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Strategic School Funding for Results (SSFR)

Perspectives of Central Office Staff, Principals,
Teachers, and School Site Councils on Resource
Allocation and SSFR Implementation in 2010–11

A report prepared for the Twin Rivers Unified
School District

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About Strategic School Funding for Results (SSFR)

Purpose

During the 2009–10 school year, the American Institutes for Research (AIR) and Pivot Learning Partners (PLP) formed a partnership with two large California school districts—Los Angeles Unified School District and Twin Rivers Unified School District—to implement and evaluate the impact of a comprehensive approach to local school finance and governance reform that creates the conditions for improved human resource management and a more equitable distribution of both resources and student learning opportunities. The *Strategic School Funding for Results* project (SSFR) was designed to (1) develop and implement more equitable strategies for allocating resources within each district; (2) make budget and resource allocation decisions more transparent; (3) link those strategies to policies and processes designed to encourage autonomy, innovation, and efficiency; and (4) strengthen accountability for improving student outcomes.

What policies underlie SSFR?

The core reform strategy offered by SSFR includes four basic elements: equity, autonomy linked to accountability, transparency, and a culture of innovation and efficiency.

- 1. SSFR achieves equity by implementing a student need-based funding model**, developing and implementing policies, processes, and tools (the Targeted Revenue Model or TRM) that support allocating dollars, rather than staff, to schools based on the needs of the students being served.
- 2. SSFR links school autonomy to accountability** by offering schools discretion over how the dollars they receive are used and then holding schools accountable for the results (student outcomes). SSFR includes a site budgeting tool (the Planning, Budgeting and Allocation of Resources tool, or PBAR). The PBAR engages school decision makers in a series of activities, including a needs assessment, goal setting, and the specification of instructional strategies and resource allocation necessary to achieve the goals within available revenues.
- 3. SSFR promotes increased transparency** by simplifying and clarifying the processes by which resources are allocated to schools, increasing the participation of a wide range of stakeholders in the design of these processes, improving access by stakeholders to information about the patterns of resource allocation and student outcomes within the revenue allocation and site budgeting tools, and simplifying the structures that support resource allocation decisions.
- 4. SSFR promotes a culture of innovation and efficiency**. As these strategies are successfully implemented, SSFR encourages a culture of school innovation to improve performance and attract students and families; provides a structured, site-based budgeting tool in the context of a fixed revenue constraint; and encourages school leaders to operate efficiently to produce the best possible results.

What are the benefits of participation in the SSFR project?

Within the framework of the SSFR project, the AIR/PLP team provides the districts with data tools and analysis, technical assistance, coaching, and training to implement the funding strategies and evaluate their success. While there are common themes being promoted across the two participating districts, each has adopted its own focus and is adapting the SSFR components to fit its unique culture and context. Each of the participating districts has committed time on the part of its leadership and staff to participate effectively in this project and has acknowledged that the project represents a collaborative effort between the AIR/PLP and district leadership teams. The formative nature of the project allows for a mutual learning experience among the participating districts and the AIR/PLP team, and the creation of a strong partnership in successfully implementing SSFR. The result of this work will provide a guide to other districts interested in implementing their own version of the SSFR model, and a series of reports describing the implementation of SSFR and the changes in patterns of resource allocation and student outcomes that coincided with the implementation of SSFR in the two districts.

How is SSFR being funded?

During the 2009–10 school year, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and Ford Foundation provided grants to the AIR/PLP team to support the first phase of the SSFR work. August 1, 2010, marked the beginning of Phase II of the project, when the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) in the U.S. Department of Education awarded a grant of \$1.67 million to the AIR/PLP team to support the development of the SSFR model for three more years. The Hewlett Foundation awarded an additional three-year grant of \$1.5 million to the AIR/PLP team to extend its support of the project over the same three-year period. The Ford Foundation also contributed \$200,000 to support the SSFR work during 2010–11.

Report Highlights

As part of the evaluation of the Strategic School Funding for Results (SSFR) project, American Institutes for Research (AIR) conducted surveys of principals, teachers, and members of School Site Councils (SSCs) to gather information on the attitudes and perspectives regarding the implementation of key components of the SSFR model in Twin Rivers Unified School District (TRUSD). AIR also conducted interviews with TRUSD central office staff and the staff of Pivot Learning Partners (PLP), the organization responsible for supporting the implementation of SSFR, to gain insights into implementation successes and challenges in 2010–11.

Based on our TRUSD surveys, we found the following:

- Fewer than half of principals and teachers felt that funds are allocated equitably to schools, but a higher proportion of principals in pilot schools felt this way.
- Members of the school site councils (SSCs) expressed strong agreement that they understood budget documents and resource allocation.
- All pilot principal respondents reported having discretion over their school budget, compared with 81 percent of non-pilot principals.
- Fewer than half of principals (about 40%) and even fewer teacher respondents (33%) reported having autonomy over their instructional program.
- SSC members expressed high levels of agreement that principals support and value their contributions.
- Approximately one third (35%) of teachers agreed that they have the opportunity to provide input into developing the budget at their school.
- Principals generally agreed that teachers are accountable to them (the principal) for student success, while almost all (96%) teachers reported feeling at least somewhat accountable to the principal for student success.

Based on our interviews with central office and PLP staff, we found several successes in SSFR implementation in TRUSD in 2010–11. These successes included the following:

- expanding the number of pilot schools in 2010–11;
- gaining buy-in and engagement from pilot principals and district staff;
- gathering the necessary data and using the Targeted Revenue Model (TRM) tool to determine allocations for pilot schools;
- increasing flexibility over existing categorical resources; and
- making strides towards changing the site planning process, increasing budget transparency, and creating a customer service culture.

There were several implementation challenges and lessons learned in 2010–11:

- There needs to be executive-level definition of roles and responsibilities for SSFR implementation to facilitate staff buy-in, and accountability measures put into place for implementation;
- Communication across a wide range of stakeholders is critical; and
- Increasing budget flexibility and autonomy must be paired with information and support.

The 19 TRUSD pilot schools in 2010–11 demonstrated that SSFR could be successfully implemented, establishing the foundation for district-wide implementation of SSFR in 2011–12. By the end of 2010–11, pilot principals and key district staff were engaged in SSFR implementation, the TRM had been used to determine district allocations for 2011–12, the district had increased the flexibility of selected categorical resources, and principals had responded creatively to their increased budget autonomy.

However, as TRUSD scales up to implement SSFR district-wide in 2011–12, moving from 19 pilot schools to all 52 schools, several major challenges remain. The tools must be fully functional as SSFR moves from a pilot to full implementation, and it will be critical for the district to provide information, training, supports, and systems to build principal knowledge and capacity for dealing with increased flexibility and autonomy over their school's budget.

Table of Contents

About Strategic School Funding for Results (SSFR).....	ii
Report Highlights	iv
I. Introduction	1
II. Methods and Data	2
A. Surveys.....	2
B. Interviews.....	3
III. Findings	3
A. Surveys: Perceptions of Key SSFR Components.....	3
B. Interviews: An Interim Self-Assessment of SSFR Implementation	6
IV. Summary.....	14
Appendix A. SSFR Principal Survey.....	16
Appendix B. SSFR Teacher Survey.....	24
Appendix C. Twin Rivers Unified School District School Site Council Survey	32
Appendix D. SSFR Interview Protocol for Central Office and PLP Staff	36
Appendix E. Graphics of Survey Findings.....	41

I. Introduction

This report summarizes the findings of surveys and interviews conducted in connection with the Strategic School Funding for Results project (SSFR) in the Twin Rivers Unified School District (TRUSD) in 2010–11.

Twin Rivers Unified School District is a mid-size suburban school district in northern California, located outside of Sacramento. TRUSD enrolls approximately 27,000 students in 52 schools. Its racial/ethnic composition is 35 percent Latino/Hispanic, 32 percent White, 15 percent Black, and 10 percent Asian. It is a high-poverty district, with a district-wide poverty rate of 79 percent. In the fall of 2009, TRUSD Superintendent Frank Porter prioritized the development of a pupil-based funding system as one of the district’s core reform strategies. Simply put, pupil-based funding is intended to allocate dollars equitably to schools, and provides school leaders with increased autonomy while holding them accountable for results.¹ TRUSD joined two other California districts (Los Angeles Unified School District and Pasadena Unified School District²) that were similarly interested in implementing a pupil-based funding system, and partnered with the American Institutes for Research (AIR) and Pivot Learning Partners (PLP) to create the SSFR project.

The 2010–11 school year was the second year of the SSFR project, during which time TRUSD was piloting SSFR in 19 schools (8 in cohort one and 11 in cohort two). Pilot schools were selected based on a combination of principal interest and district recruitment of principals who demonstrated characteristics of successful leadership, as measured by the district.

To understand perceptions of the key SSFR components of resource equity, transparency, autonomy, innovation, and accountability in TRUSD, the AIR team developed surveys for key stakeholders—principals, teachers, and School Site Councils (SSCs).³ Additionally, the AIR team conducted interviews with key central office and PLP staff to understand the major successes, challenges, and lessons learned from the 2010–11 implementation of SSFR, and to outline the next steps in 2011–12 as TRUSD moves to implement SSFR district-wide (in 2012–13). Since PLP is charged with supporting district staff with SSFR implementation and is “on the ground” in the partner districts, AIR included key PLP staff in our formal interviews. This report describes the sample selection criteria, outlines the survey and interview methods used, and summarizes key findings in TRUSD for the 2010–11 school year.

¹ See “About Strategic School Funding for Results (SSFR)” presented at the front of this report for more information about the project.

² Upon the 2011 retirement of Edwin Diaz, the Pasadena Unified School District superintendent, SSFR was put on hold in the district.

³ The School Site Council (SSC) is a body of school staff and parents required by the California Department of Education to create the school improvement plan. It is also charged with approving the categorical budget. More information is available at: <http://pubs.cde.ca.gov/tcsii/ch9/sscldrshp.aspx>

II. Methods and Data

A. Surveys

Principals, teachers, and SSC members were surveyed because they are the key stakeholder groups that SSFR is targeted towards. Principals have school-level responsibility for planning, budgeting, resource allocation, and accountability. Although teachers do not have direct responsibility for their school budgeting processes, the associated site-level planning, budgeting, and resource allocation decisions have direct implications for their work. Thus, it is critical to capture their understanding of and perspectives on these issues. Finally, SSCs have a state and federally mandated responsibility for approving the principal's proposed budget for categorical funding. They include school staff, parents, students (in high school only), and community members, so they allow us to get a sense of the perspectives of a wide array of stakeholders. However, since SSC members are elected, they do not represent a random sample of school staff, parents, students, or community members.

Principal survey

The district did not have an existing principal survey, so AIR designed a principal survey for SSFR.⁴ The survey was administered at a district-wide principal meeting in spring 2011. The response rate was 73 percent; all 52 TRUSD principals received the survey, and 38 responded. The district expressed confidentiality concerns about including a school identifier on the survey, so we did not include one. However, one item asked whether the school was an SSFR pilot school so we could distinguish responses across pilot/non-pilot schools. Principal respondents included 8 pilot and 30 non-pilot schools.

Teacher survey

In TRUSD, we capitalized on the district's existing, annual Employee Satisfaction Survey of teachers. We added items to the teacher survey to measure teacher perspectives on key SSFR components.⁵ This approach minimized respondent burden and increased our potential sample size to the entire district.

The TRUSD survey had 689 total respondents, but we separated full-time teachers from others (classified staff, paraprofessionals, part-time employees, student teachers, etc.) in our analysis. The number of respondents varies by item, ranging from about 200 to 400 teacher respondents and 100 to 200 other respondents. Unfortunately, the district did not include a school identifier on the survey, so we cannot distinguish between teacher responses in pilot and non-pilot schools.

School Site Council survey

AIR designed the School Site Council (SSC) survey⁶ and administered it to all 52 TRUSD schools. We worked in partnership with the SSFR Project Manager in the district, who sent hard copies

⁴ See Appendix A for the principal survey instrument.

⁵ See Appendix B for the survey items.

⁶ See Appendix C for the SSC survey instrument.

of the survey to all SSCs in the sample, along with instructions to administer the survey at a spring SSC meeting and an envelope to return the surveys to AIR.

We had 28 of the 52 (54%) schools participate in the SSC survey, which includes a total of 198 individual SSC members. Since the survey was self-administered at SSC meetings, the number of respondents varied across SSCs. Overall, the sample includes 32 respondents at 4 pilot schools and 166 respondents at 24 non-pilot schools. As with the principal survey, the district expressed confidentiality concerns about including a school identifier on the survey, so we did not include one. However, one item asked whether the school was an SSFR pilot school, enabling us to distinguish responses across pilot/non-pilot schools.

