

LEVEL 2 THERAPEUTIC MODEL SITE

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Abstract: L2, one of the original sites first funded under the Therapeutic Residential Model Initiative in 2001-2002, is operated as a peripheral dormitory. This dormitory cares for 185 boys and girls in grades 1-12 who attend local public schools. L2 presented an outstanding proposal which identified gaps in services and presented a reasonable budget to address those gaps by adding additional mental health services and increasing the number of residential and recreation staff. With only minor modifications to this budget, the site efficiently and effectively implemented the strategies it had proposed and utilized evaluation feedback to fine-tune systems and maximize positive outcomes. The Therapeutic Residential Model funds enabled the site to move from a functional dormitory to a therapeutic residential situation where the needs of students are assessed and addressed. Outcome indicators in spring 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 showed impacts in a number of areas when compared with the baseline year of 2000-2001:

- *Retention of students steadily increased, going from 40.7% in 2000-2001 to 68.4% in 2004-2005.*
- *75 students graduated from high school during the four Therapeutic Residential Model years, compared with 41 in the preceding four years.*
- *Academic Proficiency and ACT scores improved significantly.*
- *Thirty-day cigarette use dropped from 62% in spring 2001 to 38% in spring 2005 among 7th and 8th graders, from 58% to 33% among 9th and 10th graders, and from 72% to 29% among 11th and 12th graders.*
- *Alienation indices showed an increase in feelings of inclusion and a decrease in lack of meaning.*

This site is an outstanding example of what can be done with a well-designed and responsibly implemented Therapeutic Model Program, and the measurable impacts which can result from such strategic use of resources.

Level 2 Therapeutic Model Site

Located in a rural area in the Midwest, the L2 site operates as a tribally controlled grant school under Public Law 100-297 (the Indian Education Act of 1988). Continuously operated for well over a century, the institution provided an academic program for the first 60 years of its existence, but for the last six decades has served as a peripheral dormitory. The site, operating on 500 acres of farmland, woods, and ponds, serves 175 boys and girls of American Indian heritage in grades 1-12 from approximately 30 different tribes. The majority of students attend the local public schools, and an alternative high school on campus served approximately 15% of the students at the beginning of the funding period. While the Therapeutic Residential Model (TRM) project was underway, plans were being carried out to build a school on campus to serve all students in grades 1-12. The site received an average of approximately \$3,200 in TRM funding per student per year over the course of the grant.

L2 first received TRM funding in school year (SY) 2001-2002. The site efficiently implemented its proposal and creatively incorporated additional recommendations from an evaluation which utilized a comprehensive prevention research model (DeJong, 1995). The proposal emphasized provision of mental health services to all students, under the assumption that such services were needed by students manifesting problems and those with risk factors. In the first year, the site worked to significantly upgrade staff and services, adding a counseling center to provide appropriate levels of mental health services to all students. The site also hired seven additional home living assistants, and upgraded the quality of candidates for these positions by increasing their starting rate of pay from \$6.00 to \$7.50 per hour. A recreation aide and a security guard were also added. Tutors were hired to enhance academic performance, and cultural activities were encouraged.

In the second year of funding, implementation and restructuring continued. After assessing reasons for lack of retention in the first year, the site focused on restructuring students' experiences in the first weeks of their stay to assist their transition and to reduce the number of students lost due to homesickness. Mental health services were also at an optimum level this year, with highly qualified staff in a number of positions. A Rites of Passage ceremony was introduced to transition boys from the elementary to the middle and high school dorm. Evaluation in this second TRM year focused more closely on quality of staff and programs.

In the third year of TRM funding (2003-2004), the first and second grade classrooms were put into service as a first step in establishing a school for grades 1-12 on campus. The administration responded to recommendations for tighter monitoring of staff and requiring and enforcing standards. Several staff with less than optimal student interactions were replaced early in the year. A much-needed revamping of the recreation department took place at the end of the year. The loss of an outstanding male counselor early in the year had some impact on provision of mental health services. The size of life skills groups was decreased to more manageable levels, providing a more effective format for interactions and learning. An informal peer mentoring process emerged, with members of the senior class assuming responsibility for advising and befriending younger students.

In SY 2004-2005 the focus was on nutrition and health. An invigorated recreation staff teamed with the food service department to address widespread problems of obesity. In SY 2005-2006, classrooms accommodating grades 3-6 were put into operation.

Student Characteristics

Life Stressors. Table 1 shows responses of L2 students on the Prevention Planning Survey section of the American Drug and Alcohol Survey (ADAS), administered under anonymous conditions in fall 2001. It is clear that many incoming students had experienced school failure and been exposed to violence as either perpetrators or victims.

