

# *Professional Services Options*

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## Special Interests:

Evaluations of Churches and Church-related Organizations  
Evaluations of Nonprofit Organizations  
Research on Shyness

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# PROFESSIONAL SERVICES OPTIONS

## Introduction

As a professional evaluator, I offer evaluation services that can yield substantial benefit for your church or organization. The purpose of this document is to explain these services and their potential benefit.

Because it is important to know those with whom you work, my biography is included on the next page. This short bio explains who I am in Jesus and why I am doing evaluations.

I hope we will have the chance to work together to identify the most beneficial service for your specific needs.

Thank you.

Freda Watson

## **Contents**

Introduction and Contents .....	1
Consultant Biography .....	2
Benefits of Evaluation Services .....	3
Understanding Evaluations.....	4
Which Option to Choose? .....	5
Vision Analysis .....	8
In Conclusion.....	9
Professional References .....	10
Resume .....	11
Appendix of Sample Reports .....	13

## CONSULTANT BIOGRAPHY

A native Floridian, I accepted Jesus Christ as my dear Lord and Savior in 1981 when I was a divorced single mom. Since then, I have been faithful in Bible study, prayer, worship, fellowship and witness. While working full-time and focusing on single parenting, I wrote inspirational stories and non-fiction articles in my spare time. Some of the writing was eventually published in small Christian magazines.

In 1997, when my daughter was established as a young adult, I returned to school. I felt led to obtain a degree to strengthen my credibility as a Christian writer. I obtained a bachelor's degree in psychology in 2001. Then, realizing that further education would not only strengthen the writing but also prepare me to do research—for Christian purposes—I remained in school.

From 2001 to 2005, I went on to obtain a master's degree and a Ph. D. in educational measurement and research. That period of full-time school included part-time work in educational research. I conducted original research, worked as part of a research team, assisted with evaluations, and published several conference papers and an article in a professional journal.

From 2005 to 2012, I worked full-time as an evaluator for the eighth largest school district in the United States. I conducted numerous evaluations of educational programs and gained experience applying what I had learned in real-world settings.

Those years of education and experience provided the expertise to conduct evaluations and research on almost any topic. (Please see the resume on the following pages.) Thirty-one years of walking in grateful obedience with the Lord have provided a Christ-centered worldview and approach to evaluation, research, and writing.

In 2012, I relocated to Austin, Texas, to be with my daughter and her family. Currently, I am prayerfully seeking evaluation and research work that will strengthen the Kingdom of God, specifically:

- ✓ church growth and development evaluations,
- ✓ assimilation seminars for churches, and
- ✓ seminars and research on shyness.

Rest assured that if I have the privilege of working with you, I will be prayerfully working toward God's best for you during the entire process.

*The following page describes the benefits of the services I offer. Following that is a short summary about evaluation that will help you begin considering which option(s) will best meet your needs. If you have any questions, please feel free to email or call.*

## **BENEFITS OF PROFESSIONAL EVALUATION SERVICES**

In the broadest sense, anyone running an organization engages in evaluation. They gather, analyze, and act upon information. However, few people running an organization have time to gather all the information needed. They typically have difficulty being subjective, overlook what is familiar, do not have experience with rigorous information-gathering techniques, and nearly always have difficulty obtaining candid responses.

An organization conducting an evaluation using an evaluator who is not involved in the organization enjoys several advantages. An outside evaluator provides: (1) objectivity, (2) fresh eyes, (3) professional expertise, and (4) the means for anonymous responses to questions. It can be extremely challenging for a leader in an organization to obtain candid answers when they do their own questioning.

The chart below summarizes benefits of the evaluations and other professional services I can provide for you.

<b>Professional Service</b>	<b>Benefit to You</b>
<i>Key point to remember – Any time an evaluation is done, the program or activity is strengthened because of the attention drawn to it.</i>	
Formative Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Improve processes or resolve concerns,</li> <li>✓ Surface grassroots solutions that need to be shared.</li> </ul>
Summative Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Help decide the extent to which a program is successful.</li> </ul>
Needs Assessment Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Identify and develop a plan to address goals, problems, or conditions.</li> </ul>
Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Understand the characteristics of a large group of people.</li> <li>✓ Measure how a group of people think, feel, or act regarding a topic.</li> </ul>
Focus groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Obtain deep understanding about opinions or attitudes. Generate solutions to problems.</li> </ul>
<b>Seminars</b>	
Assimilation Needs Assessment and Seminar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Identify and close gaps between what your church is doing to assimilate believers and the Biblical plan for assimilation.</li> </ul>
The Quiet Child Seminar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Learn how to recognize and help the shy child - for parents and teachers (Available Fall 2013)</li> </ul>
Unselfish Ends: God's Answer for Shyness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Understand and overcome shyness using Biblical principles (Available Fall 2013)</li> </ul>

## **UNDERSTANDING EVALUATIONS**

### **What is evaluation?**

Evaluation involves the systematic collection of information about how a program or activity operates and the effect it is having. Other questions of interest may also be addressed. The information collected may be used to make decisions such as how to improve, expand or discontinue the program.

Evaluations are useful any time a manager or team of managers need assistance gathering information. Evaluations often bring hidden needs and solutions to light and encourage greater implementation of a program or activity simply by focusing attention upon it.

### **Why do an evaluation?**

Evaluations are especially helpful when there is a need to:

- ✓ Systematically gather valid, credible information from multiple sources,
- ✓ Do forward planning to identify goals, problems, or conditions that should be addressed,
- ✓ Help improve a developing or an ongoing program or activity, or
- ✓ Help decide the extent to which a program or activity is successful.

### **Who is involved in an evaluation?**

Evaluations have sponsors, stakeholders, audiences, and users.

- ✓ *Sponsors* are the individuals or organizations who request and usually pay for an evaluation (a church, a government agency, or a business).
- ✓ *Stakeholders* are groups directly or indirectly affected by the findings, such as church members, managers, staff who run the program, or people receiving government services.)
- ✓ *Audiences* include people who will be interested in the findings.
- ✓ *Users* are the stakeholders who are expected to do something as a result of the evaluation.

### **How do you conduct an evaluation?**

Working together, the program administrator and the evaluator determine what information the administrator needs and the most feasible means to collect that information. An evaluation plan and contract for services are written. The evaluation plan specifies which individuals or groups will participate, what data (information) will be collected, and what reports are needed.

The evaluator gathers, analyzes, and summarizes the information and provides briefings and interim products or reports as needed. Information can be gathered through in-person, phone or email interviews, site visits, surveys, focus groups, and document review. The report includes recommendations. The administrator(s) and evaluator review a draft of the evaluation report before the report is finalized for distribution. The administrator may or may not act on the recommendations. Best practice is to include a follow-up phase.

## WHICH OPTION TO CHOOSE?

Sometimes it is appropriate to conduct a full evaluation. Other times, only a survey or focus groups are needed. The examples below illustrate how each professional service could benefit your organization.

### Surveys

Surveys can be part of an evaluation or they may be stand-alone tools to gather information. A survey answers one or more specific questions. *For example, a pastor might want to know specifics about his congregation (e.g., age, gender, spiritual experience, length of membership, etc.) A pastor might also want to know whether the congregation would give stronger support to a second worship service or a building program.*

Survey questions can also be open-ended. Open-ended questions explain how people think and why they give the answers they do. *For example, "Please explain why you do or do not attend Sunday School."*

### Focus Groups

Like surveys, focus groups can also be part of an evaluation or may be a stand-alone tool to gather information. When the goal is to generate possible solutions or to obtain deep understanding about an issue, focus groups are especially helpful. *For example, a church might want to know what is happening to attendance. The consultant would meet with small groups of between 5 and 8 individuals. Some groups would be composed of individuals who do attend regularly and others groups would be made of people whose attendance was irregular or who had stopped attending.*

During such small group discussions, solutions often surface because the experts about the topic are free to discuss the situation among themselves. The consultant guides the discussion so that each person has a chance to speak. The knowledge needed about an issue often resides in these "subject matter experts" but they do not get together for the purpose of talking about the issue. Getting these people together to talk freely about an issue is another benefit of having an outside evaluator work with your organization.

### Different Kinds of Evaluations

As stated previously, any evaluation strengthens interest and participation in a program or activity. Evaluations often include surveys and/or focus groups but usually other kinds of information gathering as well, such as interviews, document review and data analysis. Evaluations are a bigger, more complex project than surveys or focus groups. More questions are addressed and more people are involved in planning and using the findings. Although evaluations usually last several weeks or months, the extra effort is worthwhile. Evaluations can have a powerful impact on an organization.

Evaluations are highly versatile. They can focus on improving how a program is operating (a formative evaluation) or on the results it is having (a summative evaluation), And, a needs assessment evaluation can help get a program or activity off to a good start or help make people aware of important goals.

## Formative Evaluations

Formative evaluations are used when there is a need to help monitor and improve an ongoing or developing program. Formative evaluations are typically used when a program is just beginning or just entering a new phase or when a long-standing program needs some reshaping. Decisions typically involve revisions in staffing, activities, or organizational components.

To identify where a formative evaluation might help, ask yourself:

- ✓ Are intended activities being carried out?
- ✓ Are expected results occurring?
- ✓ Can the program or activity be improved?
- ✓ What are the reactions of the people involved?
- ✓ What are their perceptions of what should be changed?
- ✓ Are resources efficiently managed?

*Example: A pastor of a growing church needs to know how best to support that growth and plan for the future. The Vision Analysis on page 8 is one example of a formative evaluation that would provide highly useful information.*

## Summative Evaluations

Summative evaluations are used to help decide the extent to which a program is successful and/or the extent to which a program is meeting goals. Summative evaluations should not be conducted until a program has been implemented for an adequate amount of time, typically three years for large, complex programs. Decisions usually involve expanding, modifying, or discontinuing the program or activity.

To identify where a summative evaluation might help, ask yourself:

- ✓ How effective is the program or activity in reaching its goals?
- ✓ Is the program or activity worth continuing or expanding??
- ✓ What conclusions can be made about the effects of the program?
- ✓ What does the program look like and accomplish?

*Example: The state office for a denomination needs to know how well each organizational component is functioning and where more resources are needed. A summative evaluation might begin with focus groups from each component of the organization, followed by a survey and a document review. Follow-up interviews and/or focus groups could be conducted to generate suggestions for improvement for each component of the organization.*

## Needs Assessment Evaluations

A needs assessment evaluation is a special kind of evaluation that helps with forward planning. It is appropriate whenever you recognize a gap between what is and what should be. Needs assessments are used when there is a need to re-examine and critique existing goals or there is a need to make implicit goals *explicit*. Needs assessments also are appropriate when dissatisfaction or a question about program effectiveness arises. Decisions from a needs assessment usually involve allocation of money and effort to meet high priority needs that have been identified.

To identify where a needs assessment might help, ask yourself:

- ✓ What issue or problem is concerning us?
- ✓ What should our program try to accomplish?
- ✓ What do we know about it?
- ✓ What is the gap between "what is" and "what should be"?
- ✓ Where are we failing?

*For example, perhaps community leaders might be concerned if they have seen instances where retired pastors and families living in the community are struggling. The evaluator would gather information about the needs of pastoral families in that particular area and then develop a plan for meeting the identified needs. A follow-up survey and/or evaluation would be appropriate later on to identify how well the program was doing and what improvements could be made.*

#### References

*Altschuld, J.W. (2010). Needs Assessment. Sage Publications: Thousands Oaks CA.*

Wholey, J.; Hatry, H.P.; & Newcomer, K.E. (2004) Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco CA.



## **Vision Analysis**

The first report in the appendix (XYZ Final Report) is a vision analysis.

*A vision analysis is one kind of formative evaluation that can help implement vision.*

A pastor working to make vision reality needs to know the condition of his church – what his people need right now and how they feel about what God has put in his heart for their future. That understanding will help him work more strategically by seeing which components of his vision would find fertile soil. The analysis involves four phases.

### **Phase I**

- ✓ After the pastor(s) and consultant discuss the analysis plan, the plan is presented to leadership, for input.
- ✓ Leadership lists 3 strengths and 3 needs, for the church overall and for their respective area of ministry.
- ✓ The plan is briefly presented to the congregation, and the congregation lists 3 strengths and 3 needs, for the church overall.

### **Phase II**

- ✓ The consultant analyzes the 3 x 3 survey and writes an interim report that provides rapid, actionable feedback.
- ✓ The 3 x 3 survey results are also used to help design a traditional survey that will address those topics, as well as other questions of interest, including demographics such as age, length of attendance, spiritual condition, etc.
- ✓ *In particular, the survey includes questions concerning the pastor's vision.*

### **Phase III**

- ✓ The congregation takes the survey

### **Phase IV**

- ✓ A detailed final report is written, as well as a brief summary suitable for general distribution.

Involving leadership and the congregation in the entire process has numerous benefits, including greater involvement and buy-in.

### ***What information is provided?***

- ✓ Perceptions of current strengths and needs of the church
- ✓ Answers to specific questions, specified by leadership
- ✓ Congregational demographics, including spiritual demographics
- ✓ Perceptions regarding elements of the pastoral vision.

### ***What are the other benefits?***

- ✓ For the church overall – the attention focused upon various activities strengthens them
- ✓ For the pastor and leadership - useful information to help in decision-making and in shaping the vision
- ✓ For the congregation – Enhanced involvement and sense of community

### In Conclusion

I hope this document has helped you learn a little about me and my approach toward work. Evaluation is a very useful tool, which can be shaped to fit almost any situation. In God's hand, I believe it can be used mightily to help fulfill His purposes.

I sincerely look forward to working with you.

## PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES

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**Education**

- Ph.D., Curriculum and Instruction with an Emphasis in Measurement and Research, University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida, 2009.
- Master of Education (M.Ed.), Curriculum and Instruction with an Emphasis in Measurement and Research, University of South Florida, 2001.
- Bachelor of Science in Psychology, University of South Florida, 1999.

**Professional Skills**

- Design, conduct, and disseminate program evaluations.
- Analyze quantitative and qualitative data; write and present reports.
- Utilize multiple assessment techniques: surveys, focus groups, interviews, document and content analysis, and observations.
- Develop instruments.
- Present findings to large and small audiences and outside agencies.
- Supervise clerical staff.

**Personal and Computer Skills**

- Excellent communication, organization, and project management skills. Skilled at working in teams as well as independently.
- SPSS, Excel, Word, Power Point, Visio, utilization of Internet to locate and acquire data and project-related information and research.

**Professional Experience**

Evaluation and Research Consultant, Austin, Texas. 2012 to date.

Coordinator of Evaluation, Hillsborough County Public Schools, Tampa, Florida. 2005 to 2012.

Evaluation Consultant: Hillsborough County School District, Tampa, Florida. 2004-2005.

Research, Teaching, and Graduate Assistant: University of South Florida. 2001-2004.

**Non-Academic Work Experience**

Senior Executive Secretary: Board of County Commissioners, Tampa, Florida. 1994-2001

Executive Secretary: Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office, Tampa, Florida. 1985-1994.

Medical Records Transcriber/Manager: Tampa, Florida. 1977-1983.

**Selected Educational Evaluation Reports**

All reports available from the Division of Information and Technology, Hillsborough County Public Schools, 901 East Kennedy Boulevard, Tampa, Florida 33602.

- Interim and Final Evaluation of Reading Results Optimized by Computer Software—Reading ROCs!, 2005.
- Magnet School Assistance Program: Years 1, 2, and 3 Annual Progress Reports and Final Report in concert with Tina P. Bacon, Ph.D. (outside consultant), 2005-2009.
- Initial Feedback on Renzulli Learning Systems, 2006-2007.

- Title III Evaluation Report, English Language Learners, 2007.
- Emergency Response and Crisis Management Final Report, 2007.
- Reading Between the Lines: An Evaluation of Reading Endorsement Program, Reading Instruction, Student Motivation, and Student Performance with Linda Gaughan, Ph.D., and Patti Simmons, Assessment and Accountability, and Sandra Tune, District Resource Teacher. 2008
- Formative Evaluation of Single Gender Instruction, 2009.
- Formative Evaluation of Salary Differential Program, 2009, with Julie McLeod, federal programs evaluator.
- Compliance Evaluation of Single Gender Instruction, 2009, 2010 and 2011.
- Formative Evaluation of Problem Solving Response to Intervention, August 2010.
- Evaluation of District Initiatives and Mandates, 2011.

#### **Ad Hoc Assignments**

- Preparation of Department's input into Superintendent's evaluation.
- Preparation of Department's input into District Strategic Plan.
- Maintained liaison with Children's Services staff, Imagination Library project.
- Presentation on evaluation methods to Ophelia Boys' Project Initiative staff.

#### **Independent Research**

Conceptualized and created the EncStat (Encouraged About Statistics) educational program, consisting of anxiety intervention and statistical content components designed to help graduate students in their learning of statistics by directly addressing anxiety issues. Developed psychological component and helped coordinate statistics content component. Functioned as co-leader in team meetings. Participated in instrument development, research design, conference proposals and presentations, journal article, and teaching symposium. EncStat provided research opportunities and funding for faculty and graduate students.

#### **Professional Service Activities**

- Committee Member: University of South Florida. Student Life and Activities Committee. Department of Educational Measurement and Research. 2003-2004.
- Tutor: University of South Florida. Conducted pro bono semester-long review of course material offered in Statistical Analysis I for graduate students with statistics anxiety. 2002.

#### **Publications**

Watson, F.S. (2009). *Shyness in the context of reduced fear of negative evaluation and self-focus: A mixed methods case study.* (Doctoral dissertation.) Retrieved from Proquest Dissertations and Theses (Accession Order No. 3420539.)

Dedrick, R.F., Watson, F. (2002). Mentoring needs of female, minority, and international students: A content analysis of academic research guides and related print material. *Mentoring and Tutoring, 10*, (3), 275-289.

#### **Presentations at Conferences**

Watson, F., Hess, M. R., Onwuegbuzie, T.O., Ferron, J. M., Kromrey, J. D., Hogarty, K. Y., Lunsford, D., and Dedrick, R. F. (2004, February). Anxiety and attitudes in graduate statistics education: Measuring and monitoring change during the semester. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Eastern Educational Research Association, Clearwater, Florida.

- Watson, F., Lang, T., Kromrey, J. D., Ferron, J. M., Hess, M. R., Hogarty, K.Y. (2003, April). *An assessment blueprint for EncStat: A statistics anxiety intervention program*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago.
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- Kromrey, J. D., Ferron, J. M., Parshall, C. G., Hogarty, K.Y., Grinnell, L., Hess, M.R., Lee, R., Romano, J., Sentovich, C., Watson, F., Dawson, G, Niles, J. (2002, April). *Evidence of attainment: A comparison of methods for representing and communicating student outcomes in systemic reform*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

## APPENDIX OF SAMPLE REPORTS AND WORK PRODUCTS

*Note: These sample reports are redacted or else are public information. No confidentiality concerns are compromised.*

### **Sample 1                    XYZ Church Final Report**

This report summarizes results from a vision analysis done of "XYZ Church." This evaluation followed the procedure outlined on page 9. The open-ended questions in this report are a good example of how useful such kinds of questions can be.

### **Sample 2                    ABC Church Report**

This report summarizes results from a survey given at "ABC Church." The two questions of keenest interest were open-ended. Most of the report is devoted to detailed analysis of and recommendations for those two questions. Demographic questions were also included in the survey.

### **Sample 3                    Renzulli Learning Systems**

This is an example of a report written for a full-fledged summative evaluation. This report is, of course, longer and more detailed than a report for a survey. In this case, the school district wanted to find out how the Renzulli program was being administered and how successful it was. Information was needed to help with budget decisions.

A great deal of information and suggestions were obtained from teachers and students who used the program. The evaluation questions are a good example of questions that might be asked about any program or activity. Successes, obstacles to success, and suggestions for improvement were obtained.

### **Sample 4                    Other Work Products**

The "data brief" is an example of a two-page summary of a survey. Such a brief document is useful when the purpose is to give a large number of people a quick synopsis of a survey or evaluation.

A document like the "Initiatives Flow Chart" can help summarize a great deal of complex information about various programs/activities and show how they interrelate.

***FUTURE DIRECTIONS EVALUATION***

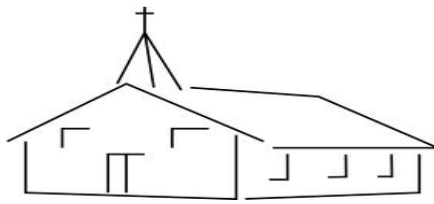
***FINAL REPORT***

***January 2013***

***XYZ Church of God***

***Anywhere, Any state***

***Senior Pastor John Smith***



**Prepared by:**

**Freda S. Watson, Ph.D.  
Evaluation and Research Consultant**



## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Clearly, XYZ Church of God is thriving. Numerous strengths give the church a firm foundation: a solid core of faithful, long-time members, recent growth in attendance, the loving nature and positive attitude of the congregation, the way the Holy Spirit is honored, the anointed preaching, and the congregation's appreciation of the Senior Pastor and his wife and other pastors. The foresight of leadership in planning for the future is another strength as is the participation of the congregation in making those plans.

Key findings of the formative evaluation results are presented below. This same order of topics is used throughout the report.

### **Basic Demographics**

- Over three-fourths of the survey respondents were members, with 55% having been members for five or more years,
- Well over half worked in a leadership or volunteer position or on staff,
- Nearly three-fourths had been a member of a church 10 plus years,
- Over three-fourths attended worship services three or more times per month,
- Nearly half either do not participate in activities or only in two activities per month, besides on Sunday,
- Slightly over half were female,
- Slightly over half were married,
- Over three-fourths were 41 years of age or older, and
- The vast majority did not have children living at home.

### **Personal and Spiritual Needs**

- Nearly all stated they had a relationship with Jesus,
- Approximately half attended Sunday School regularly and half did not,
- The top three items mentioned that would motivate individuals to attend Sunday School were: classes on different topics, more teachers, and the need to just go.
- The vast majority said they knew the church's doctrine,
- The top three personal needs reported were: spiritual growth, prayer, and love.
- The top three spiritual needs reported were: prayer, Bible teaching, and love.

### **Overall Strengths and Needs**

- The top three strengths were: the loving nature of the church, the pastor and the preaching, and the music and the worship.
- The top three needs were: more workers, assimilation, and children.

### **XYZ Overall**

- Family, the Holy Spirit, and friends were the main reasons that brought people to XYZ,
- The loving nature of the church and the people, the preaching and the Pastor, and the Holy Spirit are the main reasons reported why people stay at XYZ.
- Survey respondents believed the mission of the church should be to win the lost, to disciple, and to love, which includes outreach.

- To make newcomers feel welcome, suggestions were to communicate, take the initiative, greet them, and invite them to participate.
- About three-fourths felt they were adequately kept informed about XYZ, with about one-fourth saying sometimes yes, sometimes no.
- The main ways suggested to improve communication were different methods of contact, general improvements, and advising the congregation of those who were sick or absent.

### **XYZ Ministries**

- The top three reasons people gave for not serving in ministries were work/lack of time, not being asked, and health issues.
- Sixty-one individuals reported they could give some time in ministry, with time available ranging from “Whatever the job requires” to two hours a week,
- The three ministries in which people would be most willing to help with small tasks were (in rank order) prayer, music/worship, and children.
- The three ministries for which people supported using finances for growth were (in rank order) children, youth, and Christian education.

### **Future Directions**

- Approximately half of the respondents preferred an early worship service and half preferred a later service, if two services were held,
- Within the margin of error, approximately half supported an elected Council of Elders and approximately half supported an appointed Council,
- Slightly more respondents favored Sunday School classes grouped by age than by topic,
- Well over three-fourths preferred renovation over relocation,
- 101 individuals stated they would attend a Sunday evening service whereas 40 said they would not, and
- Well over three-fourths preferred keeping the current name of “XYZ Church of God”.