B. Interviews

The SSFR project team conducted interviews in the summer of 2011 with key central office staff and with PLP staff who were highly involved in SSFR implementation. Five individual interviews were conducted in TRUSD. Interviews were approximately 60 minutes in length and followed a semi-structured interview protocol that asked participants to discuss the major successes, challenges, and lessons learned from SSFR implementation in 2010–11, as well as to identify the critical next steps in 2011–12 for moving towards district-wide scale-up of SSFR in 2012–13.⁷ It is important to note that the 2010–11 interviews did not include principals. Thus, reports of school-level successes and challenges are from the district perspective.

III. Findings

A. Surveys: Perceptions of Key SSFR Components

When compared with non-pilot principals, pilot principals expressed greater agreement that schools with disadvantaged students receive more resources. Also, over 80 percent of all principal respondents reported understanding how resources are allocated to schools, but fewer than half of teachers reported similar understanding. These findings perhaps illustrate pilot principals' engagement with SSFR; as they participate in trainings and discussions about resource allocation and budget transparency, they may have an increased awareness about how resources are distributed to schools.

Further, pilot principals reported greater agreement than their non-pilot peers that they have autonomy over dollars in their school budget. Specifically, pilot principals reported having autonomy over determining the content of professional development. These findings provide promising, interim evidence that SSFR is “working” in the pilot schools. However, fewer than half of principals reported that they have the autonomy to implement an instructional program that meets the needs of their students. This suggests that there is further to go in increasing school-level autonomy.

In contrast with principals, pilot teachers' reported lower levels of understanding resource allocation and lower perceptions of opportunities to provide input into the school budget—

⁷ See Appendix D for the central office/PLP interview protocol.

taken together, these suggest a need to communicate more effectively about SSFR to teachers and to involve them in the SSFR reform.

On the SSC survey, respondents were generally satisfied with their understanding of resource allocation and budget documents, but SSC members in pilot schools reported greater understanding. Notably, fewer than half of SSC respondents reported receiving any training on budgeting/resource allocation.

Details of the survey findings are presented below, and supporting graphics are available in Appendix E.

Equity

One challenge in asking about resource “equity” is that the term is not the same as “equality,” and we cannot determine respondents’ interpretation of this term. For example, schools that receive School Improvement Grant (SIG) funds have more money, and Title I schools are supposed to receive funds on top of a comparable base of state and local resources.⁸ Despite this challenge, it is important to examine the respondents’ perceptions.

Fewer than half of all principals and teachers agreed, “Funds are allocated equitably to schools in TRUSD,” but a higher proportion of pilot principals than non-pilot principals reported agreeing with the statement (43% pilot principals, 37% non-pilot principals; 32% teachers). About 60 percent of all SSC respondents agreed that resources are allocated equitably across schools (65% pilot, 58% non-pilot).

Transparency

Principal respondents generally agreed that they understood how resources were allocated to their schools (87% pilot, 81% non-pilot). However, fewer than half of teachers (45%) reported understanding how resources are allocated to their school, indicating a need for better communication with teachers about SSFR.

On the SSC survey, respondents largely agreed that they understood budget documents and resource allocation. Among SSC respondents, 91 percent of SSC members in pilot schools and 84 percent of SSC members in non-pilot schools reported that “I understand how resources are allocated to my school.” Also, 97 percent of pilot respondents and 85 percent of non-pilot respondents reported, “The budget documents I am provided for SSC review are easy to understand and interpret.”

Autonomy

All pilot principal respondents (100%) reported having discretion over the dollars in their school budget, compared with 81 percent of non-pilot principals. Principal and teacher respondents ranked nine entities, ranging from curriculum specialists to the state’s department of education, on the amount of influence each had over how the school budget is spent. The principals and teachers both ranked the district and principal as the most influential. However,

⁸ For a more complete discussion of the comparability provisions of the Title I law, refer to our separate report, *A Case Study of Title I Comparability in Three California Districts*, which examines this issue in detail. The report is available from: www.schoolfundingforresults.org

principals rated teachers as the third most influential group, whereas teachers rated the school board as the third most influential. Teachers did not perceive themselves to be influential in school budget decisions. They ranked their influence as sixth, behind the district, principal, school board, state, and SSC.

A specific area in which pilot principals reported autonomy was over professional development (PD). Pilot principals rated themselves as the most influential in “determining the content of in-service professional development for the teachers of this school;” non-pilot principals ranked the district as the most influential. Also, 88 percent of pilot principals reported that they “tried something new in professional development” in 2010–11, compared with 50 percent of non-pilot principals.

Fewer than half of principal and teacher respondents reported having autonomy over their instructional program. Approximately 40 percent of principals (43% pilot, 42% non-pilot) agreed that they have “sufficient autonomy to implement an instructional program that meets the needs of my students.” Approximately one third of teachers (33%) reported agreeing with this statement.

Support

The 2010–11 survey did not include specific items about district supports for principals in the budget and site planning processes, but principal respondents did generally agree they receive support from the district to try new things in their school (88% pilot, 78% non-pilot).

However, SSCs have formal responsibility for approving the school’s categorical programs budget, and the amount of training they reported receiving on budgeting and resource allocation was low for both pilot and non-pilot schools. Fewer than half of SSC respondents reported receiving any training about budgeting/resource allocation (47% pilot, 36% non-pilot). Despite a lack of training, SSC respondents seemed to receive support from the principal in making budget decisions. Across pilot and non-pilot schools, SSC respondents agreed that “the principal provides adequate support and information for the SSC to make budget recommendations” (94% pilot, 89% non-pilot). Respondents were also in near-unanimous agreement that “the principal values the SSC’s recommendations” (97% pilot, 94% non-pilot).

Opportunities to provide input

Although teachers do not have formal budget responsibilities, the survey asked about their opportunities to provide input in the budgeting process, and found that their perceived involvement is low. Approximately one third (35%) of teachers agreed that they have the opportunity to provide input into developing and spending the budget at their school.

The SSC survey revealed that SSC respondents are satisfied with their influence and opportunities to provide input in the process. Almost all pilot SSC respondents (97%) agreed that “the SSC has significant influence over spending the school’s budget,” compared with 73 percent of non-pilot SSC respondents.

Accountability

Principals generally agreed that teachers are accountable to them (the principal) for student success. However, fewer pilot principals than non-pilot principals felt that teachers are accountable to the principal for student success (88% pilot, 100% non-pilot).

On the teacher survey, 96 percent of respondents reported feeling at least somewhat accountable to the principal for student success. Teachers also felt accountable to other groups, including 95 percent who reported feeling accountable to parents/guardians, 94 percent who reported feeling accountable to students, and 87 percent who reported feeling accountable to the general community.

Teacher respondents felt that principals had a high level of accountability for student results to the district, teachers, parents, and the SSC. More than 9 out of 10 teacher respondents (93%) felt that principals were at least somewhat accountable to the district. Seventy-eight percent felt that principals are accountable to teachers, 86 percent felt that principals are accountable to parents/guardians, 80 percent felt that principals are accountable to the general community, and 78 percent felt that principals are accountable to the SSC.

Over 90 percent of SSC respondents agreed that principals and teachers are held accountable for student success; 91 percent of pilot respondents agreed that principals are held accountable for student success, and 94 percent agreed that teachers are held accountable. The pattern was similar for non-pilot respondents; 93 percent of non-pilot respondents agreed that principals are held accountable for student success, and 92 percent agreed that teachers are held accountable. Of the three respondent groups, SSC members are the least directly accountable for student outcomes, and fewer than half of SSC members reported themselves to be accountable for student success (34% pilot, 46% non-pilot).

B. Interviews: An Interim Self-Assessment of SSFR Implementation

The findings from our central office and PLP interviews indicate that there were several major successes in SSFR implementation during the 2010–11 school year, but the district also faced major challenges and learned some important lessons on the way. Major successes included the following:

- gaining buy-in and engagement from pilot schools and district staff;
- gathering the data and using the Targeted Revenue Model (TRM) tool, developed as part of the SSFR project, to determine allocations for pilot schools;⁹ and
- increasing flexibility for pilot schools over how they use categorical funds.

Interviewees also reported some more minor successes, including progress towards changing the site planning process, increasing budget transparency, and creating a customer service

⁹ The Targeted Revenue Model, TRM, is a structured approach developed as part of the SSFR project to facilitate district-level decisions regarding how to distribute various restricted and unrestricted revenue sources among school levels (elementary, middle, and high schools) and various categories of student need (e.g., eligibility for free and reduced price lunch or status as an English language learner).

culture, although they noted that these SSFR components were still in the planning phase in 2010–11.

The challenges that TRUSD faced in 2010–11 included the following:

- gaining SSFR acceptance and buy-in from district staff;
- obtaining high-level support and accountability for implementing SSFR;
- having the necessary staff and time to concurrently build a new system and implement the current budget system; and
- implementing a major reform and developing new tools in a new district, while facing a major fiscal crisis.

The major lessons learned by district officials were that SSFR success requires the following elements:

- high-level commitment to SSFR implementation;
- a cross-functional team with defined roles and regular meetings;
- accountability measures to facilitate implementation;
- fully functional tools and sufficient training on their use;
- a recognition that there will always have to be some spreadsheets kept outside of the TRM tool to ensure budget office compliance;
- communication within the district and to schools for increasing understanding and buy-in about the SSFR reform; and
- communication and support, especially for principals, to build their capacity to handle the increased budget flexibility and autonomy that SSFR provides.

Details about these interview findings are presented below.

Successes

There were several notable successes in TRUSD in 2010–11, including the following:

- expanding the number of pilot schools in 2010–11;
- gaining buy-in and engagement from pilot principals and district staff;
- gathering the necessary data and using the TRM tool to determine allocations for pilot schools;
- increasing flexibility over existing categorical resources; and
- making strides towards changing the site planning process, increasing budget transparency, and creating a customer service culture.

Pilot principals were informed about and engaged in the SSFR reform. The first SSFR pilot cohort contained eight schools in 2009–10, and the second cohort contained 11 additional schools in 2010–11. The cohort one pilot principals were particularly engaged and motivated to implement SSFR. As one district interviewee explained,

When we suggested quarterly meetings to principals, they said they want to meet every other week. They weren't able to come every single time, but they were there for the most part and are very committed.

Interviewees consistently remarked that principals had been “on board from the beginning,” and were impressed about the principals’ growth over time. One person said,

They have been not only major proponents of the system, but their knowledge level about the process of budgeting has grown exponentially. The amount of depth they get into in an explanation shows that they get it.

As another official stated,

Pilot schools helped with the development of the PBAR tool and engaged teachers and leadership staff in their school in thinking of this new way of budgeting and accountability, and they were very energized about it. They have become champions of it.¹⁰

The enthusiasm of the cohort one principals led their peers to join the cohort two pilot, and this “championing” of the SSFR reform among principals has been critical to its successful scale-up in the district.

District staff generally accepted and bought into SSFR. Interviewees explained that getting buy-in at the central office level was a greater challenge than at the school level. This will be discussed in the Challenges section, but a major success in 2010–11 was getting to the point where, “People now recognize that this isn’t going to go away, so they’re going to have to try to find a way to make it work.” Another interviewee explained that TRUSD went through a natural cycle of reform implementation:

Typically when you have a reform or change, you go through denial first. You start with “I’m not willing to change,” then you go through denial where, “This will just go away if I go underground.” Then you get a little more building of the critical mass where people realize it’s not going to go away. They’re still kind of dragging their feet with resistance and push back. But it gets to a point where it’s inevitable that we’re moving in a direction and people need to get on board. I have seen the progression where the mentality is that this is a reform that is going to be part of the system.

The district used the TRM tool to determine allocations for pilot schools. Interviewees admitted that getting the data into the TRM tool was a challenge due to staff resistance and tight timelines, but everyone named the TRM usage as a success. They said that having all of the key decisions regarding the distribution of revenues to the school in one tool is a useful feature, and that a benefit of the tool is making the data they use more consistent. They also explained that using the tool to make allocations for pilot schools was a success that helped the central office staff and business and fiscal staff become comfortable with the tool, and it will allow them to make improvements in future years. For example, one official said,

The [2010–11] calculation was based on last year’s numbers, but now the tool will take the prior data entered and make some assumptions and calculate the number estimated for the current year instead of just taking last year’s numbers, giving it a more realistic number.

¹⁰ PBAR stands for the Planning, Budgeting, and Allocation of Resources tool developed as part of the SSFR project to facilitate decision making about resource allocation and budget development at the school site.

At the end of 2010–11, district staff reported that “there were more hurdles than successes in terms of tools,” and,

There is more work to be done to really get central office and business and fiscal staff completely comfortable that the tool has integrity and viability and will stand all those fiscal tests that it needs to stand.

However, the successful usage of the TRM tool to determine allocations for the 19 pilot schools went a long way toward assuaging concerns and demonstrating the benefits of the tool over the existing budget system.