Table 1
History of Incoming Students, Fall 2001
– Anonymous ADAS Self Reports

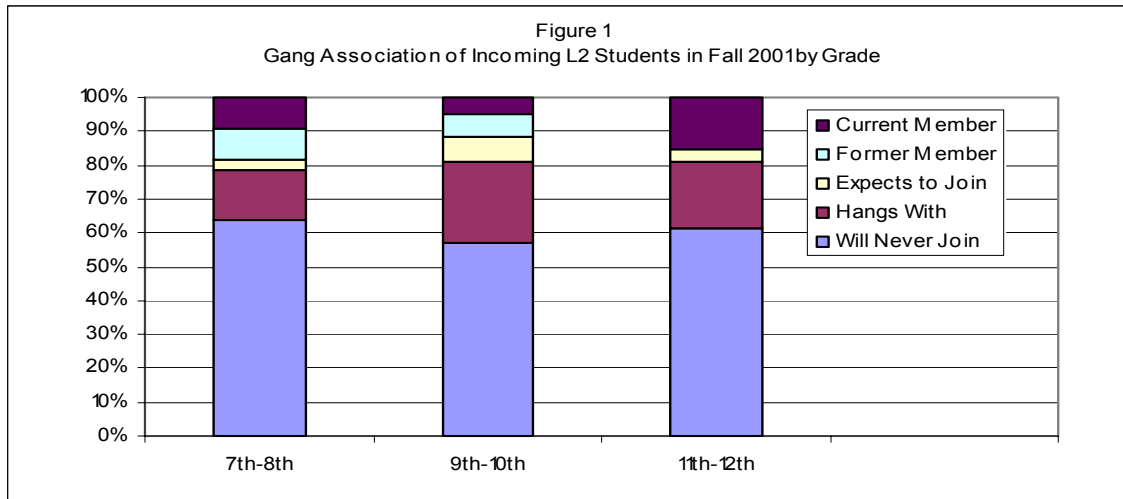
Item	7 th -8 th grade	9 th -10 th grade	11 th -12 th grade
History of Antisocial Activity			
- Have been arrested	25%	39%	19%
- Have robbed someone	19%	21%	23%
- Have beaten up somebody	64%	71%	52%
- Have hurt someone using club/chain/ knife /gun	19%	18%	22%
School Failure			
- Have flunked a grade	50%	41%	46%
- Have been expelled from school	14%	25%	36%
Victimization			
- Have been beaten up by peer	19%	25%	33%
- Have been beaten up by someone not of same age	18%	37%	44%
- Been hurt with a club/knife/gun	9%	12%	28%
- Been robbed	22%	19%	24%

Suicidal Ideation. In fall 2005, the Children's Depression Inventory was administered at L2. Table 2 shows results on an item which asks about suicidal feelings in the past two weeks.

Table 2
Distribution of Student Responses on CDI Suicide Item by Grade

Responses	5 th -6 th	7 th -8 th	9 th -10 th	11 th -12 th
I do not think about killing myself.	66.7%	50.0%	50.0%	62.5%
I think about killing myself but I would not do it.	27.3%	38.9%	38.2%	32.5%
I want to kill myself.	6.1%	11.1%	11.8%	5.0%

Students were also asked in fall surveys about their gang involvement. Figure 1 shows the percentage of students in fall 2001 choosing each option to describe their level of involvement.



Using the short form of the Jessor Alienation Scale (Jessor, Donovan, & Costa Frances, 1992), baseline measures of alienation were taken at two time points prior to funding, in spring 2001 at the end of SY 2000-2001, and in fall 2001 at the beginning of the first year of funding. While responses were similar at the two time points for the older age group, alienation was higher in the younger group at the end of SY 2000-2001 than at the beginning of the next year (Table 3).

Table 3
Percentage of students agreeing with Jessor Items
Prior to TRM Funding

Items from the Jessor Alienation Scale	Ages 9-12		Ages 13+	
	Spring 01	Fall 01	Spring 01	Fall 01
Hardly anything I'm doing in my life means very much to me.	69%	57%	43%	44%
I sometimes feel unsure about who I really am.	92%	51%	40%	43%
It's not up to me to help out when people I know are having problems	62%	40%	27%	31%
It's hard to know how to act most of the time since you can't tell what other people expect.	85%	50%	61%	57%

The BarOn Emotional Quotient Inventory focuses on a number of areas necessary for successful functioning in the world, including intrapersonal skills (inner knowledge and inner balance), interpersonal skills, ability to manage stress, and adaptability (reflecting confidence in ability to deal with situations that arise around oneself). Responses on the BarOn at the beginning of the first TRM school year (fall 2001) indicated many incoming students scored low enough on subscales that intervention was indicated. Thirty-eight percent of respondents in grades 4-12 needed help in the intrapersonal area, 66% needed help in developing interpersonal skills, 30% needed assistance with stress management skills, and 60% had low confidence in their ability to adapt to challenges.

Substance Abuse. In fall 2001, many incoming students reported having tried various substances (Table 4). By junior high, most incoming students had experimented with alcohol, marijuana, and cigarettes.

Table 4
Percentage of L2 Students Reporting
Past Substance Use, Fall 2001

	4 th -6 th	7 th -8 th	9 th -10 th	11 th -12 th
Alcohol	27%	62%	77%	91%
Marijuana	13%	60%	76%	78%
Cigarettes	33%	64%	83%	73%
Inhalants	15%	11%	21%	9%

Physical Problems. A problem with obesity was first quantified in SY 2003-2004 when the students' body mass index (BMI) was systematically measured. Over 80% of the students were identified as being overweight or obese. Blood tests at intake identified 11 students whose blood sugar was so elevated that they were transported to the local hospital for professional assessment and treatment.

