaluation findings with the lead teachers. The WHS principal seemed the least involved in raising awareness about the findings as he only discussed them with the SLC coordinator. The WHS SLC coordinator, thus, had the discretion to share it with the whole staff. At BHS, the principal seemed to use the findings for teacher buy-in while the principal at DHS discussed them with lead teachers. Thus, in general, all principals reported learning about the findings after receiving the report in either hard copy or in an electronic format.

Staff were also asked in an open-ended survey item in Year 5 only, to indicate how they learned about the evaluation findings. Seventy-four staff members responded to this item. As when asked how they first learned about the evaluation, staff also responded to this open-ended item concerning the evaluation findings by identifying either who informed them about the findings or the manner in which they learned about them. In general, the SLC coordinator, lead teacher, and administrator were the individuals identified as the source of information by staff while the top three most popular responses with regard to how staff learned were meetings and e-mails.

As with learning about the evaluation, staff identified the top three positions in the organizational structure as their source for knowing about the findings and the manner in which

those individuals were most likely to communicate with them. The fact that the SLC coordinator was the most common response under both gatekeepers is consistent with the duties associated with that position, which included sharing evaluation findings with lead teachers and, in some cases, the whole staff. Learning about the findings at meetings in Year 5 is also consistent with the manner in which SLC coordinators communicated with staff. Not surprisingly, meetings were the most common response for every staff member group. In focus group discussions, there was consensus among lead teacher that they learned about the findings at meetings, with the district workshop meetings being the most common response. While one would have expected lead teachers to be the most common response among teachers, given that they were responsible for disseminating SLC-related information to their teachers, the SLC coordinator was instead the most popular response in Year 5. In Year 5 focus groups, as noted earlier, only one lead teacher acknowledged having shared positive findings with her SLC staff. In Year 3, lead teachers were a common response among teachers (42% of 36). In interviews, principals at DHS and WHS recalled receiving the evaluation reports directly from the district office from Gatekeeper 2 in hard copy and the principal at BHS reported it was e-mailed to him. As mentioned earlier, a BHS teacher made reference to an e-mail from the SLC coordinator in which he invited staff those interested to visit his office to learn about the findings. In general, these findings suggest that meetings, the SLC coordinator, e-mails, and lead teachers were the most influential sources in raising awareness of the findings.

The disaggregated results highlight that schools differed in terms of who was most influential in raising awareness about the evaluation findings and how that was done. Under both gatekeepers, the SLC coordinator was most influential among staff at BHS and DHS. No such prominent leader emerged at WHS during the term of either gatekeeper, which may suggest

that either a formal structure to disseminate information about the findings was not in place or that weak leaders administered the grant. Among teachers in Year 5, the only deviation was that lead teachers were the most informative at DHS. Across schools, meetings were mentioned the most as the manner in which information concerning the findings was shared with staff at BHS and WHS. At DHS, staff identified many different ways in which they learned about findings without one necessarily developing as a strong reliable source. This may suggest that DHS did not have a formal structure in place to disseminate findings or perhaps there was no interest in knowing about them, as DHS was the site with the least faith in evaluations. In general, two important points came from these disaggregated findings: 1) WHS lacked strong leaders to share information about the findings, and, 2) DHS staff were not interested in learning about the findings or were finding out about them randomly.

In focus groups and interviews in Year 5, lead and non-lead teachers, as well as administrators, shared information about how they learned about the evaluation findings. As mentioned already, it was clear that principals received the evaluation reports directly from the district office either through a hard copy from Gatekeeper 2, as was done at DHS and WHS, or via e-mail at BHS. There was consensus among lead teacher focus group participants at each school that they learned about the findings at SLC-related meetings, as noted earlier in this subsection. Two BHS lead teachers admitted that they learned about the findings but they never actually read the report. As previously discussed, all the non-lead teacher focus group participants at the three sites acknowledged that they never learned about the evaluation findings. Only one lead teacher, which happened to be at WHS, acknowledged having shared positive findings with her SLC staff. As previously mentioned, it was the SLC coordinators at BHS and

DHS who shared the findings with their whole staff but discussed them only with lead teachers. The WHS SLC coordinator only shared them with counselors and lead teachers.

SLC coordinators at DHS and WHS, as previously mentioned, lamented the fact that evaluation findings were not formally discussed at faculty meetings. This could have possibly led to greater awareness of findings among teachers, as survey results point to meetings as the most common way in which aware teachers learned about the findings. And yet, some teachers in focus groups, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, could not recall whether or not findings were indeed shared with them at meetings. This seems to suggest two obstacles in raising awareness about evaluation findings: first, problems with the dissemination process and secondly, the presence of a staff culture that discourages teachers' engagement in program/policy development. Perhaps how the findings were relayed to staff played a critical role in retention of the information. Simply distributing a handout or briefly talking about findings at a meeting may not be enough for teachers to understand and/or retain such information. Engaging in in-depth discussions, as lead teachers did, could have led to more teachers retaining information about the findings. Ultimately, however, if teachers feel the findings do not directly affect them, then they are not going to pay attention when they are being discussed in meetings or read in a handout. If there is no incentive to be engaged, then why bother, especially when there is so much on their plate already? This is a paradox – teachers need to be aware of the findings if they are going to use them but because they have been conditioned to be observers rather than participants in the policy-making process, they have no incentive to learn about them.

Recap. Evaluation awareness of findings did vary by position/role and school under both gatekeepers. The percentage of unaware staff under Gatekeeper 2 was much lower than what was reported by staff under Gatekeeper 1. This was also the pattern for administrators and

teachers, when disaggregating the data. Despite the improvement, focus group data in Year 5 suggests no awareness of findings among teachers. This might have been due to flaws with the dissemination process, as there is evidence that points to lead teachers not sharing the evaluation findings. One can speculate that perhaps Gatekeeper 2's push to have SLC coordinators use findings may have led to them taking a more active role in raising awareness among teachers. Under Gatekeeper 2, the SLC coordinator, lead teachers, and administrators were identified more often as the individuals who raised awareness about evaluation findings. The SLC coordinator was also the most common response under Gatekeeper 1. With the exception of Year 3, lead teachers were not identified as much as expected despite being responsible for disseminating SLC-related information to their teams. The two most popular responses with regard to how teachers learned about the evaluation findings were meetings and e-mail. To conclude, both gatekeepers shared a similar pattern of evaluation findings among staff, with administrators and lead teachers being the most informed and teachers the least. The main difference being that more staff reported awareness of findings during Gatekeeper 2's leadership.

In Year 5, awareness of evaluation findings improved from Year 3 at each school. There was more awareness across groups at BHS than at the other two schools under both gatekeepers. Also, DHS teachers were the least aware under both gatekeepers. Focus group data suggests flaws with the evaluation findings dissemination process across schools as there was evidence suggesting that lead teachers did not share information with teachers. Results varied by school with regard to how staff learned of the evaluation findings. At WHS, staff did not identify one particular individual as being responsible for raising awareness, which may suggest either a lack of a formal structure to disseminate information or the presence of weak leaders. The SLC coordinator clearly played an important role in raising awareness at BHS and DHS. Meetings

were mentioned the most at BHS and WHS as the place where information concerning the findings was shared with staff. At DHS, there was no evident way in which the findings came to light or a particular person who shared information about them. This may suggest that staff learned randomly or that there was no formal structure in place to disseminate findings.

Evaluation Use

It is easier to get an idea of how prepared staff were to use evaluation results after getting a sense of their awareness of both the evaluation in general and its findings. Data from staff surveys and interviews/focus groups were analyzed to get an understanding of the level of evaluation use among staff. The staff survey first explored evaluation use in Spring 2008 (Year 3), the last year of Gatekeeper 1's term, and again in Spring 2010 (Year 5), during the leadership of Gatekeeper 2. Focus group and interviews on this issue were only conducted in Year 5.

Survey results seem to suggest that evaluation use was more prevalent under Gatekeeper 2 than Gatekeeper 1. In Year 3, the survey item inquired if decisions were made on SLC implementation based on the evaluation results. This last year of Gatekeeper 1's leadership, 44% of 147 staff members reported not having made any decisions regarding SLCs based on the results and an additional 42% indicated that the item simply did not apply to them. When asked if findings were used to inform decisions pertaining to their own SLCs, 63% of 65 staff members indicated that evaluation use had not taken place. Thus, depending on what type of use was envisioned, 86% to 63% of staff under Gatekeeper 1 reported not having used the findings to make informed decisions, higher than the 56% of 264 under Gatekeeper 2.

While teachers reported a similar rate of no use under both gatekeepers, administrators reported being more active under Gatekeeper 2. At the end of Gatekeeper 1's leadership, survey results suggest that no use by administrators (n=3) and very minimal use by teachers (37% of 64)

took place. By the end of the grant, under the leadership of Gatekeeper 2, the majority of teachers (64% of 181) also reported no use at all, consistent with what was reported under Gatekeeper 1, if we add those reporting no use (32%) with those who never used the findings but planned to do so (31%). This is no surprise given that awareness of findings to begin with, as previously discussed, was so low among teachers. Interestingly, Table 4.3 below illustrates that as use decreased from Year 3 to Year 4 for administrators, it nearly doubled for teachers and increased substantially for lead teachers serving under Gatekeeper 2. Perhaps this was influenced by Gatekeeper 2's move in Year 4 to hold SLC coordinators accountable for using evaluation findings. The decline in use from Year 3 to Year 4 by administrators may be explained by the nature of the grant: a bottom-up initiative. It may not be a surprise that 40% of administrators never used the findings, especially given that principals were the administrators most likely to use them. More administrators under Gatekeeper 2 reported use than under Gatekeeper 1. The manner in which staff used the findings will be discussed shortly.

Table 4.3. Year of Evaluation Use by Survey Participants' Position.

	N	Gatekeeper 1 Leadership			Gatekeeper 2 Leadership	Can't Recall	Never Used
		Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4		
Administrator	10	10%	30%	30%	20%	10%	40%
G1 SLC LT/Coord	8	25%	38%	0	0	0	38%
G2 SLC LT/Coord	21	0	5%	10%	29%	10%	48%
Both SLC LT/Coord	13	0	15%	31%	54%	8%	8%
Teacher	181	4%	3%	4%	7%	12%	64%
Other	31	13%	13%	13%	16%	16%	29%
Total	264	4%	6%	8%	12%	10%	56%

Participants could select more than one year so total percentages do not add to 100%.

Survey results for lead teachers suggest that they were more likely to use the findings the years in which they served as leaders. Those lead teachers who overlapped gatekeepers were

more likely to have used findings than lead teachers who served under only one gatekeeper. This may suggest that the more years of leadership, as presumably was the case for those who overlapped gatekeepers, the more likely use would have taken place. This may also explain the trend of gradual increase in use through time among all lead teachers. Despite this gradual increase in use, it is, nevertheless, inexplicable why more than one-third of Gatekeeper 1 lead teachers and close to one-half under Gatekeeper 2 reported no use. This seems fairly high for lead teachers.

Moderate changes took place across schools in Year 5 when compared to Year 3. Due to low participation by administrators in disaggregated form, it is difficult to draw conclusions regarding their evaluation use and to compare between gatekeepers. For teachers, it can be concluded that over 80% of teachers across schools were unlikely to use the findings under Gatekeeper 1 to make site-based decisions. More use reportedly took place for making SLC-based decisions across schools under Gatekeeper 1. Use remained fairly consistent at DHS under both gatekeepers, but, under Gatekeeper 2, decreased by 13% at WHS and improved by 12% at BHS. Among lead teachers, use was more likely to have taken place the years in which they served as leaders. Those who served under Gatekeeper 1 were more likely to have reported use in Years 1 and 2. This was the case for the three schools. And yet, 60% 5 of WHS lead teachers who served under Gatekeeper 1 indicated that they never used the findings, as was the case with the majority of BHS lead teachers (63% of 8) serving under Gatekeeper 2. It is unknown why such a high percentage of lead teachers reported never using the evaluation findings, especially in Year 4 when Gatekeeper 2 instructed lead teachers to incorporate findings into their action plans. At DHS and WHS, those who served under Gatekeeper 2 were more likely to have used the findings in Year 4. It is possible that use was taking place informally and,

therefore, lead teachers were not aware that the evaluation report had informed their action plans. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, there are challenges in documenting use as it can happen informally (Leviton & Hughes, 1981).

Focus group data in Year 5 provided some depth to the lead teacher and administrator survey results for self-reported use of evaluation findings. In the WHS lead teacher focus group, one lead teacher discussed how she used evaluation findings while another teacher explained why he had not used them. At BHS, lead teachers spoke broadly of how the findings were used to address some of the challenges they were facing. No one indicated that they personally had used the evaluation findings. At DHS, lead teachers spoke specifically of interventions that had taken place to address some of the weaknesses identified in the evaluation report. What lead teachers, principals, and SLC coordinators discussed about their use of evaluation findings will be forthcoming shortly in this section. As previously explained, teachers did not discuss use of evaluation findings in focus groups as they were not even aware of the findings.

In Spring 2010 (Year 5) under Gatekeeper 2 staff were asked in an open-ended item to indicate specifically how they used the evaluation findings, if they reported having used them. Ten staff members of the total 62, or 16%, who addressed this item reported that the findings were used to generate conversations/discussions about SLCs while 24% indicated that findings were used for planning purposes. Twenty-five staff members or 40% revealed that the findings were indeed used to make direct program development changes. Thus, in the case when use did take place, it did so primarily for direct programmatic change. It is critical to note this as it highlights the influence the evaluation had in the development of SLCs in this district. Equally important is to recognize that in addition to being used for programmatic change, the findings were also used for planning purposes.

Who used the evaluation findings for programmatic change? Teachers (36% of 25) and lead teachers serving under Gatekeeper 2 (32% of 25) had the highest percentages reporting that findings were used to make actual programmatic changes. Twenty-four percent of those who mentioned programmatic changes as the type of use that took place were lead teachers who served under both gatekeepers and only 4% were administrators. Administrators (50% of 10) made up the highest percentage of staff reporting that findings were used for conversation purposes. This was consistent with what was reported in principal interviews, as described in the following by-site discussion.