The district increased flexibility over selected categorical resources, pushing more dollars out to schools, and principals responded creatively. Due to the late start of the TRM tool development in 2010–11, the district was limited in how many resources and positions it could make flexible for 2011–12; as a result, the district focused on making Title I and a few other funds flexible for pilot schools. The district greatly reduced Title I mandatory set-asides and centrally managed programs such as professional development, after-school programs, and summer school. All of the interviewees gave specific examples of the ways in which principals were creative with this flexibility, including the following:

- **One high school offered specific after-school courses** (algebra, pre-algebra, language arts, science, and history) **and transportation** that otherwise would not have been available.
- **Some schools ran their own summer schools.** Because of furlough days and a shortened school year, schools were able to use the flexibility to extend the school year. Instead of using summer school largely for remediation and having about 30 students attend, as in previous years, they provided a self-directed program offering transportation and different opportunities, including enrichment courses, and had enrollment of about 200 students. There was also much broader ownership of the program because each program was completely staffed with teachers at the school instead of a pool of teachers from across the district as at a typical, centralized summer school.
- **Several of the sites provided their own professional development offerings** instead of sending teachers to centrally run professional development.
- **One of the sites hired a part-time specialist** to help with a student population that had a large proportion of Spanish-speaking English learner students. This specialist assisted students in some of the remedial programs and was able to translate at the school.

In 2010–11, district officials also planned for expanded flexibility in 2011–12. As one stated,

In planning for 2011–12, we started earlier and just really pushed that we wanted to get as close to 80 percent as possible. We didn’t touch unrestricted or general fund unrestricted staffing, but we just pushed a really consistent message from the superintendent... we pushed it as far as we could and we got to 70 percent and made flexible certain positions because we started early.

The 80 percent reference is to the TRUSD goal of making 80 percent of dollars flexible. In addition to flexibility over Title I, School and Library Block Grant (SLBG), and Teacher

Incentive Grant (TIG) funds, district officials increased the flexibility of Title II, Economic Impact Aid (EIA), and Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) dollars for 2011–12.

The district made progress in changing the site planning process, increasing budget transparency, and creating a customer service culture. One of the school-level complaints about site planning and budgeting was about a lack of alignment between the two processes and calendars. Previous practice was that site plans and budgets were due in October, but sites did not receive their staff (full-time equivalent or FTE) allocations in January and dollar allocations in April. In 2010–11, TRUSD took steps to provide projected, preliminary allocations to sites in December and make plans due in April 2012. The district recognized that having plans due well in advance of when the district was able to finalize its numbers made the site planning and budgeting process a frustrating activity for principals, and it prioritized changing that. As one interviewee explained,

The biggest change is not just the deadlines in the different areas of site plan and budget development, but it is the alignment of the budget development, staffing (HR processes), and site plan development into one coordinated process.

The interviewee stated that changing these processes would allow for greater transparency and stakeholder engagement in the site planning and budgeting process. The district also worked on defining transparency in 2010–11, and created a plan to increase budget transparency to schools and the community. As one interviewee explained,

We are going to show what the general fund dollars are, what a school generates and what a school actually gets funded for. So people can see, “I’m being underwritten by schools that have less senior people but generate more dollars.”

These plans for changing the site planning process and increasing budget transparency had yet to receive school board approval in 2010–11, but they demonstrate that the district was creating conditions to support successful SSFR implementation.

Further, the district was working on creating a customer service culture at the central office. As one official explained,

Part of the shift is the idea of service culture that the central office is there to provide a service and not just an audit function of what the sites are doing. Part of it is to think of the principals and sites as their customers. It’s been a very compliance mentality—that the customer is the state and you have to corral the sites to do what needs to be done in order to make that happen.

The district performed a baseline customer service survey and published a set of central office department scorecards showing, publicly, how each department rated in terms of customer service. Then the district conducted customer service training; in the training, each department came up with a set of objectives or measurable goals for the year-round services that it provides, and presented these to the pilot principals for their feedback. As one interviewee reflected,

The process was successful and it was interesting for the departments to hear from the principals and to think of them as their customers and think about measurable goals

that make principals' lives easier, not just for the department. The principals said it was a good experience because they got to learn more about what departments do and also that they were able to voice their concerns about programs and help shape the direction the departments were going to take in terms of goals and priorities.

One interviewee described the process as "positive" and "rewarding," and said that it "built our relationship with our stakeholders because of the engagement that has occurred and the outcomes that have been enacted."

Challenges

Challenges are inherent in any change process, and TRUSD faced several in 2010–11, including a lack of staff buy-in and high-level accountability, limited staff, challenges with SSFR tool development, and fiscal challenges.

Although SSFR was a school board-adopted core reform strategy in 2010–11, it did not receive consistent support for implementation at the executive level. One interviewee reflected,

They didn't build in accountability measures, and they didn't really bring the board into being an active member so that they drove the initiative. They said, "We want to make this one of our core strategies for the year," and that's about as far as it went.

As a result, one interviewee commented, "There seemed to be a lot of resistance and staff were not solution-oriented." Another interviewee explained, "There were too many issues [with the TRM] and they were busy with regular allocations." The budget team refused to use TRM because they thought it had too many flaws, so the TRUSD SSFR project manager took the initiative to input all of the data and make allocation decisions on behalf of the district because district leadership, the external partners, and she agreed that demonstrating the TRM's capabilities was a critical milestone for SSFR implementation. This did a lot to bring the budget office staff on board, but moving forward without strong support or involvement from the budget office was a major challenge in 2010–11.

As an interviewee reflected, "The ownership piece was really the biggest challenge... It was seen as one person's project instead of, 'This is a district system change.' That caused a lot of the pushback." Another interviewee said, "There was an assumption made that because the superintendent bought into this, everyone else would get on board. But that wasn't the case."

All interviewees expressed some variant of the following statement: "Our main concern is getting everything done." Operating in a time of fiscal crisis and substantial budget cuts has caused staff to be stretched and stressed. As one interviewee noted,

We've had so many cuts because of the current budget system in personnel and programs and really everyone is doing five jobs, so people are busy and frustrated and working long hours, and you're asking them to do something new and different and running two systems when you're doing a pilot, and that causes anxiety and frustration.

This interviewee noted that this will continue to be a challenge as the district adds components to SSFR and goes district-wide. Others said that once all schools are on the same system, it will get easier. However, several interviewees mentioned that the timing of SSFR implementation added to the stress for fiscal staff because they had just integrated all of the budget systems

from the four districts that incorporated to create TRUSD when they were asked to create a new system under SSFR. As one said, “We went through the largest-scale unification effort in California in 35 years. At the same time, we were designing a new process, putting a lot of strain on staff.” Another interviewee explained,

This is a district where four districts came together just three years ago and each district had its own culture and way of doing business and getting people used to a Twin Rivers way of doing business was a real battle... It took us three years to get the district up and running, and now that processes were finally down, a new tool came in that needed to be implemented... It is difficult to find time to devote to this reform and change.

In addition to limiting staff resources, the national economic crisis had direct effects on school district budgets. TRUSD was worried about declining state resources, and one interviewee explained that when SSFR went district-wide, some schools would be “winners” and other schools would be “losers” in a fixed or declining resource environment. This interviewee explained that in ideal circumstances, the district would be able to hold all schools harmless and add funds and resources to the neediest schools. As they stated, “It’s usually better to level up than level down, but the only way to level up is to find more funding.”

Finally, all interviewees cited using the TRM as a success, but several included the caveat that it needs refinement to be fully functional. One person said,

The tool is limited because we have only applied it to categorical funding—Title I, SLBG, and TIG. We are still working on unrestricted this year for next year, and it’s unclear what will change... We need to make sure everything is done correctly.

Interviewees expressed concerns about the quality of the data in the tool, the timing of getting data into the system, and the need to ensure that the tool works for the district instead of creating a separate, additional system.

Lessons learned

Everyone involved needs to understand the reform and their specific role in it. From the board to the superintendent to the central office staff to principals and others, interviewees said that all parties need to have a clear understanding of the reform, goals, steps towards achieving those goals, and their specific role. One person reflected, “We didn’t really think it through before we started moving.” Another interviewee noted,

I don’t think we were clear on the steps or roles... We kind of did this on the fly and maybe that’s what you have to do when you’re creating something new, but that offers some obstructions to full implementation.

Communication is critical, and there is a need for more communication among key staff at the central office about SSFR. Although central office staff members are stretched thin, interviewees were clear that having all of the key staff at the table in SSFR meetings—especially about the TRM and PBAR tools—was central to their progress in 2010–11. One central office staff member recalled,

There was real movement when [the research staff] was here and we could actually look at the tools and ask questions like, ‘How can this tool do what I do on a spreadsheet of

some kind right now?’... That was the beginning of the shift in attitude where they knew they can make this work, even if they were a little reluctant.

Another interviewee echoed the importance of bringing everyone together that will be responsible for doing the work. This person noted,

It was difficult to get everyone all on board to work on SSFR together. There simply wasn’t enough time, but it pays off to get the right people in the right meetings. Not having people there loses something because... there was a lot of wrong information about what the [TRM] tool does and miscommunication.

Fully functional tools are critical to SSFR success, especially district-wide. One person explained that, “The earlier piloters were the hearty ones who could bounce back when they hit a roadblock, but we need to anticipate challenges and be able to get everyone else over the roadblocks.” Another interviewee emphasized,

The most critical is having the tools in place to do what needs to be done so that there is an acceptance that the proposed systemic change works. No systems change ever is turn-key so that you just flip the switch and everything is going to be just fine. But we need to have enough of the tools in place that you can go in and adjust and make modifications. What we don’t need is for people to say, “See. It didn’t work.”

Several interviewees spoke about the importance of seeing the tool to buying into the SSFR reform. For example, one said,

Stakeholder groups, lay staff, and administrative staff all have to be convinced that this works and that it actually makes their work more effective and targets their efforts on the school site level and genuinely gives them more flexibility in return for increased accountability... Once you see the benefits of the tool and how it works, people say it makes sense.

While the project team wants the tools to be integrated into district processes in the long-term, the tools cannot entirely replace the old systems. Budget officials said that they are working with the AIR/PLP staff to get as much as they can into the TRM tool so they will not need spreadsheets on the side just to get the tool to work. They acknowledged that when the pilot scales up to district-wide implementation, the new system will be more effective and less work. However, creating a new budget system creates substantial extra work for the budget staff in the transition, because, “We must maintain the integrity of the system while building a new one.” Also, TRUSD staff members realized, “There will always be things that have to be kept separate [from the TRM] for compliance.” The same issue was mentioned for the PBAR tool, and our interviews will include principals in 2011–12 to discuss their perspectives on that tool and other SSFR implementation issues.

As more money goes to schools, principals and others will require training and support to build their capacity to handle the increased autonomy. While 2010–11 was focused on reviewing programs and figuring out how to push as many dollars as possible to the schools, the interviewees recognized that as more money goes to schools, principals and others will need training and support. The balance between building capacity for additional autonomy and maintaining compliance was discussed by several interviewees. Business office staff pointed to

several examples of processes that needed to be set up in the new system, including the following:

- When services are provided by the district office but sites are now given the money for those services, there needs to be a process for sites to get billed for those services. One such example is centralized professional development trainings.

When services formerly provided by the district are no longer provided by the district, schools have to be made aware that these services are no longer available and they will have to be the ones to provide it if they want it. Other district offices or departments also need to be made aware of these changes. An example of this is a high school credit recovery program. Some interviewees mentioned that decisions on what to push out to schools are made at the cabinet level and then get shared with the pilot principals, but that broader communication will be necessary as flexibility is given to more schools.

IV. Summary

In this report, we have used surveys and interviews to gather data on the attitudes and perspectives of school and central office staff regarding the SSFR reform as it is being implemented in TRUSD. These surveys have also allowed us to examine some differences between schools participating and not participating in the SSFR pilot during the 2010–11 school year.

Based on our surveys, we found the following:

- Fewer than half of principals and teachers felt that funds are allocated equitably to schools, but a higher proportion of principals in pilot schools felt this way.
- Members of the school site councils (SSCs) expressed strong agreement that they understood budget documents and resource allocation.
- All pilot principal respondents (100%) reported having discretion over the dollars in their school budget, compared with 81 percent of non-pilot principals.
- Fewer than half of principals (about 40%) and even fewer teacher respondents (33%) reported having autonomy over their instructional program.
- SSC members expressed high levels of agreement that principals support and value their contributions.
- Approximately one third (35%) of teachers agreed that they have the opportunity to provide input into developing and spending the budget at their school.
- Principals generally agreed that teachers are accountable to them (the principal) for student success, while almost all (96%) of teachers reported feeling at least somewhat accountable to the principal for student success.