Baseline Retention. The site had a serious problem with retention. When the cohort of all students entering by count week was analyzed for each of the two years preceding funding, only 39.8% in SY 1999-2000 and 40.7% in SY 2000-2001 made it to the end of the academic year. Many students left early in the year due to homesickness. Others had to be sent home for protection of fellow students, or to inpatient facilities because the site had inadequate resources to deal with their emotional problems. Many students were pulled out of school by parents who needed them for babysitting or emotional support. Others were lost when there were changes in the custodial situation or incarceration status of parents.

Site Resources

Facility

Facilities are generally in excellent condition. The girls' dorm, constructed within the past decade, is light and airy, housing three to four girls per room in two wings where rooms are clustered around a large living area with skylights. The boys are housed two to a room in a building with four wings. With the increase in retention from 40.7% prior to TRM to 72.7% at

the end of the third year of TRM funding, concern arose about overcrowding in the dormitories. Prior to SY 2004-2005, an additional eight rooms were added to the girls' dormitory to reduce overcrowding.

An attractive library containing a computer lab also provides a storm shelter adequate to accommodate all students in its basement. The cafeteria is well-equipped and clean, with internal walls decorated with the seals of several tribes served by the site. The on-campus gymnasium has a recently replaced floor and air circulation system. Over the three years of TRM funding, the weight room was expanded and improved. The gym has a large front area, designed to be used as a crafts and activity area, and as a student canteen. It has been converted to house the alternative program for 25 high school students. Three houses on campus have been converted to a counseling center, a campus museum, and a tutoring center. An extensive swine-raising operation on one corner of the campus affords a number of students the opportunity to raise hogs for show and sale.

Modular buildings house classrooms. In SY 2003-2004, first and second grade classes were first held on campus. By the beginning of SY 2005-2006, grades 3-6 also attended class on campus, and plans had been drafted for a new high school on campus.

Financial and Staff Resources

All TRM funds expended at this site went to upgrading its services and increasing salaries to the bare minimum necessary to attract and hold qualified staff. None of the funds were used for existing programs. The tribe operating the school has consistently been generous and flexible in its support of the institution, and provided funds to fill gaps not budgeted for in the original proposal, but identified during the program. Using TRM funding, a number of new positions were filled which addressed gaps in staffing and services to students. New hires included seven to nine home-living assistants, a recreation supervisor, a recreation aide, a security guard, a behavioral therapist, and a registered nurse. The additional staff brought number of personnel to 75. In order to attract new staff and retain existing staff, the pay rate was increased for all home-living assistants. TRM staff trainings at the beginning of each school year included topics addressing concerns identified in the previous year's evaluation.

Staff morale was high and while staff showed little reluctance to give opinions, there was little dissention. The administrator practiced an open-door policy with staff, and he had their confidence and support. His talent for nurturing and bringing out the best in staff added to the team effort. His inclusion of the staff in group problem-solving bolstered support for policies. Staff were aware of the TRM program and their enthusiasm was high throughout the course of funding.

A wave of illness, which closed other schools in the area, struck the campus during the course of both the first and second TRM years, but the site stayed open and continued functioning in part due to the TRM funding of additional dorm staff positions.

The teamwork at this site is exemplary. The high morale may partially have been due to a 12-month pay schedule. When needed, staff cheerfully work extra hours during the school year, knowing that they would be credited with this time during holidays and during the summer. Staff members can also work relaxed schedules during the summer when the school is open to various small programs and only a reduced staff is needed. A number of staff work at several different sets of duties and perform several different roles. The Intensive Residential Guidance clerk also does the newsletter, a nutritionist does fitness activities for girls, a social worker helps students produce a school yearbook, a cook does study hall tutoring, and the librarian coordinates tutorial services. The administrator was seen helping out everywhere, tutoring

students in the evenings, supervising the weight room, assisting with the birth of baby pigs, and flipping burgers for Saturday activities. The environment is structured much like an extended family. A licensed counselor functions as a mother figure, and also acts as gatekeeper and coordinator for mental health, life skills, and social services. The highly involved administrator functions as a father or authority figure, while other staff take on roles similar to those of concerned uncles and aunts. Staff members develop creative programs and act as an early warning system that funnels information to the counselors regarding behavioral changes and issues affecting individual students. Like all aunts and uncles, staff members have their own foibles as well as strengths, and a high tolerance for individuality exists. What dissent exists between staff members is generally related to differences in opinion on parenting styles used in management of students. The styles range from authoritarian to permissive, with some staff members inclined to indulge students to compensate for the excessive strictness they perceived in their fellow staff members. Students spoke freely about staff members who let them "get away with anything" and those that they perceived as too controlling.

The site showed unusual flexibility in its treatment of students. Like parents who ferry a bevy of offspring to after-school activities, staff members are seen constantly coming and going with individuals or groups of students, taking them to appointments, sporting events, shopping, family emergencies, and other activities. A call from a grandparent in Florida who wanted to see his grandchild over the weekend and promised a plane ticket resulted in a staff member driving the student two hours each way to and from the airport to deliver and pick him up. When students fail to return from a home visit, staff are dispatched to fetch them. While administrative and dormitory staff are often pressed into service, counseling staff most often serve as transporters, utilizing the time to interact with students.