In the case of every school, when use took place, it did so primarily for direct programmatic change. More staff at BHS (45% of 22) than at the other schools reported that the findings were being used directly for programmatic change. Who used the evaluation findings for programmatic change at each site? At BHS, teachers (50% of 8) and lead teachers (66% of 6) serving under both gatekeepers reported high percentages having indeed used the findings to implement programmatic changes. In focus groups, however, BHS teachers did not mention using the evaluation while lead teachers did not provide details of how they used the findings. While a lead teacher pointed out that the report mentioned a lack of SLC awareness/ identification among students, two BHS lead teachers noted SLC identification was improving but did not mention whether they had personally done anything directly to address the issue. A different BHS lead teacher speculated how she might reflect on the report and perhaps pull "some positives and some negatives from the previous years, maybe just sharing that with [teachers], would help them understand where we need change." Furthermore, one BHS lead teacher noted that the findings were "influencing" not "driving" change but did not explain what this meant. This lead teacher felt this way despite the efforts of the principal. The principal at

BHS noted that although he "already knew what was found," he quoted the report extensively to justify action. It is possible that BHS lead teachers did not realize that some of the interventions that came from the administration were influenced by the evaluation findings. The principal noted that "we were able to create some more action plans this past year" that were influenced by the evaluation findings. This may not have been communicated effectively to lead teachers. This issue has been documented in the evaluation practice literature. In a review of studies on evaluation use by local educational agencies, King and Thompson (1983) concluded that use of evaluation does take place. However, this is not always directly visible as use can be indirect and incremental (Alkin et al., 1979).

At WHS, lead teachers under Gatekeeper 2 had the highest percentage (75% of 4) of staff reporting evaluation use for programmatic change. At WHS, lead teachers in the focus groups did not discuss programmatic change. Instead, one lead teacher mentioned using positive evaluation findings to build morale in her SLC group while another indicated that the district office decided "to drive whatever they want." Interestingly, one administrator at WHS reported evaluation use for programmatic change, the only administrator to do so across schools. In interviews, the principal at WHS noted that the findings caused some "rethinking" and led to some things being "tweaked." There was very little qualitative data to support the survey results that evaluation findings were used to make programmatic change to SLCs at WHS.

Lead teachers under Gatekeeper 2 at DHS had the highest percentage (100% of 4), when compared to the other two schools, reporting having used evaluation findings to implement programmatic changes. This was also reflected in detailed descriptions in focus group discussions. One DHS lead teacher mentioned having "actually made some decisions and with the master schedule" collaboratively with the other lead teachers under the guidance of the SLC

coordinator. An additional collaborative decision made in reaction to the report, as one DHS lead teacher reported, was doing an "SLC breakfast." A different DHS lead teacher seemed to credit the SLC coordinator for that decision as he noted "I think that was [the SLC Coordinator] reading the report, taking the information, and trying to do something with it." Other lead teachers confirmed that the SLC coordinator played an active role in guiding them. Thus, it appears that the DHS SLC coordinator facilitated discussions among lead teachers on school-wide decisions pertaining to the SLC initiative. Other lead teachers mentioned how they had personally used the findings. A lead teacher spoke in general terms about "working harder this year based on the findings on the identity" and focusing "this year on interventions and where we're intervening and all that stuff." Another lead teacher described in detail what prompted his use of the evaluation:

> I guess the parent findings was what kind of… eye opening to me…. It put the mirror up… on my part that I needed to do a better job with, you know, the parents… It's a nice, you know, you're sort of in this bubble, everything's going good, and then that mirror's put up and it's like, 'oh' you know.

His surprise to learn about the lack of awareness among parents led him and his SLC team to implement a fun activity aimed at both students and parents. A different lead teacher did know about the findings but reported "still figuring out" how to use or transfer that information into an activity/change for "progress next year." The focus group discussions at DHS seem to suggest that lead teachers did not necessarily see the connection between the push to implement change through outcome charts or school-wide goals and the evaluation findings. As previously mentioned, one DHS lead teacher noted that while some changes had taken place, she did not "know that the report was the sole motivator… I know that was significant change but not directly because of the report." A different lead teacher reported that he had "not heard of someone saying I read this report and I did this, this, and that." While one lead teacher did note

that she learned how findings were being addressed because she was told "we need to do this, we need to do that; that's how it was related to me," this information was not necessarily in reaction to the evaluation report.

A DHS lead teacher summarized that district and school administrators and lead teachers were working hard to improve SLCs by doing such things as fixing the master schedule, a problem identified in the evaluation report. It is possible that not all the findings were a surprise, as mentioned by the SLC coordinator, and, therefore, lead teachers did not see the connection between proposed changes and the evaluation findings. Interestingly, the principal at DHS indicated that the findings contradicted what she believed and, thus, she used them to investigate if things were not communicated well to staff, students, and parents. Furthermore, she indicated that the evaluation findings caused discussion and reflections which led to "shifts not changes" in the SLC program. It has been heavily documented that if findings are unexpected in light of other sources or experiences, then they are less likely to be used (Caplan et al., 1975; Weiss and Bucuvalas, 1977; Patton, 1997). It seemed that lead teachers were more active in generating use out of the evaluation than the principal.

The aggregated survey results and the qualitative data analysis suggest that lead teachers were more active than principals in using the findings for programmatic change, as was the case at DHS and WHS. This would be consistent with the bottom-up design of the reform. When use did take place, it did so for programmatic change and primarily by lead teachers. There was more evidence of use at DHS than the other two schools as lead teachers were able to provide concrete examples of how the evaluation findings were used. District-wide, principals revealed that evaluation findings were used for discussions and, at a macro-level, to implement change. At BHS, the principal seemed to have taken a more active role in using the evaluation findings to

justify actions taking place and to influence new interventions. Use, however, may have been under reported given that the data seemed to suggest that some lead teachers at each school did not necessarily see the connection behind proposed decisions by the administration and the evaluation findings. Despite the low percentage of teachers who reported use in the survey and in focus groups, as previously discussed earlier in this chapter, they had the highest percentage (47% of 15) reporting that they used the findings for future planning. The disaggregated survey results and the qualitative data analysis suggest that at every school when use took place it did so primarily for direct programmatic change.

In Year 5, staff were also asked in an open-ended survey item to indicate who they thought used the evaluation findings to improve SLCs at their schools. Of the 265 staff members who answered this item, 59 or 22% indicated that the evaluation findings were used by the administration, the most popular response. Interestingly, though, only 8% of those reporting that administrators used the evaluation were themselves administrators. They instead were more inclined to think that *district* administration used the evaluation, as 25% of the eight who attributed use to *district* administrators were *school site* administrators, the highest across groups excluding "Other". Perhaps administrators were expected to use, or were perceived as using, the evaluation findings, a point raised by Gatekeeper 1 earlier in this chapter. Survey results and findings from qualitative data analyses suggest that while administrators were among the most informed of the evaluation and its findings, they were not necessarily the most active users and most definitely not for direct programmatic change. The caveat here, however, is whether the SLC coordinator was identified as an administrator. It is possible that some staff members considered the SLC coordinator an administrator, although this survey item was open-ended and many attributed use specifically to the SLC coordinator. Lead teachers serving under Gatekeeper

1, for example, named administrators and the SLC coordinator most often. Lead teachers serving under Gatekeeper 2 attributed use fairly consistently to school site administrators, district administrators, SLC coordinator, lead teachers, and even teachers. Even teachers as a group seemed to believe that the evaluation was most used by administrators, the SLC coordinator, and lead teachers. In any case, this finding seems to suggest that, despite the bottom-up nature of the reform, there was, nevertheless, a perception that programmatic change in the form of use of evaluation findings fell upon administrators.

As the qualitative data suggest, evaluation findings were mostly used by the SLC coordinator and the lead teachers. This is consistent with how users were identified by staff in the Year 5 survey. Twenty percent of 265 staff members attributed use to their site's SLC coordinator while another 20% reported that lead teachers used the findings to develop SLCs. This is consistent with the findings of interview data, as will be discussed shortly by site. Other interesting results from this item, which asked staff to identify the primary users of the findings, pertain to teachers. Interestingly, teachers (7%) were also identified as user of evaluation findings. Of those who reported teachers as using the evaluation, not one was a school site administrator; instead, they were mostly teachers (61% of 18). Hence, teachers were identifying themselves as users of the findings, albeit in low numbers. Seven percent of staff reported not knowing who might have used the evaluation findings and 2% indicated that no one used the findings at all. Teachers comprised the highest percentage of the group of individuals who did not know who used the evaluation (89% of 19) or indicated that no one used it (83% of 6). If teachers were using the findings, they were doing so in very low numbers, as previously discussed in this chapter. They were not expected to use the findings, as evident by the staff's lack of identification of teachers as users. In any case, teachers were not even aware of who was

using the evaluation findings or, worse, they were pessimistic as they felt no one used the findings.

These findings pertaining to the identification of evaluation users shed light on what was perceived and what was reality. Administrators were most often identified by staff as users of the findings. However, previous findings suggest that the SLC coordinator and lead teachers were the most active users. In fact, the SLC coordinators, by providing detailed descriptions of their efforts in implementing changes, seemed to be the most active and influential users. They, of course, had the closest relationship with the gatekeepers. This may suggest that this close relationship, in particular with Gatekeeper 2 and his professional development workshops on data use and prescription of use, may have influenced use at the SLC coordinator level. It may have also influenced use by lead teachers, although it is more difficult to make this connection.

The disaggregated results suggest that the administration was perceived as playing a more visible role using evaluation findings at BHS and DHS than at WHS. Despite this perception, administrators were not identifying themselves as so. DHS administrators were just as likely to select administrators as the SLC coordinator as evaluation users, whereas WHS administrators were more likely to point to lead teachers. As previously discussed with the aggregated results, the fact that others were selecting administrators may suggest that perhaps they were expected to use, or were perceived as using, the evaluation findings. Opposite of administrators, teachers were identified the least as users of evaluation findings at each school. At DHS, there really was no expectation for teachers to use the evaluation findings while there was very little at WHS. Teachers as a group across schools seemed to believe that the evaluation was most used by administrators, the SLC coordinator, and lead teachers – those at the top of the SLC organizational hierarchy. BHS and DHS teachers placed slightly more emphasis on

administrators than WHS teachers, who identified the SLC coordinator more often. In any case, just as the aggregated results, these findings seem to suggest that, despite the bottom-up nature of the reform, there was still the perception across schools that programmatic change in the form of use of evaluation findings fell upon administrators and not teachers.

Lead teachers seemed to be perceived as more active at WHS than at the other two schools, where the SLC coordinator had more prominence. Interestingly, lead teachers serving under Gatekeeper 2 at BHS and WHS attributed use fairly consistently to numerous individuals (administrators, SLC coordinator, lead teachers, and even teachers). Those serving under Gatekeeper 1 at DHS and WHS pointed to administrators as users of the evaluation, and in the case of WHS, also to the SLC coordinator. This may suggest that while use was perceived as being limited to those high in the SLC organizational structure under Gatekeeper 1 at WHS, a variety of perceived users emerged under Gatekeeper 2. At DHS, there was a shift in the perception from administrators as primary users under Gatekeeper 1 to the SLC coordinators and lead teachers under Gatekeeper 2.

The analysis of qualitative data also suggests that the SLC coordinator played an active role in using the evaluation findings. In fact, they were used primarily by the SLC coordinator at BHS and DHS. As noted earlier in this chapter in the discussion of the aggregated results, the two BHS SLC coordinators indicated that the evaluation had "significant impact" on the SLC initiative and that its findings "dictated our three goals this year." This was in reference to school-wide goals. They further noted that they "looked at the major issues that have been found in the report and [they] design [their] following year around those." They went as far as to describe a monitoring system in which use of findings was supervised through each SLC's action plan. The DHS SLC coordinator also mentioned that the findings "are used when looking at the

action plans." She gave concrete examples, such as the SLC breakfast previously discussed, of ways in which the findings were used. The DHS SLC coordinator noted that the SLC breakfast was a collaborative decision made by "the leads" as an "effect of looking at the data." Despite these concrete examples of use, the DHS SLC coordinator contradicted herself as she noted that the evaluation was useful but then later stated that she really "didn't see any surprises" and did "not think it has been as useful because of the limited input." The limited input was in reference to low survey participation. Thus, it seems that the BHS SLC coordinators had more faith in, and were more likely to be driven by, the evaluation findings.

There was very little evidence that the evaluation findings were used at WHS. This may explain the results for the survey item that asked staff to identify users of the evaluation. As previously mentioned, these results differed significantly from what the other two schools reported. The SLC coordinator was the third most popular response at WHS. The WHS SLC coordinator stressed that while "the data kind of reaffirms what I feel" and evaluation findings were "oh, sure absolutely" used, he spoke vaguely and failed to provide details as to how exactly they were used. As previously mentioned, only one lead teacher noted how she personally used the findings – to build morale in her SLC group. Yet, lead teachers were identified the most at WHS as the users of evaluation findings. Administrators were the second most popular group to be identified. Even the WHS principal was vague in describing use as he simply noted that the findings led to "rethinking" and to some things being "tweaked" here and there. The principal noted that he let the SLC coordinator "be a quasi administrator of the entire program" as he himself did not "tend to get too involved." Thus, without a strong SLC coordinator as in the other two schools, a supportive administration as at BHS, and an active lead teacher core as there was at DHS, WHS was left with little interest at any level to use the evaluation findings. This

was consistent with what Gatekeeper 1 noted: "[WHS] started with the idea that they already had everything going, and it's perfect." Gatekeeper 1 noted that it was a challenge to make WHS staff realize that they were not perfect. One may recall that in Chapter 3, WHS was described as having a reputation for housing the district's strongest academic programs and serving as its sports powerhouse. Given this reputation, there was no real incentive for WHS staff to be interested in implementing change.