Based on our interviews with central office and PLP staff, we found several successes in SSFR implementation in TRUSD during 2010–11. These successes included the following:

- expanding the number of pilot schools in 2010–11,
- gaining buy-in and engagement from pilot principals and district staff;

- gathering the necessary data and using the Targeted Revenue Model (TRM) tool to determine allocations for pilot schools;
- increasing flexibility over existing categorical resources; and
- making strides towards changing the site planning process, increasing budget transparency, and creating a customer service culture.

There were several implementation challenges and lessons learned in 2010–11, including the following:

- There needs to be executive-level definition of roles and responsibilities for SSFR implementation to facilitate staff buy-in, and accountability measures put into place for implementation;
- Communication across a wide range of stakeholders is critical; and
- Increasing budget flexibility and autonomy must be paired with information and support.

The 19 TRUSD pilot schools in 2010–11 demonstrated that SSFR could be successfully implemented, establishing the foundation for district-wide implementation of SSFR in 2011–12. By the end of 2010–11, pilot principals and key district staff were engaged in SSFR implementation, the TRM had been used to determine district allocations for 2011–12, the district had increased flexibility over selected categorical resources, and principals had responded creatively with their increased budget autonomy.

However, as TRUSD scales up to implement SSFR district-wide in 2011–12, moving from 19 pilot schools to all 52 schools, several major challenges remain. The tools must be fully functional as SSFR moves from a pilot to full implementation, and it will be critical for the district to provide information, training, supports, and systems to build principal knowledge and capacity for dealing with the increased flexibility and autonomy over their school's budget.

Appendix A. SSFR Principal Survey

SSFR Principal Survey

2010-11

1. Prior to this school year, how many years did you serve as the principal of this or any other school?

- None
- 1-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11 or more years

2. Prior to this school year, how many years did you serve as principal of this school?

- None
- 1-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11 or more years

3. Prior to this school year, how many years have you been a principal or teacher in this district?

- None
- 1-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11 or more years

4. Have you changed schools since last school year?

- Yes
- No (skip to 6)

5. If you have changed schools since last school year, which of the following reasons reflect your reasons for moving to this school? (*Check all that apply.*)

- Pay incentives
- Personal reasons
- I got assigned here. I did not choose to work at this school
- Other. Please specify _____

6. What grades does your school serve?

- Elementary
- K-8
- Junior High/Middle School
- High school

7. What is the percentage of students receiving free or reduced-price meals in your school?

- Below 75%
- 75-90%
- Above 90%

8. What is the percentage of English learners in your school?

- Below 25%
- 25-40%
- Above 40%

9. Which of the following are true about your school this year? (Check all that apply.)

- This school is a pilot school in the SSFR Initiative.
- This school is a charter school.
- Students are assigned to this school based on attendance area.
- 10% or more of your students are transfers from outside of your official attendance area.
- Your school or part of your school is a magnet or has a special theme.
- Your school has academic entrance criteria for students.
- Your school has other entrance requirements (eg- performing arts).
- Your school has requirements or contracts for parent participation.
- Students are required to maintain minimum performance standards (eg- behavior, academic, attendance) to remain at your school.

10. How much support do you feel you receive from the district for trying new things in your school?

- A lot
- Some
- A little
- None

11. Have you tried anything new in your school this year in the following areas?

(Check all that apply.)

- Teacher roles/new staff
- Extending the school day or year
- Teacher time use
- Curriculum
- Course offerings
- Instructional materials
- Instructional strategies or approaches
- Parent involvement
- Partnerships with external organizations
- Student supports
- Professional development
- Data use
- Student assessment
- Technology use
- Extracurricular or after-school programming
-

12. Please rank in order THE TOP THREE (1-3) by the actual influence you think each group or person has on decisions concerning the following activities. A rank of 1 means *most influence over this activity.*

a. Establishing curriculum at this school

- State department of education or other state-level bodies
- Local school board
- School district staff
- Principal
- Teachers
- Curriculum specialists
- School Site Council
- Parent association
- Teachers' union

b. Determining the content of in-service professional development programs for teachers of this school

- State department of education or other state-level bodies
- Local school board
- School district staff
- Principal
- Teachers
- Curriculum specialists
- School Site Council
- Parent association
- Teachers' union

c. Evaluating teachers of this school

- State department of education or other state-level bodies
- Local school board
- School district staff
- Principal
- Teachers
- Curriculum specialists
- School Site Council
- Parent association
- Teachers' union

d. Hiring new teachers at this school

- State department of education or other state-level bodies
- Local school board
- School district staff
- Principal
- Teachers
- Curriculum specialists
- School Site Council
- Parent association
- Teachers' union

e. Deciding how your school budget will be spent

- State department of education or other state-level bodies
- Local school board
- School district staff
- Principal
- Teachers
- Curriculum specialists
- School Site Council
- Parent association
- Teachers' union

f. Scheduling of instructional time at your school (i.e., length of the day or allocation of time among subjects or class periods)

- State department of education or other state-level bodies
- Local school board
- School district staff
- Principal
- Teachers
- Curriculum specialists
- School Site Council
- Parent association
- Teachers' union

13. To what extent do you feel *teachers* are held accountable for student success to the following groups?

	Not at all accountable	Somewhat accountable	Very accountable
To you, the principal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To parents/guardians of students in your school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To the general community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

14. What is your definition of “equity”, in terms of resource distribution among schools?

15. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. I feel that the evaluation of my performance is related to my students’ achievement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. I understand how resources (staff, funds, etc.) are allocated to my school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. I have discretion over how <i>district dollars</i> are spent at my school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. I have discretion over how the dollars in <i>my school budget</i> are spent.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Principals are assigned equitably to schools in our district.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Teachers are assigned equitably to schools in our district.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Students are assigned equitably to schools in our district.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Other support staff (e.g., librarians, custodians) are assigned to schools in a way that best reflects student needs for these services.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. The district has a teacher placement process that assigns the most effective teachers to schools with the neediest students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Schools that serve greater percentages of low-income students in our district receive more resources than schools with lower percentages of these students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
k. Schools that serve greater percentages of low-performing students in our district receive more resources than schools with lower percentages of these students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. Schools that serve greater percentages of low-performing students in our district receive more resources than schools with lower percentages of these students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. I have sufficient autonomy to implement an instructional program that meets the needs of the students in my school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n. I have sufficient autonomy to implement an <i>innovative</i> program in my school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o. I believe funds are equitably allocated to schools within our district.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
p. I feel that I receive adequate support from the central office to develop my school's budget.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
q. I feel that I have the resources I need to try new things in my school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix B. SSFR Teacher Survey

**SSFR items to add to
Twin Rivers Teacher Survey
Spring 2010**

1. How would you classify your position at this school during this school year?

- Regular full-time teacher
- Regular part-time teacher
- Itinerant teacher (I teach at more than one school)
- Long-term substitute
- Short-term substitute
- Student teacher
- Teacher aide

2. Do you hold any of the following positions? (Mark all that apply.)

- Academic coach
- BTSA mentor
- Lead teacher/department chair
- School site council member
- Another leadership position. Explain _____

3. Prior to this school year, how many years have you been a teacher at this or any other school?

- None
- 1-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11 or more years

4. Prior to this school year, how many years have you been a teacher at this school?

- None
- 1-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11 or more years

5. Prior to this school year, how many years have you worked in any position in this district?

- None
- 1-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11 or more years

6. If you have changed schools since last school year, which of the following reasons reflect your reasons for moving to this school? (Please mark all that apply.)

- Did not change schools
- Pay incentives
- Personal reasons
- I got assigned here. I did not choose to work at this school.
- Other. Please specify _____

7. How much actual control do you have in your classroom at this school over the following areas?

	No control	Minor control	Moderate control	A great deal of control
a. Selecting textbooks and other instructional materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Selecting content, topics, and skills to be taught	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Selecting teaching techniques	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Evaluating and grading students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Disciplining students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. ***Please rank in order THE TOP THREE (1-3) groups below by the influence you think each group or person has on decisions concerning the following activities. A rank of 1 means most influence over this activity.***

For each activity, please rank only the top 3 groups, and leave the others blank.

a. Establishing curriculum at this school

- State department of education or other state-level bodies
- Local school board
- School district staff
- Principal
- Teachers
- Curriculum specialists
- School Site Council
- Parent association
- Teachers' union

b. Determining the content of in-service professional development programs for teachers of this school

- State department of education or other state-level bodies
- Local school board
- School district staff
- Principal
- Teachers
- Curriculum specialists
- School Site Council
- Parent association
- Teachers' union

c. Evaluating teachers of this school

- State department of education or other state-level bodies
- Local school board
- School district staff
- Principal
- Teachers
- Curriculum specialists
- School Site Council
- Parent association
- Teachers' union

d. Hiring new teachers at this school

- State department of education or other state-level bodies
- Local school board
- School district staff
- Principal
- Teachers
- Curriculum specialists
- School Site Council
- Parent association
- Teachers' union

e. Deciding how your school budget will be spent

- State department of education or other state-level bodies
- Local school board
- School district staff
- Principal
- Teachers
- Curriculum specialists
- School Site Council
- Parent association
- Teachers' union

f. Scheduling of instructional time at your school (i.e., length of the day or allocation of time among subjects or class periods)

- State department of education or other state-level bodies
- Local school board
- School district staff
- Principal
- Teachers
- Curriculum specialists
- School Site Council
- Parent association
- Teachers' union

9. To what extent do you feel *teachers* are held accountable for student success to the following groups?

	Not at all accountable	Somewhat accountable	Very accountable
To the principal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To parents/guardians of students in your school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To the general community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. To what extent do you feel *the principal* of your school is accountable for student success to the following groups?

	Not at all accountable	Somewhat accountable	Very accountable
The district	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To parents/guardians of students in your school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To teachers in your school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To the general community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To your school's school site council	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. I believe funds are equitably allocated to schools within our district.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Principals are assigned equitably to schools in our district.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Teachers are assigned equitably to schools in our district.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Students are assigned equitably to schools in our district.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Other support staff (e.g., librarians, custodians) are assigned to schools in a way that best reflects student needs for these services.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Schools that serve greater percentages of <u>low-income</u> students in our district receive more resources than schools with lower percentages of these students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Schools that serve greater percentages of <u>low-performing</u> students in our district receive more resources than schools with lower percentages of these students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Schools that serve greater percentages of <u>English learners</u> in our district receive more resources than schools with lower percentages of these students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. I feel that I have the resources I need to try new things in my classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. I have sufficient autonomy to implement an instructional program that meets the needs of my students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Teachers have the opportunity to provide input into developing and spending the budget at this school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
l. I understand how resources (staff, funds, etc.) are allocated to my school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. The school administration's behavior toward the staff is supportive and encouraging.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n. I am satisfied with my teaching salary.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o. Necessary materials such as textbooks, supplies, and copy machines are available as needed by the staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
p. I worry about the security of my job because of the performance of my students on state and/or local tests.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

12. Have you tried anything new in your classroom this year in the following areas? (*Check all that apply.*)

- Use of time
- Curriculum
- Instructional materials
- Instructional strategies or approaches
- Parent involvement
- Partnerships with external organizations
- Student supports
- Use of data
- Student assessment
- Use of technology

**Appendix C. Twin Rivers Unified School District School Site Council
Survey**

Twin Rivers Unified School District

School Site Council Survey

Spring 2011

Please answer each question below.

1. Is your school an SSFR pilot school?

Yes

No

2. Is your school a charter school?

Yes

No

3. Is your school an alternative school?

Yes

No

4. What grades does this school serve? (Please select all that apply.)

K-3

7-8

4-5

9-12

6

5. What is your role at this school?

Principal

Parent

Teacher

Student

Other school staff (Specify:

Other (Specify:

_____)

_____)

6. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. The SSC has significant influence over how <i>district dollars</i> are spent at this school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. The SSC has significant influence over how the dollars in <i>this school's budget</i> are spent.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. The SSC has significant influence over how <i>categorical funds</i> are spent.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Parents and community members (besides SSC members) have adequate opportunity to provide input into developing and spending this school's budget.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. I believe funds are equitably allocated to schools within our district.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. The budget documents I am provided for SSC review are easy to understand and interpret.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. The principal provides adequate support and information for the SSC to make budget recommendations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. I understand how resources (staff, funds, etc.) are allocated to my school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Our principal is held accountable for student performance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Teachers in our school are held accountable for student performance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. The SSC in our school is held accountable for student performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. This school is welcoming to parents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. This school communicates effectively with parents about the progress of their children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n. This school communicates effectively with parents about upcoming school events.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o. This school communicates effectively with parents about school budgets and resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
p. The principal values the SSC's recommendations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Have you received any training about budgeting/resource allocation?