*In sum, the future looks very bright for XYZ.  
This is excellent, because the world desperately needs more churches like XYZ, where the Holy Spirit reigns and where people are truly loved.*

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Executive Summary ..... 2

Table of Contents ..... 4

Introduction and Purpose ..... 6

Data Sources and Format ..... 6

Basic Demographics ..... 6

Personal and Spiritual Needs ..... 11

Strengths and Needs..... 14

XYZ Overall ..... 17

    What Brought You Here? ..... 17

    Why Do You Stay? ..... 18

    What Should the Mission Be?..... 19

    How Do We Love Newcomers?..... 19

    How to Improve Communication ..... 20

Ministries ..... 21

    Reasons for Not Helping..... 22

    How Much Time Could Be Given ..... 22

    Where Help Would Be Given ..... 23

    Use of Finances for Growth..... 23

Future Directions ..... 24

Discussion ..... 25

Recommendations..... 28

## TABLES AND FIGURES

### **Tables**

Table 1: Length of Membership at XYZ .....	7
Table 2: Length of Membership at Any Church .....	8
Table 3: Attendance at Worship Services .....	8
Table 4: Participation in Activities Besides On Sunday .....	9
Table 5: Age of Survey Respondents .....	10
Table 6: Number of Children Living At Home .....	11
Table 7: What Might Move People to Attend Sunday School .....	12
Table 8: What Is Your Biggest Personal Need We Could Help You With? .....	13
Table 9: How Can We Better Help You Spiritually? .....	14
Table 10: Strengths of XYZ Church of God .....	15
Table 11: Needs of XYZ Church of God .....	16
Table 12: What Brought You To XYZ? .....	18
Table 13: Why Do You Stay At XYZ? .....	18
Table 14: What Do You Think The Mission of The Church Should Be? .....	19
Table 15: How To Make Newcomers Feel Loved And Accepted .....	19
Table 16: How XYZ Can Improve Communication .....	20
Table 17: Reasons Given For Not Currently Serving .....	22
Table 18: What Portion of Your Time Would You Be Willing To Give Us? .....	22
Table 19: Ministries in Which People Would Help With A Small Task .....	23
Table 20: Ministries for Which People Would Support Using Finances For Growth .....	23
Table 21: Results and Response Rates For Questions Concerning Future Directions.....	24

### **Figures**

Figure 1: Length of Membership at XYZ .....	7
Figure 2: Length of Membership at Any Church .....	8
Figure 3: Attendance at Worship Services .....	9
Figure 4: Participation in Activities Besides On Sunday .....	9
Figure 5: Age of Survey Respondents .....	10
Figure 6: Respondents With and Without Children Living At Home .....	11

## **INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE**

In the fall of 2012, XYZ Church of God conducted a formative evaluation. The purpose of the evaluation was to understand current strengths and needs, and to discover the mandate of the church. Leadership wanted to discover what was in the heart of the people and specifically how they felt about some decisions that had to be made, for example, whether to renovate existing facilities or relocate.

## **DATA SOURCES AND FORMAT**

The data in this report came from the congregation of XYZ, the Elders Council, and individuals involved in leadership. In September 2012, the consultant met with the the Elders Council and 14 other individuals in leadership to plan the evaluation. The Elders and leaders listed three strengths and three needs of XYZ. The congregation also listed three strengths and three needs. The results of these two Quick Response surveys, which were highly similar, were used to shape the Future Directions Survey.

The response rate for the Quick Response Survey was 39% (116 of an estimated 300 regular attenders). The response rate for the Future Directions Survey was 57% (171 of 300). Both these response rates are excellent and indicate that the survey results are reasonably accurate. Although response rates are excellent, it is important to keep in mind that the other 43% of the 300 individuals who attend would likely have different answers to some of these questions and some of the answers would be very different.

Results of the surveys are reported in text and in tables and graphs. For write-in questions (such as “What brought you to XYZ?”), the report contains brief summaries of responses.

## **BASIC DEMOGRAPHICS**

In order to better serve the needs of the congregation, it was useful to get a basic description of members and regular attenders. Questions about length of membership, age, etc. gave the results presented below.

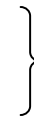
- **Over three-fourths of the survey respondents (135 or 78%) were members, with 92 (55%) having been members for five or more years,**
- **Well over half (98 or 61%), worked in a leadership or volunteer position or on staff,**
- **Nearly three-fourths (121 or 74%) had been a member of a church 10 plus years,**
- **Over three-fourths (141 or 78%) attended worship services 3 or more times per month,**
- **74 (46%) either do not participate in activities or only in 2 activities per month,**
- **Slightly over half (100 or 61%), were female,**
- **Slightly over half (99 or 59%) were married,**
- **Over three-fourths (135 or 78%) were 41 years of age or older and**
- **The vast majority (128 or 85%) did not have children living at home.**

**Over three-fourths of the survey respondents (135 or 78%) were members, and over half (98 or 61%) served in some capacity.** It was to be expected that most of the respondents to the survey would be members. This means the results give a good picture of the current congregation who attend fairly regularly. We can only speculate about the other individuals who did not complete a survey.

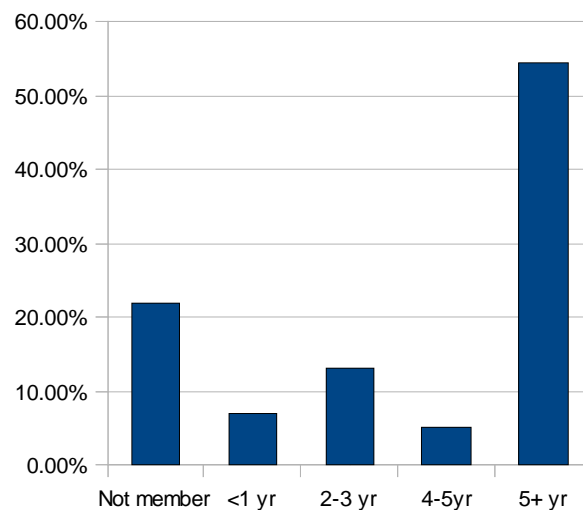
Leadership is interested in serving the needs of the current congregation of members and regular attenders so these results may be used to identify how to do that as well as to plan how to meet future needs. Table 1 and Figure 1 present the breakdown by length of membership of the survey respondents. Just over half (56%) have been members over 5 years, indicating a stable population.

**Table 1: Length of Membership at XYZ (n = 170)**

XYZ Membership	No.	Percent
Not a member.	36	22.00%
Less than one year.	11	7.00%
2 to 3 years.	22	13.00%
4 to 5 years.	9	5.00%
5 to 10 years.	22	13.00%
10 to 20 years.	31	18.50%
Over 20 years.	39	23.20%



**Figure 1: Length of Membership at XYZ**

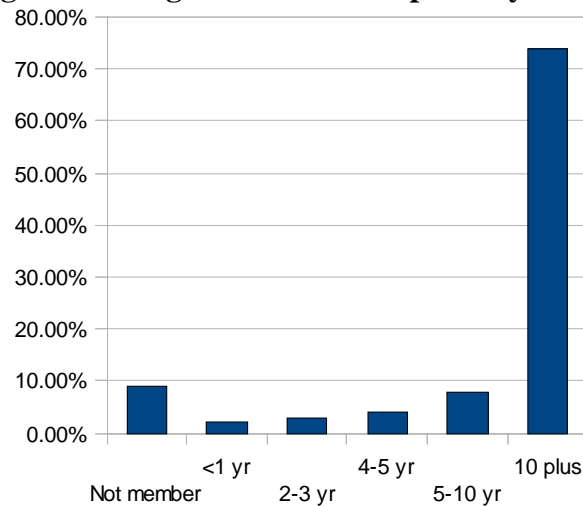


**Nearly three-fourths (121 or 74%) had been a member of a church 10 plus years, with an additional 20 (12%) having been a church member between 4 to 10 years.** As Table 2 and Figure 2 show, nearly three-fourths of the respondents had been long-time members of a church, whether it was XYZ or another church. Hopefully, these individuals are mature believers. It is interesting to note that the percentage of long-time church members (121 or 74%) was similar to those involved in service (98 or 61%).

**Table 2: Length of membership at Any Church (n=164)**

Church Membership	No.	Percent
Not a member.	14	9.00%
Less than one year.	4	2.00%
2 to 3 years.	6	3.00%
4 to 5 years.	7	4.00%
5 to 10 years.	13	8.00%
10 to 20 years.	34	21.00%
Over 20 years.	87	53.00%

**Figure 2: Length of Membership at Any Church**



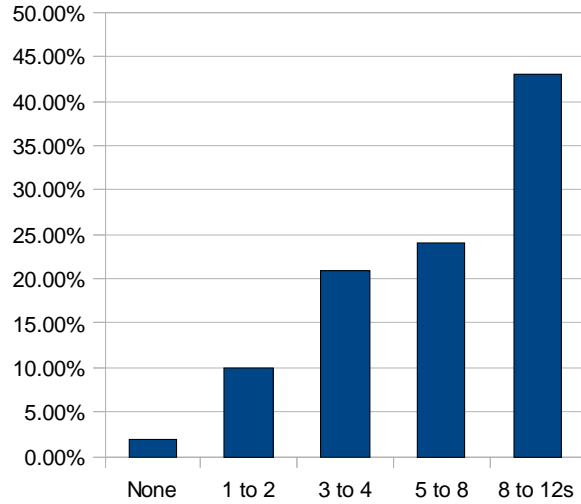
**Over three-fourths (141 or 78%) attended worship services 3 or more times per month.**

Examination of Table 3 and Figure 3 below indicates that of those 141 individuals, 24% of those attend 5 to 8 times, which indicates they attend every Sunday morning and at least one Wednesday. Additionally, almost half (43%) report attending more 8 or more times, which suggests they attend Sunday morning and Wednesday nights most of the time. This is an encouraging result as it indicates there is a solid core of individuals (approximately 141 individuals) who will attend most Sundays.

**Table 3: Attendance at Worship Services (n=160)**

Attendance at Worship Services	No.	%
None	3	2.00%
1 to 2	15	10.00%
3 to 4	34	21.00%
5 to 8	38	24.00%
8 to 12 times	69	43.00%

**Figure 3: Attendance at Worship Services**

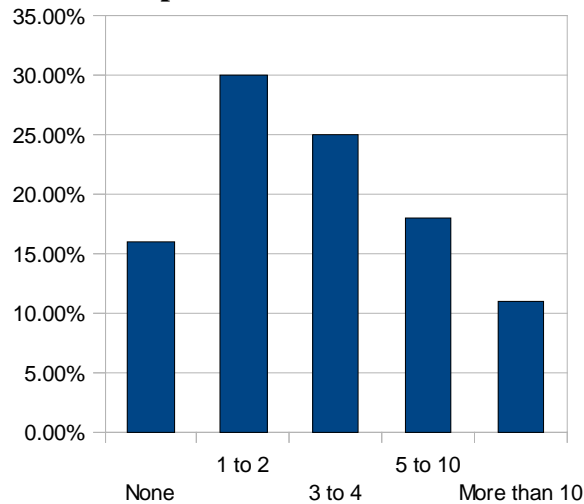


Seventy-four individuals who responded to the survey (46%) either do not participate in activities outside those on Sunday or only in 2 activities per month, 68 (43%) between 3 and 10, and 17 (11%) more than 10. It is desirable to have a larger percentage of individuals participating in more activities besides those on Sunday, which would include activities related to service. Table 4 and Figure 4 suggest that, as in many churches, a small percentage of the people do most of the work.

**Table 4: Participation in Activities Besides on Sunday (n=159)**

Activities Besides on Sunday	No.	%
None	26	16.00%
1 to 2	48	30.00%
3 to 4	40	25.00%
5 to 10	28	18.00%
More than 10	17	11.00%

**Figure 4: Participation in Activities Besides on Sunday**



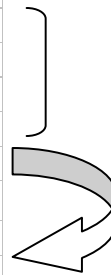


**Slightly over half of the survey respondents were female (100 or 61%) and most (99 or 59%) were married.** Again, these results are not surprising. Women typically respond slightly more often than males to surveys, and according to a 2011 Pew Research study, barely half of United States adults are married. <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2011/12/14> Of the 41% of respondents who were not married, 20 (12%) were divorced, 33 (20%) were single, 14 (8%) were widowed, and 1 (1%) were separated.

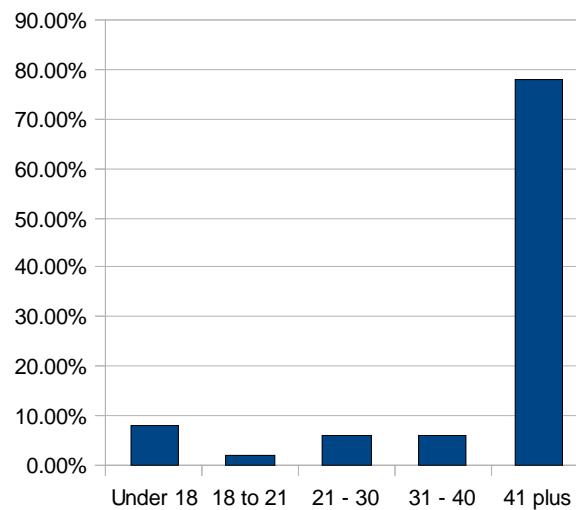
**Over three-fourths (135 or 78%) were 41 years of age or older.** Of special interest was the desire of the congregation to serve more youth and young adults. As the results show, this segment of the church is very small and needs to increase, as the first four lines of Table 5) indicate. This information is depicted visually in Figure 5.

**Table 5: Age of Survey Respondents (n=166)**

Age	No.	%
Under 18	13	8.00%
18 to 21	3	2.00%
21 - 30	10	6.00%
31 - 40	10	6.00%
41 - 50	33	20.00%
51 - 60	28	17.00%
61- 70	39	23.00%
70 plus	30	18.00%

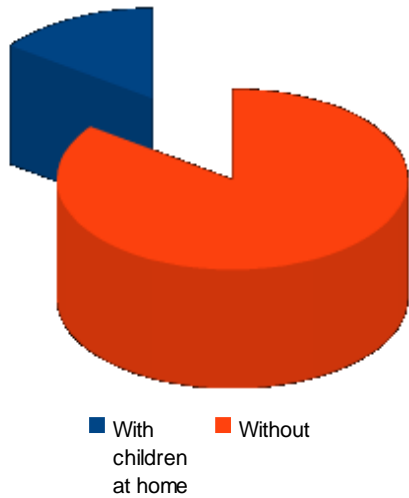


**Figure 5: Age of Survey Respondents**



**The vast majority (128 or 85%) did not have children living at home,** as depicted in Figure 6 below. Forty-three (15%) individuals who responded to the survey had children living at home. Table 6 below depicts the breakdown by age of the children. Again, this confirms that the desire of the congregation to bring in the younger generation is on target.

**Figure 6: Respondents With and Without Children Living at Home**



**Table 6: Number of Children Living at Home**

Age of Child	No.
Infant	1
3 to 5 years	7
6 to 11 years (elementary school)	13
12 to 15 years (middle school)	12
16 to 18 (high school)	9
19 to 21	8
<b>Under 21</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Young adults (19 to 30)</b>	<b>20</b>

**PERSONAL AND SPIRITUAL NEEDS**

Questions about personal and spiritual needs were included in the survey. Questions about the individual's spiritual *condition* – as best as can be 'measured' – were also asked. For example, did they know Jesus? Did they attend Sunday School and other activities? Answers to these questions are reported in this section.

- **Nearly all (158 or 95%) stated they had a relationship with Jesus, (2 people said no and 6 were unsure),**
- **Approximately half attended Sunday School regularly (83 or 51%) and half did not (81 or 49%),**
- **The top three items mentioned that would motivate individuals to attend Sunday School were: classes on different topics, more teachers, and the need to just go.**
- **the vast majority (139 or 83%) said they knew the church's doctrine,**
- **The top three personal needs reported were: spiritual growth, prayer, and love.**
- **The top three spiritual needs reported were: prayer, Bible teaching, and love.**

**Do you have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ?** Of the 166 people who answered this question 158 (95%) said yes, 2 people (1%) said no, and 6 people (4%) said they were unsure. It is wonderful that such a large proportion of people report having a relationship with Jesus Christ. Most likely, more of those who did not complete a survey do not know Him. Bringing in more of the lost seems to be on the hearts of a majority of the congregation, as indicated by responses to a question about the mission of the church.

**Approximately half attended Sunday School regularly (83 or 51%) and half did not.** It is interesting to note that over three-fourths (141 or 78%) reported attended worship services 3 or more times per month. Table 7 shows that the main reason given for not attending Sunday School was the desire for different topics and more diverse classes, with 8 people giving this reason. As one person said “I do attend regularly but would like to see a variety of topics taught. Many of the adult classes teach the same thing.”

Some people made specific suggestions, which are included in the first row of the table below. Six individuals could not specify why they did not attend, and four said it would take a change in teachers, four said they just could not. Other reasons are given in the table below. It is important that one person said “By asking” and another said for the teacher to show concern when they were absent for a while.

Only four individuals explained why they attended regularly. They said they enjoy Sunday School and it is one of the most important departments in the church.

**Table 7: What Might Move People To Attend Sunday School**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Sample Responses</b>
Need different topics	8	>More relevant topics presented. >More diverse classes. >Couples class geared towards building a God-led household. >Classes for young married couples, non-traditional. >Small class of believers, like Pastor Simmons did before the Greek class.
Unsure	6	>Unsure. >No reason.
Teachers	4	>More teachers. >More Holy Ghost-filled teachers. >Different teachers.
Can't	4	>I work every other Sunday. >Need more people in the Media Ministry.
Just do it	3	>Just need to start attending again. >Nothing wrong with the way everything is going. I should make more effort.
Planning to	3	>We have a plan to get back on track.
Important	2	>By asking. >To have teachers be concerned about me when I'm not there for a period of time.
Make it more fun	2	>Make it more fun or exciting.
Health	2	>Health.
Misc	2	>Later time. >Willpower to wake up.
Why I do attend	4	>To come worship Jesus and learn more about Him. >Sunday School is one of the most important departments of the church.>I enjoy Sunday School.

**The vast majority (139 or 83%) said they knew the church's doctrine.** It seems likely that individuals who knew the church's doctrine also had at least a basic understanding of the Bible. It is also possible that because of that, they did not feel the need to go to Sunday School.

**The top three personal needs reported were: spiritual growth, prayer, and love.** It is commendable that the most common response to this question (What is your biggest personal need with which XYZ could help you?) was spiritual growth (25 responses), closely followed by prayer (17 responses). Twelve individuals mentioned their need to be loved and 9 spoke of the need for family salvation. Six people mentioned family needs, 5 wanted help learning more of the Bible. Because of the keen interest of the church in reaching the young, the five responses relating to youth and children are all included. Table 8 displays these results.

**Table 8: What is your biggest personal need we could help you with?**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Sample Responses</b>
Spiritual Growth	25	>Spiritual growth. >To realize God's calling for me so I can have peace. >I need to surrender more of my time to prayer and ministry >To grow in the Lord >I want to hear God.
Prayer	17	>Pray for loved ones and friends and this nation. >Continue to love and pray for me >I need prayer for a financial blessing
Love	12	>Continue to encourage me. >Simply caring for me and letting me know that I am accepted. >Minister to one another.>I get lonely.
Miscellaneous	11	>Continue to follow leading of Holy Spirit as we are doing now. >Rides. >Nursery. >To be more available. . . in a time of need.
Family salvation	9	>Family salvation >Prayer for my husband's salvation and encouragement for me to hold on. >Prayer for lost children.
Family	6	>Prayer and support with family issues. >Family unity.
Bible	5	>Bible studies. >Bible study to be more accessible.
Youth	5	>More stuff for young married couples. >I would like to see more nursery workers. >Improve children's programs (under 11 years old) >Mentoring my granddaughter. >Teenagers.
	3	3 each: >Counseling. >Guidance in serving. >Continue preaching.
	2	2 each: >Finance. >Communication. >Music. >Healing.

**The top three spiritual needs reported were: prayer, Bible teaching, and love.** As Table 9 shows, the most often-mentioned way that XYZ could help its members more was through prayer, which was mentioned by 36 individuals. Twenty-four people said the church was already meeting their spiritual needs and just needed to continue doing what it was doing. Sixteen people said “keep teaching the Word”, 9 said to “keep the love and fellowship flowing”, and 5 expressed a desire to grow in the Lord.

**Table 9: How Can We Better Help You Spiritually?**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Sample Responses</b>
Prayer	36	>Praying for me continually. >Pray for my strength in the Lord. >More prayer meetings. >Keep praying. >Keep me and my family covered in prayer.
Good	24	>You are already doing it by teaching the Word to me and helping me understand the Bible and how it can help me grow spiritually. >I think the leadership and pastoral staff are right on. Keep up the good work. >Continue to provide instructions on growth. >Continue Holy Ghost guidance in everyday life.
Misc	16	>More classes on different topics. >Revival >Healing Service >Small groups ministering to one another. People are hurting and need direction and comfort.
Bible	16	>Keep teaching the Word. >Bible studies. >Continue to preach the Word of God. .
Love	9	>Call with words of encouragement. >Keep the love and fellowship flowing
Grow	5	>Seek a closer, on-fire, intimate relationship with Christ and would like help getting there. >I need to commit again. >I need guidance
Music	3	>I love the old hymns. They teach a message. >More singing
Serve	2	>Finding my place in the body.
Family	2	>Pray for our family

These previous sections have been about the people; the next section is about their perceptions of PV. Questions were asked about strengths and needs, the church overall and its ministries and possible future directions.

### **GENERAL STRENGTHS AND NEEDS OF XYZ**

In September 2012, during the initial phase of the evaluation, the Quick Response Survey was conducted. The congregation listed three strengths and three needs of XYZ.

- **The top three strengths were: the loving nature of the church, the pastor and the preaching, and the music and the worship, and**
- **The top three needs were: more workers, assimilation, and children.**

**The top three strengths were: the loving nature of the church, the pastor and the preaching, and the music and the worship.** Table 10 below lists strengths identified by the congregation. It is laudable that the most often mentioned strength was the church's loving nature. The next seven strengths are all essential for church growth, and XYZ is a growing church. The overwhelming appreciation of the pastor is particularly notable.

**Table 10: Strengths of XYZ Church – Identified by Congregation, September 2012**

Topic	Number	Sample Comments
Loving church	91	>Very caring and friendly church; always feel welcome; >When I came here I felt like I belong here; >spirit of love and fellowship is palpable in the church; >there is a lot of love here, love for God and love for others; >caring for members and strangers; a welcoming atmosphere.
Pastor and preaching	70	>Strength of our pastor, he is the best we could have ever hoped for; >having a preacher that is also a pastor; >loving and caring pastor; anointed pastor; >knowing how to engage and inspire others brings out feelings and spirit; >Godly pastor and wife; >pastor is a loving leader.
Music and worship	40	>The singing is so good. It blesses my heart and soul. >The music is uplifting and worshipful; >great music resources and leader; >worship is always anointed; >the worship team; >Spirit-filled praise and worship.
Holy Spirit	28	>Very anointed church; >strong presence of the Holy Spirit; >we have some spirit-filled, good leaders and the Holy Spirit is free to work in our services.
Youth	18	>Wonderful growth in youth & children; >good program; >youth activities.
Leadership	13	>Excellent church leadership; >willing workers; >leadership teams.
Prayer	9	>Praying for people; >good praying church.
Outreach	8	>Involvement in the community
Youth Pastor	7	>Amazing youth pastor!
Children	6	>Wonderful growth in children.
Growing	5	>Willingness to take control of church's future
Teams	5	>Great use of church members by pastor in delegating out jobs, etc.
Services	5	>I like how the service goes
Word	5	>Bible teaching
General	4	>THE SKY IS THE LIMIT FOR THIS CHURCH!
Family oriented	3 each	>Family oriented, >good teaching, >womens' ministry
	2 each	- Communication, greeters & ushers, men's ministry, staff, Sunday School times, Wednesday night Bible study ; 12 miscellaneous comments that could not be categorized
		(Number of respondents = 116; number of responses = 348)

**The top three needs were: more workers, assimilation, and children.** The needs identified by the congregation (Table 11 below) actually indicate another strength of XYZ--self-awareness and the desire to serve God. It is highly commendable that the church has a desire to grow, to develop and bring in more children, youth, and young adults, and to serve the community. The need for assimilation and more workers is typical of the church in America. People today often are too rushed to invest time in friendships or service within the church. The need for better communication is also to be expected in a growing church.