To probe further, survey participants in Year 5 were also asked in an open-ended item to describe how the identified users employed the evaluation results. Of the 145 survey respondents who answered the item, 51 staff members or 35% indicated that the evaluation findings were indeed used by someone for direct programmatic change, 23% noted that the findings were utilized for planning purposes, and 14% reported that the findings were used to generate conversations/discussions. Twenty-eight percent of staff members were categorized into a miscellaneous category, which was comprised primarily of negative commentary (don't know, useless, no planning, n/a) about how the findings were used. Approximately one-third of 90 teachers who responded to this item seemed to believe that those who used the findings did so for programmatic change but 38% mentioned miscellaneous negative comments. More administrators, two-thirds of the nine who responded to this item, seemed to think that whoever used the findings did so for planning purposes. Only 11% of administrators believed the findings were actually used to implement changes to SLCs. Programmatic change (46%) was the most popular response among the 13 serving under Gatekeeper 2 who responded to the survey, followed by planning purposes (31%). Lead teacher serving under Gatekeeper 1 reported that the findings were used by someone primarily to generate conversations (50% of two) and to make programmatic changes (50%). Thus, there was a perception among lead teachers and non-

lead teachers that when evaluation findings were used, they were used primarily for the purposes of programmatic change. Administrators, on the other hand, seemed to think that they were used primarily for planning purposes. This raises the question as to whether administrators simply did not expect other staff members to implement programmatic changes.

The main difference between schools was that while using evaluation findings for programmatic change was overwhelmingly identified at BHS and DHS as the main type of use by the identified users, it was mentioned secondly at WHS. At WHS, planning was the number one response among survey respondents, very closely followed by conversations/discussions. One can conclude that there was a perception at both BHS and DHS that when evaluation findings were used, they were used primarily for the purposes of programmatic change. Again, WHS's difference when compared to the other two schools may be due to very little evidence of actual use. It should be noted that 25% of staff at BHS and WHS and 35% at DHS fell into the miscellaneous category, which was comprised primarily of negative commentary (don't know, useless, no planning, n/a).

BHS and DHS teachers perceived programmatic changes as the primary form of use. This was especially done at BHS where the principal reported using the evaluation findings to justify school-wide goals. Given that the SLC coordinator at DHS mentioned that evaluation findings were integrated into action plans, one can see how 30% of teachers would report programmatic change. There does seem to be evidence at DHS that findings initially used for planning purposes eventually translated into programmatic change, as discussed in detail by lead teachers. At WHS, teachers pointed to planning as the main source of use but very closely followed by conversations. Programmatic change as a category was the least popular response among WHS teachers suggesting, again, that little to no use took place there. There seemed to

be evidence that a lot of planning took place at WHS but very little change, if any, occurred. This may be to what Gatekeeper 2 referred to when he stated that to some schools, the evaluation was great information "but as you can tell from maybe year three, year four, year two evaluations, it's the same issue over and over." It is unknown whether the findings were "being addressed with quality but [they were] definitely being addressed." In summary, the differences were that teachers at BHS and DHS perceived programmatic changes as the main use while those at WHS seemed to think findings were used primarily for planning purposes. Interestingly, however, administrators at DHS seemed to think like those WHS – that findings were used primarily for planning purposes. BHS administrators did not address this survey item.

Lead teachers differed across schools in how they perceived the evaluation findings being used by others. In general, participation of lead teachers under the leadership of Gatekeeper 1 was too low and not worthy of a discussion. At BHS and DHS, SLC lead teachers serving under Gatekeeper 2 seemed to think that the evaluation was used for programmatic changes. At WHS, even lead teachers under Gatekeeper 2 seemed to think that findings were primarily used for planning purposes. It is possible that SLC development was moving at a slower pace at WHS than at BHS and DHS. Perhaps with more time, lead teachers at WHS would be more inclined to believe that findings were being used for programmatic change. It was possible that WHS staff were not interested in making any changes given their school's perception as perfect.

Focus group data from Year 5 provided some insight on who teachers perceived as using the evaluation findings and how. When DHS teachers were asked if changes took place as a result of the evaluation, the most common response was "I wouldn't know" or "we wouldn't know." Teachers at WHS reported not knowing who used the findings and how because, as put

by one teacher, “we’re not involved with SLCs.” Another DHS teacher detailed what he thought might take place:

> No, I haven’t heard anybody say I need to do this differently now because of that report or… they haven’t said anything about that. I think the next step will be at the.. perhaps at the next meeting when they, if at the meeting, they talk about the results. And then, that would be the time to discuss changes. But I don’t think that’s really been done yet.

At BHS, teachers were unaware of the evaluation findings and, therefore, could not comment on who they thought might have used them. Thus, in focus group discussions, there was evidence of very little awareness across schools as to who used the evaluation findings and for what.

While one DHS lead teacher noted that “personally, no I haven’t heard of someone saying I read this report and I did this, this, and that,” for the most part lead teachers did share information about how the evaluation findings were used. As previously discussed, this was done when discussing the various interventions implemented at DHS. A WHS lead teacher commented that “it seems like [Gatekeeper 2] in the main office drives whatever they want.” He seemed to think that at the moment “they” [meaning Gatekeeper 2 and the main office] were pushing for outcome charts, the planning format used by each SLC lead teacher, to reflect evaluation findings. A DHS lead teacher noted that:

> I didn’t hear anybody go back and say, ‘oh the report said this so now we need to do this.’ I don’t recall hearing that. I mean, we’ve had significant changes and… we’ve had a lot of district guidance through the SLC coordinator’s meetings up there. I know there was significant change, but not… directly because of the report.

Thus, teachers could not articulate exactly who used the findings and how they were used by colleagues, if they indeed were used. Unless an administrator or the SLC coordinator explicitly mentioned the association between an intervention and the evaluation report, lead teachers could not make the connection. This was primarily due to the fact that lead teachers were just vaguely familiar with the findings not having read the report. As noted earlier in this chapter, lead

teacher commented that they had a “rough idea of the results” but could not necessarily “rattle them [findings] off” and maybe “didn’t see the document so that was just a little bit of I guess you could say hearsay” or were told unofficially as “we need to do this, we need to do that, that’s how it was related to me.” Without being well-informed about the findings, lead teachers were unable to identify when SLC changes or interventions were influenced by the evaluation report.

Recap. At the end of Gatekeeper 1’s leadership, survey results suggest that no use by administrators and very minimal use by teachers took place. Teachers felt more inclined to use findings for the development of their own SLCs than for the overall SLC initiative. The majority of teachers in Year 5 reporting no use at all, consistent with what was reported under Gatekeeper 1. This is no surprise given that awareness of findings to begin with was very low among teachers. Survey results for lead teachers suggest that they were more likely to use the findings the years in which they served as leaders. Survey results also seem to suggest that the more years of leadership, the more likely use would take place. Lead teachers and principals described some form of use, albeit vaguely on the part of the principals. All SLC coordinators were very detailed in their descriptions of how they used the evaluation findings. Findings were used primarily to make direct program development changes. They were also used for planning purposes and to generate conversations/discussions about SLCs. Lead teachers were most likely to use the findings for programmatic change while administrators for conversation purposes. In general, administrators were most often identified by staff as users of the findings, followed by the SLC coordinator and lead teachers. The data suggest that SLC coordinator and lead teachers were the most active users of the evaluation findings. The SLC coordinator, by providing detail

descriptions of their efforts on implementing changes, seemed to be the most active and influential users.

With regard to the disaggregated results, in Year 3 at the end of Gatekeeper 1's leadership, survey results suggest that administrators did not use the findings, at least at BHS and DHS, and that minimal use by teachers took place at the three schools. No conclusions can be drawn with regard to WHS because administrators did not participate in the survey. A much lower percentage of teachers at BHS used the findings than teachers in the other schools. The high percentage of teachers reporting no use in Year 5 is comparable with the results of the Year 3 survey, if adding those who reported no use with those who reported never using the findings but planning to do so. It is not surprising that use would be so low among teachers given that awareness of findings was also low to begin with, as previously mentioned and as discussed by teachers in focus groups. What is surprising is that administrators reported low percentages of use. Survey results highlighted that 40% of administrators at WHS and 50% at DHS never used the findings. No conclusions could be made with regard to BHS administrators.

Use by lead teachers was more likely to have taken place the years in which they served as leaders. There was consistency across schools with regard to when and how the evaluation was used. In the case of every school, when use did take place, it did so primarily for direct programmatic change. More staff at BHS than at the other schools seemed to believe that the findings were being used directly for programmatic change. While BHS teachers and lead teachers serving under both gatekeepers reported that they indeed used the findings for programmatic changes, there was no evidence of this in focus group discussions. At WHS, lead teachers under Gatekeeper 2 had the highest percentage reporting evaluation use for programmatic change but no discussions concerning programmatic change took place during the

focus group sessions. Lead teachers under Gatekeeper 2 at DHS reported the highest percentage, when compared to the other two schools, of evaluation use for programmatic change. This was also reflected in detailed descriptions in focus group discussions by DHS lead teachers. Staff also identified those who they perceived as using the evaluation findings. The administration may have played a more visible role using evaluation findings at BHS and DHS than at WHS, where lead teachers seemed to be more active. The SLC coordinator also seemed more prominent at BHS and DHS than at WHS. What is clear is that teachers were identified the least as users of evaluation findings at each school. In interviews, SLC coordinators asserted with confidence that findings were indeed used to make direct programmatic changes and, in the case of BHS and DHS, provided rich description. The principals at DHS and WHS did not use the findings for programmatic change while the BHS principal reported that the findings influenced school-wide goals.

Chapter Summary

Gatekeeper 1 and Gatekeeper 2 defined their philosophies on evaluation through their descriptions of their perceptions, values, experiences, administrative styles and interactions. While their perception of the SLC initiative evaluation was fairly similar as they both learned to appreciate the practical uses of the evaluation, the context of the program under each of their leadership did differ. The only evident difference in the gatekeepers' perception of the evaluation was that Gatekeeper 2 considered the evaluators "partners." Both gatekeepers acknowledged that the the organizational structure of the district and schools precluded them from establishing accountability measures with regard to use. With the exception of the large,

structurally-based grant requirements, the school site staff had the autonomy to decide if and how the evaluation findings were to be used.

While both gatekeepers shared similarities in their interactions with staff, there were also some notable differences. Gatekeeper 1's interactions with staff varied more than Gatekeeper 2's given that the program evolved substantially throughout her leadership. It gradually became a more cohesive, centralized structure in which she brought SLC leadership staff from all three sites to the district office. While Gatekeeper 2 continued with the centralized approach he inherited from Gatekeeper 1, a new grant substantially increased the number of SLC coordinators he supported. At meetings, Gatekeeper 1 focused primarily on professional development on SLC theory, SLC practice, administrative procedures associated with the implementation, evaluation needs, and general leadership development. Gatekeeper 2, on the other hand, focused on action plans, institutional goals, data analysis/use, professional development on core subjects, evaluation needs, and strengthening career pathways. While Gatekeeper 2 provided more depth than Gatekeeper 1 in formal discussions regarding evaluation findings, Gatekeeper 1 disseminated findings to a broader audience (each school's professional learning community and the school board). Both gatekeepers indicated that the autonomy at each site precluded them from enforcing use of the evaluation findings, unless, according to Gatekeeper 2, the goals of the grant were being blatantly ignored or violated. The both expected lead teachers to share the findings with other teachers but were pessimistic about whether this was actually accomplished.

There were some differences during the leadership of each gatekeeper with regard to evaluation experiences among stakeholders. Despite this difference, a similar pattern influenced by the organizational structure of the schools was evident within each gatekeeper's leadership. The main differences between gatekeepers were that administrators and teachers under

Gatekeeper 2 reported higher percentages of awareness of findings than those under Gatekeeper 1. Furthermore, administrators under Gatekeeper 2 reported a significantly higher percentage of use than those under Gatekeeper 1. This may give the illusion that experiences were more positive during Gatekeeper 2's leadership. However, lead teachers under Gatekeeper 1 reported slightly higher percentages than those serving under Gatekeeper 2 of awareness of the evaluation and its findings, as well as use. This difference, however, may be influenced by very low survey participation among lead teachers serving under Gatekeeper 1 and the fact that they had to think retroactively about their experiences when they served as leaders, as the survey was administered in Year 5. Due to these issues, it was difficult make a reliable comparison between Gatekeeper 1 and Gatekeeper 2 with disaggregated data.

The organizational structure of the schools had an impact on evaluation experiences of staff. Under Gatekeeper 2, administrators, as a group, were the most aware of the evaluation and its results and the most active in using them; teachers were the least aware and less likely to report use. Stakeholders perceived administrators as the most likely users of the findings and teachers as the least likely. It can be concluded that staff's experiences under Gatekeeper 2 followed the hierarchical organizational structure of the schools – those on top were more informed and active than those at the bottom. When disaggregating the data by school, this was also the case for WHS. There were minor exceptions at BHS, where teachers reported a slightly higher percentage of use than lead teachers, and at DHS, where more lead teachers than administrators reported use. Interestingly, while DHS staff was the least positive attitudes about evaluation and were least aware of it and its results, they reported more evidence of use than the staff in other schools. Under Gatekeeper 1, more administrators and lead teachers than non-lead teachers were aware of both the evaluation and its findings but more teachers than administrators

reported using the results. Also, more lead teachers than administrators were aware of the evaluation findings and reported use. Thus, there was a slight deviation in the social hierarchy of the organization under Gatekeeper 1, as teachers reported more use than administrators and more lead teachers than administrators were informed about the findings. This was more difficult to assess in disaggregated form as participation by administrators was so low. It is also important to note that as far as evaluation experiences during Gatekeeper 2, all groups reported a steady decline in percentages starting with evaluation awareness at the top, awareness of findings in the middle, and use at the bottom. For those serving under Gatekeeper 1, there was one notable exception – teachers reported a higher percentage of use than of awareness of findings.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion and Conclusions

Despite all the gains made in the evaluation discipline since the 1960s, there is, nevertheless still, a great need for further empirical research on evaluation theory and practice. Typically, when evaluation theory and practice are addressed in the literature, they tend to be discussed in fairly broad terms. There is a need to engage in conversation about some of the logistical issues that come into play during an evaluation. In particular, additional evaluation use studies within field contexts might be fruitful. This was the purpose behind this dissertation. This type of study is needed to learn how to make evaluation more accessible to stakeholders at all levels of an organization's social structure. With school district budgets shrinking and forcing the closure of research and evaluation units, there has never been a more critical time to study how to maximize evaluation use among school staff.