This site has an unusually strong emphasis on post-graduation support for high school seniors. Students are assisted in choosing colleges or vocational schools compatible with their interests and are supported through out the process of application. The academic counselor arranges financial aid packages to enable students to attend the college or school of their choice, and students receive a monthly financial stipend from the site as long as they stay enrolled in a post-secondary education program. The numerous students who choose to attend the local campus of the state university come back regularly for visits. A number of high school students report that they have chosen to transfer to this boarding school because of its reputation for getting students into college.

Family and Community Involvement

In many ways, L2 is a model for how an institution can work with community resources. The tribe operating the institution has an excellent relationship with the site, providing funding and in-kind staff positions where needed, as well as medical care for all students regardless of their tribal affiliation. The relationship with other governmental agencies is enhanced by the on-site placement of two social workers provided by the State Department of Human Services. The two social workers participate as full members of the therapeutic team. The administration works cooperatively with the local university to place and support its high school graduates. While there is some discrimination against L2 students who attend the local high school, the L2 administration had a cooperative relationship with the public school system. Increasing cultural activities has provided an additional connection to the community. Interested students are now being taught the language of the Nation operating L2, and their American Indian dance group is frequently asked to perform at both community and statewide cultural celebrations. In the course of TRM funding, L2 has increased tribal contacts in the surrounding area to provide additional

cultural experiences and support to students, and has transported students to cultural events in the surrounding area.

The site also works well with families. L2 staff assist in the ongoing contact between children and families, making home visits as necessary. The two on-site social workers meet with parents and social service representatives, attend court hearings, do home studies, and make home visits. They are present for IEP meetings. They also assist students in writing letters home to parents and communicating with family and friends using e-mail from the computer lab in the library. A "Parent Compact," part of the application, designates respective areas of accountability among students, parent/guardians, and school. The site provides students with trips home for Thanksgiving, Christmas, spring break, and summer. Parents, many of whom live in state, are encouraged to take their children home for visits at least once a month. Rooms in the dorms are reserved for parents of students who wish to visit the site. Parents are asked to come in for disciplinary consultations, or are connected to the proceedings via conference calls. Parents are invited to Parent Day and the Christmas play.

TRM funds in the first two years were used to increase communication by distributing the school newsletter that, among other things, profiles students of the month. This newsletter is sent to all parents. When the newsletter was replaced in the third year by a yearbook, some key aspects of the newsletter were included with the superintendent's quarterly letter to parents.

A video project was completed to introduce parents who live at great distances to their children's lives at L2. Approximately one-half of the students have siblings or cousins with them at L2, and nearly all have a relative on staff or enrolled as a student. The boarding school's willingness to take back students who have left has allowed some families to treat the school as a revolving door. Certain families regularly enroll their children and remove them at the same time each year, often after Christmas festivities. Many parents consider the school to be a temporary haven for their children while they work out stressful situations in their lives. As such a haven, L2 is performing a valuable service for many children. Given the lack of control L2 has over outside factors such as parents' decisions to re-establish their families, the site has done well to significantly increase retention under TRM. This change indicates that the comfort level of both children and their families has increased with regard to their residence at L2. This increase can be seen as an improvement in retaining those students who, in the past, have not gotten the care and attention they need for their problems.

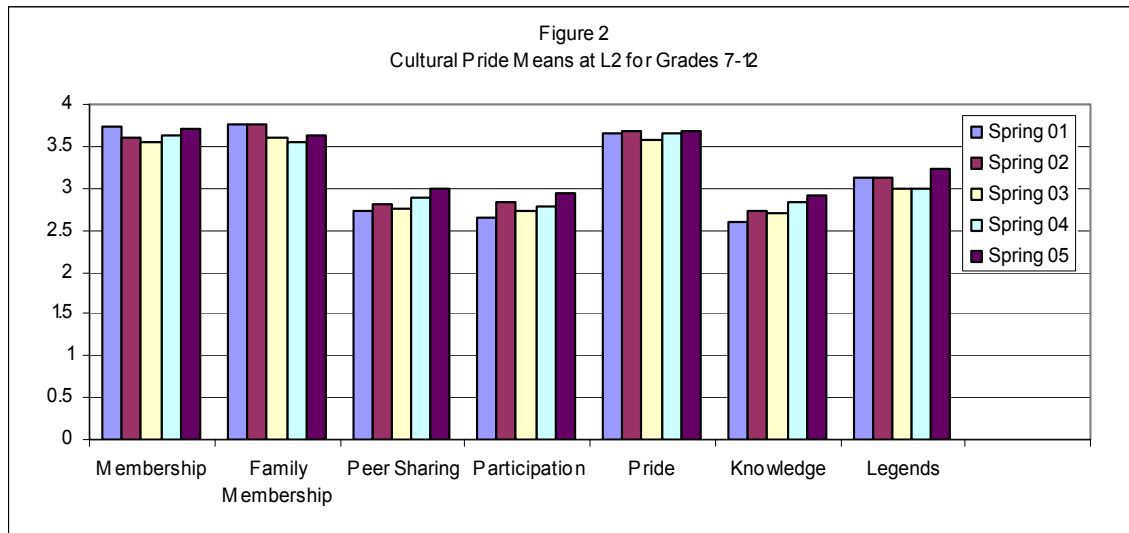
Program and Service Components

Cultural Programming

In the baseline evaluation report, gaps were noted in the program and service components. Students at L2 were required to attend Christian religious services, but traditional religious leaders did not have equal standing. Some traditional crafts were done in the alternative school, but these were not available to the other students. For years, the substance abuse counselor had brought a cultural dimension to his work, crafting carved prayer feathers and Indian flutes for students. However, compared with the wealth of cultural activity at other sites, lack of activities at this site made it seem like a non-Indian residential boarding school. This finding suggested that a lack of culturally relevant services could contribute to the lack of meaning and identity expressed by many L2 students. Although this element was not originally included in the proposal or budget, the administration and staff acted upon the recommendation that it be enhanced. Several elements were added. Cultural awareness and cultural activities were sponsored by several dorm staff. One staff person assisted the younger boys in tracking