**Table 11: Needs of XYZ Church – Identified by Congregation, September 2012**

Topic	No.	Sample Comments
Workers	140	140 needs were mentioned that required workers. Some specific comments were - >Not enough workers; >more support for all ministries, especially children.
Assimilation	18	>Hard for new people to get plugged in..we lose contact with them; >more family functions; >more fellowship time.
Children	16	>Children's ministry is small; >children's ministry organization.
Loud	16	>Sound/music is too loud.
Music	15	>More worship time. >Don't really care for old-time song before praise and worship [Note: The next comment expresses the exact opposite opinion: "More old songs"] SEE FOOTNOTE BELOW THIS TABLE
Nothing	15	>Nothing is wrong.
Youth		>More youth programs; >more spiritual building with youth;.more missions and activities for youth.
Communication	11	>Communication from leaders; .more informed church bulletin; >take advantage of new technologies.
Outreach	11	>Community outreach; >more programs to serve.
Sick and absent	10	>Contact people not attending regularly; >let people know about sick and hospital visits; .>Call to see if ok.
Sun. p.m.	9	>Bring Sunday evening service back
Growth	9	>Need a larger facility (Sunday School department); >need more space; church can't grow because of building size > need to have two or more services - people leave when church is too full!
Attitude	8	>Less territorialism; need unity in some places.
Spiritual	8	>More freedom in spiritual gifts; .no tarrying at the altar as used to be on Sunday nights.
Sunday School	8	>Growth in our Sunday School, especially in children's department; >more classes.
Young adults	8	>Training/mentoring for upcoming generation; >something to attract young couples/their needs and activities
Sound	6	>Need more than one sound man for each sound board.
Leaders	6	>Too many people in more than one leadership role; >guidelines for leaders
Prayer	6	>Need to have more prayer partners; >opportunities for corporate prayer.
Van	5	>Drivers for church van
Choir robes	5	>Love to see choir back in robes every Sunday
Sanctuary	5	>Drinking or food in sanctuary; >stop all moving around while service is going on.
Web	5	>Fix video; >more info on website needed -dates, coming events, etc.
Finances	4	>More church staff care (salaries, etc.); more tithers.

Men's Ministry	4	>Men's ministry.
Revival	4	>More revivals
Services	3	>Need early morning service
Altar	3	>More personal prayer time in altar; >organized altar prayer ministry.
Marriage	3	>Couples ministry
	2 each	Personal needs; evangelism; greeting guests; teach parents Godly principles. My father won't come to church
	13	Miscellaneous comments – could not be categorized in groups.
	Number of respondents = 116; number of responses = 303.	

**NOTE:** Although music was the fifth most often mentioned “need” it was also the third most often mentioned strength. Most of the 15 “needs” were for specific preferences, e.g., “Southern Gospel music.” Music and worship are central to the life of any church. They are also some of the most visible aspects and aspects about which there is great diversity in taste. The data indicate that the music and worship are doing very well.

### **XYZ OVERALL**

In the Future Directions Survey, five general questions were asked about perceptions of XYZ overall. Results in the headlines in bold print below include the top three reasons given. More details are given in the body of the report following the headlines.

- **Family, the Holy Spirit, and friends were the main reasons that brought people to XYZ,**
- **The loving nature of the church and the people, the preaching and the Pastor, and the Holy Spirit are the main reasons reported why people stay at XYZ.**
- **Survey respondents believed the mission of the church should be to win the lost, disciple, and to love, which includes outreach,**
- **To make newcomers feel welcome, suggestions were to communicate, take the initiative, and greet and invite them to participate.**
- **One hundred and eleven (73%) felt they were adequately kept informed about XYZ, with 42 (27%) saying sometimes yes, sometimes no, and**
- **The main ways suggested to improve communication were different methods of contact, better communication in general, and advising the congregation of those who were sick or absent.**

**What Brought You to XYZ?** The responses given most often to this question were family (43 responses) followed by the Holy Spirit (23 responses), friends (20 responses) and having grown up at XYZ (20). Other reasons were also given frequently, such as relocation (12 responses), looking for a Pentecostal church (9), sound preaching and doctrine (8). Topics mentioned four times or less included the location, loving people, and being invited, as depicted in Table 12.



**Table 12: What Brought You to XYZ**

Topic	No.	Sample Responses
Family	43	>I came with my family. >My wife and children.
Holy Spirit led me	23	>A move of the Holy Spirit in the service. >Seeking for a new direction in God.
Friends	20	>Friends who are attending >A friend invited me, I loved it and I never left!
Grew up here	20	>Grew up here. >Been here all my life
Relocation	12	>Moved down here and was recommended to visit and immediately felt God's calling here. >My job
Pentecostal	9	>Searching for a church home with a Pentecostal background >Looking for a full gospel church.
Preaching, doctrine,	8	>Sound teaching and doctrine. >Needed to be under good preaching – truth.
Location	4	4 each: >Location, >Loving people. >Invited
Loving people	2	2 each: >Misc, >Children/youth, >Ministry.

**Why do you stay at XYZ?** Responses to the next question (Why do you stay at XYZ?) were very similar to those given in the Quick Response Survey in September. As seen in Table 13, the top three reasons why people remained at XYZ were: it is a loving church (45 responses), the pastor and the preaching (41 responses) and the presence of the Holy Spirit (25 responses). It is noteworthy that 149 people responded to this question and these 149 people gave 213 responses. In other words, people had a lot to say about why they stay at XYZ.

**Table 13: Why do you stay at XYZ?**

Topic	No.	Sample Responses
Loving church/the people	45	>Lots of unconditional LOVE, genuine, from members. >There is so much love here and I have made some forever friends. >The loving people. >Good, friendly saints of God.
Preaching/Pastor	41	Pastor does not say what I want but what I need to hear. >Anointed preaching. >I love the Pastor and his wife. I love the sermons and teaching. >Amazing Pastor.
Holy Spirit	25	>Because of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the services and the anointing of the Holy Spirit on the preaching. >I love the way God takes over. >God is here. >Moving of the Holy Spirit and anointing.
Love this church	17	>I love it and it is where God wants me at. >Awesome church. >Because it is a wonderful church. >We love it.
Home	15	>It is my church family. >Because the people here are like my family and this church is where I grew up and I LOVE it.
Worship	10	>I feel free to worship. >When I leave after each service I know I've been to church. Not there for show.
Fed spiritually	10	>I am being fed spiritually. >I get fed the Word – all the Bible, not just part of it. >Because I am being fed.
Family and friends	10	>Family members. >Family is here. >Christian friends
Doctrine	6	>The church follows Christ and the Bible. Believe in the doctrine of the church. >Sound doctrine.
God's will	5	>I feel like this is where God put me.
Atmosphere	5	.>Love the. . . warm feeling I get while I'm here.
	3	3 each: >The Word >Music >In Ministry. (7 misc.)

**What do you think the mission of the church should be?** By far, the most often-mentioned theme in responses to this question was to win the lost, as depicted in Table 14. Eighty-six individuals gave this response. The next most often-mentioned response was to disciple or minister to the Body of Christ (44 responses) and to love (23 responses) followed by outreach (17 responses,)

**Table 14: What do you think the mission of the church should be?**

Topic	No.	Sample Responses
Win the lost	86	>Reaching people for Christ and not omitting the little ones! >To spread the gospel of Jesus Christ.>Saving the lost at any cost. >Saving souls. >Reaching out to the lost.
Discipling/Body Ministry	44	>To save the lost and encourage believers >Reach the lost, the lonely, and the hurting and help believers grow. >Reach out and in. >Discipleship. >To minister to each other – show our love.
To love	23	>To continue to share the love and the Gospel and accept anyone and everyone with open arms >Show the love of God. >Let others see that Jesus is in us by our love to others.
Outreach	17	>Go out into the highways and byways and compel the lost to come in. >The congregation ministering to the community. > To reach out beyond the walls of the church and love the community with the Word of God.
Miscellaneous	10	>To be a praying church for people. >Revival
Word	8	>To preach the Word of God so that all may be free and healed. >Stay steadfast in God's Word. >Teach the Word of God.
Needy	4	>Helping the needy. >Reaching out to people in need.
Holy Spirit	3	3 each: >Holy Spirit. >Same as doing now. .
Healing	2	2 each: >Heal the sick. >Call for sick and absent. >Youth

**What can we do to help newcomers feel loved and connected?** The things mentioned to help newcomers (keep in touch, contact between Sundays, talk to them, etc.) are all what you do when you really love someone and want to reach out to them. This is what XYZ has already been doing that makes it such a loving church to its members. The challenge is to maintain that as the church grows. Given the good-hearted people in XYZ, that should be easy.

**Table 15: How to Make Newcomers Feel Loved and Accepted**

Topic	No.	Sample Responses
Communicate/ follow up	31	>Contact them after they leave – sit down and talk to them. >Have more personal contact and help improve contact outside the church. >Phone calls, texts, emails, invite to person's homes or out to eat. >Talk to them, call them, be there for them. >When people of the church come by my work and seek me out and tell me they miss me or talk to me it makes me feel like I'm a part of a great church. >Connect with them as soon as possible. >Personal interaction.
<i>Take the initiative</i>	24	<i>Three topics all concerned taking the initiative: Be friendly (9), be welcoming(9), show them love (9)</i>
<i>Be friendly</i>		> <i>Be friendly.</i> > <i>Be more forward with new people.</i> > <i>Just be friendly and loving.</i> > <i>Become warm.</i>
<i>Be welcoming</i>		> <i>Make them feel welcome.</i> > <i>Welcome them more.</i>

		>Welcome them and love them like Jesus would.
Show them love		>Acknowledge them, befriend them, welcome them with words. >Demonstrate love. >Show our love toward them and tell them they are welcomed and wanted in our midst!>Speak to each one.
Greet them	9	>Make an effort to welcome them personally. >Make sure no one leaves our church without a hug and a greeting from many people.>Speaking to them, being friendly ourselves, learning their names, and inviting them to a service that would be for them and their ages.
Invite them	7	>Reach out more. >Offer ways to get plugged in—become part of the community . . . >Tell them opportunities to connect with people their age. Connect with a card or phone call from someone their age.>Introduce them to the programs available. >Ask them personally to get involved in ministries.
Continue the same	16	>Continue as you are doing. >You're doing great. >I can't think of anything. The love of the people is why I'm here today.
Love	7	>Be loving ,non-critical, and friendly. >Continue to give love and support.>Love them unconditionally, as Jesus does- let Him shine through us. Don't overwhelm them.
Specific events	5	>Have a meeting for newcomers & help them learn other members names & sit down at an evening meal >Prepare a welcome room for after services fellowship & snacks. >Invest our resources to provide very special welcome events.
Misc	2	>Improve technology to reach the outside world.

**Do you feel you are kept adequately informed about XYZ?** A clear majority, 111 (73%) of survey respondents felt they were kept adequately informed. Forty-two (27%) said sometimes yes, sometimes no, and 3 (2%) said no. It is important to note that most of the respondents were either working and/or long-time members and therefore, likely well-connected. The other people (the 130 of the 300 estimated regular attenders) might have responded differently.

Respondents who said “Sometimes yes, sometimes no” were asked to explain what XYZ needed to do better for them regarding communication. The most often-mentioned topic was the method of making announcements. Twelve people had suggestions for keeping in touch besides announcements given during the service. As one person said. ”Sometimes – often – people say they don't hear the announcements.” This is so in many churches and other organizations, where people are busy or distracted during the first minutes of a gathering or meeting. Another individual observed: Would like to see announcements in paper form or electronic – too long in the service.” Table 16 presents sample responses.

The suggestions for other forms of communication with the congregation included: print, internet, telephone (the phone tree), and a bulletin board, bringing back the newsletter. Also requested was a “more extensive bulletin, showing all ministries and upcoming events.”

One individual said they did not know all the ministries that were open to take part in. *This is important in light of the need for more workers.*

**Table 16: How XYZ Can Improve Communication**

Topic	No.	Sample Responses
Method of informing congregation of events	12	>Info board to show upcoming events. >Have a listing or bulletin board where the needs of the people can be posted etc., shut-ins, hospital, etc. >Let all members know of church events/outings through email or mail. >Send email reminder or call. >More printed and internet communication. > We could make better use of the phone tree (3 comments) >Bring back the newsletter. >Call me and let me know if something has been cancelled. >A more extensive bulletin – showing all ministries and upcoming events.
General	8	>Communication from office and between ministries needs to be better. >Be sure people supporting the church are informed of major decisions and have a part in it. >Things are not always communicated and you feel unsure about what is expected.
Sick and absent	3	>Put in the bulletin the ones who are sick and in the hospital. I never hear until too late. . . I like to send cards . . . >If someone is out or missing for a short time, have someone call and pray and ask what their needs are.
Misc.	3	>As a team leader, I could facilitate prayer for specific needs if I knew. >Stay more in touch with senior citizens.
Web Page	2	>Update church web page >Need more on web page/facebook.
Gaps	2	>A lot of people don't have email and don't receive phone tree messages.
Service	1 ea.	Ministries > <i>I don't know all the ministries that are open for me to take part in.</i>

### **XYZ MINISTRIES**

The Quick Response Survey revealed that the biggest need of the church was for more workers. Accordingly, the congregational survey included questions about how to increase workers.

- **The top three reasons people gave for not serving in ministries were work/lack of time, not being asked, and health issues,**
- **Sixty-one individuals reported they could give some time in ministry, with time available ranging from “Whatever the job requires” to two hours a week,**
- **The three ministries in which people would be most willing to help with small tasks were (in rank order) prayer, music/worship, and children, and**
- **The three ministries for which people supported using finances for growth were (in rank order) children, youth, and Christian education.**

**The top three reasons people gave for not serving in ministries were work/lack of time, not being asked, and health issues.** Eighty individuals answered the question “If you are not currently serving in some capacity, please tell us what is stopping you.” As Table 17 shows, by far the most common answer was work or lack of time, which is understandable in our time-stressed world. It is noteworthy that six individuals said they had not been asked; it is possible that the 5 who were “Unsure” had also not been asked. Most of the remaining reasons might be addressed by

information. That is, by informing attenders that membership, a certain age, or specific skills were not necessary.

It also bears repeating that in making suggestions about how to improve communication at least one person said “I don't know all the ministries that are open for me to take part in.”

**Table 17: Reasons Given for Not Currently Serving**

<b>Reason Given</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Sample Responses</b>
Work/Time	15	>Long hours at work. >Working too much. >Busy life >Personal priorities and responsibilities. >Time
* Not asked	6	>Have not been invited. The “church” does not know I am new or that I attend. >Not knowing what the church needs from me. >Never given the opportunity.
Miscellaneous	5	>Other people telling me the departments are full. >Attitudes of some.
Health	5	>Health issues
Nothing/unsure	5	>Nothing. >Unsure.
Family	4	>Taking care of family
* Not a member	4	>Not a member.
* Age	3	>Age
* Felt inadequate	2	>Never felt adequate enough. >Maybe something like a meeting, asking anyone that wants to become involved to come. Do not want to approach anyone myself.
* Just began	2	>I just recently found two ministries. I believe it takes a little time to become acquainted.
* Too young	2	>I think I am too young.

**Sixty-one individuals reported they could give some time in ministry, with time available ranging from “Whatever the job requires” to two hours a week.** Review of Table 18 gives an encouraging picture. The results suggest that quite a few individuals have a desire to serve. As one individual stated, “I do not have much time to serve but would like to.”

**Table 18: What portion of your time would you be willing to give us?**

<b>Amount of Time</b>	<b>No.</b>
Anytime. As much time as the job would require.	14
Afternoons or evenings	5
Not sure	4
4 hours weekly	3
Mornings	3
Children	2
Choir	2
6 to 10 hours	2
Sundays	2
Saturdays	2
Whatever my schedule permits	2
King's Breakfast	1
2 hours	1
9 or 10 hours per month	1
2 to 3 times a week	1

Weekdays	1
<b>47 total comments</b>	

**The three ministries in which people would be most willing to help with small tasks were (in rank order) prayer, music/worship, and children.** The survey included the following question: “Each ministry at XYZ has small tasks that require little time or effort. Please place a check in Column A for the areas in which you would be willing to help with a small task. Each ministry also requires finances. Please place a check in the areas where you are in favor of spending finances for growth.”

It is not possible to distinguish how many individuals checked more than one ministry in which they would be willing to help with a small task, nor is it possible to tell if these included all the people who were willing to serve in the future if they could. What is clear, however, is that there are many people who would be willing to help in at least some capacity. Table 19 below presents the ministries, in rank order, in which people would said they would help with a small task.

**Table 19: Ministries in Which People Would Help with a Small Task (in rank order)**

Ministry	No.	Ministry	No.
Prayer	41	Christian Education	18
Music and Worship	37	Nursery	17
Children	34	Young Adults	*16
Outreach	30	Property Management	15
Senior Adults	29	Finance	12
Youth	25	Ushers	10
Media	23	Cub and Boy Scouts	7
Missions	21	Total	351

\* Note: Due to consultant error, “Young Adults” were listed twice in the survey question, thus averages of the two responses were used for the above figure.

**The three ministries for which people supported using finances for growth were (in rank order) children, youth, and Christian education.** Again, the results give an encouraging picture. (See Table 20). Nearly half of respondents (who, you will recall, were largely members) supported using finances for growth in six of the key areas of ministry: children, youth, Christian Education, Missions, Young Adults and Outreach. The next four areas (except for senior adults) presumably would require relatively little finances. With many of the respondents being senior adults perhaps they were indicating a preference not to spend money on themselves.

**Table 20: Ministries for Which People Would Support Using Finances for Growth (in rank order)**

Ministry	No.	Ministry	No.
Children	47	Music and Worship	30
Youth	47	Prayer	28
Christian Education	42	Cub and Boy Scouts	28
Missions	41	Media	26
Outreach	40	Property Management	23
Nursery	35	Finance	9
Young Adults	* 34	Ushers	4
Senior Adults	33	Total	

Note: Due to consultant error, “Young Adults” were listed twice in the survey question, thus averages of the two responses were used for the above figure.

It is important to notice that although people gave solid support for using finances for growth for young adults (34 individuals indicated support), the willingness to serve was not so strong (only 16 individuals indicate they would serve with a small task in this ministry). Several explanations are possible (see the discussion and recommendation section). However, one fact is unalterable: *in order to serve more children and youth, the church will also have to serve young adults, who are responsible for the children and the youth.*

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- **Approximately half of the respondents preferred an early worship service and half preferred a later service, if two services were held,**
- **Of the 132 respondents to the question, 71 (or 53%) supported an elected Council of elders whereas 62 (or 47%) supported an appointed Council.**
- **Slightly more respondents (69 of 120 respondents or 58%) favored Sunday School classes grouped by age,**
- **Well over three-fourths (120 of 136 respondents to the question, or 88%) preferred renovation over relocation,**
- **Of the 141 respondents to the question, 101 (or 72%) stated they would attend a Sunday evening service whereas 40 (or 29%) said they would not,**
- **Well over three-fourths (124 of 144 respondents to the question, or 86%) preferred keeping the current name of “XYZ Church of God”.**

Table 21 presents results of the questions concerning future directions. Preferences regarding one issue – attending the early or later service – were about even. Two other issues – Sunday School classes grouped by age or by topic and an elected or appointed Council of Elders – differed by 16 and 9 responses respectively. The responses on both those issues were not definitive, as indicated by the Confidence Interval (CI) column, which indicates the margin of error for a sample size of 170.

Two issues on which the responses were definitive were the preference to keep the current name and to renovate, rather than relocate. There was also a definitive response from those individuals (101) who indicated they would attend a Sunday evening service.

**Table 21: Results and Response Rates for Questions Concerning Future Directions**

Issue (ordered by percentage of difference)	Options	No.	Percent *	C.I.**	N***	Diff
<b>Early or later service</b>	Would attend early service	80	60.00%	NA	143	1 (3%)
	Would attend later service	81	57.00%			
<b>Council of Elders</b>	Prefer elected Council	71	53.00%	±7.50%	132	9 (6%)
	Prefer appointed Council	62	47.00%	±7.50%		
<b>Sunday School classes</b>	Prefer classes grouped by age	69	58.00%	±7.40%	120	16 (14%)
	Prefer classes grouped by topic	53	44.00%	±7.50%		
<b>Sunday evening service</b>	Would attend	101	72.00%	NA	141	61 (43%)
	Would not attend	40	29.00%			
<b>Changing name</b>	Prefer keeping name as is	124	86.00%	±5.20%	144	104 (72%)
	Prefer changing name	20	14.00%	±5.20%		
<b>Renovation/relocation</b>	Would support renovation	120	88.00%	±4.90%	136	101 (74%)
	Would support relocation	19	14.00%	±5.20%		

\*Note: All percentages do not sum to 100 because some respondents marked both options for some questions.

\*\* Confidence intervals (the margin of error) was calculated at the 95% level.)

\*\*\* The number of responses for each question varied, as indicated in the column marked “N”.

## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

For ease of reading and application, the discussion is arranged by topic. The same order of topics is used in the recommendations.

**[1] The Holy Spirit.** The Holy Spirit was the fourth most-often mentioned strength of XYZ. The top three were: the loving nature of the church; the Pastor/preaching; and music/worship. This writer is certain that members would agree He, the Holy Spirit, is by far the biggest strength of XYZ. And, He obviously undergirds all other strengths and successes.

**[2] The loving nature of the church.** The most often-mentioned strength of XYZ – in both surveys – was its loving nature. This is highly commendable. Jesus said our love for each other would show the world that we are His disciples (John 13:35). Letting God’s love flow through us is also the path to winning the lost and building up the Body, which the congregation indicated should be the mission of the church.

As some comments indicate: “It is hard for new people to get plugged in. . . we lose contact with them; we need more family functions, more fellowship time.” Some of the congregation are already aware that with rapid growth, it is hard to be sure everyone is connected and feels loved.

It is essential to maintain this atmosphere. Ninety-two people (55% of the 171 survey respondents) had been members of XYZ for five plus years. This constitutes a solid core of people



who are likely to remain for many more years. The efforts of those who currently demonstrate love must be maximized and others who do not— members and newcomers alike — should have help developing this habit. Otherwise, the overall warmth and love could diminish as the numbers grow. Teaching on that topic will help. The Assimilation Seminar and Workshop will provide teaching as well as help create new pathways for showing love and establishing connections. (See item below on assimilation.)

**[3] Senior Pastor and Wife.** The second greatest strength was the Pastor and his preaching. XYZ recognizes the blessing they have in their “Godly pastor and wife” and they find him to be a “loving leader”. Members appreciated “. . . having a preacher that is also a pastor.” They found the Senior Pastor to be “a loving and caring pastor, and an anointed pastor” and they recognized that “. . . knowing how to engage and inspire others brings out feelings and spirit.” It surely pleases God when His workers are appreciated, and He is clear about the need to support pastors.

**[4] Music and Worship.** Music and worship was the third greatest strength. The Holy Spirit inhabits praise so it is essential to keep this ministry strong. The unity and oneness of heart between the Senior Pastor and Worship Leader helps create the atmosphere of worship and prepares the way for the moving of the Holy Spirit. So does the gifting and experience of the Worship Leader. It is essential to support the music and worship ministry. Music and worship was the second top area in which people would be willing to work and it ranked ninth (of 16) as an area in which people supported using finances for growth.

**[5] Children, youth, and young adults.** Bringing in more young people, of all ages, is clearly a mandate of this church. Over three-fourths (135 or 78%) of the survey respondents were 41 years of age or older, so this desire will help balance the population and keep the church strong for years to come. Children and youth were the top two areas (out of 16) in which people supported using finances for growth and were among the top six in which they would be willing to work. God cares deeply about children (Matthew 19:13-15) and training future generations is central to Bible teachings (Deuteronomy 11:19).