The previous chapter outlined the detailed results of this study. A lot of information was presented and discussed with the intention of providing snapshots of the diverse evaluation experiences of staff during the leadership of two different individuals. Low survey participation limited the scope of the quantitative findings. Nevertheless, much qualitative data offered salient insights and made important contributions to the literature on evaluation practice. What lessons were learned from the results discussed in Chapter 4? What were some of the limitations in this study? And, what are the implications for future research? This chapter will wrap up this multiple case study by addressing these questions.

The results of this study suggest a number of important issues pertaining to factors that influence evaluation use. The table on the following pages summarizes those points while also

providing a discussion of their significance and implications. The table also includes a description of each gatekeeper's experience to serve as evidence of how each issue arose.

Issue	***Gatekeeper 1***	***Gatekeeper 2***	***Comment/Discussion***
Role of Supervisors	During Gatekeeper 1's leadership, direct supervisors did not seem to have taken an active role in the evaluation. Principals, who supervised school staff, were not very involved and neither was the assistant superintendent, who supervised both the Gatekeeper and the principals. The lack of involvement from direct supervisors may have hindered more possibilities of stakeholder use of findings.	With the help of the assistant superintendent, Gatekeeper 2 was able to succeed in making principals understand the need to address particular evaluation findings. Gatekeeper 2 was clear that he did not supervise principals, SLC coordinators, or lead teachers and, therefore, had no authority to require any of them to use the evaluation findings to inform changes to SLCs. However, he knew to turn to the assistant superintendent for help. The assistant superintendent, whose job duties included supervising high school principals, could exert more pressure on principals to use the findings to implement changes to SLCs. Pressure from supervisors proved to be more successful in triggering use than recommendations or suggestions from Gatekeeper 2, a district administrator with no supervisorial authority. Principals, as supervisors of school staff, were expected to play a critical role in driving	*Supervisors have the power to drive evaluation use.* It was evident from Gatekeeper 2's experience that stakeholders were more likely to use findings when they felt slightly pressured by their supervisors. The lesson learned here was that prescribed use by an authority figure may help move a reform forward. A supervisor does not need to decide what changes are to take place but, instead, may simply need to guide a conversation so that stakeholders can come upon a decision on changes they can implement. The supervisor does not prescribe what needs to be done, just that something must be done. Research by Cox (1977) pointed out that more attention will be given to findings most relevant to a manager's needs. This explains the times when Gatekeeper 2 had to ask the assistant superintendent for help in pressuring principals to enact use. King and Thompson (1983) also concluded that stakeholders are more likely to use findings when there is a perceived need or when "the results are directly applicable to an issue they must address." (p. 11) The key here is the issue that **must** be addressed. When Gatekeeper 2 made some issues priorities that principals had to address, then use took place. Furthermore, King and Thompson (1983) concluded that "to work in a school district is to work in a political environment where specific individuals can make a difference and can actually make evaluation use occur." (p. 12) This study suggests that an individual with status and supervisorial authority have the power to motivate stakeholders to use the evaluation findings. By now, it has been heavily documented that the

		evaluation use. This expectation came from both above (the district office) and from below (teachers). Gatekeeper 2 expected the SLC coordinator and principal to make sure findings were infused into action plans. They were supposed to be the overseers of evaluation use on campus. At the same time, teachers felt it was not within their purview to use findings to make decisions. Instead, they expected the administration to do so. This was despite the bottom-up approach of the reform.	presence of a key individual is instrumental in driving use (Fairweather et al., 1974; Galser, 1976; Patton, 1997). In Patton language, this would be the primary intended user. This study strayed away from using that term due to both the nature of the school district bureaucracy and the structure of the SLC initiative. The bottom-up approach should have meant that the policymakers were at the bottom of the bureaucracy, where most decisions should have been made. Policy decisions and directions, however, continued to come from above. Stakeholder involvement in the evaluation was also primarily at the top and, thus, making it more relevant to gatekeepers. However, gatekeepers did not have sufficient supervisorial authority to drive evaluation use. The only way gatekeepers could have served as influential primary intended users was if they had been granted supervisorial power. The implications here are that supervisors need to be held accountable for evaluation use. They do need to take an active role in monitoring use rather than simply sharing evaluation results. If gatekeepers do not serve as direct supervisors, then they need to communicate with direct supervisors and inform them of this responsibility. It is important for supervisors to know even if they are indirectly involved in the reform being evaluated.
Role of Belief in Program	Gatekeeper 1 admitted that she was not convinced that the SLC reform would be as beneficial as proponents claimed.	Gatekeeper 2 clearly believed in the SLC initiative and was deeply invested in moving the reform forward. The fact that Gatekeeper 2 perceived the initiative as a permanent	*Personal interest and belief in the program influences the amount of energy gatekeepers invest in driving evaluation use.* It is logical that personal interests and beliefs are a motivating factor to individuals. This is evident in any field.

	This may have been the reason why she did not find it critical to make the use of evaluation findings a priority.	change in education philosophy that would greatly benefit students may have influenced his push for decisions to be made based on the evaluation findings. This may have been the reason why he sought support from the assistant superintendent and dedicated so much time to professional development sessions on "data" use.	Cousins (2003) mentions administrative support and political processes and influences at the micro-level as variables connecting participatory evaluation and knowledge utilization. A personal belief in a program is one that influences how invested a manager will be in its development. Obviously, the more interested a manager, the more committed s/he will be to the development of a program. Christie (2007) found an association between prior beliefs in program efficacy and influence of evaluation data: use of large-scale study data was more likely when decision-makers were convinced of a program's efficacy. Gatekeepers should be the first ones to buy into reforms being evaluated. Their supervisors should, at the very least, attempt to sell the program to gatekeepers. In the long run, it would benefit the development of the program.
Role of Dissemination Process	The manner in which Gatekeeper 1 and SLC coordinators shared evaluation findings may have influenced used. Emphasis was placed on distribution of findings rather than discussion. Furthermore, the findings were distributed during an awkward time that made it difficult for	Gatekeeper 2 shared evaluation findings slightly differently than Gatekeeper 1. While findings were disseminated to the whole staff, discussions about them only took place among administrators, SLC coordinator, and lead teachers. As a result, these individuals were the most informed and most likely to use them. While teachers were interested in learning about the	*The dissemination process under which evaluation findings are delivered influence use.* Discussing rather than receiving the findings is more likely to lead to retention and use, especially if the discussion includes strategizing how the findings can be used to make informed decisions. Also, delivering the findings at a prime time for use is more likely to get staff to utilize them for planning purposes. Leviton and Hughes (1981) note that "(t)he way evaluation is presented to users affects their comprehension and thus the extent of use." (p. 537). Cox (1977) found that close verbal communication enhances use. Also, Larsen (1985) further argues that presentation

	planning purposes. During her leadership, Gatekeeper 1 placed the evaluation findings on meeting agendas twice and each time allotted 30 minutes for discussion. While evaluators briefly summarized the findings to SLC coordinators and lead teachers and answered questions, 30 minutes may have not been enough time for staff to fully understand or ponder the findings. Under Gatekeeper 1, the evaluation report for Year 1 was officially submitted towards the end of Year 2, and Year 2's report was submitted towards the end of Year 3. Thus, findings were delivered when teachers and administrators were busy preparing for both	evaluation findings, they could not recall with certainty whether the findings were indeed shared with them. This suggests that perhaps how findings were relayed to them played a critical role in retention. Rather than being given or told the findings, teachers may have benefitted from discussions about them. Gatekeeper 2 also placed the evaluation findings twice on meeting agendas. At the first meeting, 20 minutes were allotted to the discussion but 2 hours were set aside at the second meeting. The second workshop took place after staff had undergone training on how to use data/evaluation findings. Guiding questions for the discussion were provided by both the evaluators and Gatekeeper 2. Gatekeeper 2's guiding questions called for SLC coordinators and lead teachers to note strategies to support strengths and strategies to improve weaknesses. Essentially, staff had to brainstorm how the findings	of information alone does not automatically lead to use but, instead, makes stakeholders ponder the findings and other outside factors before making the decision to use or disregard. Without being given a moment to discuss or ponder the findings at a staff meeting presentation, it is very likely that stakeholders will simply disregard the information. In this scenario, staff are treated as report audience rather than stakeholders. Alkin et al. (1985) also note that effective presentation of results is a contextual factor influencing use. Alkin et al. (1979) note that "information dialogue" is an important attribute when reporting on the evaluation. This implies that a discussion on findings, in which dialogue between stakeholders takes place, is much more meaningful than simply presenting findings to an audience comprised of stakeholders. (p. 254). Further support for this is found in a discussion by Preskill and Torres (2000) in which they note the benefits of informal education that takes place "when organization members engage in collaborative, dialogic, and reflective forms of evaluation practice." (p. 27) Engaging in discussing findings of an evaluation which is formative in nature, as did the SLC coordinators and lead teachers, is being part of the evaluation process. Preskill and Torres (2000) eloquently note that "communicating and reporting formats that are designed for use in working sessions where findings are presented and then discussed can result in greater learning than written reports and one-way verbal communication." (p. 31) In the evaluation literature, the importance of timeliness as a factor influencing use has also been heavily

	standardized tests and the end of the academic year. In addition, evaluation findings may have been perceived as irrelevant given that staff, for example, would have had to plan for Year 3 using from Year 1's evaluation results. One can conclude that the dissemination process of evaluation findings under Gatekeeper 1 was not user-friendly.	would be used to implement change at their sites. This two-hour workshop set the foundation for use to take place. At a meeting in which data use was discussed, Gatekeeper 2, SLC coordinators, and the evaluators agreed to a change in the timeline so that evaluation reports were to be submitted and made available to staff in August, prior to the start of the academic year. Having the report in August would allow the use of findings for planning purposes prior to the start of the academic year. Gatekeeper 2 spearheaded this move to maximize use. One can conclude that the dissemination process of evaluation findings under Gatekeeper 2 was aimed to be user-friendly.	documented for some time (Banta and Bauman, 1976; Falcone and Jaeger, 1976; Guba 1975). Research by Florio et al. (1979) found that delivering evaluations to Congress at a relevant point in the legislative process was critical in influencing use. Obviously, evaluation will likely go unused if not delivered in time for a relevant hearing. Strommen and Aleshire (1979) found that newly introduced information after the planning of a program led to the disregard of such information despite its merits. Similarly, if evaluation findings were not delivered at a time for school site staff to plan for the year, then they were unlikely to get much use. The method and format in which findings were presented, as already discussed, seemed to influence both awareness and use among site staff. The lesson here is that gatekeepers should be conscious about when they deliver findings to stakeholders. The goal should be to make them available when staff is most likely to use them, probably right before the academic year. This means making the necessary adjustments to deliver the findings at the optimal time. Delivery to stakeholders does not necessarily have to be aligned with the delivery to the funding agency.
Role of Gatekeeper Perceptions of Evaluation	Gatekeeper 1 initially viewed the evaluation as a requirement imposed on the district	Gatekeeper 2 also stated that he initially viewed the evaluation as a requirement. However, he came to	*The evaluation team's approach can help perceptions of evaluation evolve.* Some individuals may have narrow views of evaluation due to prior experiences or negative stereotypes. With the appropriate approach, evaluation

	by the federal government. She eventually realized that the evaluation also served as a study on the influence and impact of SLCs on students. Interacting with the evaluation team helped her perceptions evolve, making her realize the practical uses of the evaluation in the development of SLCs. While Gatekeeper 1 realized the practicality of the evaluation, there is no evidence suggesting that she truly bought into it.	understand that the evaluators were to provide unique and important data on student, parents, and staff that could help measure the SLC effect. Thus, through interactions with the evaluation team, his perceptions evolved, leading him to understand the practical uses of the evaluation in SLCs development. There is ample evidence that Gatekeeper 2 clearly bought into the evaluation.	teams can help break stereotypes and expand narrow views. Having individuals understand the practicality of an evaluation gets them a step closer to achieving the use of findings. Evaluator interest in use was one of the six contextual factors identified by Alkin et al. (1982) found to be strongly and consistently associated with evaluation use. Given that the ABC Evaluation Team's theoretical foundation is rooted in evaluation use, one can understand the change that took place in gatekeepers' perceptions of evaluation. Furthermore, a review of studies focusing on credibility of the evaluation process or of the evaluator led Cousins and Leithwood (1986) to conclude that credibility positively influence use. In this multiple case study, the evolution in perceptions by both gatekeepers, but Gatekeeper 2 in particular, can only be explained as a result of the evaluator gaining credibility. Shulha and Cousins (1997) note that studies have found that "evaluators working in partnership with stakeholders" are more successful in leading to knowledge production. Partnership being the key word, one used by Gatekeeper 2 to describe the role played by evaluators. Alkin et al. (1982) also noted that the interest and attitude of those responsible for making decisions play a critical role in determining use. In this case, it was evident that Gatekeeper 2 expressed a greater interest in evaluation than Gatekeeper 1. In general, there is ample evidence in the literature that stakeholder involvement makes evaluations more relevant, which in turn, result in greater commitment to use (Alkin et al., 1998).