down histories of their ancestors. Another sewed traditional dance regalia for students and recruited knowledgeable older students to teach traditional dance to fellow students. An Indian Club, sponsored by several staff members, came into being and began to perform at local cultural celebrations. The administration supported these activities with materials and transportation, and provided comp time to dorm staff who added these activities to their responsibilities. At the end of SY 2003-2004, when staff turnover imperiled Indian Club activities, high school girls with experience in the program stepped up and assisted new staff in organizing traditional dance performances. A staff member wired a wing of the younger boys' dormitory, allowing staff to play recorded American Indian flute music in the halls. A Rites of Passage ceremony with traditional elements was developed by a residential staff person to mark the yearly transition of the younger boys to the older boys' dorm. The TRM funding has also allowed students to make field trips that included American Indian and other cultural celebrations. The nation which operates the site provided backing for their traditional language to be taught in school classes.

Comparison of survey results suggests that these enhancements had some impact on both cultural pride and alienation. Figure 1 shows cultural pride means at each spring measurement for grades 7-12, based on a scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) through 4 (*a lot*). Originally low areas of peer sharing, participation, and knowledge have trended upward since the introduction of TRM.



Items:

Membership:	"I like being a member of my tribe."
Family membership:	"I like that my family is part of my tribe."
Peer sharing:	"I talk to my friends about things having to do with my tribe's culture (religion, customs, values, food, language, arts, pow wow and other celebrations)."
Participation:	"I participate in tribal and other Indian celebrations."
Pride:	"I am proud to be a member of my tribe."
Knowledge:	"I know about my tribe's culture and history."
Legends:	"I like telling and listening to tribal legends and stories about my ancestors."

Socialization/Life Skills

The majority of the students at this site are at-risk youth. According to Brendtro, Brokenleg, and Van Bockern (2002), key components of an environment that seeks to “reclaim” such youth are:

- (1) Experiencing belonging in a supportive community, rather than being lost in a depersonalized bureaucracy.
- (2) Meeting one’s needs for mastery, rather than enduring inflexible systems designed for the convenience of adults.
- (3) Involving youth in determining their own future, while recognizing society’s need to control harmful behavior.
- (4) Expecting youth to be caregivers, not just helpless recipients overly dependent on the care of adults. (p. 4)

In every boarding school, there are proactive systems that attempt to meet these needs, encourage healthy social development, stimulate moral development, and encourage pro-social behavior. There are also reactive discipline systems in place to discourage behavior that does not conform to norms. A number of both elements are in place at L2 to foster life skills related to moral and social development.

Proactive Components

Agricultural Program. An agricultural program teaches students how to raise, care for, and show livestock. The hog program addresses a number of students’ emotional, social, and life skills needs, and it may be a key element in the students’ success.

Work-Study. Students are allowed to perform work on campus in exchange for money to be spent on clothing. Students obeying school and residential rules receive rewards. In addition, a number of students are allowed to remain on campus during the summer for a building maintenance work program.

Rewards for pro-social behavior. In the first two years of TRM, the school recognized some students for pro-social behavior. Students competed for the Famous for a Month Award for good behavior, which was given each month to two recipients, one male and one female. This award was difficult to obtain. Many students came from homes where they were not consistently rewarded for pro-social behavior, and they had difficulty maintaining the consistency required to obtain this award. Recognizing this, in the third year of TRM the site implemented a Good Behavior Report which was similar to a school report card, with ratings of seven different characteristics in each of three areas: attitude, performance, and skills. The weakness of the Good Behavior Report was that it was too global of an assessment and too analytic of a system. It was recommended in fall 2003 that a “caught being good” strategy be implemented. In this system, staff report individual acts of kindness, consideration, generosity, or helpfulness that they observe. Children cited for being good receive a certificate and a small award at a weekly ceremony and are entered into a weekly raffle for a larger prize. This system produces a variable-interval schedule of reinforcement which would be expected to provide the most lasting effect and make staff more aware of good things children are doing, as well as reinforcing good behavior. By spring 2004, the system had recognized 25 students for positive actions.

Life Skills Curricula. During the first year of TRM funding, the site systematically applied for and received Intensive Residential Guidance funding for all of its students. This funding mandated systematic assessment of students and the development of a program to address student needs. A major component of the required services was life skills training. Beginning in the first year of funding, life skills subjects were discussed during group or individual sessions with professional counselors. The counseling staff obtained an American Indian Life Skills Curriculum (LaFromboise, 1996) and used some of its lessons in structured activities. A number of part-time counselors with specialties in grief, sexual abuse, and other such issues worked with indicated groups. Sessions varied in quality and level of preparation. Over time, the system evolved to decrease group size to increase participation and effectiveness. Also, sessions that did not appear to be helping students were eliminated. A retreat format was used in later years, in which groups of students in specific age groups would travel to a retreat venue. The staff of the counseling center took responsibility for this component. In SY 2004-2005, in preparation for loss of funding, dormitory staff were encouraged to begin taking over these sessions.