**[6] Young Adults.** Two good reasons to focus on young adults: (1) To serve the young, of all ages, the church must serve *young adults*, who parent the children and the youth. (2) The church expressed the desire to “Get in more young families. . . to close the gap between teens and those in their 40s”. Willingness to serve in the Young Adult area ranked 11th out of 16 areas. It is possible, and understandable, that some of the congregation feel unprepared to engage with today's youth and young adults. The “generation gap” has become increasingly hard to bridge. The enemy of our souls increased his attack on our children in the 1970s. These Generation X children, and the generations after them, are now young adults in their 20s, 30s and early 40s. They look and act and think quite unlike the believers born before the 1970s who make up the majority of XYZ.

**[7] Nursery.** A good nursery and nursery workers are central to success in ministering to youth and young adults. The nursery was recently refurbished and updated, which will attract parents. The nursery always needs workers. However, consistently asking for nursery workers could create the undesirable impression that “just anyone” is able to work in the nursery, which could make parents feel it was not a safe place to leave their infants.

**[8] Assimilation.** Formal focus on assimilation seems critical at this stage in XYZ's recent growth. As stated above, the loving atmosphere must continue to expand as the number of people grows. Specific preparation for assimilation will help. Fellowship is a pillar of the Christian life, and welcoming strangers is following God's command (Leviticus 19:33-34.)

The 2013 Assimilation Seminar and Workshop will focus on how to knit newcomers into the loving Body of Christ at XYZ. Participants will also plan more pathways for connections and friendships through getting acquainted activities, family fun events, outreach events, etc.

**[9] Workers.** The Quick Response survey indicated that the biggest need of XYZ is for more workers. One hundred and forty items were mentioned that require workers. Accordingly, the Future Directions Survey showed: (1) numerous people are willing to help with "small tasks" in the ministries, (2) many people not currently serving could give part of their time, (3) some people did not know what ministries were needing help or thought they did not "qualify" to help, and (4) finally, as one person commented, "No one asked me to help."

**[10] Communication.** Though most of the survey respondents felt they were kept adequately informed, 42 (27%) said "sometimes yes, sometimes no". And, those who did not complete a survey are probably not as well-informed as those who did. It is certain that newcomers will not be. Additionally, continued growth will mandate improved communication. This should be prioritized.

**[11] Senior Adults.** Senior adults are a big proportion of the current congregation and will likely continue to be so. Twenty-nine people indicated they would help with "small tasks" in this ministry and 33 supported using finances for growth for this ministry.

**[12] Prayer Ministry.** Prayer is the key to success in God's work. This ministry should be fully supported. It is encouraging that 41 individuals said they would be willing to help with a "small task" and 28 supported using finances for growth. Just think, if one can put a thousand to flight. . .

**[13] Leadership.** As the church grows, leadership must also grow, in numbers and in quality. Otherwise, people will not remain and will begin leaving as the current leaders become overtaxed and cannot meet the needs of the people. Investing in leadership development, like investing in good physical health, involves short-term cost for long-term gain.

**[14] Sunday School.** Christian Education received strong support in the survey, with 18 people willing to help with a "small task" and 40 supporting the use of finances for growth. This, too, is a key component of the church's stated mission to win the lost and disciple believers.

**[15] Outreach and Home Missions.** Outreach into the community was listed as both a strength and a need in the Quick Response Survey. It received solid support in the Future Directions Survey, with 30 people saying they would help with some small tasks and 40 people supporting using finances to grow this ministry. Outreach was also included by 17 people in stating what they thought the mission of XYZ should be.

**[16] Media.** The Quick Response Survey showed that more workers are needed to operate the sound equipment and that some adjustments need to be made. (Sixteen individuals said the sound was

“too loud”) Twenty-three people said they would help with a small task in this ministry, and 45 supported using finances for growth.

**[17] Property Maintenance.** With an older building, needs must be addressed quickly. It would be helpful to encourage members to notify the church office about problems as soon as they become aware of them.

**[18] Finance Committee.** The Finance Committee is foundational to all that the church does. It is commendable that the committee members themselves identified three needs even before the congregation provided feedback.

**[19] Counseling, Cub and Boy Scouts, and Ushers.** As the congregation grows, so will these ministries.

### **Future Directions Section of Survey**

**Attendance at an early or a later service.** Responses were approximately half and half regarding preference to attend an early or a later service. This bodes well for the future because two services seem necessary soon.

**Council of Elders** – Responses on this issue were not definitive. Although slightly more respondents favored an elected Council, a similar number within the margin of error favored an appointed Council.

**Sunday School Classes Grouped By Age or By Topic** – On this issue also, responses were not definitive for one option or the other. With Sunday School attendance low, compared to worship service attendance, some classes grouped by topic is an idea well worth considering.

**Sunday evening service** – One hundred and one people said they would attend a Sunday evening service if one were provided. If the decision is made to do so, it is critical to be aware of the extra work this places on the individuals involved. Especially bear in mind that each hour in the pulpit is the equivalent of a full day's work for a pastor. With two services likely coming soon, it is critical to husband workers' resources, especially those of the Senior Pastor.

**Changing the name** – There was clear and strong support for keeping the current name of the church.

**Renovation/relocation** – Again, there was clear and strong support for renovation rather than relocation

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is important – and encouraging – to keep in mind that the first four of the items listed below are issues that the congregation said are current strengths. Accordingly, the primary focus should be to keep those strengths strong. Items labeled “Identified Need” were identified by ministry leaders as part of the Quick Response Survey in September 2012.

**[1] The Holy Spirit**

- a) Keep in step with the Spirit. (Galations 5:25)
- b) Continue to welcome Him into the services and *continue to cherish His presence.*

**[2] The loving nature of the church**

- a) Do everything possible to maintain this valuable quality of XYZ.
- b) Following up on plans made during the Assimilation Seminar will help.

**[3] Senior Pastor and Wife**

- a) Continue to keep the Senior Pastor, his wife and their family covered in prayer,
- b) Continue to express appreciation to them. Shepherds need love and encouragement just as much, sometimes more, than the sheep they lovingly care for,
- c) Lighten his load as much as possible; bearing too many responsibilities wears pastors down. A pastor needs good health and also needs time to devote himself to the Word. The Senior Pastor's loving nature, his shepherd's heart, and his dependence on the Holy Spirit are priceless.
- d) Help the Senior Pastor as he develops other leaders. (See Item 12- Leadership Development)
- e) Cherish your pastor's wife as one who has the rare maturity to openly state that her main job as a pastor's wife is to take care of her husband. *Help her as she helps him.*

**[4] Music and Worship**

- a) Help the Worship Leader make use of the willingness of people to help with a “small task”,
- b) Identified Need: Get more people, including young people, involved,
- c) Identified Need Improve the sound system – train the operators,
- d) Identified Need: More time for training in music, and
- e) Provide finances where needed.

**[5] Children, Youth, and Young Adults - in General:**

- a) Fully support the children and youth pastors and workers.
- b) Seek to direct new workers into these ministries as much as possible.
- c) Use finances to expand and improve existing programs and activities.
- d) Host events specifically for children, youth, and young adults. God said to go out in the “highways and byways” and invite people to partake of what He has prepared for them. The youth and young adults, along with their children, live in the “highways and byways.”
- e) Sponsor fun activities that provide wholesome entertainment for children, parenting classes and free parenting materials, a moms day out program, a foster grandparent program, etc. Do not neglect single parents, a large demographic in our world today.

**[6] Needs for Children:**

- a) Make the children's ministry a priority in using the offers to help with “small tasks”.
  - Identified Need: Provide training for childrens' workers.
  - Identified Need: Their own space and technology, so the set can be consistent.
- b) Ask the Children's Pastor what else is needed.

**[7] Needs for Youth and the Youth Pastor**

- a) Make the youth ministry a priority for offers of new workers.
- b) Provide finances needed to continue developing the youth program.
- c) Specific identified financial needs are: more money for activities, a sound system, and bigger

- space.
- d) Help the Youth Pastor identify mentors for the youth.
  - e) Educate the congregation on how to engage the youth, as suggested below.

**[8] Needs for Young Adults**

- Appoint a team—primarily composed of youth and younger adults-- to consider how to attract younger people.
- Educate the church in how to reach the youth and especially young adults. Hold a seminar, purchase books and training materials – whatever it takes.

**[9] Nursery**

Seek ways to keep the need for workers supplied without appealing to the entire congregation.

**[10] Assimilation**

- a) Maximize participation in the 2013 Assimilation Seminar and Workshop
- b) Follow up on plans that are made.

**[11] Workers**

- a) Ask the Lord of the Harvest for more workers – Matthew 9:37-38
- b) Decide which ministries have the most critical need for workers and communicate that need to the membership; at the same time, prepare those ministry leaders to receive the help.
- c) Make it clear to the congregation that: there is a serious need for workers, that no special qualifications are necessary to help, and that if they feel an impulse to help it is likely the Holy Spirit wanting them to serve so He can bless *them* as they bless others.
- d) Hold a special sign-up event for workers, as two respondents suggested. Offer a meal, have a booth or table for each ministry, and make it fun.
- e) Encourage each ministry to mentor their new workers (those for small tasks as well as those able to make a greater commitment.)
- f) Make service a key component of the assimilation plan.
- g) Periodically celebrate and honor leaders and workers.

**[12] Communication**

- Follow up on the recommendations given by members.
- One individual commented that it is very difficult to reach someone in a time of need. Although it must be noted that others said “XYZ is there in times of need”, review of this issue is recommended.

**[13] Senior Adults**

- a) Support the Senior Adult ministry with workers and finances.
- b) Identified Needs: More people involved, more contact, and a budget increase.

**[14] Prayer Ministry**

- a) Consider using finances for more training.
- b) Make full use of those who indicated a willingness to help (41 individuals.)
- c) Identified Need: More training on how to work with people with various needs.

**[15] Leadership Development**

- a) Continue to support development of leadership teams, the Senior Pastor's preferred way of leading. The Quick Response survey indicated this method is working well.
- b) Invest in training for leaders through purchase of training materials and the services of a consultant or part-time pastor with expertise in leadership and administration.
- c) Consider an appointed Council of Elders, the best way to develop leaders. Within the margin of error, approximately half the congregation supported that option.

**[16] Sunday School – Life Groups**

- a) Work to increase attendance.
- b) One person said they would attend if they had been asked. Newcomers who are “unchurched” and particularly young adults, may not know about the value of attending Sunday School, or that the church has such classes specifically to help them grow spiritually.
- c) Begin new classes or change some existing classes to the topic format.
  - Consider offering a list of topics and let the congregation vote.
- d) Encourage Sunday School teachers to contact absentees.
- e) Make Sunday School a key component of assimilation and advertise it as such.
- f) Make it easy for newcomers to connect with others in Sunday School.
- g) Stress to the congregation that attending Sunday School, even if they have thorough Biblical knowledge, is one of the best ways to make contact with and nurture newcomers.

**[17] Outreach and Home Missions**

- a) Channel new workers into this ministry.
- b) Support this ministry with finances.
- c) Expand current efforts to bring in people. Establish an external ministry.
- d) Identified needs: Do more ministering while feeding; perhaps have free handouts

**[18] Media**

Advertise for more workers and, if necessary, purchase training.

**[19] Property Maintenance**

Identified Needs: members to give input on maintenance problems of which they are aware; finances; and need method to raise funds.

**[20] Finance Committee**

Identified Needs: Better communication to congregation; more emphasis on ministries; and use finances to grow the church.

**[21] Counseling, Cub and Boy Scouts, and Ushers**

As the congregation grows, these ministries must have more resources as well.

**[22] Singles Ministry**

A single ministry is needed. Those who are unmarried – single, divorced, widowed and separated – will continue to grow as the church grows. In particular, many youth and young adults are unmarried. As the younger segment of the church population increases, so will the number of those who are single. God clearly cares deeply for those who are “solitary”, be they orphans, widows or unmarried.

**[23] Website**

Identified Need: Fix video; need updates on website; website live feed not always working; and need more information on website – dates, coming events, etc.

**[24] Future Directions Issues**

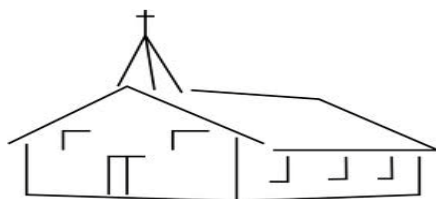
- a) **Early or late service** – Half preferred the early, half preferred a late service. This suggests that both services would be well attended.
- b) **Council of Elders** – Seriously consider converting to an appointed Council.
- c) **Sunday School Classes** – Keep some classes grouped by age and change, or add, some classes to grouping by topic.
- d) **Sunday evening service** – One option would be to have a service consisting of praise and worship, prayer, testimonies, etc. some evenings and other evenings have preaching by the Assistant Pastor or other guest pastors.
- e) **Renovation/relocation** – If renovation is pursued, begin planning now how to address challenges such as limited parking space and the age of the building.
- f) **Changing Name** – There was clear support for keeping the current name.

**[25] Prayer**

Items that are mentioned last tend to stay in the mind. *Prayer is mentioned last because it the most important recommendation of all.* The suggestions above are offered with the knowledge that only prayer is going to meet these needs. The Prayer Team must continue its vital mission of prayer, and the congregation must continue to pray. *What is accomplished for the Kingdom is not by human might, nor by human power but by the Spirit of the Living God (Zechariah 4:6)*

**With the loving, good-hearted people of XYZ and the presence of the Holy Spirit, it seems the words of one individual are the best summary:**

“THE SKY IS THE LIMIT FOR THIS CHURCH!”



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Interim Report  
ABC Church Survey – Phase One  
Discovering Our Church Community

December 30, 2008

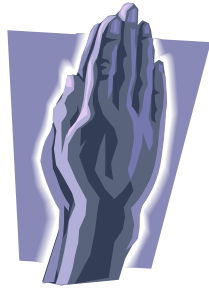
Prepared for:

ABC Church  
Anywhere Street  
Anywhere, USA 77777

Prepared by:  
Freda Watson, M.Ed.



## A word of prayer . . .



Dear friend,

As you read this report, I pray that you will pray – for the Holy Spirit to open the eyes of your heart:

- that you may see and hear what He has to say to you, (Ephesians 1:18)
- that He will use the words in this report as He intends them, ( Psalm 33:11) and
- that He will, through His omnipotence, correct any mistakes on my part. (Romans 8:28)

May God bless you richly for caring about loving others. We are *all* precious in the eyes of God. Our Lord Jesus said, “. . . whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for Me.” (Matthew 25:40, NIV)

In His Love,

Freda Watson

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Between May and October 2008, 240 members, regular attenders, and visitors of ABC Church completed the *ABC Church Survey – Phase One: Getting to Know Our Church Community*. This interim report presents results of two questions in that survey:

- (1) What can ABC Church do to be a more loving church for you?
- (2) What is your greatest need that ABC Church could help you meet?

According to the 197 individuals who answered Question 1, the best way ABC Church could be a more loving church is by reaching out – by helping people get to know each other better, including having events and activities specifically for that purpose – and by following up more with visitors and absentees. ABC Church was perceived as a loving church by many survey respondents although some individuals made negative comments about the need to be more friendly and accepting and less critical. Other ways suggested for ABC Church to be a more loving church included needs of specific groups (such as support for single moms).

The largest percentage of the 181 survey respondents for Question 2 indicated that their biggest need was for more prayer, more growth as a Christian and more of the Word, a finding that attests to their spiritual maturity. Other needs mentioned included the spiritual needs of families as well as those of youth, children, seniors, men and women.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The most obvious recommendation is for the church and leadership to continue to pray and seek the Lord for His direction (James 1:5). Additionally, the comments on each topic could be given to the appropriate Leadership Team, with guidance from the Senior and Executive Pastors. The recommendations below are grouped according to topics addressed in survey responses.

### Reaching Out

Help is needed in two ways:

- Getting acquainted with more people while at church, and
- Establishing deeper relationships outside, as well as inside, church, that is, friendships.

A new Leadership Team for the purpose of helping ABC Church “reach out” more will soon be formed. Initial suggestions for the Assimilation Team to consider include:

- Ask the Prayer Team for special prayer as the team is being formed and initial actions are taken.
- Gather more information:
  - Have focus groups to discuss how to reach out and carefully consider the information provided.
  - Ask each Leadership Team to discuss ways to reach out more; consolidate those suggestions.
  - Research the literature, beginning with the list of Assimilation Resources (Appendix C).
  - Explore what other local churches are doing to facilitate connectedness.

- Raise congregational awareness of the need to actively assimilate and how to do that:
  - Make brief presentations to the Sunday School and Wednesday night classes.
  - Make brief reminders periodically on Sunday morning.
  - Hold a special training event to train 20% of the congregation to be part of the Assimilation Team, as suggested by in 'Helping Outsiders Become Insiders" by J. Melvin Ming (1999).
  - Make a summary of this report available to the congregation.
- Provide more opportunities for assimilation:
  - Add something to help foster connections in each existing activity.
  - As soon as feasible, begin activities and explore methods for the specific purpose of helping people make connections.
  - Include a feedback mechanism for each activity.
- Enhance existing visitor follow-up and review the suggestions in Christian literature.
- Institute a follow-up mechanism for those who are absent.

**Positive and Negative Comments** – Ask members of the Leadership Teams to review all positive and negative comments from both survey questions. The positive comments would provide encouragement, and the negative ones could provide guidance.

**Other, Outreach, Leadership, Communication and Inclusiveness** – In these categories, there was a wide variety of needs. It is recommended that church leadership review these comments and bring them to the attention of the appropriate Leadership Team.

**Prayer, Growth as a Christian, and the Word** - As stated earlier, it is a positive finding that so many individuals felt their greatest need was for the fundamentals of the Christian life. It is recommended that these areas continue to be stressed, from the pulpit, in Christian education classes, and in other activities.

It is also a positive finding that responses to "What is your greatest need?" were distributed across many, rather than one or two, categories. This suggests that ABC Church is doing well in meeting the needs of most congregants. However, all the needs mentioned should be prayerfully considered and addressed to the fullest extent possible.

**Family** - Most of the comments regarding the need for attention to family issues concerned prayer or other general needs; however, four individuals requested meetings and instruction to strengthen marriages.

**Consider Follow-Up Research** - Consider a follow-up survey, focus groups and/or interviews.

Updated and further suggestions will be presented in the final report.

# Table of Contents

	Page
A Word of Prayer .....	1
Executive Summary .....	2
Table of Contents .....	3
Introduction .....	4
Responses to Survey Questions	
Question 1: What Could ABC Church Do To Be A More Loving Church? ...	4
Question 2: What is Your Greatest Need ABC Church Could Help You Meet? ....	8
Discussion .....	11
Recommendations .....	14
References .....	16
Appendices	
A: Demographic Results of Survey	
B: Complete Text of Responses to Questions 1 and 2	
C: Additional Assimilation Resources	

## INTRODUCTION

Between May and October 2008, 240 members, regular attenders, and visitors of ABC Church completed the *ABC Church Survey – Phase One: Getting to Know Our Church Community*. This is an interim report on results of two questions in the survey:

- ✓ What can ABC Church do to be a more loving church for you?
- ✓ What is your greatest need that ABC Church could help you meet?

Care should be taken in generalizing these findings because the 197 people who answered Question 1 and the 181 who answered Question 2 represent 13% and 12% respectively of the 1,500 names on the church roll. As with many churches, the roll contains names of individuals who are no longer attending. Another reason to be cautious in interpreting these findings is that most of the responses were from long-time attenders. (Forty-six percent had attended ABC Church for five or more years.) Further, it cannot be ascertained that the demographic composition of the survey respondents is representative of the congregation. Analysis of demographics and responses to other questions on the survey will be presented in the final report; summary demographic results are presented in Appendix A.

The responses to both questions were analyzed to identify common themes. The full text of all comments is included in Appendix B. Discussion of the frequency of mention of each theme follows.

### Question 1: How Could ABC Church Be A More Loving Church for You?

A total of 197 people took time to share their ideas about how ABC Church could be a more loving church. As Table A shows, their ideas covered a broad range of topics, which suggests that being a loving church means different things to different people. Each topic is described following, ordered by frequency of mention. Discussion and recommendations are presented after responses to the two questions.

#### Reach Out

The most frequently mentioned way in which ABC Church could be a more loving church was to facilitate people getting to know each other better, with 65 people making suggestions on how to do that. Their suggestions included reaching out more, having events specifically for getting better acquainted, and following up with visitors and absentees. Some of the comments were specific (*Encourage the people to smile more and stop a while after church to get to know someone*) and some were general (*Create a friendlier atmosphere*).

Table A. Response to Question 1: What Could ABC Church Do To Be a More Loving Church \*

Frequency of Mention	Category	Examples
65	Suggestions to help ABC Church facilitate connections	
21	Reach out	<i>Help us get to know people. The members of the church need to get to know each other more personally More programs that help us get to know each other better.</i>
19	Events and activities to facilitate connections	<i>Events and methods to help people get to know each other on purpose and not just by chance. More opportunities for fellowship in smaller to medium groups focused on getting to know each other better.</i>
13	Follow-up	<i>Some sort of personal follow-up would improve retention of new people. Need to call people when they are out of church and follow up.</i>
12	Miscellaneous	<i>More communication in general.</i>
59	Positive comments	<i>I think ABC Church is already a very loving church. I have found the church to be a caring place and have experienced acceptance and love.</i>
30	Negative comments	<i>Overall, ABC Church is a loving church. I have seen some areas that are cliques and some that are open to other people. Some people are not very open to people who are different. God wants us to love everyone no matter what. Be in unity and not find fault.</i>
18	Other (could not be categorized)	<i>Have more Spanish services. I believe we need an outreach to married couples.</i>
10	Outreach	<i>Go into the community and love more of the community people in.</i>
7	Leadership	<i>Staff involvement with the congregation. The staff and leadership teams are awesome and show only love. I cannot ask for more.</i>
4	Inclusiveness	<i>Devote more attention to racial/ethnic group needs.</i>
4	Communication	<i>Better communication between team leaders, church staff, and members.</i>

\*N = 197

Representative comments for the Reaching Out theme include the following:

- Show an interest in people who are trying to meet people - make it a little easier to connect with people.
- Better communication - more information.
- The congregation needs to reach out more to the visitors and also the members that come to our church and let them know how much we appreciate them visiting our church and how much we care for them as a church family.
- As members acknowledge people, shake hands with everyone and not only with people you know.

What they were asking for—a friendlier atmosphere, where it is easier to connect with others—is a challenging change to make. One can't do that by simply telling a congregation "Be friendlier". Many, as evidenced by responses to the survey, do want to have a friendlier atmosphere and do want to get to know more people. Remarkably, the survey respondents themselves provided some viable solutions to one of the biggest obstacles to having a more loving church, which is getting to know each other on a more than first name basis. They suggested "... events and methods to help people get to know each other on purpose and not just by chance."

**Events and Activities to Facilitate Connections** - It was interesting that 19 people specifically suggested events and activities focused on getting to know each other better. Most of the suggestions were quite practical and should be easy to implement. The suggestions fell into three categories: meet and greet events, small group meetings, and welcoming meetings for visitors and new attenders. Representative comments included the following:

- Have a "*meet and greet*" event for people who are new to the church so all the new ones can connect with each other and get to know church staff/leadership.
- *Regular church events* that help me get to know people would help.
- More gatherings and *friendship meetings* for more people to get acquainted and be more of a friend to each other.
- Have events to broaden inclusion of its members to have *more fellowship and interaction*.
- Have 8 to 10 people *Bible studies once every 2-3 weeks*; it worked at the previous church I attended.
- A Bible-based *discipleship program* and more fun activities (movies, beach, bowling, house party...)
- More personal study classes not like Sunday school but like study guide class were there is *more interaction*.
- At least every six weeks after the a.m. service have a meet the pastor and his family mini-session

**Follow Up** – Following up with visitors and checking on members and regular attenders who are absent is a logical aspect of being a loving church. Thirteen people commented about the need to follow up. Several individuals related they had been members for quite some time and had felt like "no one missed or care about" them when they were absent for several weeks and no one contacted them. Some comments were about visitors and the need to "take better care of them". Examples of comments about following up are:

- Some sort of personal follow-up would improve retention of new people.
- Visitors are given a warm welcome and information on their first visit including a letter from Pastor but there is no follow-up.
- If possible, attendees should sign a roster showing their attendance. ABC Church should keep records and will know when each person hasn't been to church recently and contact them to see if they are ill or what.
- Reach out to church members when not at church. Find out why and what is going on, if they need prayer or any assistance.
- This is a big church but there has to be a way we can keep track of those that have stopped coming.