			Research and evaluation units in school districts should be aware of the various approaches to evaluation and should educate administrators and leaders about them. Gatekeepers should have positive perceptions of evaluation if they are to use findings or encourage others to do so.
Role of Monitoring Use	Gatekeeper 1 mentioned no monitoring having taken place.	Gatekeeper 2 called for the findings to be incorporated into official action plans. Doing so served as a manner to monitor use. The SLC coordinators, lead teachers, and even Gatekeeper 2 incorporated findings into action plans. Gatekeeper 2 called upon on-site administrators to monitor use. In Year 4, Gatekeeper 2 asked SLC coordinators not "if" but "how" they were using data, including evaluation findings, to shape SLCs. He was doing so in official meetings. This served as a monitoring activity and as a way for SLC coordinators to hold each other accountable for using findings.	*Monitoring use will lead to a greater likelihood of the utilization of findings.* If stakeholders know that an accountability measure exists and that they will be required to report how they used the findings, then they will have no choice but to use the findings to inform some decisions. Expectation alone will not lead to informed decisions based on findings. An accountability measure needs to be in place to strongly encourage stakeholders to use the findings. Patton (1997) argues that managers, with the assistance of evaluators, can work with staff to establish a monitoring system to help everyone stay focused on desired outcomes. One can argue that a desired outcome, of course, is evaluation utilization. The lesson learned is that gatekeepers and supervisors need to be actively involved in monitoring use. Through professional development, district administrators should ensure that supervisors are aware of this responsibility.
Role of Program Stage	On the survey, most staff reported learning	The stage of the program allowed Gatekeeper 2 to focus	*There are greater opportunities for use at the gatekeeper-level at the earlier stages of an initiative, when there is*

	about the evaluation during Gatekeeper 1's leadership. This was not necessarily attributed to her efforts. Instead, it is likely that the stage of development played a major role. Staff were more likely to learn about the evaluation when they first learned about the SLC initiative. The program stage dictated how Gatekeeper 1 interacted with staff. At the time of inception, when no structure existed, Gatekeeper 1 attended each school's monthly SLC leadership meetings comprised of the coordinator, lead teachers, and, on occasion, an administrator to provide guidance and support. She had the burden of establishing structure where no	on action plans, aligning schools' goals with those of the district, data analysis, professional development on core subjects, the needs of the evaluation, and strengthening career pathways as they related to SLCs. Discussing these issues in-depth helped to encourage and facilitate use. When discussing evaluation findings, SLC coordinators and lead teachers were encouraged to report not "if" they were using them but "how". Gatekeeper 2 used the evaluation findings to inform the topics selected to address at meetings and professional development workshops. While a low percentage of staff reported using the findings, it is evident that use did increase gradually, albeit very slightly, throughout the years. One can speculate that staff got more comfortable using findings with each passing year. Also, because Gatekeeper 1 had dealt with establishing the structure in the earlier stages of	*more room for growth. Conversely, there are important opportunities for use further down in the social hierarchy at the later stages of an initiative, when the program is fairly established and staff is more likely to have bought into it.* Given that very little structure exists at the implementation stage of a program, a gatekeeper may rely on evaluation results to guide his/her decisions. A gatekeeper may be too busy focusing on his/her needs that s/he will not dedicate much time to promoting use among other stakeholders. At a later stage, however, once the program is fairly established, a gatekeeper may afford to focus on pushing for use among other stakeholders. Also, stakeholders may feel more comfortable using the findings with each passing year. Gatekeepers or supervisors should inform stakeholders of changes they personally make based on evaluation findings. By setting the example, these individuals can help establish a culture that values evaluation use.

	structure existed and getting buy-in for a new program. Gatekeeper 1 focused on the logistics of and resources for developing SLCs, general professional development on SLCs, administrative issues related to SLCs, and leadership development. She spent her leadership primarily getting the program established, organized, and focused. Not much was done to highlight the evaluation, other than to address logical issues pertaining to data collection. Perhaps it may have been too early to push for use. Gatekeeper 1 used the evaluation findings to inform her decisions on how she could best support and guide the SLC teams at each site.	the program, Gatekeeper 2 had more opportunities to monitor use in the later stage.	

	The findings led her to: 1) hire a coach who helped facilitate evaluation use, 2) implement SLC coordinator meetings, and 3) establish the SLC lead teacher workshops. These critical changes influenced by the evaluation findings were an investment in future evaluation use.		
Role of Training on Use	Gatekeeper 1 did not provide any professional development opportunities for staff to learn how to use data/evaluation findings.	Gatekeeper 2 used Year 4 meetings to focus primarily on professional development on how to utilize data, evaluation findings included. The goal of these discussions at these meetings seemed to be to get SLC coordinators comfortable with requesting and using data. These discussions may be perceived as coaching site leaders on how to use data to develop the SLC program. These discussions triggered a timeline change that moved the delivery of findings from December to August, a prime time for their inclusion in	*Professional development training on data use is likely to lead to increased interest in and use of evaluation findings.* If staff learns to appreciate the benefits of using evaluation findings and are taught how to use the findings to make informed decisions, then it should be easier for them to get comfortable doing so. Given that decisionmaking was at the bottom of the hierarchy, some evaluation capacity building had to take place. This is what took place in the training of staff to use findings. Gatekeeper 2 indirectly got involved in building evaluation capacity. He educates staff on both the benefits of the evaluation and how to partake in the process. Cousins et al. (2008) argue that "(e)valuation capacity building often depends upon training and professional development opportunities." (p.5) Unfortunately, it is not necessarily made available to everyone equally. This was evident in the training of

		planning for the new academic year. Survey results seemed to suggest that awareness of evaluation findings improved during the time that SLC coordinators and lead teachers went through numerous sessions focusing on promoting data use.	SLC coordinators and lead teachers but not non-lead teachers. In 1983, King and Thompson called for researchers to determine if school staff could in fact be effectively trained to use evaluation information. A contextual factor identified by Alkin et al. (1985) in influencing use was assistance in developing procedures. Quoting an evaluator in one of the studies, it was noted that "school administrators, teachers, and parents who serve on Title I advisory committees often do not have group process skills and decisionmaking skills. They must be given assistance in how to read, analyze, and make decisions upon evaluation data." (p. 2) This was what Gatekeeper 2 attempted to achieve with his professional development workshops aimed at SLC coordinators and lead teachers. The lesson learned is that school districts should provide training on data/ evaluation use to leadership staff, and possibly to non-leader teachers. The more comfortable staff are using data, the more likely they will use it.
Role of Administra-tive Approach	Gatekeeper 1's administrative style focused on breadth – addressing a variety of issues and keeping a number of group stakeholders (SLC coordinators, lead teachers, principals, professional learning communities, and	Gatekeeper 2's administrative style focused on depth – on addressing a few issues (primarily data needs and use, core subject content, leadership skills) and with a few stakeholder groups (principals, SLC coordinators, lead teachers, and assistant superintendent). His focus seemed to be on use of	*A gatekeeper's administrative approach influences stakeholders' use of evaluation findings.* It is obvious that leadership styles affect if and how reforms move forward. At times, administrative approach can be influenced by the stage of development of a reform. In any case, the decisions gatekeepers make will influence if and how findings are used by stakeholders. In discussing the elements of administrative styles that impact evaluation use, Alkin et al. (1979) point to administrative and organizational skills as particular

	board members) informed. Her focus seemed to be on awareness of findings by a broader audience. Gatekeeper 1 did not seem to think that principals fit in the evaluation process. She indicated that principals relied heavily on the SLC coordinators and, therefore, were not as informed as others to implement changes. She envisioned SLC coordinators and lead teachers as functioning as distributors of information concerning the findings. In sharing the findings, she wanted them to ponder how to make changes to SLCs. Gatekeeper 1 had no expectations for non-lead teachers to use the findings. She indicated that ownership of the initiative had to be	findings but by those at the top of the hierarchy (principals, SLC coordinators, lead teachers). Gatekeeper 2 spent more one-on-one time with principals than anyone else discussing findings. Thus, Gatekeeper 2 envisioned principals as both active users of the evaluation and overseers of use, at the teacher level. He expected SLC coordinators and lead teachers to incorporate findings into action plans. Gatekeeper 2 also did not necessarily expect non-lead teachers to make use of the findings. Instead, he viewed principals and SLC coordinators as the policy-makers. Gatekeeper 2 used the evaluation primarily as a resource to push for use at the site level. Thus, he created opportunities for stakeholders to think of how the findings could be used. He called upon his supervisor to help pressure principals into using the	critical and taking initiative as equally important. It was evident that Gatekeeper 2's administrative approach was more refined than Gatekeeper 1. He possessed the administrative and organizational skills to consistently push for the use of evaluation findings and created accountability measures to ensure use took place. Furthermore, he had the insight to realize there was a need for staff training and took the initiative to develop an in-depth data/ evaluation use workshop. All this, of course, with staff high in the SLC hierarchy. The lesson learned is that the approach a gatekeeper takes has the potential to drive evaluation use. Addressing weaknesses, having high expectations, setting up accountability measures, providing the necessary training – all seem to increase the likelihood of evaluation use.

	organic and, as such, she could not prescribe use. Gatekeeper 1 personally used the evaluation findings to address needs evident across sites. This led, for example, to the development of a coach position. One of the duties of this coach was to assist school site staff by fostering use of evaluation findings. Also, Gatekeeper 1 was responsible for establishing the monthly SLC coordinator meetings. These meetings provided the space in which SLC coordinators were trained under Gatekeeper 2 to make use of data/evaluation findings.	findings to make informed decisions regarding SLCs. He was consistently persistent in encouraging and, at times, pressuring, principals and SLC coordinators to make informed decisions based on the evaluation findings. He also led by example as he incorporated findings into his own personal action plan.	
Role of Organiza-tional	Gatekeeper 1 recognized that the autonomy granted to	Gatekeeper 2 was frustrated with the autonomy granted to school site staff given the	*The organizational structure of an institution can limit evaluation use, especially when it makes it difficult for accountability measures to exist.* The structure can lead

Structure	school site staff by the organizational structure of the institution weakened her power to enforce use. While Gatekeeper 1 expected action, she allowed the autonomy to dictate how that action would surface. She noted it was not her role to force teachers to use evaluation findings.	nature of the organizational structure of the institution. He acknowledged that the autonomy granted to school site staff dictated if and how evaluation use took place. He noted that he did not supervise principals or SLC coordinators and, therefore, did not have the authority to evaluate them. Thus, he also expected action but allowed the autonomy to dictate how that action would surface. Gatekeeper 2 got involved, or sought the involvement of his supervisor, only under the most critical situations. Administrators were identified by staff as those who were most likely to use the evaluation findings. This again supports the notion that staff members were adhering to the social structure of the institution with regard to use. Administrators were expected to use findings to inform decisions, teachers were not. Administrators had the same expectation for district administrators. Thus, staff	to an autonomy that controls the flow of information – whether findings would be shared with others in the first place. Overseers of the evaluation, the gatekeepers, can only encourage use if they do not have the authority to enforce it. The same can be said about SLC coordinators with regard to SLC lead teachers, who were informed to share findings with their SLC teachers. The effect of the flow of information in bureaucratic systems has been documented. In 1967, Downs' research found that "middlemen" in hierarchical bureaucratic systems selectively shared information. Adherence to the hierarchy is deeply imbedded in the culture of bureaucratic institutions. In an interview by Christie (2008), in which a school district internal evaluator stated that "we respect the hierarchy" when describing the communication process during an evaluation. (p. 535) In their synthesis of studies, Leviton and Hughes (1981) noted that the "hierarchy affects dissemination, because valuable information may never get to potential users." (p. 537) This applies to SLC coordinators, who served as "middlemen" or mini-gatekeepers for lead teachers, and lead teachers who served as "middlemen" for teachers not holding a leadership position. Alkin et al. (1979) also argue that the interrelationship between different stakeholders within organizations affect evaluation utility. The fact that individuals are bound by their roles is most true in bureaucracies. Kennedy et al. (1980) further suggest that the nature of an organization (i.e. the local education agency) is an uncontrollable factor evaluators deal with that can cause nonuse. They allude to a process of potential use that

		simply believed that those above them were responsible for using the evaluation findings.	"has many layers and is diffuse." (p. 65). Also, as previously mentioned in Chapter 2, Shulha and Cousins (1997) eloquently document that the "complexity of bureaucratic levels within the organization, the lines of communication within and across these levels, and the dominant mechanisms for framing the meaning of evaluation information all contributed to the potential utility of evaluation findings." (p. 198). In discussing a conceptual framework, Cousins (2003) notes that administrative organizational support, political processes and influences at the micro-level, and organizational culture are powerful variables connecting participatory evaluation and knowledge utilization. In 2008, Cousins et al. further argued that an institution with "a flat, non-hierarchical structure with few formalized controls over employees' work" tends to enhance organization learning. (p. 5) Cousins found a higher capacity to use evaluations in non-governmental organizations, implying that the bureaucratic nature of government organizations hinders use. Thus, the organization's structure itself influences whether stakeholders can learn to use findings, and if so, it can transform the organization's culture to one that is more user-friendly. The lesson is that school district administrators need to be aware of how the district's organizational structure affects reforms. Gatekeepers may need to be granted supervisorial power to enforce evaluation use for the sake of moving reforms forward. Another way is to establish a culture in which use of data, including evaluation findings, is expected at all levels of the social structure.

Role of Reform Priorities	Gatekeeper 1 did not discuss district or school priorities with regard to the various reforms taking place. The only evident priority was hers in establishing structure and buy-in into the SLC initiative.	While Gatekeeper 2 noted the importance of the SLC evaluation, he clarified that it was not a comprehensive evaluation that took into account all of the schools' needs. As such, principals had the discretion to decide which needs were priorities and to address those. Priorities with regard to the SLC initiative were reflected in how the findings were used. While staff had the discretion to decide how to use them, survey results suggested that of those who did use the findings most chose to make direct programmatic changes or to plan for the future – at least at the SLC lead teacher and non-lead teacher level. These individuals also seemed to believe that administrators were using the evaluation findings for these purposes.	*When multiple reforms are taking place, evaluation findings will be used to address one particular reform only if aligned with school leaders' priorities.* It is a challenge for administrators to decide which findings to use when they are responsible for multiple reforms. It is logical that findings aligned with their priorities are more likely to be implemented. These require less work and may fit better with the school-wide vision. Alkin et al. (1979) argued that preexisting evaluation bounds have an influence on the utility of an evaluation. A preexisting bound in the present multiple case study was what the school district proposed to do in the original grant application. Ignoring evaluation findings that addressed these specific preexisting bounds mobilized Gatekeeper 2 to reach out to the assistant superintendent for help in pressuring principals to use this information. Leviton & Hughes (1981) have also indicated, as noted by many writers, that research gets used more often in the presence of high relevance to program concerns. The lesson is that school district administrators should cautiously align reforms so that changes in one can benefit others. While this cannot always be done, supervisors should nevertheless require that critical findings be addressed to move reforms forward.
Role of Experience Using Evaluation Findings	Gatekeeper 1 noted it was the responsibility of lead teachers to inform non-lead teachers about the	Gatekeeper 2 noted it was the responsibility of lead teachers to inform non-lead teachers about the findings. Furthermore, he reported that it	*There are higher expectations of use for those with experience, or perceived as having the experience, making decisions based on evaluation findings.* Generally, this applies to those holding a leadership position. Those with inexperience are perceived as not

	findings. She admitted that even if done, SLC teachers did not know what to do with findings. Instead, she believed that teachers waited for administrators to direct them on what to do with those findings. Gatekeeper 1 reported that those with experience using findings or who took the initiative to use findings were promoted to leadership positions.	was the responsibility of the administration and the SLC coordinator to keep SLC teachers informed about the findings and to facilitate use. Focus group teacher participants reported that it was not in their place to use evaluation findings. The focus groups discussions seem to suggest that teachers had little to no experience using evaluation findings. As a result, they invested very little effort to keep informed about the evaluation and its findings.	knowing what to do with the findings. Those with little to no experience also believe it is not their place to use the findings. Alkin et al. (1979) argued that the orientation of users, which is shaped by attitudes, perceptions, and experiences with previous evaluations, affect evaluation use. Leviton and Hughes (1981) also noted that certain factors affect how receptive administrators are to research. One such factor is that heavy use leads to more trust in research. In discussing a study, Hofstetter and Alkin (2003) argued that familiarity with evaluations may explain why administrators find reports more useful than teachers. Preskill and Torres (2000) also note that transformative learning is incremental, meaning that learning builds on past experiences. This is certainly the perception present in a hierarchical setting. Those at the top are generally perceived as more experienced. The lesson learned is that school administrators need to change this perception, perhaps through professional development or by monitoring use. All staff should feel a sense of responsibility to use evaluation findings to make informed decisions. They should know that a collaborative effort is needed to move a reform forward, especially in the case when the initiative is structured as a bottom-up reform.