Yes

No

a. If yes, To what extent do you agree with this statement?:

The training I received was sufficient to help the SSC allocate funds at this school.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Appendix D. SSFR Interview Protocol for Central Office and PLP Staff

2011 SSFR INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR CENTRAL OFFICE AND PLP STAFF

Goals

1. We know that the SSFR reform is a board and cabinet priority in this district. What are the district's goals for SSFR?
 - *What do you see as the primary goals for funding allocation decisions?*
 - *Probe, if necessary:*
 - *Flexibility/autonomy of general funds, categorical funds; per-pupil funding, need-based funding; actual teacher salaries*
 - *Transparency, innovation*
 - *What do you see as primary goals for the planning and budgeting process?*
 - *Budget timeline; goals-based budgeting; alignment between program plans, budgets, and resource allocation*
 - *Transparency, innovation, staff and community engagement*

Progress/milestones

2. What progress has been made this year (2010-11) on goals related to funding allocation decisions? What key milestones have been reached?
 - *What influence has SSFR had on flexibility of general funds? Categorical funds?*
 - *What influence has SSFR had on funding based on per-pupil allocations? Actual teacher salaries?*
3. What progress has been made this year (2010-11) on goals related to the planning and budgeting process? What key milestones have been reached?
 - *What influence has SSFR had on the budget timeline? Goals-based budgeting?*
 - *What, if anything, does/will the new planning and budgeting process allow principals to do that they would not have been able to do otherwise?*
4. What progress has been made this year (2010-11) on other SSFR goals? What key milestones have been reached?
 - *To what extent do you feel that schools' program plans are aligned with resource allocation?*

Capacity

1. Do you feel that principals, teachers, and school site council members have adequate preparation and the technical capacity to make effective decisions about program planning, budgeting, and resource allocation?
 - *If yes, what evidence do you have of this?*
 - *If no, what kinds of capacity building activities do you think are important?*

2. We know that you have invested a lot of time in SSSFR. How much time would you estimate that you spend on a weekly basis on work related to SSFR?
 - *About how many hours a week do you work total? About what proportion of your time do you spend on SSFR?*
 - *What do you spend most of your time on, related to SSFR? (e.g., strategizing, meeting with principals, etc.)*
3. Who else would you say are key contributors to SSFR implementation in the central office? In the schools?
 - *About how much time do they spend related to SSFR?*
 - *Why are they key?*
4. Do you feel that you have the capacity at the district level to successfully implement the SSFR reforms?
 - *If no, what resources are needed?*

Professional development training and support

5. How would you describe the role of the district central office in supporting the alignment of schools' program plan with resource allocation decisions?
 - *What has the central office done this year (2010-11) to provide PD training to school sites around program planning, budgeting, and/or resource allocation?*
 - *Who organizes and facilitates PD training activities?*
 - *What types of activities have occurred? How many times/how often?*
 - *Who attends? How many people attend?*
6. What other resources or supports do principals, school site councils (SSC), and teachers have for program planning, budgeting, and resource allocation—besides from the central office?
 - *What resources or supports do you think they need? Are there any plans to provide these?*

Communication

7. What has the central office done this year (2010-11) with regard to communicating about SSFR?
 - *What is the district's communication strategy about SSFR reforms?*
 - *Who organizes and facilitates communication?*
 - *What types of communication methods do you use?*
 - *Who is the target audience for various types of communication?*
8. Do you feel that principals, teachers, school site council members, parents, and community members have a clear understanding of SSFR?
 - *If no, what do they know? What don't they know?*
 - *What perceptions or misperceptions do they have?*

- *What do you wish they knew?*

Transparency and involvement

9. One of our goals on this project is to make district funding to schools a more transparent process. What progress has been made this year (2010-11) in terms of transparency?
- *To what degree do you believe your current process is transparent to:*
 - *Board members? Principals? Teachers or other school faculty? Parents? Community members?*
 - *What has been done to increase transparency?*
 - *What remains to be done to increase transparency?*
 - *What successes or failures have you encountered in attempting to increase transparency?*
10. Is the community involved in the budgeting and program planning process at the school level? How would you describe their role and involvement?
- *What members of the school community (e.g., teachers, other faculty, parents, students, other community members at large) are involved in budgeting, program planning, and budgeting at the school site?*
 - *What steps has the district taken to involve the community in the program planning and budgeting process at the school level?*
 - *What value do you feel is added (or could be added) with the community's involvement in this process?*
 - *What limitations, if any, do you see in involving the community in these decisions?*
 - *Are there any plans in place to increase community involvement in this process?*

General reflection on SSFR

11. What are the biggest steps the district has taken this year (2010-11) to move SSFR forward?
- *Probe for specific examples.*
 - *What have been major "wins"?*
 - *What are you most proud of about SSFR this year?*
12. What have been the biggest challenges or barriers to SSFR implementation this year (2010-11)?
- *Probe on: funding and resource allocation; planning and budgeting process; professional development; communication; transparency; community involvement*
 - *How were these addressed?*
 - *Were there any issues you faced that you hadn't predicted?*
 - *If yes, how did you address this?*
 - *Were there any major mistakes that were made?*

- *If yes, how did you address this? What might you do to avoid a similar mistake in the future, or to prevent it if you could go back?*
 - *What most concerns or disappoints you about SSFR this year? What “keeps you up at night”?*
13. What do you see as critical next steps moving forward? What do you see as major challenges?
14. Do you feel there are any district- or state-level policies that create barriers to SSFR implementation and achieving SSFR goals?
- *If yes, which policies? What is the implication of these policies for SSFR? What would you like to see changed about this policy? Do you have any strategies for changing the policy?*
 - *State categorical program restrictions*
 - *State and/or federal accountability policies*
 - *Small school, comprehensive schools*
 - *Open enrollment*
 - *Curriculum and/or standards policies*
 - *District hiring, placement, tenure policies; union collective bargaining agreements*
 - *Other?*
15. What are some major lessons learned this year (2010-11) that can help other districts who are considering implementing a reform like SSFR?