**Miscellaneous Comments About Reaching Out**– Thirteen people made general suggestions about reaching out that covered topics such as “Keep reminding us of this and other goals” and “Sign up to drive the church van” and “Just keep it real.”

**Positive Comments** – The second largest category, after the need to reach out, was positive comments, with 59 individuals speaking about the loving nature of ABC Church. Many indicated “nothing else needs to be done” to make ABC Church a loving church. Many of the positive comments were very warm in tone.

- Nothing. It is fine just as it is.
- We found more love here than anywhere else.
- Our pastor always tells us how much God loves us and how much he loves us. We feel love at this church.
- I just recently started attending and found people to be very loving and they welcomed me with joy. I was surprised because for the size of the church . . . most people know each other and greeted each other with affection. It is common in big churches for members to get lost in the crowd.
- I do not think the church needs to do anything to be more loving. It is everything I need right now.
- Pastor Simmons is a God-send. I pray he will stay.

**Negative Comments** – The 30 negative comments conveyed, in some cases, a great deal of hurt and anger. Most of the negative comments concerned the need to be friendlier and more accepting, and some individuals spoke about unkindness, criticism, and complaints.

- To be a loving church, we need to be friendlier to each other. I have been there 10 years and I have seen the same faces and when they see you they don't even say hello or acknowledge you are there but they want the church to grow and more members but they don't want to change their way of being.
- There are social cliques that keep people from getting to know a variety of people. I don't know the solution.
- Let me start by saying ABC Church really shouldn't proclaim to be the MOST loving church in America. I have come across some pretty rude, self-centered, cliquey people, don't want to have anything to do with you unless they feel you fit in kind of people.
- Appreciate the leadership more and not be so critical about things that are meaningless.
- Convince people they need to quit complaining about things.

It is important to not let these comments create an offense because “A brother offended is harder to win than a fortified city.” (Proverbs 18:19, NIV). Those who responded to the questions with negative comments are to be commended for their honesty. They supplied the information because they were asked to, and they did so anonymously. In no case were negative comments directed at individuals.

**Address Other Concerns** – Eighteen comments addressed a wide variety of topics and could not be categorized under one subject. The comments counted as “**Other**” included suggestions like “Support for single mothers”, “Have more Spanish services,” and “an outreach to married couples.” As indicated in Table A, 10 people wanted more **outreach** to the local community, with activities like feeding the poor and doing community service for local charities and recovery centers. Seven people had suggestions for the



**leadership** (such as to be more caring) and four people wanted a more inclusive environment. Four people believed **communication** should be improved.

## QUESTION 2: WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST NEED ABC CHURCH COULD HELP YOU MEET?

The 181 responses to the second question (What is your greatest need ABC Church could help you meet?) were also coded by topic. Table B presents the frequency with which each topic was mentioned.

**Prayer** - As Table B depicts, the greatest need people expressed was for prayer. Thirty-four survey respondents requested prayer for a variety of needs, most often family, healing, and finances. Many simply said "Pray for me". It is a tribute to the spiritual strength of the congregation that the majority of people reported that their greatest need was prayer. Examples of requests for prayer are:

- Pray for unsaved loved ones.
- Pray for healing in my body and finances.
- To be in prayer for our church body and the direction of the church.
- To know that the prayer line is open via internet, prayer box, etc.
- Continued prayer for all our family, friends, and our country.

**"Other" Needs** – Twenty-three needs were classified as "Other". As with the "Other" category for responses to the first question, these "Other" responses for the second question addressed a broad spectrum of needs. Comments included, for example:

- [We need]. . . to help widows and elderly in repairs to their homes
- I would really benefit from an exercise class,
- Men's' ministry.
- A network vehicle within the body to address the daily needs would be helpful. I have two small children and no family to help when I could be working on my at home business and with other occasional needs like this. I believe that maybe if the body knew there was a need it is possible someone may be able to help. A little help would be a big relief sometimes.
- A contact list of all the different services ABC Church offers and who the contact person is. Name of owners of small businesses . . . who are members.

Some wanted shorter announcements and some said ". . . better and more advanced communication of what church ministries are doing so I can get involved. I like when announcements are made from the stage". Three people expressed a desire for "a variety of songs, not just contemporary" and "more worship songs, especially well-known ones, to get us involved . . . and the old hymns."

Table B. Response to Question 2: What is Your Greatest Need ABC Church Could Help You Meet?

Frequency of Mention	Category	Examples
34	Prayer	<i>Pray for unsaved loved ones</i>
23	Other	<i>Continue to pray for all our families, friends, and our country. To reach the Spanish speaking community.</i>
22	Growth as a Christian	<i>Update membership directory to help put names with faces. My greatest need here at ABC Church is what I seek after and that is my spiritual feeding.</i>
21	Family needs	<i>My greatest need is to Love the Lord and to be a servant. Provide a happy, friendly place that my family and I can grow in God and enjoy the worship services. Keep feeding the Word. Provide a place where my kids can learn about God in an interesting and fun way where they will be saved and stay in church, dedicating their life to Christ. Continue to offer classes, events, etc. that minister to the whole family.</i>
18	No needs	<i>No particular needs at this time.</i>
17	Word	<i>Learning more of the Word. Just be the church you are – preach the Word.</i>
9	Youth and Children	<i>My greatest need is that the church maintains an organized young adult group. Child development.</i>
8	Positive Comments	<i>Continue stressing that we are the “most loving church in America.” People need love. You do it everyday I am there. My greatest need is just to draw closer to the Lord. Everyday that I am in a church that loves the Lord like you do , you help me grow and I am drawn closer to the Lord. I know everything else will work out.</i>
8	Negative comments	<i>To have unity among believers. We need to feel that we belong.</i>
8	Fellowship	<i>Feeling a part of the community. To experience the church-family warmth that is dormant.</i>
5	Financial	<i>My financial struggles by praying for me and my family/friends. To help me get my groceries.</i>
4	Seniors, Men, and Women	<i>Need to call seniors more to keep up with them.</i>
4	Outreach	<i>I believe we could do more community work.</i>

N= 181.

**Family Needs** - Twenty-one individuals said their greatest need had to do with family. Many wanted prayer for their family. Others wanted, for example:

- A young marriage group. . . There is a singles group and a divorcee group . . . why not build a small group for newlyweds and young marriages?
- Prayer for unsaved loved ones.
- Strengthening marriages, marriage seminars and teaching.

**Growth as a Christian** - It is also a tribute to the spiritual strength of the congregation that the second most often mentioned need (besides the "Other" category) was to grow as a Christian. Some people expressed this as "I have a need to grow more in the Lord", or "Getting to be more like Jesus and being a better servant to others and to my Lord." People wanted the church to "continue to challenge me to grow closer to God and that His will be done in my life and that of my family." They wrote comments like:

- Keep me coming to church and live the way God wants me to live.
- Spiritual guidance with work and love life. To help get through the hard time.
- My greatest need is keeping my faith strong. It is tough just living day to day. The devil is at work and I need to know how to fight the devil in my everyday life.
- Teaching about living a daily life with Christ—discipleship.

**The Word** – Seventeen said their greatest need was for "learning more of the Word". People wanted ". . . more Bible teaching" and "In-depth study of the Word." Again, this attests to the spiritual maturity of the church that so many individuals recognized their ongoing need for more of the manifold blessings of studying the precious Word of God. Members and attenders said:

- I want to learn more of the Bible.
- Just be the church you are, and preach the Word.
- Bible teaching, spiritually uplifting,

**No Needs** - Eighteen people said they had "No particular needs at this time". Praise the Lord!

**Youth and children** - For 9 people, their greatest need had to do with youth and children. One person said "My greatest need is that the church continues to maintain an organized young adult group". Others said "Children finding a place" and "Reinforce my Christian values with my teenagers".

**Positive Comments** – Eight people made complimentary statements such as "Remain the loving church you are". One person said, "Only one need – that Pastor Simmons would just keep preaching wonderful anointed sermons" and another requested ABC Church to "Continue stressing that we are "the most loving church, people need love".

**Negative Comments** - Eight people made comments such as "No gossiping" and "To have unity among believers" and "I would like to feel welcome when I walk through the doors on Sunday morning."

**Fellowship** - Fellowship was reported by eight people to be the biggest need that ABC Church could help them meet. They said, for example:

- I need to become more involved.
- Outside of church my wife and I have not seen any other church attendee in any type of social setting other than monthly breakfast/lunch
- I need to know more people in the church so I can be more comfortable when I am there but more than that I need to develop real friendships where we connect outside of church.

**Financial** - Five respondents said they needed financial help. One said, "I feel I have found a family here but I am afraid to seem needy."

**Seniors, men and women** – Four people requested more activities for special groups – such as seniors, men and women.

**Outreach** - Four individuals requested that the church do more outreach, such as "community work" and "activities that get us off the church grounds and into the community."

## DISCUSSION

Although it is not possible to tell how many people actually heard about the survey, having 197 and 181 responses to Questions 1 and 2 is at least approximately 12% of the members on the church roll. It is highly likely that the percentage of response is greater because some individuals whose names are on the church roll are no longer active, as stated earlier. The congregation is to be congratulated because 60 survey respondents believed ABC Church was already a loving church and nothing else needed to be done. The negative comments were relatively few when one considers the size of the congregation and the nature of human nature. As one person said, *"They do a nice job. Church is a tough job. There are a lot of expectations of not perfect people."*

The usual cautions regarding self-report data apply to results of this survey. For example, people sometimes answer surveys in a socially desirable way, and everyone, including this writer, has personal biases of which they are unaware.

The responses to Question 1 were categorized into eight themes. These themes are discussed below.

**Reaching Out** - Based on responses to the survey, the best way ABC Church could be a more loving church is to reach out more. The topic mentioned most often by those who chose to answer the question "How can ABC Church be a more loving church for you" was suggestions on how to help people connect with and get to know each other better. Sixty-three people made suggestions. That represents one-third of the 197 people who answered the question.

Having such a high percentage of responses about reaching out as well as positive comments likely reflects the fact that most of the people completing the survey were members or long-time attenders who would, in general, be more connected than those relatively new to the church. Had more people new or

relatively new to the church taken the survey, there would most likely have been more requests for reaching out.

Regardless of how one looks at the numbers, the results clearly indicate that for many people ABC Church needs to reach out more. As one person said: "We need to feel that we belong. ABC Church is a great church and Pastor Simmons is by far one of the best pastors, but I feel as if we are individuals that meet once a week. The church doesn't seem connected with each other." Another individual commented "I have been attending ABC Church since October of 2006 and have found the folks to be friendly, however, have not formed any relationship with any member. Have taken couple of Bible studies and did not bond with anyone. I am a pretty open person but folks kept to those they knew - no one knows me."

There are many factors that make it difficult for people to get acquainted and to form friendships at any church. Some of those are:

- Church settings are social situations, and we are interacting with people who are often strangers or casual acquaintances.
- Social encounters with strangers, or relative strangers, are difficult for many, perhaps most, people.
- This is particularly so for those who are socially anxious, which research has demonstrated is about half the population.
- Most interactions at church are in unstructured situations with no clear rules on what to say or even when to speak.
- It is easy to stay anonymous in large churches, particularly if one wishes to do so.
- ABC Church is a very large church and that accentuates all the issues.
- It is human nature to focus on ourselves and to overlook the responsibility we all have to reach out to others. It is also natural for many individuals to wait for others to initiate contact.
- The biggest reason is the enemy of our souls. Satan works to steal, kill and destroy God's beloved children and any good thing they have (John 10:10). One of the best things we have is fellowship with fellow believers.

These and other reasons help explain why connections are not made that keep people coming back and that help make people feel loved. They also help explain how the following two incidents could have occurred when many people reported that they found ABC Church to be a loving church already:

- *We had been coming to the church for about 5 years before anyone really took the time to get to know us. We would come to functions and go to Sunday School but we still had not established any relationships with anyone until we started going to the youth meetings. Even at that, we were there for almost a year before anyone really started to develop a relationship with us. We had decided to look for another church a couple of years ago because I was tired of going and being alone all the time. The reason we came back was because I felt that God was leading me to bring our teenager there because that was where he wanted to be and that was where he would grow. I made the sacrifice to come back because I really believed that was what God wanted. . . I have pretty much given up on the idea that a church is a loving place to be . . .*
- *I would love to have a simple women's fellowship, where you can get to know each other. Have a ladies brunch, trips to antique stores . . . I so much miss fellowshiping. My heart just breaks, not getting to know other women. I have been going to ABC Church six years and not meeting just one friend to go out to lunch with breaks my heart.*

Two things would go far to help prevent experiences like the above: (1) Educating the members and regular attenders on the importance of assimilation, and (2) Providing opportunities specifically for that purpose.

Obviously, many people at ABC Church already are reaching out in friendly ways, as indicated by comments such as, "I already feel loved and accepted at ABC Church. Even though ABC Church is a large church, I noticed this and felt this the very first time I visited." Another said "I have found the church to be a caring place and have experienced acceptance and love." Equally obvious is that some close relationships are being formed. This happens naturally when you take the same class, share a meal, or attend the same social event. ABC Church has many such activities and relationships do get established this way.

However, the suggestions made in response to this survey pinpoint a critical need. J. Melvin Ming (1999) says ". . . assimilation ministry must help guests establish relationships with people in the church, to move from being outsiders to being insiders." Robert W. Jeambey (1998) reports that "43 percent of all people who leave congregations do so because of *nonacceptance and unrelatedness*."

Another critical need is to follow up with members and regular attenders who are absent. No procedures are currently in place other than what individuals choose to do with those they know. This seems a particularly important component of an assimilation plan, especially for a large church.

**Outreach** - ABC Church already does outreach activities, and it is possible some of the respondents were not aware of all that ABC Church does; however, most of the comments about outreach indicated they wanted *more* outreach. One individual made a comment that was, in fact, an excellent recommendation: *I think we need to use the folks more that we have to come up with ideas to help in the community. We have a lot of great people that can be used to deliver programs to the community. I say if we go to the people and get some of their ideas, they will be more apt to get involved.*

**Leadership, Communication, and Inclusiveness** – The main concern for the seven people who commented about leadership seemed to be more involvement with the congregation. Four people each talked about the need for better communication and to be more inclusive. Again, ABC Church is to be commended to have so few comments about three issues that are important for everyone; however, these concerns should be addressed.

**Prayer** - ABC Church has had a thriving Prayer Team for many years. There are many ways individuals can request prayer, such as calling the church office to have a name put on the prayer list in the bulletin, going to the altar for prayer, going to the 8:30 a.m. Sunday morning prayer meeting, the Friday night prayer meeting the first Friday of each month, and others. It might be helpful to periodically announce the opportunities for prayer from the pulpit.

**Growth as a Christian** – Two of the primary purposes of any evangelical church are to win the lost and to help individuals in their Christian growth – through worship services, Sunday Schools and other training opportunities. As mentioned earlier, the fact that so many people reported their greatest need was for prayer and growth as a Christian attests to the spiritual maturity of the church.

**Family Needs** – It is natural that many of those who completed the two questions indicated their greatest need had to do with family. There were many requests for prayer as well as for specific aspects of the family, such as marriages and children. ABC Church has many ministries that touch the family but perhaps more opportunities for couples could be considered.

**Word** – The tone of the 17 responses regarding the Word was that the individuals wanted and needed *more* of the Word, which, again, speaks well of those who responded to the survey. ABC Church provides abundant opportunities for hearing the Word, through worship service, Sunday Schools, Wednesday night and other activities. One avenue for learning more of the Word not currently offered is home Bible studies.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The most obvious recommendation is for the church and leadership to continue to pray and seek the Lord for His direction. (James 1:5) Jesus did not meet every need that was around Him but He did meet every need that God the Father had planned before the foundation of the world. We have that same precious, precious Holy Spirit who lived in Jesus living also in us to guide us as we serve Him so that we, as individuals and as a church, fulfill God's purposes for us as well as for those around us. (Galatians 4:6)

Additionally, the comments about each topic could be given to the appropriate Leadership Team, with guidance from the Senior and Executive Pastors. Recommendations regarding responses to the first question are presented below.

### Reaching Out

The most critical concern the first two questions of the survey revealed is the need to reach out more. Review of comments in that category reveal that help is needed in two ways:

- Getting acquainted with more people while at church, and
- Establishing deeper relationships outside, as well as inside, church, that is, friendships.

A new Leadership Team for the purpose of helping ABC Church “reach out” more will soon be formed. Below are some initial suggestions for the Assimilation Team to consider:

- Ask the Prayer Team for special prayer as the team is being formed and initial actions are taken.
- Gather more information:
  - Have focus groups to discuss how to reach out and carefully consider the information provided.
  - Ask each Leadership Team to discuss ways to reach out more; consolidate those suggestions.
  - Research the literature, beginning with the list of Assimilation Resources (Appendix C).
  - Explore what other local churches are doing to facilitate connectedness.

- Raise congregational awareness of the need to actively assimilate and how to do that:
  - Make brief presentations to the Sunday School and Wednesday night classes.
  - Make brief reminders periodically on Sunday Morning.
  - Hold a special training event to train 20% of the congregation to be part of the Assimilation Team, as suggested by J. Melvin Ming in “Helping Outsiders Become Insiders”.
  - Make a summary of this report available to the congregation.
- Provide more opportunities for assimilation:
  - Add something to help foster connections in each existing activity.
  - As soon as feasible, begin activities and explore methods for the specific purpose of helping people make connections.
  - Include a feedback mechanism for each activity.
- Enhance existing visitor follow-up and review the suggestions in Christian literature.
- Institute a follow-up mechanism for those who are absent.

**Positive and Negative Comments** – Ask members of the Leadership Teams to review all positive and negative comments from both questions. The positive comments will provide encouragement, and the negative ones will provide guidance for making improvements.

**Other, Outreach, Leadership, Communication and Inclusiveness** – In these categories, there was a wide variety of needs. It is recommended that church leadership review these needs and bring them to the attention of the appropriate Leadership Team.

**Prayer, Growth as a Christian, and the Word** - As stated earlier, it is a positive finding that so many individuals felt their greatest need was for the fundamentals of the Christian life. It is recommended that these areas continue to be stressed, from the pulpit, in Christian education classes, and in other activities. It is also a positive finding that responses to “What is your greatest need?” were distributed across many, rather than one or two, categories. This suggests that ABC Church is doing well in meeting the needs of most congregants. However, all the needs mentioned should be prayerfully considered and addressed to the fullest extent possible.

**Family** - Most of the comments regarding the need for attention to family issues concerned prayer or other general needs; however, four individuals requested meetings and instruction to strengthen marriages.

**Consider Follow-Up Research** - Consider a follow-up survey, focus groups and/or interviews.

Updated and further suggestions will be presented in the final report.

\* \* \* \* \*

*“And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ – to the glory and praise of God.”*  
*Philippians 1:9-11, NIV*



## References

Littleton, Jeanette Gardner. *How to Become A Visitor-Friendly Church: Touch Points of Turning Guests into Members* (YOUR CHURCH, January/February 1998, online] available from <http://www.christianity.net/yc/8Yi/l61068.html>.

Ming, J. Melvin (1999). Helping Outsiders Become Insiders. *Enrichment Journal*, Q3, 1999.

New York International Bible Society. (1978). *The Holy Bible, New International Version*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

## APPENDICES

- A: Demographic Results of Survey
- B: Complete Text of Responses to Questions 1 and 2
- C: Additional Assimilation Resources

## APPENDIX A

### DEMOGRAPHIC RESULTS OF SURVEY

**Appendix A: Demographic Results of Survey  
(Calculated on responses to all survey questions)**

Frequency	Percent*	Survey Question
		<b>Gender of Survey Respondents</b>
73	32%	Male
157	68%	Female
		<b>Age of Survey Respondents</b>
23	10%	21-30
31	13%	31-40
60	26%	41-50
66	28%	51-60
37	16%	61-70
17	7%	70 +
		<b>Race/Ethnicity of Survey Respondents</b>
144	64%	Caucasian
48	21%	African American
26	11%	Hispanic
10	4%	Multiracial
		<b>Length of Membership at ABC Church</b>
61	27%	0
20	9%	Less than 1
23	10%	2 to 3
19	8%	4 to 5
41	18%	5 to 10
35	15%	10 to 20
29	13%	Over 20
		<b>Length of Membership at Any Church</b>
15	6%	0
6	3%	Less than 1
8	3%	2 to 3
12	5%	4 to 5
25	11%	5 to 10++
50	21%	10 to 20
119	51%	Over 20
		<b>Number Worship Services Attended Per Month</b>
20	9%	1 to 2
92	40%	3 to 4
69	30%	5 to 8
47	21%	8 to 12

Number Activities Participated in Per Month		
68	29%	0
95	41%	1 to 2
40	17%	3 to 4
30	13%	5 to 10
Number Close Friends at ABC Church		
46	19%	0
55	24%	1 to 2
46	20%	3 to 4
36	16%	5 to 10
50	21%	10 +
Number Acquaintances at ABC Church		
11	5%	0
19	8%	1 to 2
39	17%	3 to 4
44	18%	5 to 10
120	52%	10 +

\* The total number of responses for each demographic question varied from 228 to 235; percentages are calculated accordingly for each question.

## APPENDIX B

Complete Text of Responses to Questions 1 and 2

NOT INCLUDED IN THIS SAMPLE REPORT IN ORDER TO  
PRESERVE CONFIDENTIALITY

## APPENDIX C

ADDITIONAL ASSIMILATION RESOURCES

## Appendix C: Additional Assimilation Resources

(from [http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/199903/042\\_outsiders.cfm](http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/199903/042_outsiders.cfm))

### BOOKS AND OTHER HELPFUL RESOURCES

We Build People

<http://www.we-build-people.org/>

*Assimilation: From Visitor to Minister*

Audio Seminar

Charles E. Fuller Institute

PO Box 91990

Pasadena, CA 91109

1-800-999-9578, ask for item #4379

*Assimilate and Grow* videos

Church Growth Today

PO Box 47

Bolivar, MO 65613

1-800-852-7289

McIntosh, Gary & Martin, Glen

*Finding Them, Keeping Them: Effective Strategies for Evangelism and Assimilation in the Local Church.*

Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992.

### ORGANIZATIONS

Care Ministries

Ken Houts, Founder

9412 Delmar

Prairie Village, KS 66207

1-800-769-GROW

Ministry of Caring

Thomas Ming Ministries

16703 NW Waterford Way

Portland, OR 97229

503-645-6383

Thomasming@AOL.com



**Hillsborough County**  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
*Excellence in Education*

**INITIAL FEEDBACK ON THE  
MAGNET SCHOOL-WIDE ENRICHMENT MODEL  
USING RENZULLI LEARNING SYSTEMS  
2006-2007**

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September 2007

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the 2006-2007 school year, Renzulli Learning Systems (RLS) was implemented in the district's 25 public magnet schools. An evaluation was requested to determine program usage and success. The sample for the teacher survey was intentionally purposive in order to obtain feedback from teachers who had used RLS the most. Highlights and recommendations based on the process evaluation follow.

### Conclusions:

**Although usage varied greatly by site and by individual teacher, initial RLS implementation has been successful.**

- ✓ By the end of the 2006-2007 school year, 13 of 20 magnet elementary and middle schools had more than half their students registered, and ten schools had between 33% and 92% of student profiles completed.
- ✓ Most teachers surveyed reported using most components, at least to a limited extent, for differentiating instruction and for providing enrichment to the curriculum.
- ✓ Most teachers surveyed believed RLS was an effective teaching tool, and they reported an increase in student engagement as well as other desirable student outcomes.
- ✓ A solid foundation was established for continued use and future expansion, despite obstacles.
- ✓ The magnet office RLS administrator was especially adept in accommodating the needs of individual schools and site managers.
- ✓ The supervisor of magnet programs and the magnet office RLS administrator were successful in identifying and responding to needs that emerged during the year.
- ✓ Parental involvement was reported as limited, but comments were positive.