The Rangers, a boy-scout type of organization, was begun early in the first year of funding, providing skill development, social bonding, and self-esteem building activities. Rangers was particularly popular with elementary and middle school students. Girls have been involved in a more sporadic girl scouts program.

Reactive Components.

Discipline. The handbooks for staff and students of L2 delineate standards for behavior. There are consequences for violation of rules. Students who damage property are expected to put in work-study hours to pay for repairs. Students with minor violations receive appropriate discipline and a denial of privileges. High school students who have difficulty adjusting to the standard classroom are removed from the public school and placed in the alternative school at the facility, or expelled. However, staff tended to be arbitrary in their application of the rules. Students reported that several staff members let them "get away with anything" while others were overly strict or appeared to administer discipline in a whimsical manner. Responses on the staff survey in spring 2003 shown in Table 5 indicated that staff in general considered this area to be a problem.

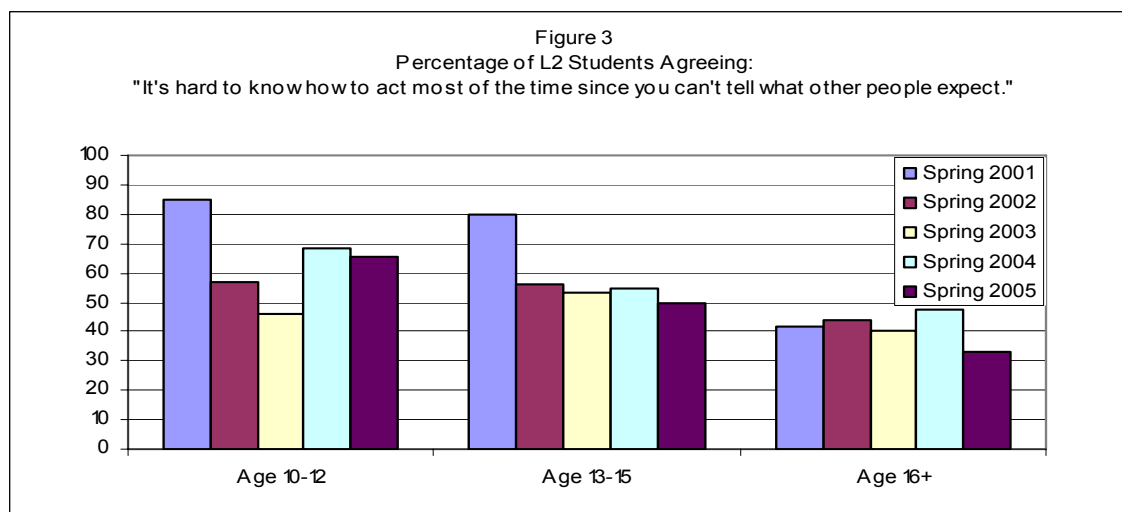
Table 5
Percentage of Staff Rating Item at 3 or 4 on a Scale of
0 (not a problem here) to 4 (a major problem)

	Spring 2003	Spring 2004
"Students need more discipline in the dorm."	54.4%	44.1%
"Students need more consistency in the dorm."	46.5%	43.1%
"Discipline is inconsistent, not all students are treated equally."	42.9%	31.1%

Dormitory staff were even more critical than other staff of this situation, with 74.1% giving serious-problem status to "Students need more discipline in the dorm"; 48.1% to "Students need more consistency in the dorm"; and 56% to "Discipline is inconsistent, not all students are treated equally." Based on these results, at the end of the second year of TRM funding a three-pronged approach was recommended to deal with the situation: (1) increased training of staff in parenting principles, child development, and behavior modification principles; (2) grassroots involvement of staff in establishing standards for discipline with which all could

concur; and (3) enforcement of these standards through rigorous oversight by supervisors, with ratings tied to performance objectives for each staff member and supervisor. In the third year of TRM, the administration addressed this situation with some success. Staff were involved in training and discussions of parenting skills. Administration also removed several staff members who shirked their duties or did not have primarily positive interactions with children. Based on survey responses, the percentage of staff rating the problem as serious or major (3 or 4) in spring 2003 compared with spring 2004 shows an improved situation (see Table 5).

Student responses to the Jessor Alienation item "It's hard to know how to act most of the time since you can't tell what other people expect," were also examined to see if the social environment had become more consistent. Figure 3 shows the percentage of students agreeing with this statement at each spring time point.



A chi square comparison of the overall percentage of students agreeing at baseline in spring 2001 with those agreeing in spring 2005 showed a significant decrease, from 63.8% to 46.9% ($\chi^2 = 5.547, p < .02$).

Substance Use Prevention Programming. Unlike sites that have academic programs on an enclosed campus, this site sends students out to local schools where they have considerable access to illegal substances. An advanced prevention program is required for students who violate the alcohol and drug policy, and violators are required to take random drug tests for the remainder of the school year. The school has access to two drug dogs and used TRM funds to hire an additional security guard.