Appendix E. Graphics of Survey Findings

List of Figures

Figure 1. Equity – Principal Response..... 43

Figure 2. Equity – Teacher Response..... 43

Figure 3. Equity – SSC Response..... 44

Figure 4. Transparency – Principal Response 44

Figure 5. Transparency – Teacher Response 45

Figure 6. Transparency – SSC Response 45

Figure 7. Autonomy – Principal Response..... 46

Figure 8. Influence – Principal and Teacher Response 46

Figure 9. Influence – Principal Response..... 47

Figure 10. Innovation – Principal Response 47

Figure 11. Autonomy – Teacher Response..... 48

Figure 12. Support – Principal Response..... 48

Figure 13. Support – SSC Response 49

Figure 14. Support – SSC Response 49

Figure 15. Opportunities to Provide Input – Teacher Response 50

Figure 16. Opportunities to Provide Input – SSC Response 50

Figure 17. Accountability – Principal Response..... 51

Figure 18. Accountability – Teacher Response..... 51

Figure 19. Accountability – Teacher Response..... 52

Figure 20. Accountability – SSC Response..... 52

Figure 1. Equity – Principal Response

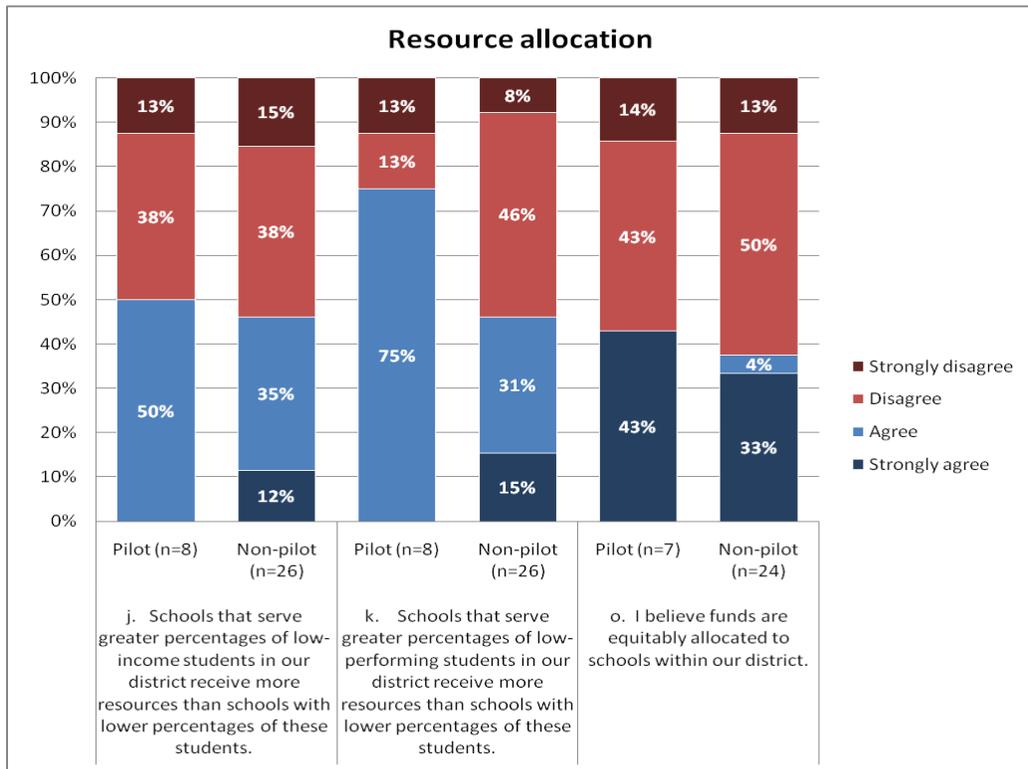


Figure 2. Equity – Teacher Response

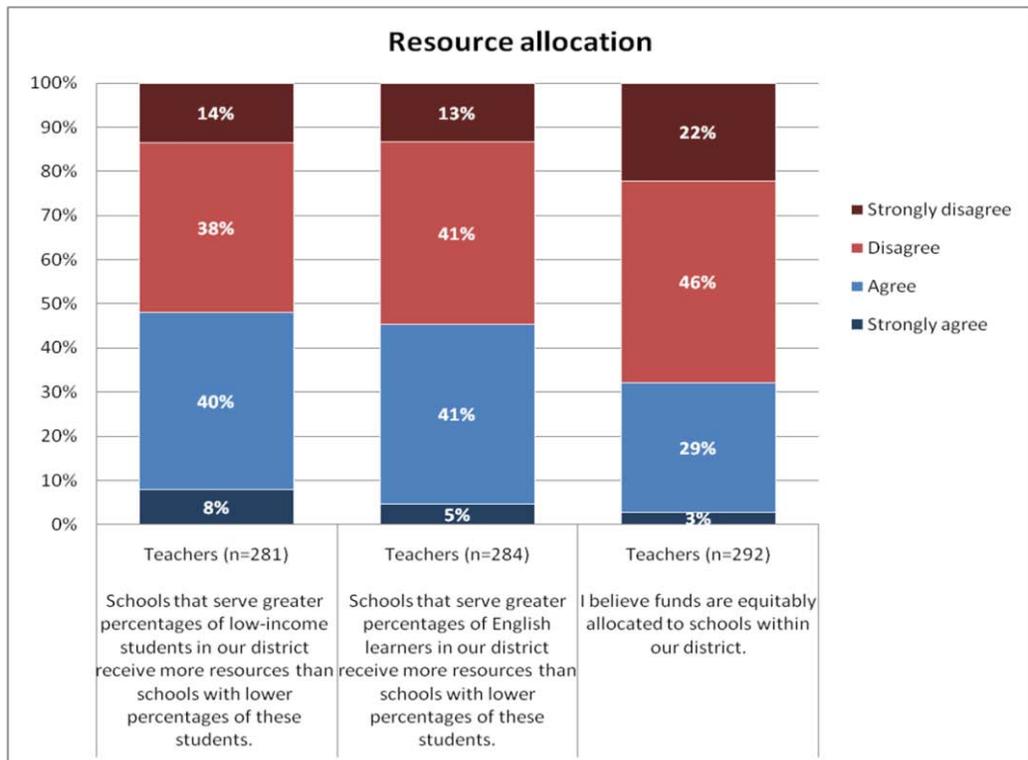


Figure 3. Equity – SSC Response

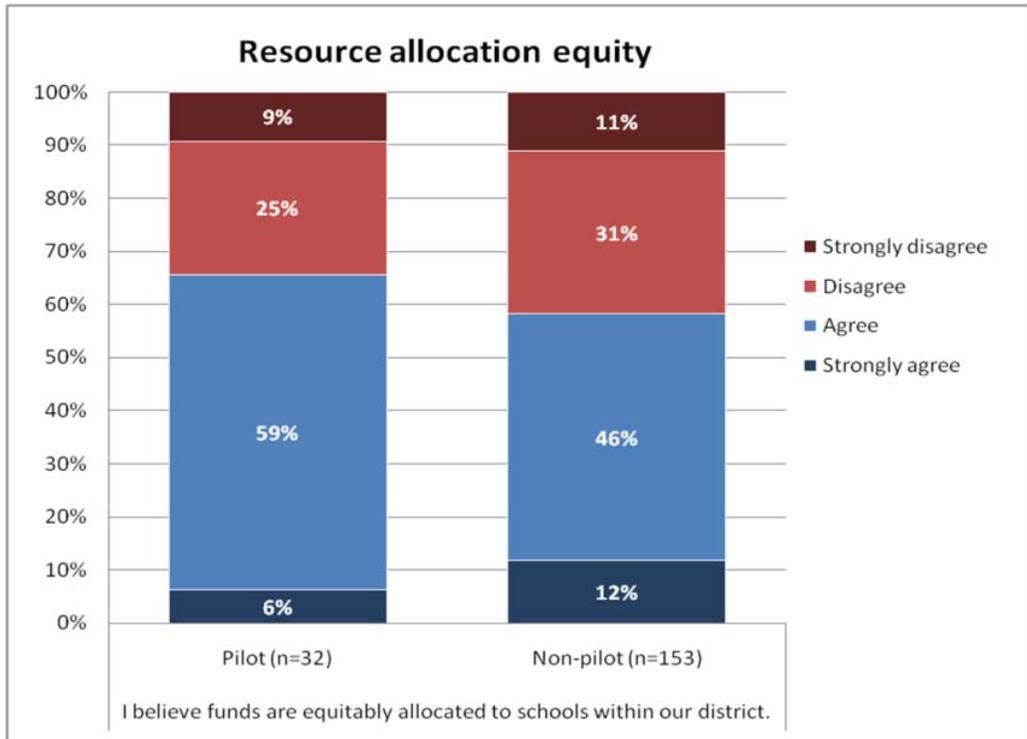


Figure 4. Transparency – Principal Response

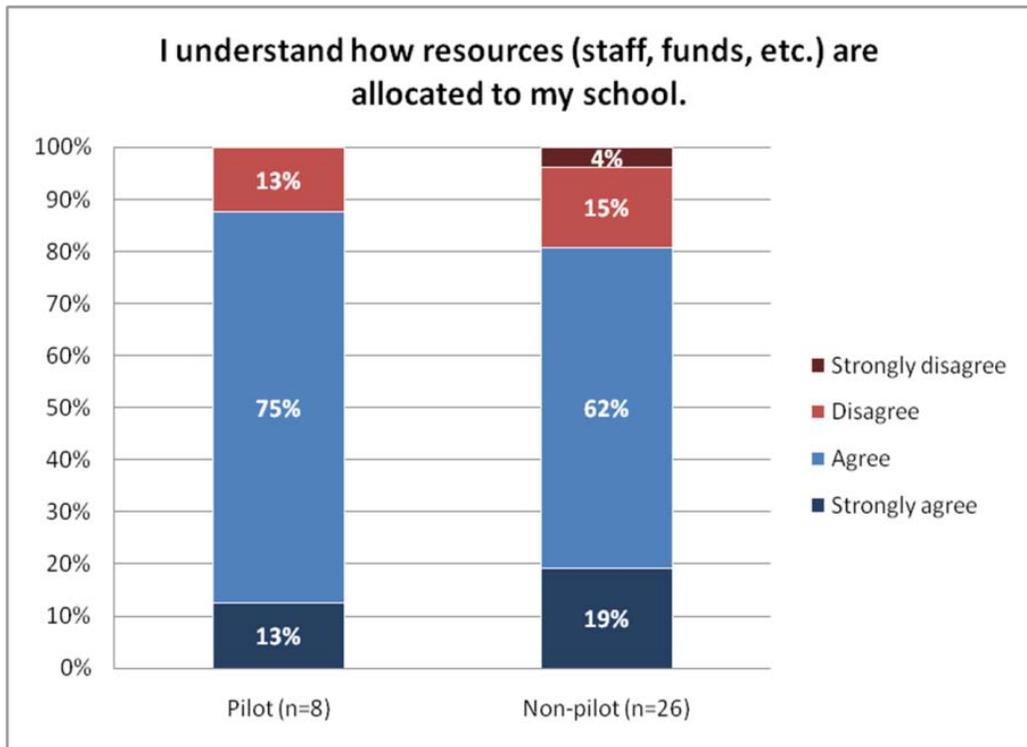


Figure 5. Transparency – Teacher Response

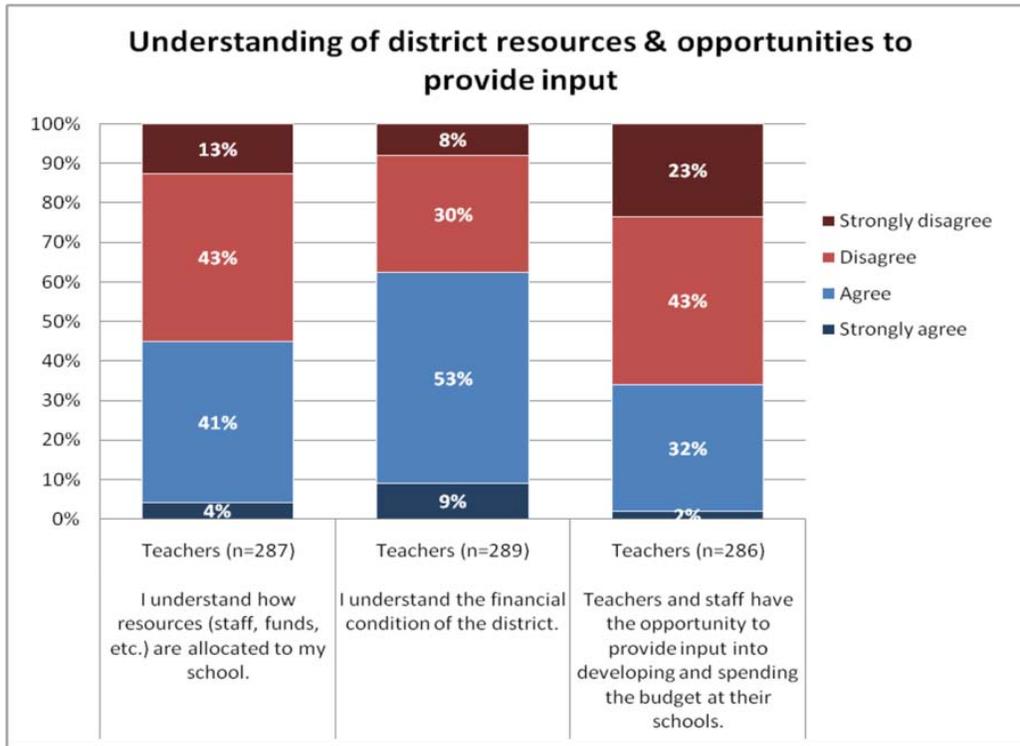


Figure 6. Transparency – SSC Response

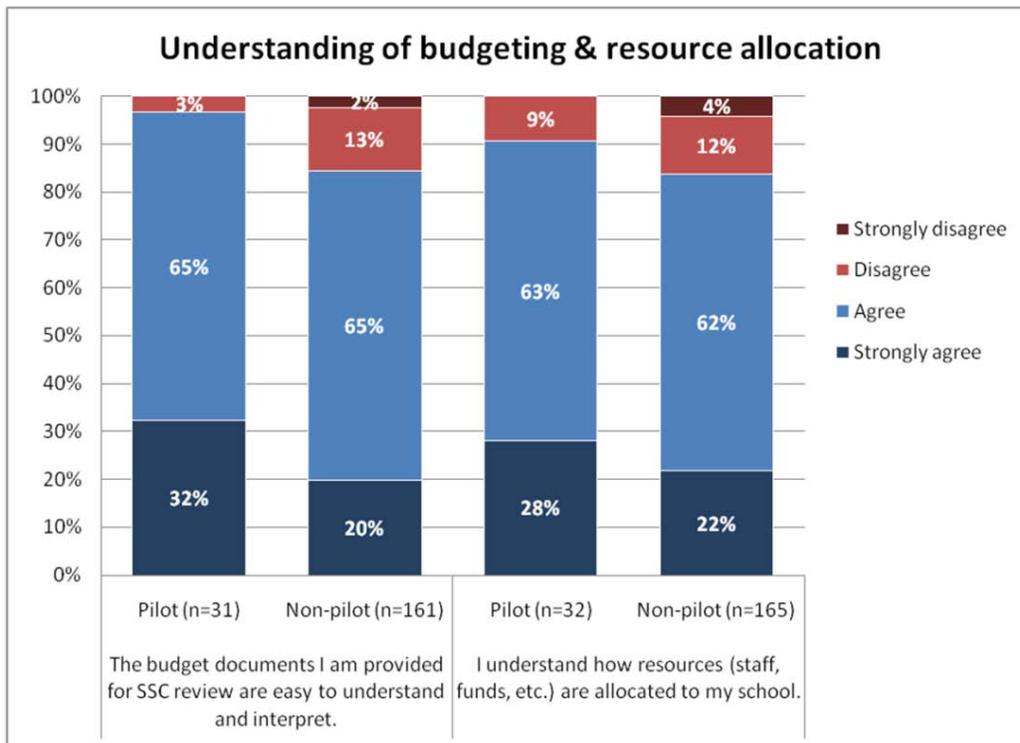


Figure 7. Autonomy – Principal Response

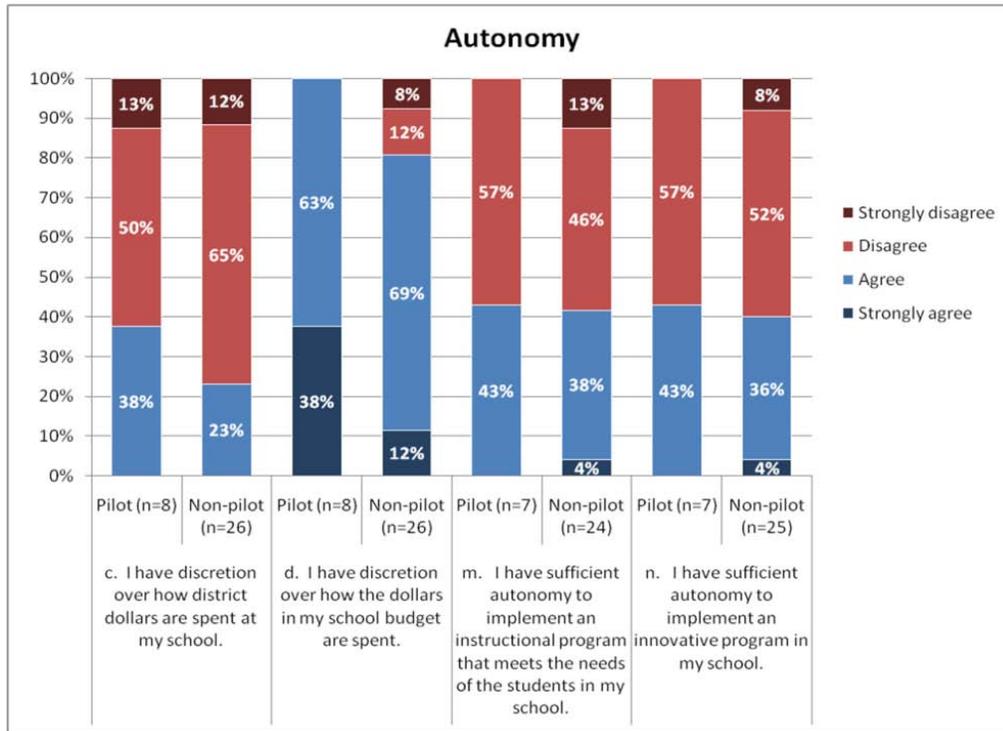


Figure 8. Influence – Principal and Teacher Response

Respondent ratings of the most influential in "deciding how your school budget will be spent"

Group	Pilot principals (n=7)	Non-pilot principals (n=23)	Teachers (n=184)
State	5%	4%	64%
School Board	0%	16%	72%
District	38%	48%	83%
Principal	90%	70%	81%
Teacher	52%	29%	49%
Curriculum Specialist	0%	1%	44%
School Site Council	14%	30%	54%
Union	0%	1%	23%
Parent Teacher Association	0%	0%	29%

Note: Ratings were determined from summing responses that ranked the level of influence each of 9 groups had on the above item. Respondents indicated the most influential, second most influential, and third most influential (3, 2, 1) from among the 9 groups.