**The most significant obstacles to success were lack of teacher time, insufficient computer access (in some instances), training, and teacher interest.**

- ✓ Teachers reported a lack of time to learn "one more program", and some felt overwhelmed by all the teaching materials made available to them.
- ✓ Whole-class use may remain problematic at some schools where all students cannot use a computer at the same time; however, as training continues and word-of-mouth spreads, it is possible that teachers with insufficient computer access will use RLS in other ways.
- ✓ In hind sight, the fact that the first two large-group trainings were not hands-on possibly affected teacher attitude and usage, early in the school year especially. Results of the teacher survey administered in May 2007 indicated a high level of teacher interest in more usage.

### Opportunities For Continuing Growth:

- ✓ Continue working to:
  - alleviate the obstacles of time and computer access.
  - increase teacher interest and skill level.
  - obtain support from principals.
- ✓ Proceed with training and enhanced follow-up, as planned.
- ✓ Monitor usage of RLS in other district programs and consider possible expansion.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction .....	1
Program Description.....	1
Evaluation Purpose and Questions.....	2
Data Sources and Reporting .....	3
Question 1: How was RLS Implemented in the School Settings?.....	4
Question 2: How was RLS Used in the Classroom?.....	6
Question 3: How Successful was RLS?.....	12
Question 4: What Barriers were Encountered in Using the RLS program? .....	15
Conclusions and Opportunities for Growth .....	20
Opportunities for Growth.....	22
References .....	23

## LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

	Page
Table A. Data Sources .....	4
Figure 1. Growth in Registration, September 2006-May 2007 .....	7
Table B. RLS Registration, Profile Status, and Usage .....	9
Table C. Perceived Purpose of RLS, as Reported by Site Managers .....	10
Table D. Extent of Usage of RLS Components, as Reported by Teachers.....	10
Table E. Usage Type and Subject Area, as Reported by Teachers.....	11
Table F. Perceived Effectiveness, as Reported by Teachers .....	12
Table G. Desire to Use RLS More in the Future, as Reported by Teachers .....	13
Table H. Teacher Likes and Dislikes, as Reported by Site Managers .....	13
Table I. Perceived Increase in Student Engagement, as Reported by Site Managers.....	14
Table J. Perceived Effect of RLS on Students, as Reported by Teachers to Site Managers.....	14
Table K. Effect on Use of Differentiated Instruction, as Reported by Teachers .....	15
Table L. Most Frequently-Mentioned Barrier, as Reported by Teachers.....	16
Table M. Most Frequently Mentioned Concerns, as Reported by Site Managers .....	16
Table N. Additional Comments from Teachers .....	17
Table O. Likes and Dislikes Regarding Training, as Reported by Teachers.....	18
Table P. Adequacy of Training, as Reported by Teachers.....	19
Table Q. Levels of Interest in More Training, as Reported by Teachers.....	19

## LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A: Data Sources and Methods of Analysis

Appendix B: Questions Emailed to Site Managers and Full Text of Responses

Appendix C: Teacher Survey, Cover Letters, and Full Text of Responses

Appendix D: Duke Gifted Letter

Appendix E: Summary of Reported Effect of RLS on Achievement

## INTRODUCTION

This report is a summary of the initial implementation phase of Renzulli Learning Systems (RLS) as part of the School-wide Enrichment Model for magnet school programs in Hillsborough County Public Schools. Plans were made in the fall of 2005 and the spring of 2006 for six magnet schools to offer the Gifted and Talent Development Academy (GTDA) program in concert with their magnet themes. In GTDAs, students are provided with opportunities for both acceleration and enrichment. GTDAs employ the School-wide Enrichment Model (SEM), a research-based plan that emphasizes the development of gifted behaviors among all students. The SEM has seven components, the first of which is development of a Total Talent Portfolio through assessment of student strengths, abilities, interests, and learning styles. The decision was made to use RLS to implement the first component of the SEM in all magnet schools. In June 2006, the district purchased annual, renewable subscriptions to the Renzulli Learning Systems for the district's 25 magnet schools. The RLS subscriptions provide for initial as well as ongoing teacher training in program use.

During the 2006-2007 school year, RLS was also used in the School-wide Enrichment Model for Reading (SEM-R). SEM-R was implemented in the District in six schools. An evaluation of the SEM-R was conducted and is available from the Department of Assessment and Accountability. For the 2007-2008 school year, 11 schools will use RLS with Project M<sup>3</sup> (Mentoring Mathematical Minds) as part of their gifted program.

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

RLS is an interactive web-based teaching and learning tool to help teachers assess strengths and differentiate curriculum and instruction. The research-based program consists of four components:

- student strength assessment using an electronic learning profile,
- enrichment differentiation databases,
- the Wizard Project Maker, and
- the Total Talent Portfolio.

The electronic profiler creates a profile of each student's academic strengths, interests, learning styles, and preferred modes of expression. In the second component, the system uses a differentiation search engine to examine resources relating to the student's individual profile. Teachers have a set of learning maps for fourteen enrichment resource databases: virtual field trips; real field trips; creativity training; critical thinking; projects and independent study; contests and competitions; websites; fiction books and e-books; non-fiction books and e-books; how-to books and e-books; summer programs; on-line activities and classes; research skills; and videos and DVDs.

Teachers may use information from the student profiles in many ways, e.g., to group students according to academic strengths, interests, learning style, and preferred expression mode. They may use the lesson planner and the databases to plan and to give lessons. RLS can be used in various ways to provide instruction. Teachers can use their classroom computer and projection device to deliver instruction to the whole class or students may work in groups or pairs or individually.

Teachers and parents have access to their student's profile and can review the student's web activities. The Wizard Project Maker helps teachers and students find topics they wish to explore in greater depth for investigative projects, research, and other learning activities. Student activities are stored in the Total Talent Portfolio so that students can evaluate the sites they visit, return to on-going work, and store favorite activities and resources. Teachers can review the portfolio at any time, and the portfolio travels with students throughout their schooling.

#### ***"The Enrichment Triad Model***

*The Enrichment Triad Model was developed by Joseph Renzulli in 1977 for use with gifted and talented students. Over the years, it has proven to be an excellent model to use with all students. The goal of the Enrichment Triad Model is to encourage creative productivity in students. This is done by providing background information and exposing students to various topics, teaching them process-training skills, and providing opportunities for students to apply those skills through independent projects.*

**Type I Enrichment** experiences are about discovering, stimulating and inspiring interest.

**Type II Enrichment** experiences come in two varieties: thinking skills, and "working" skills. Thinking skills encourage creativity, problem solving and critical thinking. The "working" skills include how-to skills, the appropriate use of various resources, and written, oral and visual communication skills. Both types of skills are needed to successfully complete a Type III Independent Investigation.

**Type III Enrichment** experiences are academic investigations, artistic productions, or other projects or endeavors in which the student becomes a first-hand inquirer and practicing professional, focusing on a topic or problem of intense, personal interest.

*Renzulli Learning is based on the Enrichment Triad Model. By answering the questions in the Interest Areas, Ability, Expression Style, and Learning Style sections, a profile is generated for each student. Once a profile is generated, the student is able to go to the Enrichment Activities which are designed to build interest (Type I activities), develop skills (Type II activities) and encourage the production of independent or small group work (Type III activities)."*

<http://teachers2.renzullilearning.com/Triad.aspx>



The program can be viewed at <http://www.renzullilearning.com>.

## **EVALUATION PURPOSE AND QUESTIONS**

The purpose of this process evaluation was to document implementation and program users' initial perceptions of the benefits of RLS for teachers and students. Four questions were identified to document the initial implementation of RLS and to gauge program use and benefits. Findings are ordered by the questions listed below.

1. How was RLS implemented in the school settings?
2. How was RLS used in the classroom?
3. How successful was RLS?
4. What barriers were encountered in using the RLS program?

Throughout the 2006-2007 school year, decision makers monitored registration and usage data as well as teacher feedback. Data available during the year indicated sufficient teacher usage and interest, and in early June 2006 a decision was made to renew RLS licenses for all but three magnet schools. The

licenses for three international baccalaureate high schools, which had little usage, were used for three Title I schools during the 2007-2008 school year.

## DATA SOURCES AND REPORTING

Process data regarding implementation were gathered from a variety of sources and in various forms. Table A provides a list and brief description of the information gathered. Further details are presented in Appendix A. Appendix A also contains the teacher survey, list of questions emailed to site managers, and respondents' verbatim comments. Results from each source are included in the report where the subject the data address is discussed. A brief narrative addresses each of the evaluation questions. Key findings regarding each evaluation question are listed at the beginning of each section, with data and brief explanatory narrative following.

Caution should be exercised in drawing conclusions based on information currently available, for a number of reasons. (1) The available data are preliminary and somewhat limited. (2) Magnet schools show a high degree of heterogeneity regarding program usage. This is to be expected during an initial implementation year. Additionally, because this district uses site-based decision making, each principal has the autonomy to specify how the program will be utilized and to tailor program utilization to the particular theme of his or her school and student population. (3) The sample for the teacher survey was intentionally purposive in order to obtain feedback from teachers who had used the system the most at each school. (4) The data are self-reported. (5) Finally, "success" can be defined in different ways. If, for example, only a few classes in a school used RLS but those classes used it for almost daily for reading enrichment, RLS was successful. Likewise, if high-achieving students in classes at another school used RLS only during student free time to participate in independent enrichment that would otherwise not have been possible, RLS was successful for that school. Finally, it is essential to bear in mind when considering results of the teacher survey that the survey was distributed by site managers to teachers who were believed to have utilized the system the most. Additionally, each school varied widely in the number of teachers who completed the survey. Although the best data possible were utilized, caution should be applied in attempting to make generalizations based upon these preliminary findings.

Appendix B contains copies of the questions that were emailed to site managers and the full text of their responses. Appendix C provides copies of the teacher survey, the teacher survey cover letter, the letter requesting site managers to distribute the survey, and the full text of teacher comments to the write-in responses.

Regarding results of the teacher survey presented in this report, teachers were requested to skip questions 5 through 11 if they had not used RLS at all or only had their students register and complete the student profile. A total of 142 teachers completed the survey, and 50 teachers skipped most, but not all, of questions 5 through 11. Accordingly, the number of responses for the questions in the teacher survey varies.



**Table A. Data Sources**

Data Source	Participants	Response Rate	Comments
Email questions	RLS school site managers	64% (16 of 25 site managers)	Questions about program use were emailed to all RLS site managers.
Teacher survey	Teachers	91% at the school level (20 of 23 schools)	Site managers were asked to distribute the surveys to teachers they believed had used RLS the most. Twenty of 22 magnet schools responded, with between one and 16 responses per school. No surveys were sent to three high schools having very low usage (Middleton, Hillsborough, and Robinson High Schools.)
Registration Numbers	RLS System	NA	Data were taken from the RLS on-line system throughout the school year.
Usage data	RLS System	NA	RLS collaborated with the district evaluator to develop additional usage data which were made available at the end of the 2006-2007 school year.
Emails and interviews	Participating teachers	NA	Informal interviews were conducted and emails were exchanged with teachers.

### **QUESTION 1: HOW WAS RLS IMPLEMENTED IN THE SCHOOL SETTINGS?**

- Pre-implementation preparations were made.
- Initial large group training was provided by RLS staff.
- To initially implement the program, between one and three curriculum coordinators, one of whom was a lead teacher, were designated at each school.
- Individualized, hands-on trainings were provided throughout the school year.
- By March 2007, there was enough RLS use for an awards ceremony.
- RLS was responsive to suggestions for improvement.

**Pre-implementation preparations were made.** In the winter of 2005, magnet staff conducted a pilot at Ferrell Middle School. Basic, start-up training was provided, and teachers were enrolled in the RLS system. Following the initial pilot, all magnet schools were invited to enroll and participate in an “open pilot” for the month of February 2006. A total of 6,875 students, 765 teachers, and 58 parents enrolled in RLS during the initial pilot.

In the late spring of 2005-06, RLS was introduced at a meeting for principals of all magnet schools. The program was introduced as part of the unique curriculum that all magnet schools are required to have and to advertise in their marketing and recruitment efforts. The magnet district office offered a Summer Training Institute in 2006 for 55 principals, assistant principals, and lead teachers to review the previous

year's accomplishments for magnet schools. The importance of using RLS during the coming year was also emphasized. A district resource teacher on the magnet district staff was designated as the magnet office RLS administrator. In the spring of 2007, another district resource teacher also began assisting with RLS training and follow-up, although on a limited basis.

**Initial large group training was provided by RLS staff.** On June 21, 2006, as part of the district's agreement, an RLS trainer conducted a six-hour train-the-trainer in-service for 41 teachers. Magnet school principals were encouraged to send at least one teacher to the training. Basic, start-up training was provided. Anecdotal feedback indicated that teachers would have preferred the training to be more hands-on. The next training was scheduled for August 21, 2006, with 102 lead teachers, curriculum integration resource teachers, other resource teachers, and technical specialists. The magnet office RLS administrator had prepared an agenda that focused on advanced hands-on applications, based on feedback from participants in the June 2006 training. However, due to illness, the RLS trainer presented the training. The August 21, 2006, training provided was generally the same as that provided on June 21<sup>st</sup>.

**To initially implement the program in schools, between one and three curriculum coordinators, one of whom was a lead teacher, were designated at each school.** The curriculum coordinators were to assist teachers with becoming familiar with RLS, having their students complete the Learning Profile, and encouraging program use in lesson planning and delivery. Lead teachers were designated as RLS site managers. In early August, the magnet office RLS administrator sent an email to site managers, encouraging them to attend the August 21 training. Site managers were also asked to consider how to train and register school staff, how to register students, and how their teachers could use RLS. The Magnet office RLS administrator also included sign-in and basic usage instructions and invited teachers to call or email if they needed assistance in any way. Plans were to have the site managers and curriculum coordinators at each school encourage registration and program use at each site and to act as a program resource for teachers. The magnet office RLS administrator maintained regular contact with the site managers and curriculum coordinators throughout the year via site visits, emails, and telephone calls. The magnet office RLS administrator was available to respond to teachers whenever they requested help and in most instances responded well within 24-hours.

**Individualized, hands-on trainings continued to be provided throughout the school year.** The initial goal was for schools to begin using RLS at the start of the school year. However, that proved to be too ambitious, as indicated by the fact that only 1,797 students were registered on September 8, 2006 (the earliest available data). To help increase registration and usage of RLS, the magnet office RLS administrator began going to individual schools and providing additional training, most of which was one-on-one training for individual teachers. She also went to schools during planning time to provide training at team meetings and other teacher conference times.

Between August 4 and November 21, 2006, the magnet office RLS administrator provided individualized training at 24 of the 26 schools. A total of 34 visits were made. At each site, an agenda that included practical applications for that school's magnet theme was used. The training was hands-on, with the teacher and trainer working together in utilizing the system. The magnet office RLS administrator responded to requests for support via telephone and email as well. Because of other duties, the magnet office RLS administrator lacked sufficient time to meet individually with all schools that needed further training and/or assistance. Accordingly, in late October 2006, at the request of the magnet supervisor, a trainer from RLS also began providing additional training and support. Trainings were conducted at some schools as part of faculty meetings.

**By March 2007, there was enough usage for an awards ceremony.** The district magnet office used one of its monthly meetings to showcase RLS. Awards were given to schools for various categories of use. During the latter part of the 2006-2007 school year, the magnet office RLS administrator continued to provide email and phone support, and individualized trainings as requested by schools. Another resource teacher from the magnet office staff assisted, when other duties permitted, with individualized trainings and other support. Anecdotal information indicated that during the last two months or so of the school year, with standardized testing completed, teachers had more time to utilize programs such as RLS.

Another in-service training was provided in May 2007 by the magnet office RLS administrator and the RLS trainer. The participants were individually selected, with the goal of producing the maximum effect on usage of RLS. Based upon knowledge of the challenges to implementation thus far, the manager invited technical resource teachers from each school to participate in the training. The aim of that training was to motivate school-based technical personnel to be a resource at their individual schools to assist with registration of students and usage of RLS. Approximately 15 technical resource and media specialists attended the training. Five schools requested more in-service training in RLS during the summer of 2007, as part of their allotted summer in-service hours. The five schools requesting more training had high, medium, and low percentages of student enrollment in RLS.

**RLS was responsive to suggestions for improvement.** During the school year, suggestions from teachers were forwarded to RLS staff. Some of the suggestions were incorporated in the RLS website. For example, the teacher portion of the website was revised in the spring of 2007 and teachers were able to use links to the Sunshine State Standards that were incorporated in the lesson planner.

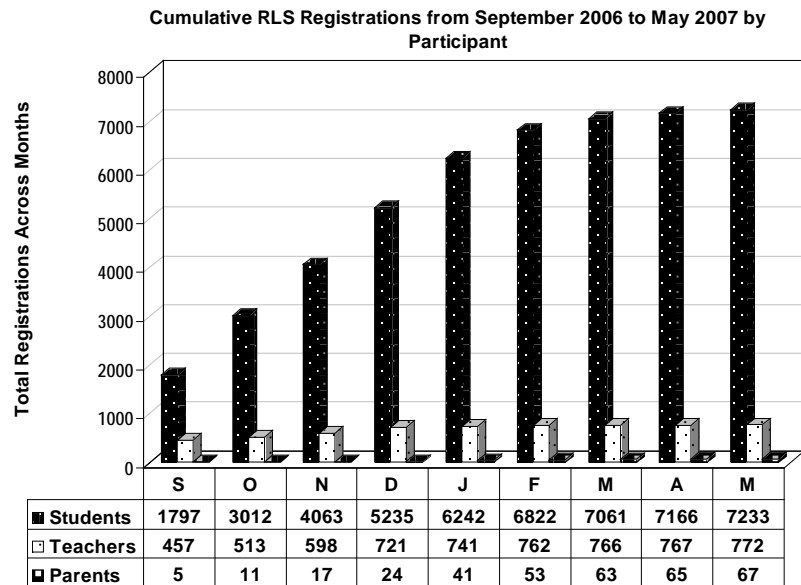
## **QUESTION 2: HOW WAS RLS USED IN THE CLASSROOM?**

- Growth in student registrations was generally steady throughout the first six months of the school year.
- Consistent emphasis was placed throughout the year on student registrations.
- By the end of the school year, excluding schools with less than 1% enrollment, 13 of 23 schools had 50% or more of their students enrolled.
- Preliminary data indicate widely varying levels of use.
- Data indicate that most site managers understood the purpose of RLS.
- Most teachers surveyed reported using most RLS components, at least to a limited extent.
- Teachers reported using RLS most often on an individual student basis and with Language Arts.
- RLS use varied greatly by site and by teacher.

**Growth in student registrations was generally steady throughout the first six months of the school year.** As depicted in Figure 1, student enrollment in the RLS increased at a fairly steady rate between September 2006 and February 2007, ranging from 1,797 to 6,822 students. By the end of the school year, 7,233 students had been registered in RLS. Growth in teacher registration was also steady. The total number of teachers increased from 457 in September to 772 in May 2007. Registration of parents for the same time period increased from 5 to 67.

**Figure 1. Growth in Registrations from September 2006-May 2007**

Consistent emphasis was placed throughout the year on student registrations. The magnet office RLS administrator monitored and reported on registrations weekly to the supervisor for magnet schools and programs. Review of the weekly status reports indicates that the magnet office RLS administrator regularly contacted and visited the various schools. The magnet office RLS administrator attended curriculum meetings at some schools and was in the schools on a regular basis, either directly concerning RLS matters or concerning other matters related to her duties as a district resource teacher for magnet schools. Additionally, as part of the weekly Tuesday Report, which the magnet office distributed to all magnet schools, the magnet office RLS administrator included a "Renzulli Tip of the Week."



By the end of the school year, excluding those high schools with less than 1% enrollment, 13 of 20 schools had 50% or more of their students enrolled. As Table B indicates, most schools had a relatively high percentage of enrollment. Considering the obstacles to registration and usage, as described subsequently in this report, these percentages are commendable. Additionally, 13 schools had 25% or more of their student portfolios completed, with four of those schools having 92%, 82%, 75%, and 59% of their portfolios completed. This also is a commendable accomplishment.

Preliminary data indicate widely varying levels of usage. With any computer-based educational program, enrollment percentages do not necessarily indicate the extent to which a program is being utilized. Table B presents year end usage data that was under development during the school year and was made available by RLS at year end. The company continues to expand the reporting capabilities of RLS to meet accountability needs of users. Report capabilities now include other categories of use, such as number of student self-assessments, teacher assignments, and projects completed. However, these components, which give a clearer indication of actual usage, had little or no use during the initial year of implementation and are not included in Table B.

The data in Table B are ordered by the "% Registered in RLS" column. Number of students (as well as teachers and parents) registered was the primary indicator staff had available during the implementation year to monitor program growth. Until May 2007, the other variables in Table B were not available or available only in combination with other variables. Currently, the two best indicators are "Percent Enrolled" and "Percent Profiles Completed". However, one must be wary of drawing conclusions about usage based upon these two categories. For instance, one school had high registration and percent

of profile completion but only four students had logged into the system after they initially enrolled. The other categories of use presented in Table B are a rough gauge of program usage, and caution should be exercised when considering these preliminary data. Descriptions of the categories, along with examples of how they inter-relate follow.

"Profile" has three subcategories (Not Started, In Progress, and Complete) because some time is required for students to complete the profile. Accordingly, the system allows students to save completed items and return at a later time. During the implementation year, these categories were combined with "Sites visited" and were not available separately until year end.

"Total Sites Visited" reflects the number of individual web sites students at each school visited. Inspection of individual student data in the system in some instances revealed that some students had exceptionally high numbers of sites visited but most of the sites indicated a view-time of 15 seconds or less, which would indicate the student was simply "clicking around". This variable is, therefore, of questionable use at the current time.

"Total Days Logged In" indicates the number of times a student logged into the site. This number can be misleading. One school had a relatively low number of total days (87) but 75% of student profiles were completed at that school. One teacher at that school had utilized student profiles and information from the project maker to complete student projects but had not used the system itself because of computer access issues. Other sites had a relatively high number of days logged in but inspection of data at the individual student level revealed that almost all those days had been on the initial day when students were registered.

"Total Favorites" indicates the number of favorite websites a student marked during the times he or she was logged into RLS during the year. Although presumably students could also have given only a cursory viewing to a website before designating it as a favorite, it seems logical to assume that this category is a more accurate indicator of program usage than is "Total Sites Visited". Visual comparison of these two categories suggests that to be the case because fewer favorites were designated than sites were visited.

Although preliminary and inconclusive at this point, the data do indicate considerable usage, especially if considered in light of the fact that this was the initial year of implementation. These preliminary results also provide guidance in thinking about how to monitor usage in future years. The various school sites showed a high level of variation in use. Other indicators of the high degree of variation in usage are results of the teacher survey (presented in the remainder of this report) and the response site managers made when asked about their future plans for RLS. Some sites needed refresher training while others had specific plans for more usage.