Role of One's Leadership Position	At the end of Gatekeeper 1's leadership, administrators as a group were the most positive about and aware of the evaluation than teachers. Administrators and lead teachers were also most aware of the findings. Teachers were the most unaware of the evaluation and findings. Survey results seem to suggest that lead teachers were more likely to find out about the evaluation during the leadership of the gatekeeper under whom they served. SLC coordinator and lead teachers were identified most often as the source for learning about the evaluation findings.	At the end of Gatekeeper 2's leadership, administrators and lead teachers as a group were also the most aware of the evaluation and its findings. Teachers were most unaware of the evaluation and the findings. Survey results seem to suggest that lead teacher were more likely to find out about the evaluation during the leadership of the gatekeeper under whom they served. They were also more likely to use findings during the years they served as leaders. Those in leadership positions were identified as taking an active role in the evaluation. Administrators and SLC coordinators were identified by staff as sources for raising awareness about the SLC evaluation but raising awareness about the findings was attributed to the SLC coordinators and lead teachers. Administrators were identified by staff as those who were	*Those in leadership positions are most positive about evaluation, are more aware of findings, and are more likely to use the evaluation results.* This could be attributed to leaders having more experience using evaluation findings. It is most likely, however, that schools have an established culture that calls upon leaders to make decisions. Teachers are generally excluded. The issue of leadership is closely associated with that of the role of supervisors. Cousins and Leithwood (1986) noted in their review of studies that evaluation was "reported to be of most use in the early stages in the decisionmaking process." (p. 355) Earlier stages implies that those in leadership roles are the ones making the decisions, as presumably leaders are the ones with most involvement in the early stages. While there were conflicting conclusions about whether position in an organizational hierarchical influences use, Cousins and Leithwood (1986) did find that some studies did support the view that "greater utilization occurred among those with positions higher in the hierarchy, for example, central office administrators as opposed to principals, and principals as opposed to teachers." (p. 356). In this multiple case study, it is also important to note that leadership position, closely associated with supervisorial authority, was also influential in driving use. The lesson is that administrators need to change the school culture so that staff can learn that it is everyone's

		most likely to use the evaluation findings. Due to their leadership roles, the SLC coordinator and lead teachers benefitted from formal discussions on the evaluation findings. This may have led to their high level of awareness. Lead teachers indicated not having shared evaluation findings with teachers. Teachers could not assert with authority whether findings were indeed shared. This implied that expectations were that teachers did not need to know and, perhaps, that they did not know what to do with the information.	responsibility to make informed decisions so that they can collectively move reforms forward.
Role of Data Collection Activities	The role of data collection activities was not mentioned by Gatekeeper 1 nor addressed in data collected during her leadership.	In both surveys and focus group interviews during the leadership of Gatekeeper 2, teachers revealed that they learned about the evaluation after participating in data collection activities (surveys and/or focus groups).	*Data collection activities provide opportunities to share information about the evaluation and its findings.* This is most likely to happen in large institutions with poor communication systems in place. Awareness of the evaluation is a step towards use of findings. Patton (1997) argues that paying attention to face validity leads to more credible data on the part of stakeholders and, indirectly, more likelihood of use. In this multiple case study, in informing stakeholders of what was being

			measured, data collection instruments also informed them about the evaluation. This multiple case study highlights the potential for data collection instruments to serve as a direct source of information and indirectly as a form to encourage use. The lesson learned is that school districts should be aware that staff is learning about the evaluation through third parties. Efforts should be made to properly inform all staff. If this is not doable, then perhaps it may be in the interest of school districts to mention important findings in survey format.
Role of Meetings	The role of meetings was not mentioned by Gatekeeper 1 nor addressed in data collected during her leadership.	During Gatekeeper 2's leadership, meetings was the source most commonly identified as to how information about the evaluation was delivered. It was more common than the SLC coordinator, lead teacher, or administrator.	*The optimal way to share information about the evaluation and its findings is at meetings.* This is logical given the isolated manner in which teachers work. Discussing findings at meetings can provide opportunities for learning to take place, to clear misconceptions, and to plan for their use. Essentially, for constructivist and transformative learning to take place, organizations need to bring people together (Preskill and Torres, 2000). The lesson for school district administrators is that either having more meetings or longer meeting may lead to a better informed staff more likely to help move reforms forward.
Role of School Context	DHS staff had the least positive attitudes about evaluation and were least aware of it and its results. A previous	DHS staff had the least positive attitudes about evaluation and were least aware of it and its results. A previous experience with a	*The political dynamics of the evaluation attitudes of staff and administrative style of leaders affect evaluation use at a particular site.* It was clear that in one school, negative attitudes towards the evaluation predicted low awareness of evaluation findings and use. The site with

	experience with a similar reform left them resistant to SLCs. The BHS staff was the most enthusiastic but, according to Gatekeeper 1, most naïve. The WHS staff seemed to believe their school was fine and did not need to invest much in SLCs.	similar reform left them resistant to SLCs. BHS was the most enthusiastic but, according to Gatekeeper 2, most resistant. WHS staff seemed to believe their school was fine and did not need to invest much in SLCs.	the most enthusiastic staff reported the higher percentages of evaluation awareness and knowledge of findings. Evaluation perceptions, administrative style, and leadership role comprise the school political context. These issues have already been discussed in the rows about. The school context influences if and how use will take place. Gatekeepers should plan for regular meetings with school leaders across the district to stay informed of the influences of school context. By addressing administrative issues and working towards improving evaluation attitudes, gatekeepers can help inspire evaluation use at the site level.

The research findings of this multiple case study provide confirmatory evidence related to a number of issues discussed in the evaluation literature. It is invigorating to find similar findings in different contexts as they simply strengthen the call to address weaknesses, which in this case pertain to obstacles that hinder evaluation use. Facilitating evaluation use will help move education initiatives forward so that they can be developed to their fullest and assessed more accurately.

Limitations

This study had some limitations that were rooted in the fact that it relied on secondary data sources. First, survey items were not worded consistently throughout the years, which presented a challenge. Secondly, surveys in Year 3 and Year 4 did not identify lead teachers, a group that played a critical role in this study. To compensate for this short-coming, teachers having served as SLC leaders were identified in Year 5 and were labeled as having served under Gatekeeper 1 or Gatekeeper 2. Thus, those serving under Gatekeeper 1 had to think retroactively about all their evaluation experiences, unlike teachers and administrators who had a reference point for some survey items in Years 3 and 4. The responses of lead teachers serving under Gatekeeper 1, therefore, may not have been as accurate as for those who served under Gatekeeper 2. A third challenge that arose with the survey pertained to the item that inquired whether staff had served as SLC coordinator at any point during the initiative. It appears that this item needed clarification as more survey participants reported having served as SLC coordinators than what was accounted for in an evaluation report. Due to this confusion, responses for the SLC coordinator could not be reported separately and, instead, were combined with the responses of the SLC lead teachers.

Another serious limitation was that survey participation was low, especially among administrators and lead teachers serving under Gatekeeper 1. The problem with this low sample size was exacerbated when disaggregating the data by schools. Because the nature of the organizational structure of a school dictates a high ratio of teachers per administrator, it was expected that teacher participation would yield higher numbers than administrators. Unfortunately, participation from administrators was excessively low throughout the years but, in particular, in Years 3 and 4. This low participation may have affected the ANOVA results for BHS and DHS, where no statistical differences were found regarding evaluation awareness between lead teachers serving Gatekeeper 1 and Gatekeeper 2. Furthermore, given the low survey numbers, it was difficult to put too much weight on the descriptive analyses of some of the survey items.

This study would have benefitted from qualitative data from Year 3 focus groups that addressed staff's experiences with the evaluation. Not having Year 3 qualitative data that addressed this issue prevented a more in-depth analysis of Year 3 that could have provided a clearer snapshot of the status under Gatekeeper 1. This would have balanced things more equally with the Year 5 analyses, in which both quantitative and qualitative data were taken into account to highlight what was taking place under Gatekeeper 2. Lastly, transcripts indicate that on two occasions the evaluation team failed to follow the interview protocol during staff focus groups. It is possible that time ran out and, therefore, some items pertaining to awareness of the evaluation and its findings were not discussed.

An attempt was made to produce an accurate, useful, and honest study despite these limitations that speaks to the evaluation experiences of school staff. While these flaws did limit

the scope of the study, the findings of this multiple case study, nevertheless, are of practical significance and make important contributions to the evaluation field.

Reflections

In analyzing previously collected data for this multiple case study, I could not help but reflect on my experiences as a member of the evaluation team. Although not the lead evaluator, I nevertheless witnessed the evolution of the staff culture that took place when Gatekeeper 2 became the leader of the SLC initiative. While both gatekeepers were exceptional leaders, Gatekeeper 2 seemed to have managed the mini-gatekeepers (principals and SLC coordinators) at the school sites more effectively than Gatekeeper 1. It was evident that during the leadership of Gatekeeper 2 evaluation findings began to inform school-site decisions, many times without lead teachers having knowledge of it. I believed this occurred because: 1) Gatekeeper 2 understood that despite the bottom-up structure of the initiative, schools continued to function in a top-down culture, and 2) he placed a certain degree of pressure on staff by prescribing evaluation use. Gatekeeper 1, on the other hand, remained loyal to the original structure of the initiative, which called for SLCs to be driven by teachers. Unfortunately, the nature of the bureaucracy and the school culture itself prohibited most teachers from fulfilling the role called upon then by the initiative. Thus, I feel that Gatekeeper 1 was unable to get school site staff to use the evaluation findings to the degree that Gatekeeper 2 did.

I noticed that the impact on culture seemed more intense by the change of gatekeepers than the nature of the initiative itself. I realized that Gatekeeper 1 had to focus primarily on the implementation of the grant, ensuring that staff understood the purpose behind the initiative and encouraging the establishment of SLCs. She had the burden of introducing the new policy to three schools – one in which staff accepted the reform with open arms, another in which staff

was overly resistant, and a third in which staff was indifferent. It was clear that in Year 1, staff were not ready to implement the new policy let alone be interested in the evaluation or its findings. This was painfully evident to the evaluation team, as even developing a logic model of the initiative proved too stressful and time-consuming for staff. School site staff simply could not envision the program and its purpose. In Year 2, Gatekeeper 1 realized the importance of holding the SLC coordinator meetings and quarterly lead teacher workshops. This was when a change in culture began to take place, albeit, more at the buy-in level rather than an interest or appreciation for the evaluation. In Year 3, Gatekeeper 1 continued providing professional development to the SLC coordinators and lead teachers, primarily strengthening their leadership skills and helping them to seek more buy-in at the teacher level.

The evaluation team was aware that Gatekeeper 1 focused her interactions at the SLC coordinator and lead teacher levels all three years she served as director of the grant. She indicated she wanted interest and participation at the teacher level to be organic, as was meant to be in a school supportive of a successful SLC culture. Gatekeeper 1 lamented the lack of interest at the teacher level and partly blamed teachers for the lack of successful development of SLCs at each of the schools. She did not feel principals played a significant role in the development of SLCs, as the SLC initiative was supposed to be driven by teachers. Thus, she did not actively seek out the involvement of the principals in enforcing use of the evaluation findings. Even the evaluation team had limited interactions with the principals, whom were interviewed annually. During the leadership of Gatekeeper 1, the evaluation team was invited to present evaluation findings to SLC coordinators and lead teachers twice. Both times, limited time was set aside for discussion. While Gatekeeper 1 was very accommodating with regard to data collection

activities, she rarely referred to the evaluation findings when speaking with the evaluation team or school site staff.

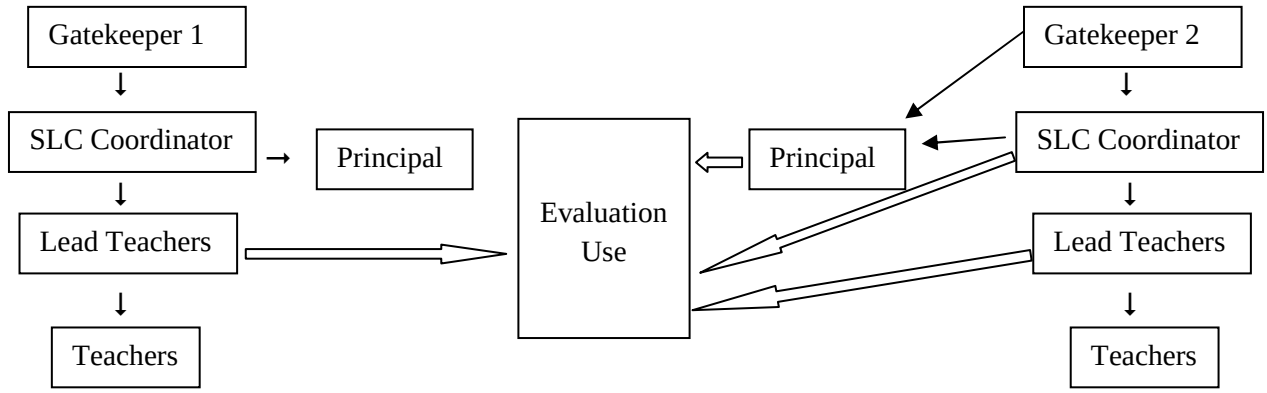
Things differed substantially with Gatekeeper 2. He seemed to focus on improving the SLC culture on each high school campus by developing the established SLCs. In Year 4, he referred to having read the evaluation reports to become acquainted with the status of the SLC initiative. He decided to emphasize data use in his professional development with SLC coordinators. To facilitate the use of evaluation findings, he sparked the collaborative decision made by him, SLC coordinators, and the evaluation team to change the evaluation report deadline from December to August, just before the start of the academic year. This allowed for use of evaluation findings in the planning of the academic year. In Year 5, he asked the evaluation team to be available for a two-hour session so that SLC coordinators and lead teachers could read through the findings, discuss them, and plan for action. He not only facilitated the in-depth presentation of evaluation findings but, by dedicating so much time to it, I feel he also legitimized the evaluation. It was the first time that as a member of the evaluation team I felt our work valued, appreciated, and, most importantly, used by critical stakeholders in the development of SLCs. I felt that finally in Year 5 the evaluation had gained respect, at least by the director, SLC coordinators, and SLC lead teachers.