Figure 9. Influence – Principal Response

Respondent ratings of the most influential in "determining the content of in-service professional development programs for teachers of this school" (n=31)

Group	% of total possible score	
	Pilot (n=7)	Non-pilot (n=24)
State	0%	1%
School Board	0%	8%
District	52%	72%
Principal	81%	64%
Teacher	67%	40%
Curriculum Specialist	0%	14%
School Site Council	0%	0%
Union	0%	0%
Parent Teacher Association	0%	0%

Note: Ratings were determined from summing responses that ranked the level of influence each of 9 groups had on the above item. Respondents indicated the most influential, second most influential, and third most influential (3, 2, 1) from among the 9 groups.

Figure 10. Innovation – Principal Response

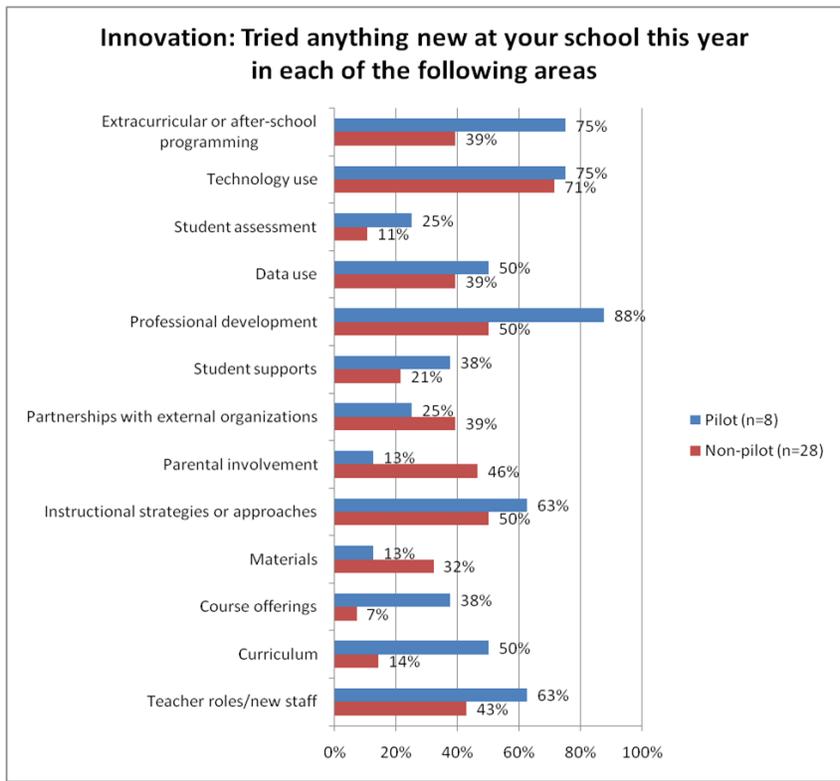


Figure 11. Autonomy – Teacher Response