Table B. RLS Registration, Profile Status, and Usage

School Name (n=23) **	Total Students	No. Enrolled	% Enrolled in RLS *	Profile – Not Begun	Profile - In Progress	Profile - Complete	% Profile Completed	Total Sites Visited	Total Days Logged In	Total Favorites
Progress Village Middle	862	923	107.1	448	262	213	24.7	335	718	214
Dunbar Elementary	298	312	104.7	2	37	273	91.6	10279	2409	268
MacFarlane Park Elementary	386	398	103.1	167	4	227	58.8	4600	1995	960
Lomax Elementary (GTDA)	390	385	98.7	2	66	317	81.3	7886	2687	391
Young Middle	751	697	92.8	297	7	124	16.5	1114	306	353
Ferrell Middle (GTDA)	511	465	91.0	11	71	383	75.0	560	87	105
Lee Elementary (GTDA)	382	324	84.8	23	39	184	48.2	9708	1443	1129
Cahoon Elementary (GTDA)	371	275	74.1	58	103	114	30.7	6526	2056	134
Stewart Middle	865	628	72.6	48	193	387	44.7	903	7	262
Dowdell Middle	728	502	69.0	126	211	165	22.7	2364	379	390
Lockhart Elementary (GTDA)	461	287	62.3	11	91	185	40.1	911	51	846
Lincoln Elementary (GTDA)	414	242	58.5	17	47	178	43.0	1473	361	383
Shore Elementary	390	195	50.0	26	31	139	35.6	5462	1394	360
Sligh Middle	888	412	46.4	16	247	149	16.8	143	452	36
Franklin Middle	585	260	44.4	5	32	223	38.1	971	409	77
Orange Grove Middle	629	210	33.4	0	4	206	32.8	6563	403	4676
Williams Middle	897	226	25.2	10	37	179	20.0	508	182	57
Rampello Downtown Partnership	668	151	22.6	32	38	133	19.9	892	241	114
Blake High	1723	301	17.5	14	33	254	14.7	201	103	29
Muller Elementary	356	12	3.4	3	3	6	1.7	15	48	25
Jefferson High	1727	12	0.7	2	3	7	0.4	10	0	0
Tampa Bay Tech High	1803	7	0.4	2	1	4	0.2	0	0	0
Middleton High	1652	3	0.2	0	0	3	0.2	11	1	1
TOTAL/AVERAGE	22562	7229	54.9 (average)	1320	1561	4054	33.0 (average)	61435	15733	10810

Note. GTDA = Gifted & Talent Development Academy Program. \*Some schools reflect percentages greater than 100 due to student transfers after RLS enrollment. The RLS registrations were not purged until the end of the school year. \*\*Hillsborough, King, and Robinson High Schools had one or fewer students registered.

Data indicate that site managers in general understood the purpose of RLS. Table C presents responses site managers made to the question “What do you perceive as the purpose of RLS?” It is logical to assume that teachers, who attended the same training, had a similar understanding.

**Table C. Perceived Purpose of RLS, as Reported by Site Managers**

Frequency Of Mention n=14	Theme	Illustrative Example(s)
8	Differentiated instruction	“To differentiate the curriculum based on student learning styles” and “. . . a great tool for differentiated instruction...”
3	Enrichment	“. . . to enhance instruction and enrich course content.”
2	Research	“An added method of research and use of internet sites.”
1	Other	“I like the educational search engine...”

Most teachers surveyed reported using most components, at least to a limited extent. Based on the teacher survey administered April 20, 2007, the majority of teachers had used RLS at least to a limited extent. As indicated in the shaded portions of Table D, 80.4% of the 142 teachers surveyed reported using, at least to some extent, information on student attributes to differentiate instruction, 81.6% indicated they had used the search engine to locate enrichment activities, and 68.5% reported using the total talent portfolio, at least to a limited extent.

**Table D. Extent of Usage of RLS Components, as Reported by Teachers**

Please rate the extent to which you have used... (n=92)	A Great Extent		B Some Extent		C Limited Extent		D Not Yet / Not At All		Missing / No Response	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
5. information on student attributes from the RLS profiler to differentiate instruction.	5	5.4	36	39.1	33	35.9	16	17.4	2	2.2
6. the enrichment activities (search engine).	15	16.3	34	37.0	26	28.3	14	15.2	3	3.3
7. the total talent portfolio.	5	5.4	26	28.3	32	34.8	27	29.3	2	2.2

Teachers reported using RLS most often on an individual student basis and with Language Arts. The top half of Table E presents teacher responses to the open response survey item: “Please describe the primary ways you have used RLS (whole class activities with teacher guiding, individual student learning projects, student free time, etc.)” Summing the three categories of “Student Free Time”, “Student Projects”, and “Research” indicates that RLS was used by teachers most often on an individual student basis. When asked “With what subjects have you used RLS?”, teachers responded as indicated in the bottom half of Table E. The results are generally consistent with the district emphasis on language arts.

**Table E. Usage Type and Subject Area, as Reported by Teachers**

Frequency Of Mention	Theme
	<b>Type of Use, as Reported by Teachers, n=64</b>
43	Individual Student (Including Specific Mentions, As Presented Below)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20 Student Free Time</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18 Student Projects</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 Research</li> </ul>
12	Whole Class With Teacher Guiding
4	Enrichment
3	Computer
2	Other
	<b>Subjects With Which Teachers Reported Using RLS, N=114</b>
41	Total Language Arts (Including Specific Mentions, As Presented Below)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18 Language Arts</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16 Reading</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 Writing</li> </ul>
27	Social Studies And History
25	Science
14	Math
7	Other (Foreign Language, Intro To Computers, Art.)

**Usage varied greatly by site and by teacher.** Interviews with the magnet office RLS administrator, site managers, and teachers confirmed the findings presented above. As indicated, the most common way teachers had used RLS was on an individual student basis. Some teachers let students use RLS during their free time, either in the classroom or in the media center. Students also used RLS for individual projects and research. Fewer teachers (12 as compared to 43) reported using the program with the entire class at once, for example, taking a virtual field trip with the teacher displaying the program on a Smartboard or other projector device. Some sites reported using RLS with only certain grade levels or subjects. One site used RLS in the Foreign Language Lab, and another used it only as an after-school program.

Some teachers were exceptionally creative in coping with the lack of computer access. Some teachers used the information about student learning styles and interests by printing the information and making a traditional paper file of student information. Another teacher used the program for students to conduct research projects, but students printed the Project Maker rubric and used a paper copy, rather than the electronic version available in the system.



### QUESTION 3: HOW SUCCESSFUL WAS RLS?

- Most teachers who participated in the survey believe RLS was an effective teaching tool.
- The vast majority of teachers surveyed want to use RLS more in the future.
- Site managers reported teachers like many aspects of RLS.
- Most dislikes reported by teachers concerned lack of time and computer access.
- Teachers who had used RLS reported an increase in student engagement as well as other positive effects.
- Most teachers reported more use of differentiated instruction, at least to a limited extent.
- Data regarding parental interest and involvement is preliminary but positive.

Caution should be exercised in drawing conclusions based on information currently available, for a number of reasons. Further discussion about the preliminary nature of the data can be found in the Data Sources and Reporting section of this report. Appendix A contains details about the data sources.

**Most teachers who participated in the survey believe RLS was an effective teaching tool.** As depicted in Table F, when asked if they believe RLS is an effective way to differentiate curriculum and instruction as well as to find instructional resources, 69.3%, and 72.8% of teachers respectively agreed or strongly agreed. When asked if RLS is an effective resource for students to use for projects, 78% agreed or strongly agreed. Taken together, these responses indicate that for the teachers surveyed, the majority consider RLS an effective teaching tool.

Table F. Perceived Effectiveness, as Reported by Teachers

RLS is an effective way for me to... (n=92)	A Strongly Agree		B Agree		C Disagree		D Strongly Disagree		E Not Enough Use Yet to Determine		Missing / No Response	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
9. . . differentiate curriculum and instruction	15	16.3	49	53.3	5	5.4	2	2.2	20	21.7	1	1.1
10. . . to find instructional sources.	21	22.8	46	50.0	9	9.8	2	2.2	14	15.2	0	0.0
11. . . RLS is an effective resource for my students to use for projects	23	25.0	49	53.3	4	4.3	2	2.2	14	15.2	0	0.0

**The vast majority of teachers surveyed wanted to use RLS more in the future.** As reflected below in Table G, 83.1% of teachers strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "I would like to use RLS more in the future (for instructional purposes, for enhancing my curriculum, etc.) Only 8.4% disagreed or strongly disagreed with that statement. This seems consistent with the findings presented earlier that most teachers surveyed had used RLS at least to some extent and that most believe it to be an effective teaching tool.

**Table G. Desire to Use RLS More in the Future, as Reported by Teachers**

18. I would like to use RLS more in the future (for instructional purposes, for enhancing my curriculum, etc.) (n=142)	A Strongly Agree		B Agree		C Disagree		D Strongly Disagree		E Not Enough Use Yet to Determine		Missing / No Response	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
	57	40.1	61	43.0	10	7.0	2	1.4	10	7.0	2	1.4

**Site managers reported teachers like many aspects of RLS.** In response to the questions “What do your teachers seem to think about RLS? What do they like and why? What do they not like and why?” site managers responded as indicated in Table H. Teachers like students being able to work on projects and research, and they also like the variety of available activities and resources. Curiously, teachers at four schools were reported as specifically liking the variety of activities and resources whereas teachers at two schools were reported as feeling overwhelmed by “all the web sites.”

**Most dislikes reported by teachers concerned the lack of time and computer access.** As indicated in Table H, the most often-cited dislike from teachers was the lack of time to use RLS. It is relevant to notice that of the nine negative comments reported by teachers, only three directly involved RLS. Teachers would possibly have commented on the lack of computers and time when asked about any new computer-based program.

**Table H. Teacher Likes and Dislikes, as Reported by Site Managers**

Frequency Of Mention n=28	Theme	Illustrative Examples
<b>Reported Likes</b>		
6	Projects and research	“Project maker ability” and “They like the fact that students can research and make a project independently or in a group.”
4	Variety	“. . . the variety of activities that are available for them and their students.” and “It provided a wealth of resources.”
3	Student interests	“Gives them an idea of what student interests are” and “They like getting more information about their students which is helpful when planning projects.”
3	Other	“The profiler”; “Differentiation”; and “Having a safe site.”
<b>Reported Dislikes</b>		
6	Lack of Time	“They just haven’t had time to really dig in and use it.” and “They are overwhelmed with too many programs, not enough time for it.”
3	Lack of computer access	“Having to schedule computer time” and “Having limited student computer stations.”
3	Negative	“Both teachers and students seem to be overwhelmed and sometimes get lost among all the web sites” and “Seems imposing and more complicated than it actually is.”

\*The total number of responses exceeds 17, the number of site managers responding to the question, because responses were coded once for each category for which they were appropriate.

Teachers who had used RLS reported an increase in student engagement, as well as other positive effects. Data from three sources indicate RLS had increased student engagement. First, the shaded portions of Table I indicate that 61.9 % of the teachers surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that “RLS has increased student engagement”, with 23.9% indicating they had been unable to use RLS enough to make a determination.

**Table I. Perceived Increase in Student Engagement, as Reported by Teachers**

19. RLS has increased student engagement. (n=92)	A Strongly Agree		B Agree		C Disagree		D Strongly Disagree		E Not Enough Use Yet to Determine		Missing / No Response	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
	21	22.8	36	39.1	7	7.6	3	3.3	22	23.9	3	3.3

Second, when asked how they thought RLS had affected students, all the responses from teachers whose students had used RLS were positive and reflected different aspects of student engagement (see Table J). For example, one teacher reported that students had found information to share with classmates and teachers. Finally, when requested to provide feedback information for the Duke Gifted Letter at Duke University, the magnet office RLS administrator emailed teachers and inquired about their experience with RLS. Teachers reported that “The students want to use it every time they are on the computers” and “Many students don’t wait for me to assign something or lay out exactly what I want them to do. They are more inclined to take the initiative.” (See Appendix D for verbatim teacher responses for the Duke Gifted Letter.)

**Table J. Perceived Effect of RLS on Students, as Reported by Teachers to Site Managers**

Frequency Of Mention (n=15)	Theme	Illustrative Examples
7	Positive effects	“Students are motivated and excited to work on the program. . . ” and “It helps them become better at independent research. . . ”
4	Not enough use yet	“Not enough are using it . . . ”
2	Research and independent learning	“It helps them become better at independent research. They also learn more about themselves as learners.”
2	Interest	“Helps figure out interests.” and “. . . allows students to select areas of interest to explore.”

Most teachers reported more use of differentiated instruction, to at least a limited extent. Because increasing the use of differentiated instruction is one of the key aims of RLS, the issue was the subject of two questions on the survey. Responses to both questions were within 6.5 percentage points across all categories of response. The finding that the initial year of using RLS had increased teacher reported use of differentiated instruction to at least to a limited extent for 71.7% of the 142 teachers surveyed is encouraging.

**Table K. Effect on Use of Differentiated Instruction, as Reported by Teachers**

	A Great Extent		B Some Extent		C Limited Extent		D Not Yet / Not At All		Missing / No Response	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
8. To what extent has RLS increased your use of differentiated instruction? (n=92)	4	4.3	30	32.6	32	34.8	16	17.4	10	10.9
5. Please rate the extent to which you have used information on student attributes from the RLS profiler to differentiate instruction. (n=92)	5	5.4	36	39.1	33	35.9	16	17.4	2	2.2

**Data regarding parental interest and involvement is preliminary but positive.** Although the program had only been implemented a short while, the limited data available indicate parents had a favorable impression of RLS. For example, one parent reported “My son is excited at the end of the day – more challenged and drawn in. This is a good fit for my child.” One elementary school reported that parents assisted with completing the profiles and it is possible other schools involved parents. These comments are encouraging but as one teacher stated, “It is a new technology to us, and it takes a while for word to spread.” Another teacher stated “Some [parents] seem very aware of what his or her child is working on”.

#### **QUESTION 4: WHAT BARRIERS WERE ENCOUNTERED IN USING THE RLS PROGRAM?**

- The most frequently mentioned barriers were time constraints, limited access to computers, and in some instances, insufficient training, and lack of teacher interest.
- Survey data and other feedback revealed participants preferred hands-on training.
- Most teachers reported being adequately trained but also requested more training.

The most frequently mentioned barriers reported were time constraints, limited access to computers, and insufficient training, as depicted in Table L. The barriers of time and computer access, as reported by teachers, were confirmed in the responses site managers made when asked what was not working so well (see Table M). In their responses, site managers at three schools mentioned limited access to computers, and site managers at two schools commented on the lack of time (“... any spare time in the classroom is spent with reading strategies”).

Interviews confirmed the finding in the site manager emails and in the teacher surveys. Teachers as well as site managers, most often mentioned time and computer access as barriers to implementation. The lack of time for teachers was frequently mentioned during interviews. As one individual explained,

"This is a big district with multiple supervisors in each curriculum area who make requirements on teachers' time."

**Table L. Most Frequently Mentioned Barrier, as Reported by Teachers**

Frequency Of Mention (n=93)	Theme	Illustrative Examples
40	Time	"Time is a barrier"; and "Teachers have so much to do, I don't need anything more."
30	Computers	"Need more computers in the classroom"; "The school has only one computer lab and it is being used for other district-mandated programs."
18	Training	"Not enough training" and "I don't know enough about it"
5	Other	"Profiler too complicated" and "students becoming comfortable with RLS"

**Table M. Most Frequently Mentioned Concerns, as Reported by Site Managers**

Frequency Of Mention (=13)	Theme	Illustrative Examples
5	Interest	"It is a hard sell."; "No buy-in from teachers"; and ". . . Many teachers feel overwhelmed with the amount of technology and resources available to them."
3	Computers	". . . limited student stations in the classroom and only one general computer lab for all the school to use" and "Getting a functional computer lab of 30 computers. . ."
2	Time	"Time. Time. Time." and ". . . trying to cover the curriculum and still give students time to use RLS."
3	Other	". . . search engine sending students to sites to purchase things." and "The ability of this tool to address high school students"

Regarding computer access, in the teacher survey, 66.9% of teachers surveyed reported they had four or fewer working computers in their classroom and that only 35.2% had daily access for all their students at the same time. It was interesting to note that the majority (51.4%) of the teachers surveyed strongly agreed with the statement "I have sufficient skills to use computer-based instructional programs," an additional 33.8% agreed, and only 6.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed (with 2.8% of responses missing). That is an encouraging finding regarding more usage of RLS in the future.

Additional comments from teachers who were surveyed confirmed that lack of time and computer access were obstacles. Twenty-nine of the 142 teachers surveyed responded to the question "Do you have any other comments to add?" As reflected in Table N, the majority of teachers said something positive about RLS, others commented on the need for more time, computers, or training, and four teachers

made negative comments about the program itself. The reported lack of time to utilize RLS is not surprising, if one considers the fact that magnet schools receive additional resources from Title 1 funds and grants. In some cases, school leadership teams face a challenge in managing the programs available to their teachers.

**Table N. Additional Comments from Teachers**

Frequency Of Mention (=29)	Theme	Illustrative Examples
11	Positive about RLS	"It's a great program" and "Kids love it!"
6	Time	"We do not have time" and "It was one more thing I felt like I had to do"
5	Computer access	"We need more computers in each classroom" and "A second computer lab is needed at our site."
4	Negative about RLS	"Students go to 'fun' programs only" and "It is alright but I can find more appropriate sites for my students on my own and not through Renzulli."
3	Training	"I would like to be retrained in RLS. . ." and "I am enthusiastic about its potential with appropriate training."

With respect to teacher interest, the five mentions of lack of teacher interest in RLS as reported by site managers seems to contradict the results of the teacher survey regarding interest levels. However, It is possible that teachers wish to use RLS more but the barriers they mentioned (lack of time and computer access) were part of their daily work environment and thus were very much in their awareness. Additionally, site managers responded in February 2007 and teachers responded to the survey in April 2007. As stated earlier, anecdotal information indicated that teachers had more time to use RLS after state assessments were completed. Additionally, it should be noted that some teachers found the program too complex and "overwhelming." Teachers from high schools also believed the site was too basic for high school students.

**Survey data and other feedback revealed participants preferred hands-on training.** Written and anecdotal feedback from the June 21 and August 21, 2006, trainings revealed participants preferred the training to be more hands-on. Illustrative comments from the August 21 training are presented following.

- ✓ ". . . The training needs to be hands-on from the beginning. Have participants log in and create their accounts and follow along. The 'show and tell' was not engaging. More time needs to be spent on actual application, i.e., how it could be used in the classroom."
- ✓ "If we could have had a hands-on I believe you could have generated much more enthusiasm. Being in the library with all the computers, wouldn't this have been possible? Hands on always results in a better understanding of a resource."

Although all planned large group training had already occurred by the time that feedback was received, the requests for hands-on training were considered in subsequent trainings. The site-based, individual follow-up trainings were hands on, as mentioned earlier. Following the in-service training conducted in May, which employed a hands-on format, verbal feedback from the participants indicated satisfaction and the likelihood of the participants helping to spread the word about RLS. Comments after that training included the statement that the training was slower paced and teachers had time to use the system. Participants also believed that setting aside time for training away from the school sites was good because it provided time for teachers to actually work with the program, which they agreed was difficult to do at their school sites.

To the question “What were your likes and dislikes about your RLS training?” teachers responded as indicated in Table O. Six of the respondent comments that the training was too short included phrases about the need to focus on practical applications and give participants time to explore the program. Nine respondents made positive comments, such as “I got a good overview of it and how to use it.”

**Table O. Likes and Dislikes Regarding Training, as Reported by Teachers**

Frequency Of Mention (n=52)	Theme	Illustrative Examples
25	Too short	“Not enough of it” and “Not in depth enough.”
9	Positive comments	“I got an overview of it and ideas to use it” and “Training was very helpful.”
8	Follow-up	“Just once a year, no follow-up” and “Not enough follow-up support.”
7	Negative comments	“Confusing” and “It was more of an executive overview than training. . . The rest was sales pitch.”
3	Size of group	“Large group” and “A smaller group would work better.”

Most teachers reported being adequately trained but also requested more training. When asked if they had been adequately trained to use RLS, the majority (55.6%) of teachers strongly agreed or agreed while 31.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed (See Table P).

**Table P. Adequacy of Training, as Reported by Teachers**

	A Strongly Agree		B Agree		C Disagree		D Strongly Disagree		E Not Enough Use Yet to Determine		Missing / No Response	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
13. I have been adequately trained to use RLS.(n=142)	23	16.2	56	39.4	32	22.5	14	9.9	14	9.9	3	2.1

It is interesting to note that although the majority of teachers surveyed reported they had been adequately trained, even larger proportions of teachers reported interest in more training in using the various components (enrichment activities, project maker, total talent portfolio and practical applications for the classroom. The shaded portions in Table Q indicate 74%, 72.5%, 71.1%, and 77.4% of teachers strongly agreed or agreed they wanted more training in how to use enrichment activities, the project maker, the total talent portfolio, and practical applications in the classroom respectively.

**Table Q. Levels of Interest in More Training, as Reported by Teachers**

(n=142)	A Strongly Agree		B Agree		C Disagree		D Strongly Disagree		E Not Enough Use Yet to Determine		Missing / No Response	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
14. I would like more training in how to use the enrichment activities (search engine).	43	30.3	62	43.7	20	14.1	4	2.8	10	7.0	3	2.1
15. . . . how to use the project maker.	47	33.1	56	39.4	22	15.5	3	2.1	12	8.5	2	1.4
16. . . . how to use the total talent portfolio.	43	30.3	58	40.8	22	15.5	4	2.8	13	9.2	2	1.4
17. . . . practical applications in the classroom.	55	38.7	55	38.7	18	12.7	2	1.4	10	7.0	2	1.4

**Other obstacles to implementation.** Teacher interviews disclosed that, especially early in the school year, it was difficult to get students registered into the system. Efforts to overcome this obstacle



included asking media specialists to help enroll students when students visited the media center and emphasizing to teachers that initial enrollment was a quick and easy process.

Teachers reported it was even more problematic to find time for students to complete the learning profile, which does take a good amount of time to complete. Younger students especially often required considerable assistance in completing the questions and for the very youngest students, an adult had to read the questions for them. This obstacle was addressed in several ways. In some schools, students were sent to the media center in free time and other times to complete their student profile. In at least one school, parents were asked to help their child complete the profile while at another site a volunteer helped with completing the profiles.

Although teachers did not comment on the lack of success for the train-the-trainer program, it is possible that successful implementation of that model would have resulted in a larger number of registrations and profiles completed earlier in the school year and more usage by teachers throughout the year.

## CONCLUSIONS

**Although usage varied greatly by site and by individual teacher, initial RLS implementation activities were carried out successfully in the district's magnet schools as intended.** RLS was successfully piloted and then introduced to principals. Teachers were trained in the summer of 2006 and more individualized follow-up training was conducted throughout the 2006-2007 school year. Growth in registrations increased at a relatively constant rate so that by year end 13 of 20 magnet elementary and middle schools had more than half their students registered, and 10 schools had between 33% and 92% of student profiles completed. Most teachers surveyed reported using most components, at least to a limited extent, for differentiating instruction and for providing enrichment to the curriculum. Preliminary usage data were encouraging. Most teachers surveyed believed RLS was an effective teaching tool, and they reported an increase in student engagement and other desirable student outcomes, such as students identifying their learning styles and becoming better at independent research. Parental involvement was reported as limited, as would be expected for the initial year of implementation, but comments from parents were reported to be positive.

**A foundation was established for continued use and future expansion, despite obstacles.** In light of the obstacles described below, it was a considerable achievement to have most students enrolled, to have many teachers utilizing the program at least somewhat, and to have some individual teachers with high levels of interest in the program. The supervisor of magnet programs, the magnet office RLS administrator, and site managers are to be commended for their efforts.

**Some teachers had high interest levels, which should facilitate increase in program use.** The majority of teachers surveyed wanted to utilize RLS more in the future. The fact that some teachers reported being excited about utilizing RLS was beneficial to the implementation year and will likely be even more so in future years. That excitement was most likely communicated to other teachers. For example, at one site during the summer break teachers met and enrolled all their students for the coming year to facilitate getting an early start using the system. The teachers had gathered in the classroom of one teacher who had effectively utilized the program during the year. It is believed that teachers such as these who are sold on the program will sell the program to other teachers through sharing information they have

learned and through acting as a resource at their schools. Additionally, continuing to provide training specifically for media specialists and technical specialists at schools should also help provide additional resources at each school.

**The supervisor of magnet programs and the magnet office RLS administrator were proactive in identifying and responding to needs that emerged during the year.** In spite of the press of other duties, the magnet office RLS administrator kept in touch regularly with site managers and teachers and identified emerging needs and potential problems rapidly. The Supervisor of Magnet Programs and the magnet office RLS administrator communicated regularly which resulted in critical modifications being made sooner rather than later. Two such modifications were requesting additional time from the RLS trainer and in making trainings more hands-on. The magnet office RLS administrator was especially adept at accommodating the needs of individual schools and site managers. Her regular contact with the schools and easy accessibility via email and telephone helped increase the number of registered users and the extent of usage. Her can-do attitude was another positive influence on site managers and teachers.