Cigarette use was recognized as a serious problem at this site. A problem noted in early evaluations was that smoking was prevalent among staff members. Students were well aware that staff smoked in bathrooms and outside back doors. Surrounded by role models who smoked, it was not surprising that so many students copied their behavior. After recommendations to address this problem, the administration researched smoking cessation programs and sponsored staff members who were willing to try to quit smoking. Initiated in SY 2003-2004, and subscribed to by several prominent smokers on campus in 2004-2005, the effort appeared have a positive effect on the high school students. Figure 4 shows ADAS data on self-reported use of cigarettes in the past 30 days.

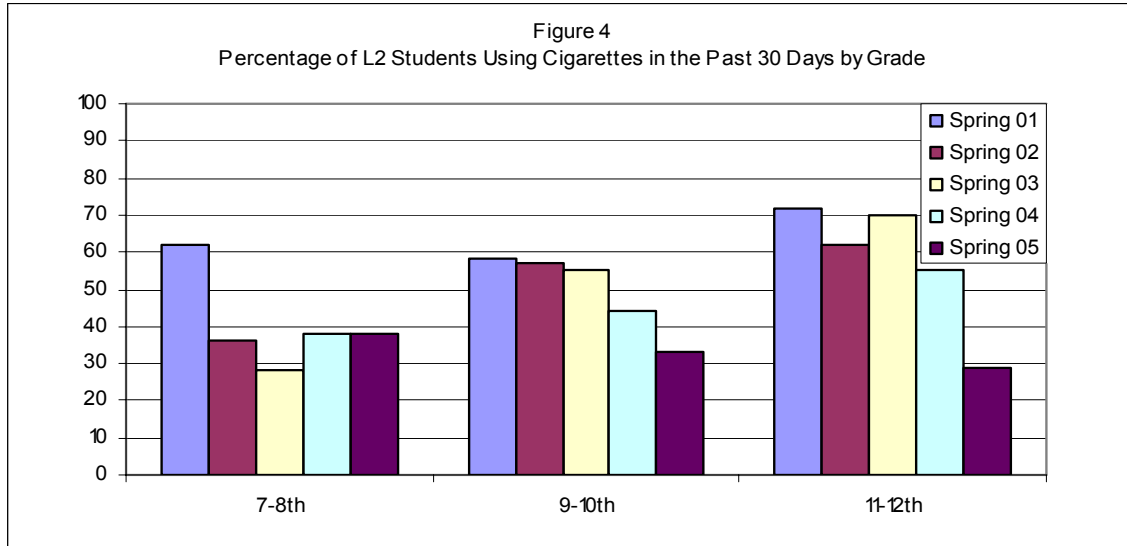


Figure 5 shows ADAS data on self-reported alcohol use among L2 students. Interdiction is difficult. Students have opportunities to obtain alcohol on a daily basis as they attend school in the local town, have frequent visitors on campus, and are encouraged to go home to be with their families when possible.

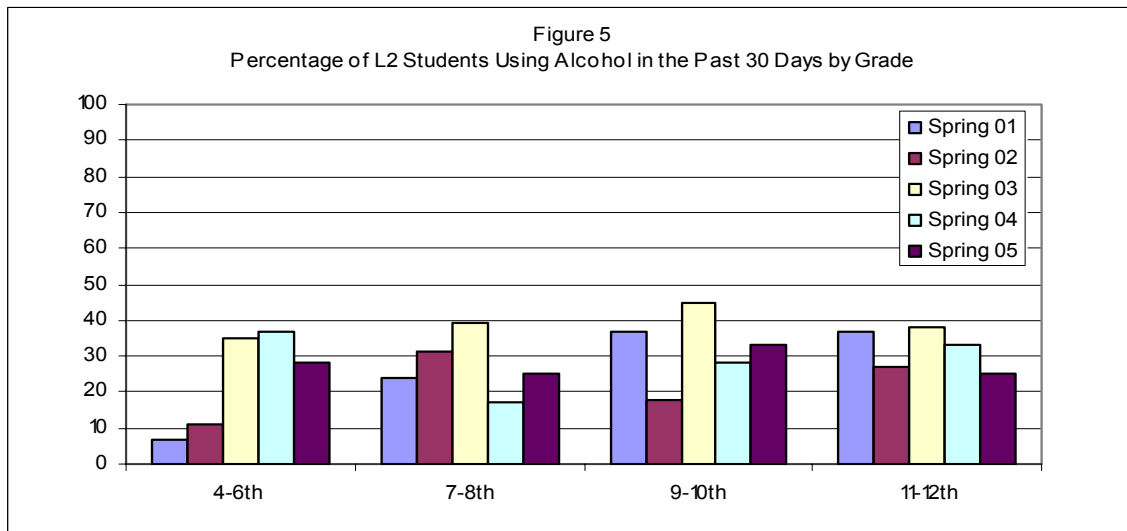
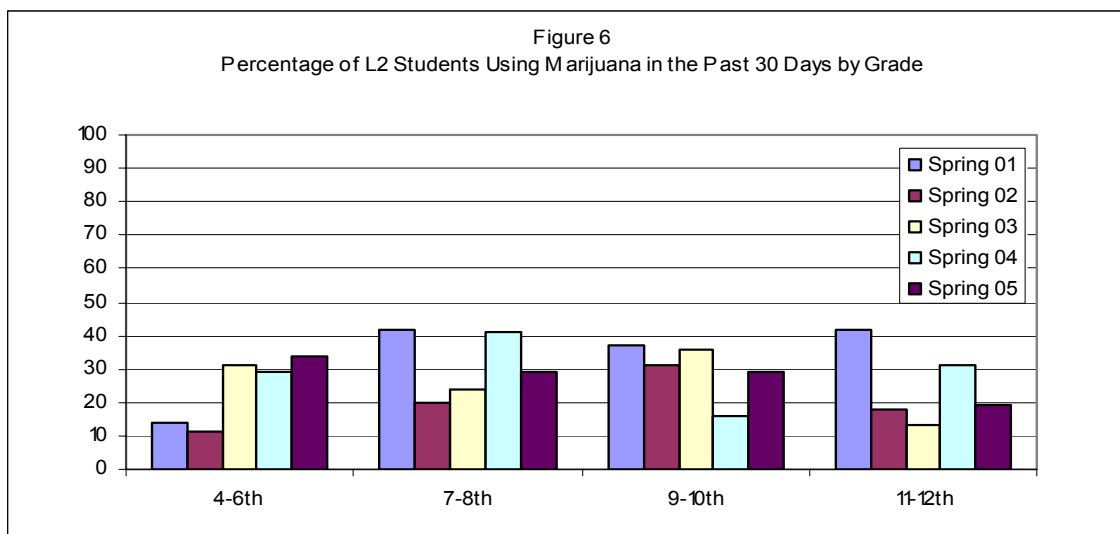