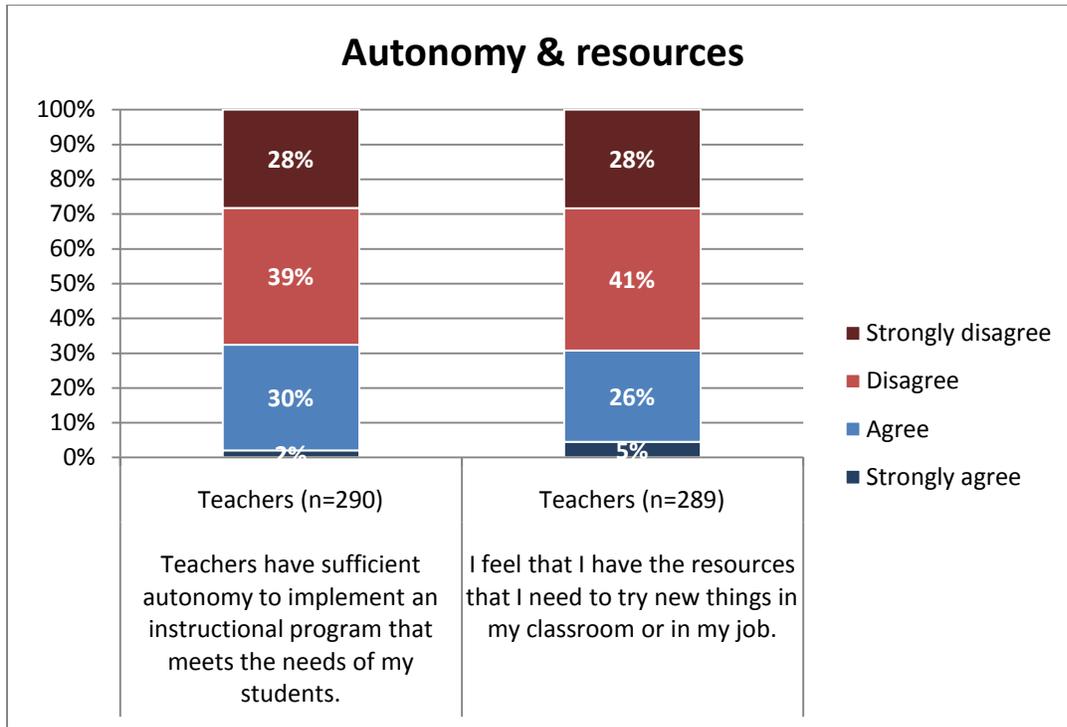


Figure 12. Support – Principal Response

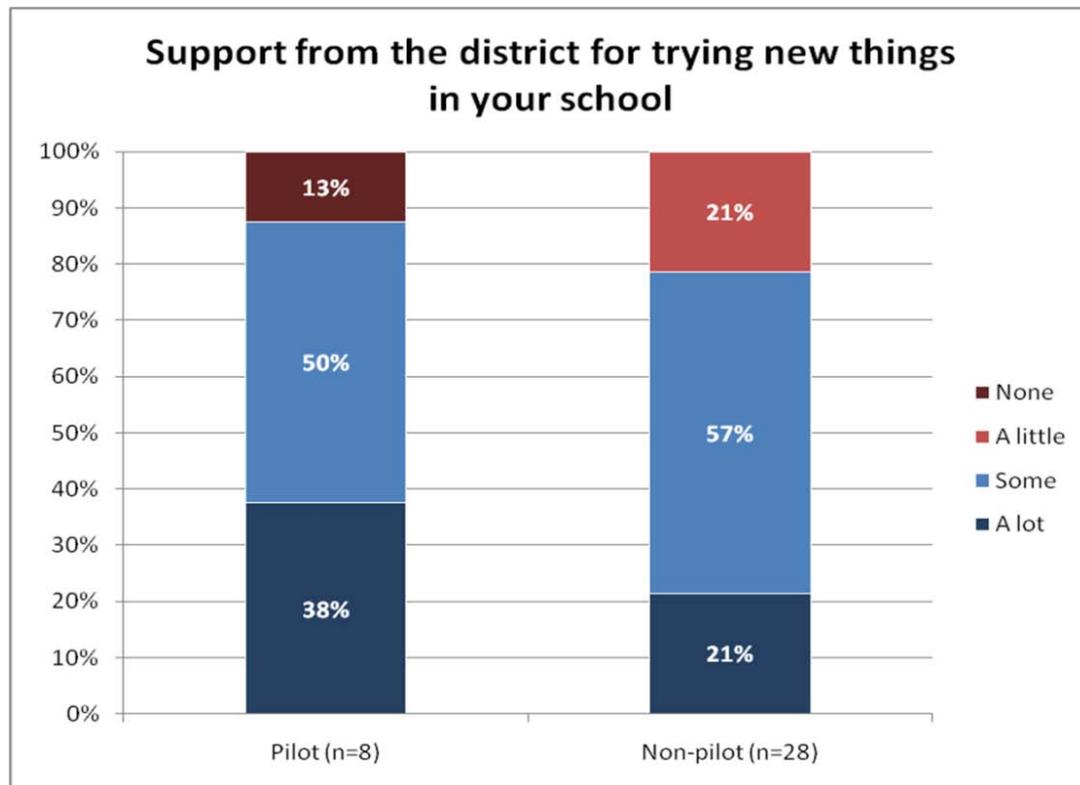


Figure 13. Support – SSC Response

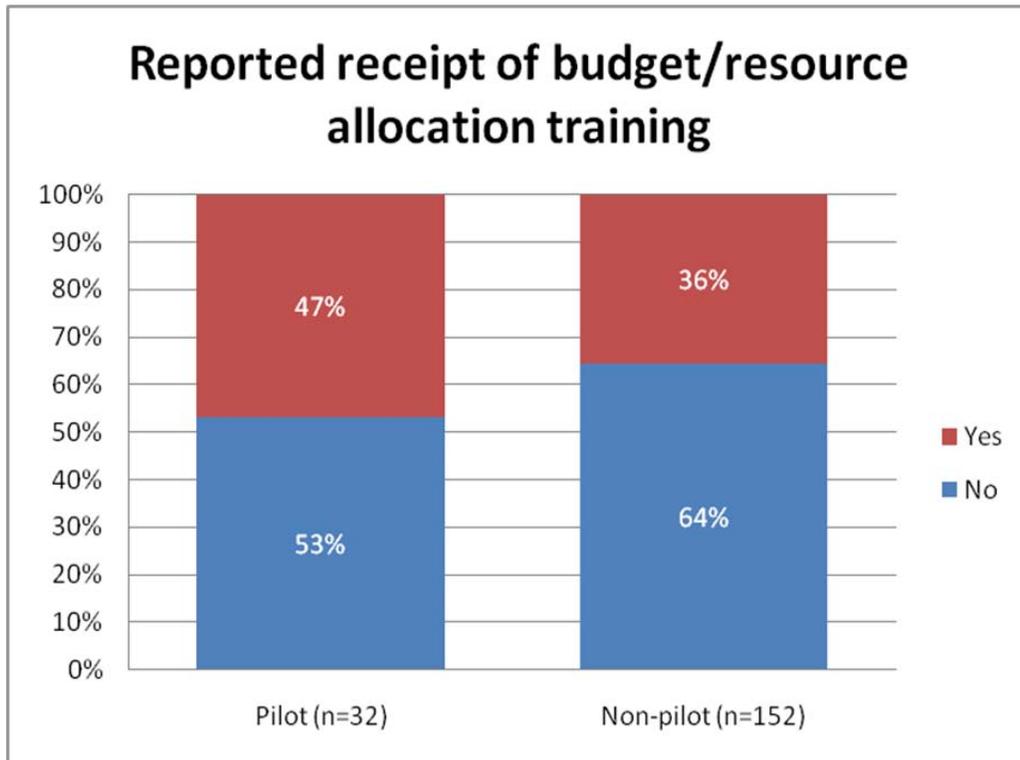


Figure 14. Support – SSC Response

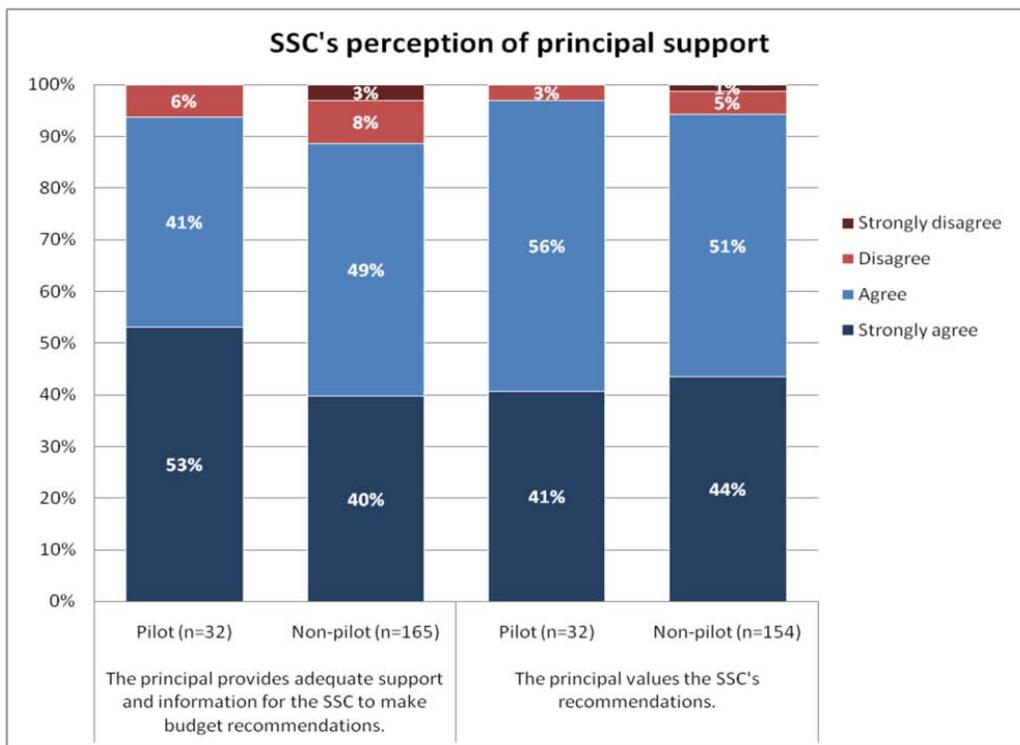


Figure 15. Opportunities to Provide Input – Teacher Response

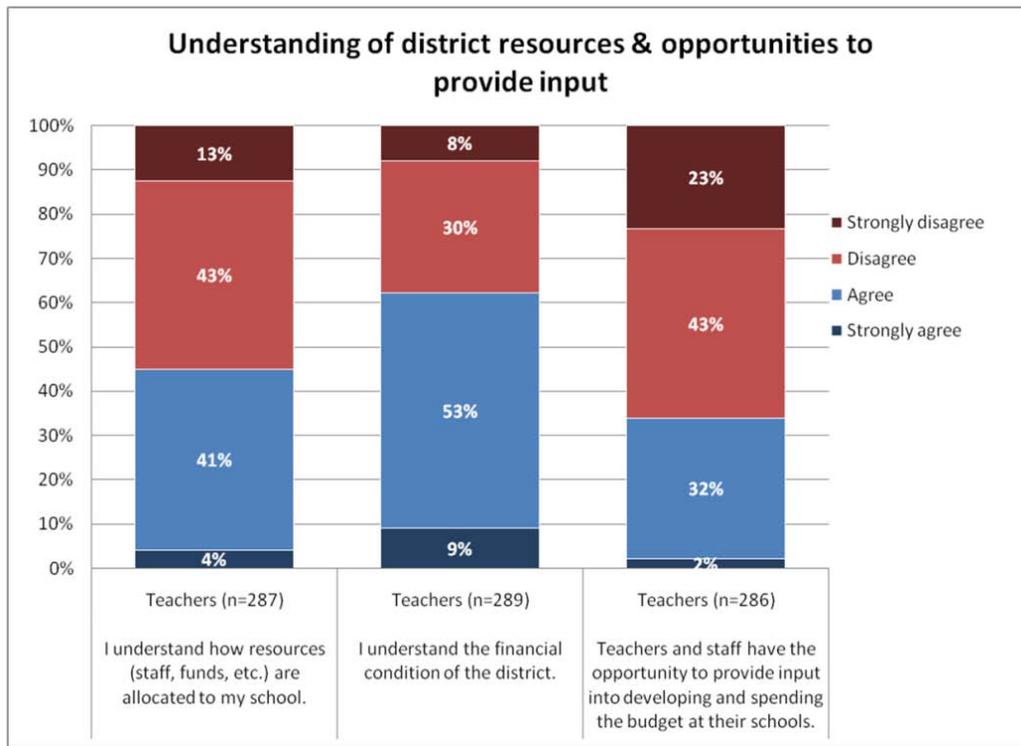


Figure 16. Opportunities to Provide Input – SSC Response

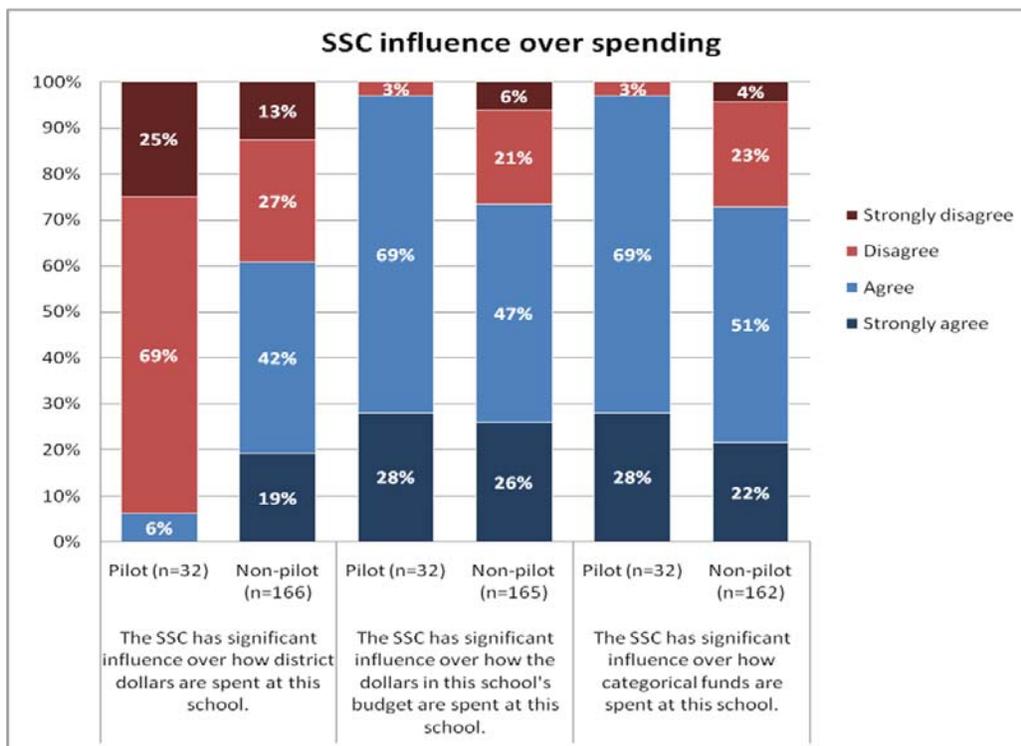


Figure 17. Accountability – Principal Response

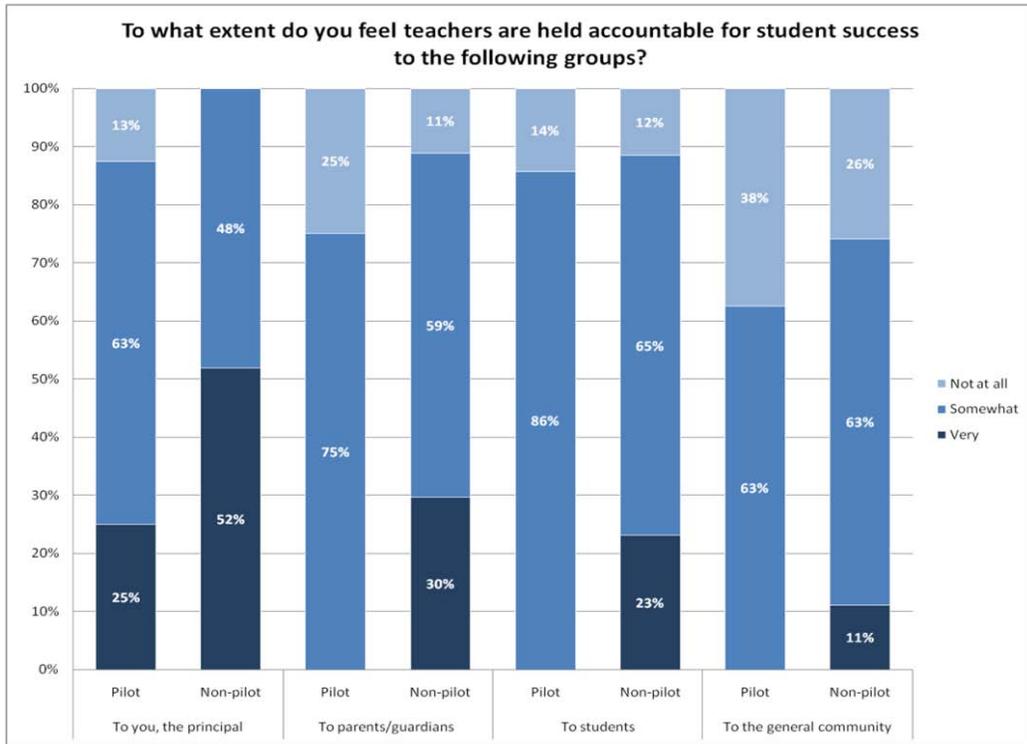


Figure 18. Accountability – Teacher Response

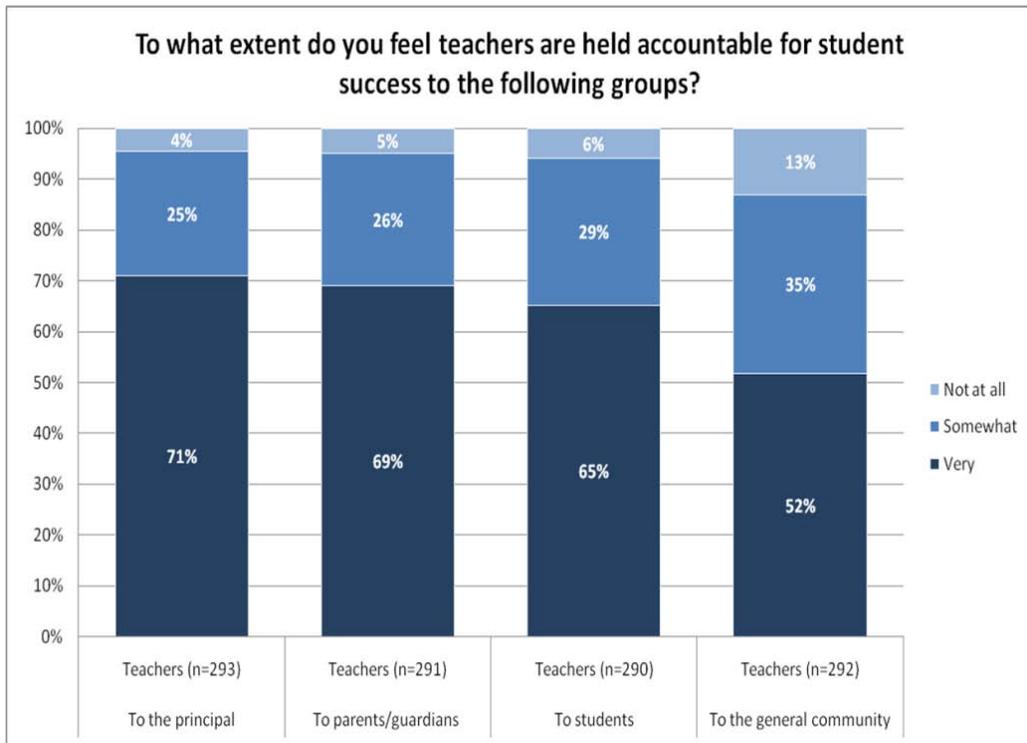


Figure 19. Accountability – Teacher Response

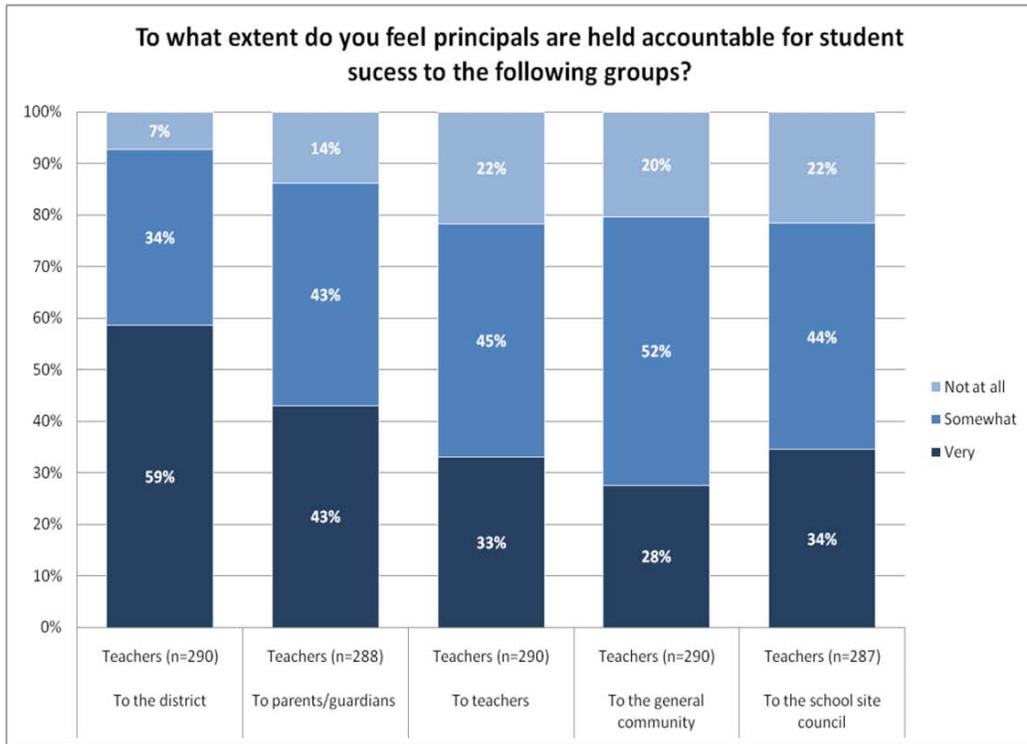


Figure 20. Accountability – SSC Response