**The most significant obstacles to usage were lack of teacher time, insufficient computer access in some instances, insufficient training, and lack of interest of some teachers.** Teachers consistently reported a lack of time to learn "one more program." Several schools mentioned that they had many new resources and some teachers felt overwhelmed and could not use all the teaching materials made available to them. Additionally, many teachers referenced the pressure to prepare for state assessments and the requirements subject area supervisors at the district level often place on schools and teachers.

Computer access is likely to remain problematic at some schools although that obstacle, too, could be diminished as teachers gain more familiarity with the system and as they communicate with each other about their successes in dealing with obstacles. Teachers at some sites had adequate computer access. Some teachers were described as seeing little value in using RLS if they could not use it as a whole class activity. Hopefully, that attitude will change as more teachers gain familiarity with the program and as word of mouth spreads.

In hind sight, the fact that the first two large-group trainings were not hands-on possibly affected teacher attitude and usage, early in the school year especially. Teachers consistently reported they had little to no time to learn another program, and teacher interviews revealed teachers liked being able to use their in-service time to actually use the program because once they return to their school site, it was difficult to make time to do so. The lack of teacher interest reported by site managers is likely a secondary, rather than primary, effect. It is logical that teachers would not be interested in learning and/or utilizing a program if they lacked time and the equipment to learn and to utilize the program with their students. Additionally, data from the teacher survey, administered in May 2007, indicated a high level of teacher interest in more usage. The site manager data were gathered in February 2007, a time when teachers are focused on upcoming state assessments. Teachers would have had more time to work with the program after March, when state assessments were completed.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONTINUING GROWTH

### **Work to alleviate the obstacles of time and computer access.**

- ✓ Continue to emphasize in large group and individual trainings how RLS can increase student engagement and save time for teachers (through using the lesson planner, the pre-selected websites, reviewing portfolios at the start of the year, etc.).
- ✓ Share success stories and adaptive strategies at district level meetings.
- ✓ Consider establishing an RLS conference area on the district intranet to facilitate teachers sharing success stories and adaptive strategies within and across schools.
- ✓ Continue efforts to train and motivate media specialists and other school-level resource personnel to assist with student registration, profile completion, and to facilitate student as well as teacher usage.

### **Proceed with training and enhanced follow-up, as planned by the magnet office RLS administrator.**

- ✓ Continue individualized site visits and trainings as well as email and telephone support.
- ✓ Continue tailoring the agenda for individual trainings at each site by finding material related to that schools' magnet theme.
- ✓ Identify an individual at each site to assist with implementation and to act as an official resource person for RLS.
- ✓ Consider scheduling another training specifically for school resource personnel.
- ✓ Follow up and see how teachers are utilizing the system and check to see if they are mentoring other teachers.
- ✓ Conduct an orientation and help with completing portfolios.
- ✓ Emphasize Type III enrichment and links with the Sunshine State Standards, the identified goal for implementation year two.

### **Work to increase teacher interest and skill level.**

- ✓ Emphasize in training how RLS can be used on an individual basis so that teachers for whom computer access is an issue will see the value of RLS.
- ✓ Stress to teachers the value of reviewing student portfolios to acquaint them with student interests, learning styles, etc.
- ✓ As the magnet officer RLS administrator manager suggested, "Find the people who really love RLS and who will help others."
- ✓ Consider training at team meetings, rather than faculty meetings, as suggested by some teachers.

### **Continue seeking support from principals.**

- ✓ Plans are in place already to address this need, via featuring RLS at quarterly principal meetings.
- ✓ Collect success stories and adaptive strategies that will directly appeal to principals and use them at quarterly principal meetings as part of the RLS feature on the agenda.
- ✓ Consider suggesting principals use closed circuit television to show teachers how to use RLS.
- ✓ Make principals aware that the RLS student portfolio provides information about an easy way to improve communication with individual students by talking in terms of the students' interests.

**Consider other options for enhancing usage in magnet schools and in other district schools.**

- ✓ Concentrate efforts at the start of the year to maximize the time for word of mouth to spread.
- ✓ Emphasize to guidance counselors and other school staff the value of reviewing student portfolios.
- ✓ To enhance usage at high schools, emphasize that identifying interest levels will help middle and high schools prepare for specialization in high school.
- ✓ To enhance parent involvement, consider school-based events in which parents can visit the school and work on RLS with their child and participate in related activities.
- ✓ Share lessons learned with the Title I schools that will use RLS for the first time in 2007-2008, as well as the 11 schools that will utilize RLS with Project M<sup>3</sup> as part of their gifted program.
- ✓ Continue to monitor success and usage and evaluate RLS.

**Consider how RLS might be used in other district schools and programs.**

- ✓ Monitor how effective RLS is perceived to be in implementing the SEM-R and the Project M<sup>3</sup> programs during the 2007-2008 school year.
- ✓ Investigate the potential for using RLS to assist high school students in designating their area of specialization.
- ✓ It is premature to consider the effect on achievement in the district magnet schools. However, one study has indicated usage of RLS resulted in a significant increase in reading fluency and comprehension and in social studies. (See Appendix E.) Investigating the effect on achievement is a topic for future consideration.
- ✓ The potential that RLS seems to have for use with other programs in the district should be considered.

## **REFERENCES**

Renzulli, Joseph.S., & Reis, Sally.M. 1997. *The Schoolwide Enrichment Model: A How-to Guide for Educational Excellence*. Creative Learning Press, Inc., Connecticut OH.



**Currently Available Salary Differential Data**

This data brief presents findings relating to one of the six goals of the Salary Differential (SD) program--to recruit and retain professional staff (Evaluation of Salary Differential Program, March 2009). The usual cautions regarding retrospective self report data apply. NOTE: Only teachers who had left or entered a Renaissance school between April and September of the survey year were surveyed.

**Recruitment**

For the 2009-10 and the 2011-12 survey years, approximately three quarters of teachers who left Renaissance schools indicated that the bonus pay was not much of a factor in their choice of school (76% and 78% respectively). As displayed in Table 1, roughly similar percentages (68% and 77% respectively) were reported by teachers recently entering Renaissance schools (new teachers and those transferring into or between Renaissance schools.)

Table 1: Survey Question: Would you have chosen to teach at this school if the SD pay was not offered?

Options	Teachers Who Left		Teachers Who Recently Entered	
	2009-10 (n=217)	2011-12( n=372 )	2009-2010 (n=141)	2011-12(n=238)
Yes	76%	78%	68%	77%
No	24%	22%	32%	23%

Responses to another question, however, are instructive, as presented in Figures 1 and 2. The bonus pay seems to exert a stronger influence for recently entering teachers than for those who transferred out.

**Survey Question: How much of a factor would you say the Salary Differential was in your decision to teach at a high poverty school?**

Figure 1: Teachers Who Left Renaissance Schools

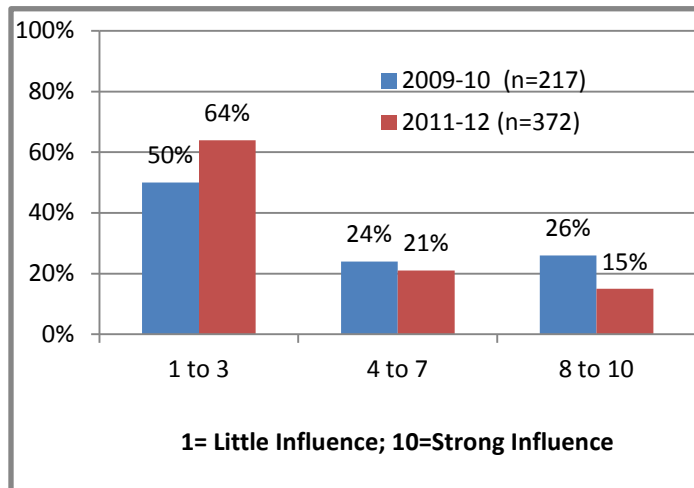
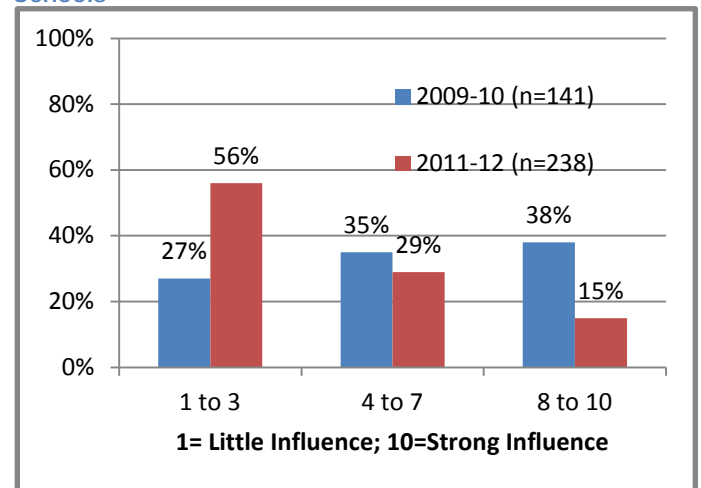


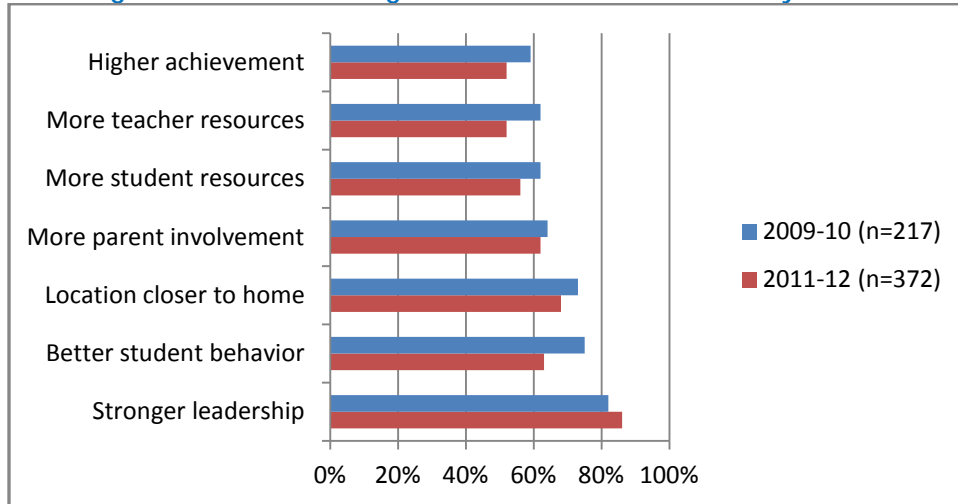
Figure 2: Teachers Who Recently Entered Renaissance Schools



### Retention

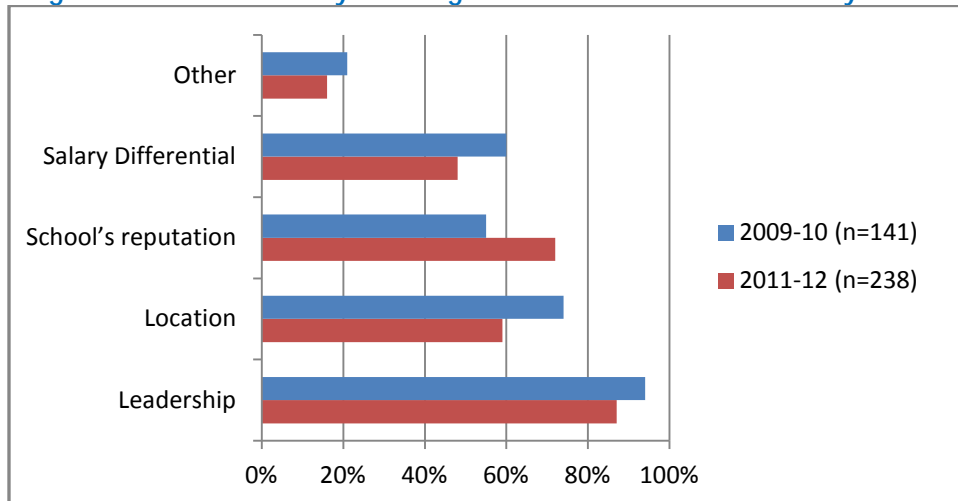
When asked what would have kept them at their Renaissance school, for both survey years teachers who left Renaissance schools rated leadership the most influential factor, as displayed in Figure 3. Other factors, such as student behavior and location of school were also rated as important.

Figure 3: Percentage of Teachers Leaving Who Indicated Factor was Very or Somewhat Important



As displayed in Figure 4, for both survey years teachers who had recently entered a Renaissance school also ranked leadership as the most influential factor. In 2009-10, 94% of the 141 teachers indicated leadership was Very or Somewhat Important in their decision to enter or transfer into the school; that figure was 87% in 2011-12. For the same teachers in 2009-10, 60% indicated the salary differential bonus pay was Very or Somewhat Important; for 2011-12, the percentage was 50%.

Figure 4: Percentage of Teachers Recently Entering Who Indicated Factor was Very or Somewhat Important



### Future Plans

Data addressing the remaining five goals will be available at the end of the 2011-12 school year for inclusion in a full evaluation report.

**Initiatives Flowchart - A Work in Progress – May 2011**



- FDOE Differentiated Accountability Plan**  
[7 documentation areas]
- [1] School Improvement Planning
  - [2] Leadership
  - [3] Educator quality
  - [4] Professional Development
  - [5] Aligned & paced curriculum
  - [6] Florida's Continuous Improvement Model (F-CIM)
  - [7] Monitoring processes and plans

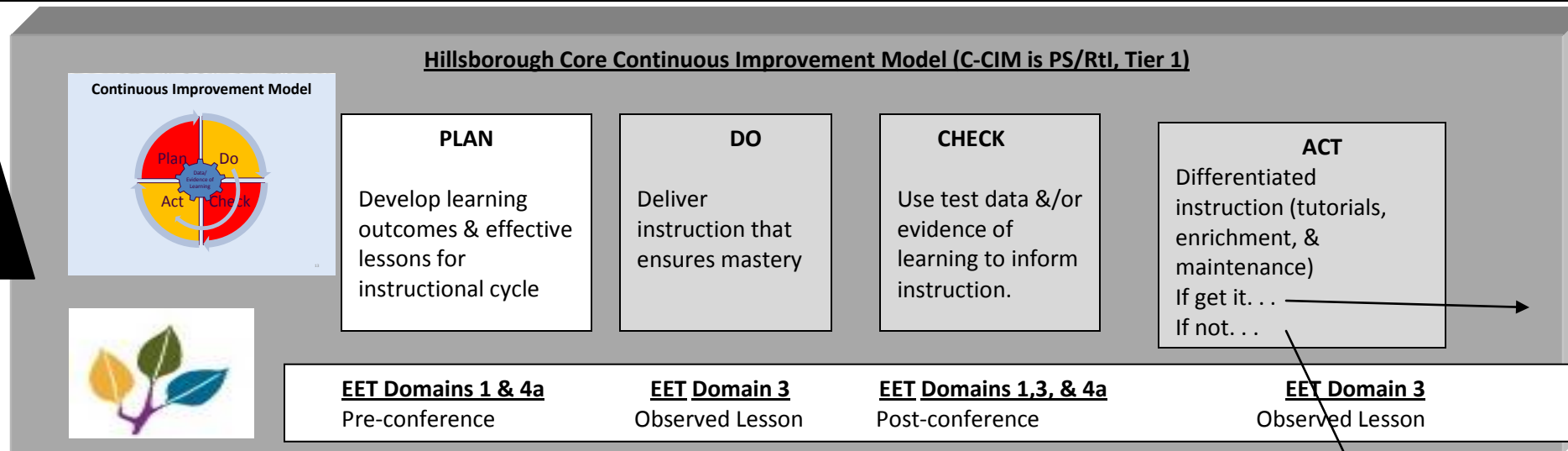
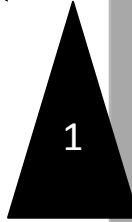
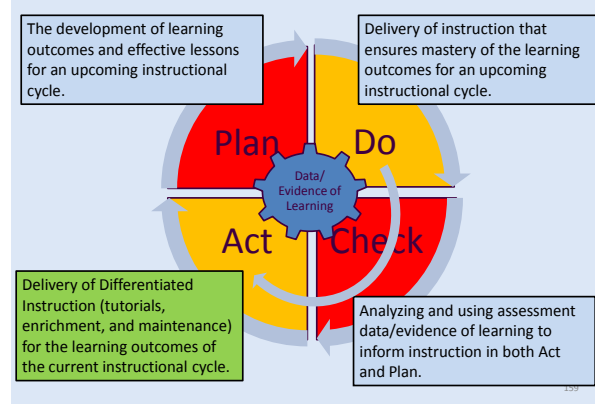
**SCHOOL YEAR**

**DISTRICT CALENDAR - All students, all classes – daily lessons - aligned with NG-SSS & grade level benchmarks. Curriculum guide for math; pacing guide for science.**  
 DISTRICT CALENDAR TESTS: Common assessments– identified by grade level or dept. team, given by all teachers periodically [FCAT practice & released tests, unit, chapter, strand, topic, 9-wk, semester, mid-year, etc.]

**C-CIM- Hillsborough Core Continuous Improvement Model = main/initial teaching of the instructional cycle; NOTHING NEW ; C-CIM is PS/Rtl Tier 1; a framework for effective teaching – teachers use resources & materials available for grade level & subject being taught.**  
 FCIM (Florida CIM)CALENDAR–Benchmark skills needing reinforcement or maintenance. Mini-lessons (10-15 min.) occur inside or outside of daily lessons . Flexed, based on grade or content data; does not replace daily lessons. FCIM TESTS: Mini-assessments (4-5 FCAT-like questions) on specific skills and concepts .

**SIP** guides PLCs, CIM, and PS/Rtl goals. Used to record data from PLCs and PSLT to document progress on SIP goals each 9 weeks. Ongoing strategy fidelity & data checks.

**Hillsborough Core-Continuous Improvement Model**



- LEGEND**
- CIM:** Continuous Improvement Model
  - C-CIM:** Core CIM
  - EET:** Empowering Effective Teachers
  - F-CIM:** Florida CIM
  - PLC:** Professional Learning Community
  - PS/Rtl:** Problem Solving Response to Intervention
  - PSLT:** Problem Solving Learning Team
  - SIP:** School Improvement Plan

Student data is discussed in team meetings of the Collaborative Culture

**Collaborative Culture Process**  
Provides a process to increase teacher effectiveness. Provides a process to increase student achievement. Process recorded on the School Improvement Plan. **Handout 20**

Where does the Collaborative Culture Process occur?  
Professional Learning Communities and Problem Solving Leadership Teams

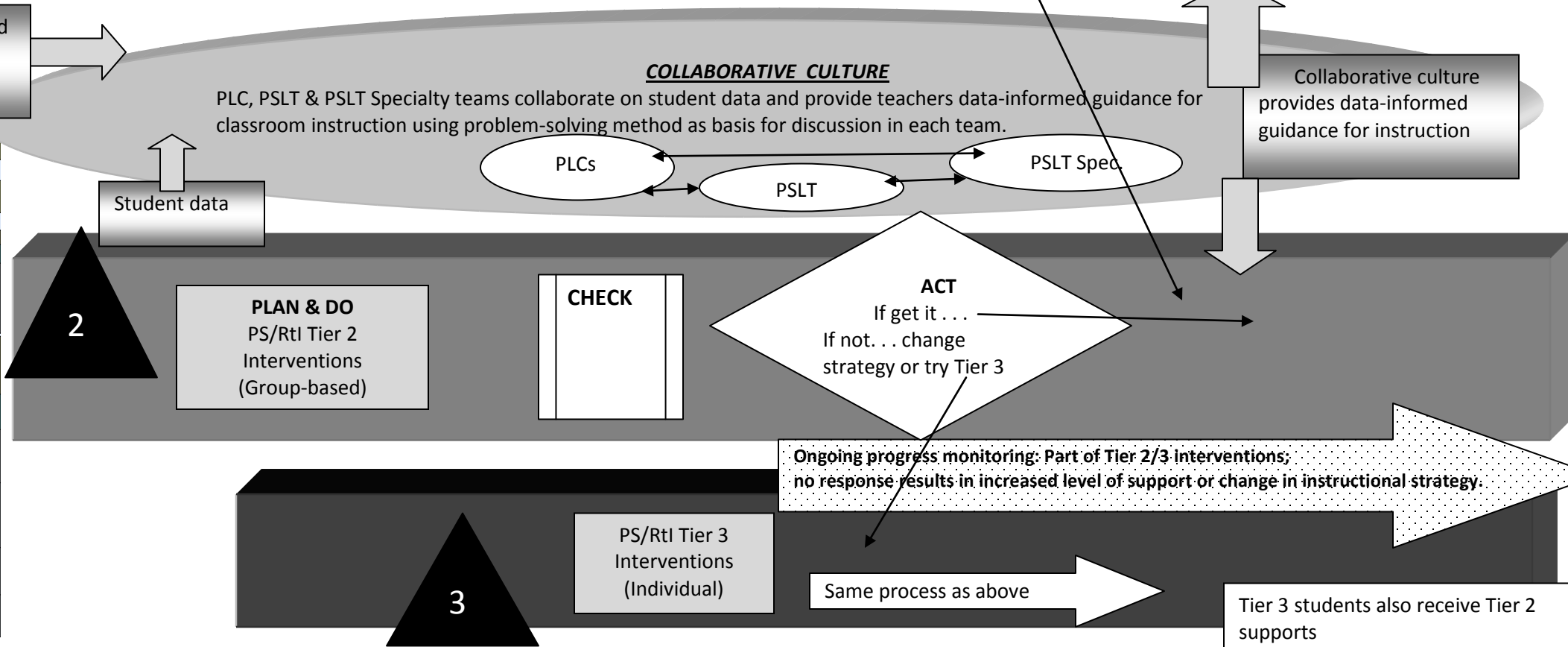
Where does Collaborative Culture exist?

Elementary	Middle	High	K-12 (Other Teams)
Grade Level Teams Vertical Teams Content Focus Teams	Grade Level Teams Subject Area Teams (Specific Course Teams – 7 <sup>th</sup> grade Language Arts 8 <sup>th</sup> Advanced Math, etc.)	Department Teams (Specific Course Teams – English I, Algebra I, All AP courses, Biology, etc.)	Problem Solving Leadership Team (PSLT) Literacy Leadership Team, SAC Specific Topic Groups, Faculty Groups

What happens in these Collaborative Cultures?  
Engage in continuous improvement through 1) implementing a problem-solving process to improve teacher effectiveness, 2) implementing a problem-solving process to strengthen the core instruction/curriculum, and 3) providing differentiated instruction and/or more intense intervention/enrichment to targeted students.

**Problem Solving Process to Increase Student Achievement: Alignment of Language**

Professional Learning Community (PLC) Questions	PLAN	DO	CHECK	ACT
What do our students need to know and be able to do?	Teach Core Curriculum	Teach Intervention	How will we know when they have learned it?	What will we do when students do or do not learn it?
Core Continuous Improvement Model (C-CIM)	PLAN Core Curriculum NG Sunshine State Standards	DO Teach Core Curriculum Using best practices	CHECK Assess Core Curriculum with common assessment	ACT Intervention/Enrichment of Core Curriculum Repeat the 'process' when necessary
Florida Continuous Improvement Model (F-CIM)	PLAN Tested Benchmarks Timelines	DO Teach Tested Benchmarks Mini-Lessons	CHECK Tested Benchmarks Mini-Assessments	ACT Intervention/Enrichment of Tested Benchmarks
Problem-Solving/Response to Intervention	Problem Identification & Problem Analysis	Instruction/Intervention	Evaluation of Response to Intervention Monitoring and Fidelity Check data	Repeat the 'process' when necessary <sup>7,4</sup>



**K-12 Reading Plan & similar initiatives** provide instructional & assessment plans that result in data for PLCs and PSLT. Behavior & attendance initiatives provide framework for data for PLCs & Rtl