A factor that seemed to have helped influence use was that, unlike Gatekeeper 1, Gatekeeper 2 focused on the principals to drive SLC development. Gatekeeper 2 did not only discuss the findings with SLC coordinators and principals, but he also held them accountable for using what he referred to as evaluation "data" to make informed SLC decisions. Principals and SLC coordinators had to report not "if" they were going to use the evaluation findings but "how" they were going to do so. While not dictating what they had to do, Gatekeeper 2 was pressuring

principals and SLC coordinators to do something. Again, what he asked and to whom seemed to push for SLC policy decisions to be based on evaluation findings. His strategy was to prescribe use. I believe this approach was fairly successful. He left the intricate details to the principals and SLC coordinators, as well as the decision of how they would influence or pressure lead teachers to make use of the evaluation findings. The bottom line was that direct action to SLCs took place as a result of the evaluation.

The key is that Gatekeeper 1 did not perceive principals playing a significant role and, instead, felt that buy-in and development had to be at the lead teacher, and to some degree, teacher ranks. Gatekeeper 2, on the other hand, felt that principals were critical in driving SLC development. The flow chart below highlights how information regarding the evaluation findings was disseminated at each school site during the leadership of each gatekeeper. The chart also illustrates who gatekeepers perceived as the primary users of the evaluation findings.

Figure 5.1. Dissemination of Evaluation Findings and Perceived Users.



The thinner arrows point to how information made its way from the SLC directors at the district office to teachers at each school site. The block arrows point to who was expected to make use of the evaluation findings, either on their own accord, or in the case of Gatekeeper 2, with some pressure. It is evident that there are more arrows under Gatekeeper 2 than Gatekeeper 1. As previously mentioned, Gatekeeper 2 believed that principals played a critical role in the development of SLCs on their respective campuses. Gatekeeper 1 seemed to think that lead teachers where the primary users of the evaluation findings, as they could take the necessary actions to make improvements to their SLCs. While she wanted teachers to care, and be involved in making those informed decisions, Gatekeeper 1 did not really expect teachers to actually use the evaluation findings. Gatekeeper 2 also did not necessarily have such expectation but he did anticipate that lead teachers, SLC coordinators, and the principal would direct teachers in implementing any actions they made with regard to the development of SLCs. While one could argue that the actions taken by each gatekeeper were influenced by the stage of the initiative, this was not necessarily the case. Personal philosophies, interests, and administrative approach, as already mentioned in the table discussed earlier in this chapter, played a significant role in influencing gatekeeper actions.

Due to some limitations, data presented in this dissertation does not necessarily support what seemed fairly evident to the evaluation team – the presence of a greater appreciation for the evaluation and an increase in use of findings during the leadership of Gatekeeper 2. One of the limitations was that staff was not aware that some of the actions being implemented at the direction of the principals were in fact influenced by the evaluation findings. Thus, it is very likely that use under Gatekeeper 2 was unreported by lead teachers and teachers. I do not believe this was the case under Gatekeeper 1 given that principals did not play a prominent role in

developing SLCs. While identification of how evaluation findings influence use is very complex (Mark & Henry, 2012), it is likely that this was the case with Gatekeeper 1. It was easier to track the flow of information and use under Gatekeeper 1 given that the lines of communication were very linear, unlike with Gatekeeper 2, who also communicated directly with principals. Thus, I feel that evaluation use was under reported under Gatekeeper 2 but not under Gatekeeper 1.

As a member of the evaluation team, I witnessed how these gatekeepers administered the grant and how they interacted with staff. Experiencing the small change in culture from one of indifference to the evaluation to one that valued it, made the evaluation team, myself included, realize the impact a gatekeeper has in influencing evaluation use. It was evident to the evaluation team that prescribed use, not necessarily dictating what must be done but requiring an action based on the evaluation findings to be taken, did in fact increase use. Unfortunately, data restrains prevented this dissertation to support this premise empirically. Observations from the evaluation team, however, seem to support that this did indeed take place. This suggests that further study of prescribed use would certainly benefit the literature on evaluation utilization.

Implications for Future Research

The lessons described earlier in this chapter shed light on the various issues that can be further explored in future research. There is a need to understand how to proceed with each lesson learned in this multiple case study. Knowing that supervisors have the power to drive evaluation use is not necessarily something new to practitioners. However, it may be important to know whether a supervisor's perception of evaluation has more influence than their personal belief in a reform, with regard to yielding evaluation use. Also, how does an evaluator approach the influence of the organizational structure in order to improve the likelihood of use? If an evaluator could only focus on a few, which lesson would be the most fruitful to address?

Similarly, if a school district can only invest so much in changing its culture to one that is conducive to evaluation use, to which lesson should resources go? Is prescribed use a practical approach to achieving evaluation utilization? While the lessons were identified, each one could be further explored in-depth in future research.

As previously mentioned, all the lessons identified in this multiple case study may not be new to the evaluation field. Thus, it is surprising that these challenges keep surfacing despite the knowledge about them. It is critical that more research in this area is done in order to address these challenges and break some of the barriers to evaluation use. Not only would this help move education reforms, it would also result in more appreciation for evaluations, and indirectly, to the field as well.

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Appendix A

Fall 2007 (Year 3) Survey

This survey will help your school learn more about what teachers think about Small Learning Communities (SLCs) and progress towards implementing SLCs. Please be honest and open. All responses will be combined, so individual responses will NOT be reported to anyone. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential.

Section A: About You

1. Are you part of a Small Learning Community? □Yes □No □don't know

a. If yes, which SLC? □SLC1 □ SLC3 □ SLC5
□ SLC2 □ SLC4 □ SLC6

b. If no, would you like to be a part of an SLC? □Yes □No □don't know

2. Position: □Teacher □Counselor □Administrator

3. Department (if applicable)**:** (If you teach in more than one department, choose one of your departments as a reference point for this survey.)

□Art (Fine & Performing) □English □Technology □Foreign Language □Science
□History-Social Science □Physical Education □Mathematics □Other (specify): _____

4. Grade level: (If teaching more than one grade, please choose the primary grade in which you teach.)
□9th □10th □11th □12th

5. Number of years at this school: □First year □Year 2 or 3 □Year 4-6 □Year 7-10
□Year 10-15 □Year 16-20 □20+ years

6. Number of years teaching OVERALL: □First year □Year 2 or 3 □Year 4-6 □Year 7-10
□Year 10-15 □Year 16-20 □20+ years

Section B: Small Learning Communities

Please tell us to what extent you agree/disagree with the following statements:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
1. I understand the vision and goals for implementing small learning communities **at this school.**	1	2	3	4	NA
2. I understand the vision and goals for **my SLC.**	1	2	3	4	NA
3. I am comfortable with how **my school** is implementing small learning communities.	1	2	3	4	NA
4. I am comfortable with how **my SLC** is being implemented.	1	2	3	4	NA
5. I believe that forming small learning communities will help **this school** raise student achievement.	1	2	3	4	NA
6. **The school** provides time on a regular basis for the sharing of information, ideas, and instructional strategies.	1	2	3	4	NA
7. I am able to navigate through **the district's** administrative procedures.	1	2	3	4	NA
8. I am able to navigate through **the school's** administrative procedures.	1	2	3	4	NA

My SLC provides teachers with opportunities to collaborate on decisions that will:					
9. improve student achievement.	1	2	3	4	NA
10. improve systems and processes at the school level.	1	2	3	4	NA
11. improve systems and processes at the department level.	1	2	3	4	NA
12. identify areas for professional development.	1	2	3	4	NA

13. What has been most rewarding, so far, when it comes to Small Learning Communities?

14. What has been the biggest challenge, so far, in implementing Small Learning Communities?

15. What additional resources do you feel you will need to successfully implement Small Learning Communities?

Section C: Staff to Staff Interaction

One of the anticipated outcomes of creating small learning communities (SLCs) is to create a stronger professional network and community for school staff. We are trying to get a picture of who is in your professional network.

For the following questions, please list your name and 0 - 3 people *at your school* (could be another teacher, an administrator, counselor, etc.) in response to the question. You may list a name more than once, if applicable. Again, **individual responses will NOT be reported**. All responses will be combined to gain an overall picture of staff interaction at the school.

1. Whose shared ideas about curriculum and instruction do you incorporate into your teaching?

   First Initial, Last Name

   Your name: _____
   Staff Member #1: _____
   Staff Member #2: _____
   Staff Member #3: _____

2. Who do you collaborate with on curriculum and lesson planning?

   First Initial, Last Name

   Your name: _____
   Staff Member #1: _____
   Staff Member #2: _____
   Staff Member #3: _____

3. When you think about possible ways of improving SLCs, who would you share the idea with to test it out?

   First Initial, Last Name

   Your name: _____
   Staff Member #1: _____
   Staff Member #2: _____
   Staff Member #3: _____

Section D:Attitudes towards Evaluation Practice in Schools

Please tell us to what extent you agree/disagree with the following statements:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
a. Evaluation would pave the way for better teaching and learning for our students.	1	2	3	4	NA
b. Our programs could use evaluation to learn how to be even more effective.	1	2	3	4	NA
c. Implementing an evaluation would enhance our stature as a school.	1	2	3	4	NA
d. An evaluation would make it easier to convince administration of needed changes.	1	2	3	4	NA
e. The integration of evaluation activities into our work would enhance the quality of decision making.	1	2	3	4	NA
f. It would be worthwhile to integrate evaluation activities into our daily work practices.	1	2	3	4	NA
g. There would be support among staff if we tried to do evaluation work.	1	2	3	4	NA
h. There are evaluation processes in place that enable staff to review how well changes we make are working.	1	2	3	4	NA
i. We are allowed the time to be involved in evaluation activities.	1	2	3	4	NA
j. The arguments for conducting an evaluation are clear to staff members.	1	2	3	4	NA

Section E: Culture and Climate Change

1. In your opinion, has the culture and climate of the school changed with the implementation of small learning communities? □ YES □ NO

a. If YES, in what ways has the culture and climate changed at this school?

b. If NO, how would you describe the culture and climate of this school?

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the evaluator at email@address.edu.
Your feedback plays an invaluable role in our efforts to strengthen SLCs at your school.

Spring 2008 (Year 3) Survey

This survey will help your school learn more about what teachers think about their teaching and school environment and experience. Your responses will be used to identify the school's progress towards meeting its Small Learning Community goals. Please be honest and open. All responses are optional and will be combined across the district, and across schools, so individual responses will NOT be reported to anyone and your responses will be kept strictly confidential.

Section A: About You

1. Small Learning Communities (SLCs): □SLC1 □SLC2 □SLC3 □SLC4 □SLC5 □SLC6 □I don't know □I am not a part of an SLC

2. Position: □Teacher □Counselor □Administrator

3. Gender: □Female □Male

4. Department (if applicable)**:** (If you teach in more than one department, choose one of your departments as a reference point for this survey.)

□Art (Fine & Performing) □English □Technology □Foreign Language □Science
□History-Social Science □Physical Education □Mathematics □Other (specify): _____

5. Grade level: (If teaching more than one grade, please choose the primary grade in which you teach.)

□9th □10th □11th □12th

6. Ethnicity □African American □Asian/Pacific Islander □Biracial/Multi-racial □White
□Hispanic/Latino □American Indian □Other (specify): _____

Section B: Small Learning Communities (Please indicate Not Applicable, if you are not in an SLC)

Please tell us to what extent you agree/disagree with the following statements:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
16. The faculty and staff at this school are aware of small learning communities (SLCs) and understand the purpose and goals for SLCs.	1	2	3	4	NA
17. The faculty and staff at this school have opportunities to suggest modifications to the SLCs that are heard and taken into consideration.	1	2	3	4	NA
18. Students at this school have opportunities to suggest modifications to the SLCs that are heard and taken into consideration.	1	2	3	4	NA
19. The principal and staff clearly communicate goals, standards, and expectations for achievement and behavior to the students.	1	2	3	4	NA
20. The school provides time on a regular basis for SLC teams to meet to share information, discuss students' academic progress,curriculum needs,etc	1	2	3	4	NA
21. I understand what my role is in my SLC.	1	2	3	4	NA
22. Lessons are designed and conducted to encourage students to think critically.	1	2	3	4	NA
23. Teachers sometimes change their lesson plans because of student suggestions.	1	2	3	4	NA

Section B, continued: (Please indicate Not Applicable, if you are not part of an SLC)

Please tell us to what extent you agree/disagree with the following statements:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
24. Teachers differentiate instruction and a variety of teaching approaches to help students with different learning styles.	1	2	3	4	NA
25. Teachers do a good job of making sure students know how they can get help if they fall behind.	1	2	3	4	NA
26. Students receive regular guidance on course selection and college and career planning.	1	2	3	4	NA
27. Students talk to me about their non-academic problems.	1	2	3	4	NA
28. I am aware of how my students are doing in non-academic areas of their lives.	1	2	3	4	NA
29. There is a climate of trust here among students, between students and teachers, and among students, teachers, and administrators.	1	2	3	4	NA
30. Teachers have high expectations for all students.	1	2	3	4	NA
31. Students receive prompt feedback and regular progress reports with specific suggestions for improvement.	1	2	3	4	NA
32. I talk with other teachers about students who might be struggling academically.	1	2	3	4	NA
33. The administration, teachers, and staff at this school work together to assist students who may be at risk of failing.	1	2	3	4	NA
34. I talk with my students about how to get into college.	1	2	3	4	NA
35. I talk with my students about how to pay for college.	1	2	3	4	NA
36. Students are aware of the A-G requirements needed to get into a UC or CSU.	1	2	3	4	NA
37. By the time students graduate from this school, they will be prepared to succeed at the college or career of their choice.	1	2	3	4	NA
38. I am involved with tutoring students who might need some additional academic support.	1	2	3	4	NA
39. I have regular contact with parents to inform them of their child's progress.	1	2	3	4	NA
40. The school supports the involvement of families and community members in planning, reviewing, and improving school programs.	1	2	3	4	NA
41. There are strong connections to the communities that provide students with the opportunity to engage in activities related to their college and career interests.	1	2	3	4	NA

Section B, continued:

42. Immediately following high school, what percentage of current 12th graders at your school do you think will:

	0-10%	11-30%	31-50%	51-70%	71-90%	91-100%
k. Graduate from high school	1	2	3	4	5	6
l. Seek a full time job (instead of college)	1	2	3	4	5	6
m. Join the military	1	2	3	4	5	6
n. Attend a trade/technical school	1	2	3	4	5	6
o. Attend a community college	1	2	3	4	5	6
p. Attend a 4-year college	1	2	3	4	5	6

Section C: Staff to Staff Interaction

One of the anticipated outcomes of creating small learning communities (SLCs) is to create a stronger professional network and community for school staff. We are trying to get a picture of who is in your professional network.

For the following questions, please list your name and 0 - 3 people *at your school* (could be another teacher, an administrator, counselor, etc.) in response to the question. You may list a name more than once, if applicable. Again, **individual responses will NOT be reported**. All responses will be combined to gain an overall picture of staff interaction at the school.

4. Whose shared ideas about curriculum and instruction do you incorporate into your teaching?

First Initial, Last Name

Your name: _____

Staff Member #1: _____

Staff Member #2: _____

Staff Member #3: _____

5. Who do you collaborate with on curriculum and lesson planning?

First Initial, Last Name

Your name: _____

Staff Member #1: _____

Staff Member #2: _____

Staff Member #3: _____

6. When you think about possible ways of improving SLCs, who would you share the idea with to test it out?

First Initial, Last Name

Your name: _____

Staff Member #1: _____

Staff Member #2: _____

Staff Member #3: _____

Section D: SLC Evaluation

Directions: We (the evaluators) are also interested in evaluation awareness and participation on your campus. With that in mind, please answer the following questions:

2. I am aware that there is an SLC evaluation being conducted? □Yes □No
   a. If no, I would like to be informed about this evaluation. □Yes □No

3. Have you participated in any of the following SLC evaluation activities? (choose all that apply)
   □ Logic model sessions □ Presentation of results □ I don't know
   □ Focus group sessions □ Interview □ I have not participated

4. Has your participation in these evaluation activities changed the way you think about:
   a. SLCs? □Yes □No □Not applicable
   If yes, in what ways?

   b. Your School? □Yes
   If yes, in what ways?

   c. Evaluation? □Yes □No □Not applicable
   If yes, in what ways?

5. Are you aware of any results that have come from the SLC evaluation? □Yes □No □I don't know
   a. If yes, how did you hear of these results?
      □Directly from the evaluation team □SLC coordinator □SLC lead teacher □Other: _____
   b. If no, would you like to be informed? □Yes □No

6. Have you made any decisions regarding SLC implementation based on these results?
   □Yes □No □Not Applicable

a. If yes:	No	Yes, a little	Yes, some	Yes, extensively	Not yet, maybe in the future
- I used the SLC evaluation findings to help plan a new project(s) for my SLC.	□	□	□	□	□
- I used the SLC evaluation to make changes to my SLC.	□	□	□	□	□
- I used the SLC evaluation to increase the attention given to my SLC/SLCs at my school.	□	□	□	□	□
- I used the SLC evaluation findings to enhance my SLC's/school's commitment to SLCs.	□	□	□	□	□
- I used the SLC evaluation findings to seek additional funding for my SLC project(s).	□	□	□	□	□
- Other (please elaborate):					

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the evaluator at e-mail@address.edu. Your feedback plays an invaluable role in our efforts to strengthen SLCs at your school.

Spring 2005 (Year 5) Survey

Hello LBUSD Staff Member: For those of you who have completed the online SLC staff survey, we appreciate your support and we thank you for your time! For those of you who have forgotten or have not had a chance to take it, we ask that you please do so soon as the survey administration is coming to an end. You may recall that you are invited to participate in the annual SLC Staff Survey administered by the ABC Evaluation Group, the external evaluator for Small Learning Community (SLC) Initiative. In this survey, staff members from BHS, DHS, and WHS will be asked to answer questions about their SLCs. It will take approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Your responses to this survey will be used to identify the school's progress towards meeting its SLC goals. All responses are optional and will be combined across the district, and across schools, so individual responses will NOT be reported to anyone and your responses will be kept strictly confidential. All data will be collected by the ABC Evaluation Group and reported back to the district in an aggregated format. If you have questions at any time about the survey or the procedures, you may contact the evaluators at email@address.edu. Thank you very much for your time and support. Please start with the survey now by clicking on the Continue button below.

My school:

1. BHS
2. DHS
3. WHS

My SLC:

1. BHS Academy I
2. BHS Academy II
3. BHS Academy III
4. BHS Academy IV
5. BHS Academy V
6. BHS Academy VI
7. BHS Academy VII
8. I don't know
9. I am not part of an SLC

My SLC:

1. DHS Academy I
2. DHS Academy II
3. DHS Academy III
4. DHS Academy IV
5. DHS Academy V
6. DHS Academy VI
7. DHS Academy VII
8. DHS Academy VIII
9. DHS Academy IX
10. I don't know
11. I am not part of an SLC

My SLC:

1. WHS Academy I
2. WHS Academy II
3. WHS Academy III
4. WHS Academy IV
5. WHS Academy V
6. WHS Academy VI
7. WHS Academy VII
8. WHS Academy VIII
9. I don't know
10. I am not part of an SLC

The grade level in which I teach: (If you teach in more than one grade, please choose the primary grade in which you teach.)

1. 9th
2. 10th
3. 11th
4. 12th

My position:

1. Teacher
2. Counselor
3. Administrator
4. SLC Lead Teacher
5. Other

Number of years teaching OVERALL:

1. First year
2. 2-3 years
3. 4-6 years
4. 7-10 years
5. 11-15 years
6. 16-20 years
7. 20+ years
8. N/A

During this SLC Initiative (F2005-S2010), have you served as SLC coordinator?

1. Yes
2. No

If yes, what academic year(s)?

1. 2005-2006
2. 2006-2007
3. 2007-2008
4. 2008-2009
5. 2009-2010

During this SLC Initiative (F2005-S2010), have you ever served as SLC lead teacher?

1. Yes
2. No

If yes, what academic year(s)?

1. 2005-2006
2. 2006-2007
3. 2007-2008
4. 2008-2009
5. 2009-2010

Please tell us to what extent you agree/disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
I understand the purpose and goals for small learning communities at this school.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
The faculty and staff understand the purpose and goals for SLCs at this school.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
I am comfortable with how my school has developed small learning communities.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

I understand the vision and goals for my particular SLC.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
I understand what my role is in my SLC.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
I am comfortable with how my SLC has developed.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
I believe my SLC will be sustained.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
I believe SLCs, as an initiative on my campus, are sustainable.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
The faculty and staff at this school have opportunities to suggest modifications to SLCs.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Students at this school have opportunities to suggest modifications to SLCs.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Please tell us to what extent you agree/disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
The school provides time on a regular basis for SLC teams to meet to share information, discuss students' academic progress, curriculum needs, etc.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
I believe that small learning communities will help this school raise student achievement.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
I am able to navigate through the school's administrative procedures with regard to SLC matters.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
I am able to navigate through the district's administrative procedures with regard to SLC matters.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Teachers use a variety of teaching approaches to help students with different learning styles.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Lessons are designed and conducted to encourage students to think critically.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Teachers do a good job of making sure students know how they can get help if they fall behind.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Students receive regular guidance on course selection.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
There is a climate of trust here among students, teachers, and administrators.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Teachers have high expectations for students.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Students receive prompt feedback and regular progress reports with specific suggestions for improvement.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
I talk with other teachers about students who might be struggling academically.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

In your opinion, what percentage of your students will complete the following levels of education: (Please make sure your total equals 100%)

- Less than high school _____
- High school graduate _____
- Some college _____
- Technical/Trade college _____

- Associates degree (AA or AS) from a 2-year community college _____
- Bachelors degree (BA or BS) from a 4-year college _____
- Graduate-level degree _____

Please tell us to what extent you agree/disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
The administration, teachers, and staff at this school work together to assist students who may be at risk of failing.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
I talk with students about their plans after high school.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
I talk with my students about how to get into college.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
I talk with my students about how to pay for college.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Students are aware of the A-G requirements needed to get into a UC or CSU.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
By the time students graduate from this school, they will be prepared to succeed at the college or career of their choice.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
I tutor students who might need some additional academic support.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
I have regular contact with parents to inform them of their child's progress.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
The school supports the involvement of families and community members in planning, reviewing, and improving school programs.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

What additional resources do you feel you will need to successfully sustain SLCs?

When did you first learn that the SLC Initiative was being evaluated?

1. Y1 (2005-06)
2. Y2 (2006-07)
3. Y3 (2007-08)
4. Y4 (2008-09)
5. I can't recall when I learned that the SLC Initiative was being evaluated.
6. I never knew that the SLC Initiative was being evaluated.

If you did know that the SLC Initiative was being evaluated, how did you find out?

What years were you aware of the SLC Initiative evaluation findings?

1. Y1 (2005-06)
2. Y2 (2006-07)
3. Y3 (2007-08)
4. Y4 (2008-09)

5. I can't recall the year(s) I knew about the SLC Initiative evaluation findings.
6. I never knew about the SLC Initiative evaluation findings.

If you were aware of the evaluation findings, how did you learn about them?

What years did you use any of the evaluation findings to make changes to your SLC?

1. Y1 (2005-06)
2. Y2 (2006-07)
3. Y3 (2007-08)
4. Y4 (2008-09)
5. I did use the evaluation findings to make changes to my SLC but I cant recall which year(s).
6. I have never used the evaluation findings to make changes to my SLC.

If you did use the evaluation findings to make changes to your SLC, how were the results used?

To your knowledge, who has used the evaluation findings to improve SLCs? (Please avoid using names. Simply indicate the person(s) position(s).)

In what ways did this/these individual(s) use the evaluation findings?

What years did you use any of the evaluation findings to make changes to your own practice?

1. Y1 (2005-06)
2. Y2 (2006-07)
3. Y3 (2007-08)
4. Y4 (2008-09)
5. I can't recall when I used the evaluation findings to make changes to my own practice.
6. I never used the evaluation findings to make changes to my own practice.

If you did use the evaluation findings to make changes to your practice, please describe how you changed your practice.

What years did the evaluation findings change the way you think about SLCs?

1. Y1 (2005-06)
2. Y2 (2006-07)

3. Y3 (2007-08)
4. Y4 (2008-09)
5. I can't recall when the evaluation findings changed the way I think about SLCs.
6. The evaluation findings did not change how I think about SLCs.

If the evaluation findings changed how you think about SLCs, please indicate in which ways you changed.

What years did the evaluation findings change the way you think about school reform in general?

1. Y1 (2005-06)
2. Y2 (2006-07)
3. Y3 (2007-08)
4. Y4 (2008-09)
5. I can't recall when the evaluation findings changed the way I think about school reform.
6. The evaluation findings did not change the way I think about school reform.

If the evaluation findings changed the way you think about school reform in general, please indicate in what ways.

Appendix B

Gatekeeper 1 Discussion Questions

SLC Discussion Topics
Lead Teacher Workshop
May 29, 2008

1. How do we encourage more parental involvement? (Whole Group)

2. What are some scheduling issues at your school site in regards to SLCs? (Site Group)

Mixed Groups: Please select one person to serve as a notetaker for your group. Your group will report out their findings to the larger group.

3. Some schools are experiencing a perceived hierarchy with their SLC programs at their school site. What are some ways that you can alleviate the negative impact of this hierarchy at your school?

4. Staff buy-in and involvement is at varying degrees at all school sites. What are some ways to get staff involved? How to empower teachers who are assigned to an SLC, but do not have students within the SLC?

5. Several schools are either starting new Smaller Learning Communities, or transforming existing Smaller Learning Communities with a new focus. What are some recommendations or consideration you could offer?

Gatekeeper 2 Discussion Questions

Discussion Worksheet (ABC Evaluations)
Site:_____

Strengths	Current practices that support this strength	Strategies for building on this strength

Areas for Improvement	Barriers (Site and District)	Support Needed (Site and District)

Evaluator Discussion Questions

Cohort X – Year 4 Evaluation Report 2008-09
Guiding Questions

Section 1: Achievement and Attitudes Towards Achievement

Academic Behavior and Expectation
College Knowledge

Section 2: Culture and Climate

SLC Awareness and Student Involvement
Personalization

Section 3: Building Leadership Capacity

SLC Development and Implementation
Parent/Community Collaboration
Challenges/Proposed Solutions

- For each grant goal (section), what were the more important and relevant evaluation findings?
  - What could be done to address student needs?
  - What could be done to address parent needs?
  - What could be done to address staff needs?

- How do the evaluation findings for each goal (section) relate to your current action plans?

- Are the needs of parents, as found in the evaluation, aligned to your action plans? If so, how? If not, what changes/revisions can be made?

- Are the needs of students, as found in the evaluation, aligned to your action plans? If so, how? If not, what changes/revisions can be made?

- Are the needs of staff, as found in the evaluation, aligned to your action plans? If so, how? If not, what changes/revisions can be made?