Figure 6 shows marijuana use in the past 30 days as reported anonymously on the ADAS. As drug use is reported to be common in the local schools, marijuana use, like alcohol use will continue to be a problem until L2 completes its school on campus. While the rate of use has declined since spring 2001, there is considerable fluctuation over the data points.



Academic Program

Students attend local schools in a town one mile from the campus. According to official school report card data, these schools do not have a high level of academic performance. The 70% performance benchmark for State Core Curriculum Tests is not being met in the fifth grade in math, U.S. government, geography, and the arts. In eighth grade, six of the seven benchmarks are not met. In high school, grades 10-12 also perform below the state average, with only 40% of students performing at satisfactory or above in English, 58% in U.S. history, and 38% in biology. This situation significantly limits the site's control over academic outcomes.

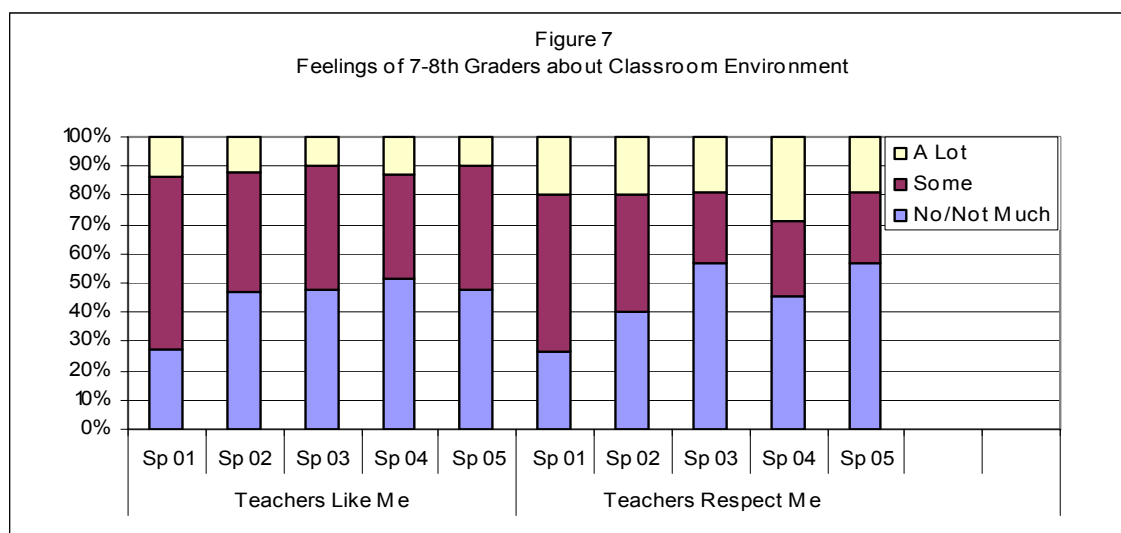
However, L2 provides strong academic encouragement and support for students. Study hall is provided for all students on a voluntary basis, and students receive rewards for good grades at the end of each nine-week quarter. Students' academic performance is closely monitored. The administration receives a list of D and F students each week from the public schools. The list is posted and these students are required to attend study hall. Failing students are also restricted from off-campus activities. Students remaining on the failing list for three weeks are restricted to their dorm. The alternative school on campus is available to students who have problems adjusting to the public schools. Additional tutors are brought in to assist students after school.

Library and Computer Resources. Fifty percent of staff surveyed at the end of SY 2002-2003 rated "lack of access to computer resources" to be a serious problem. Thirty-three percent rated it as such in spring 2004. The library is open 12 hours a week, from 6-8 p.m. Sunday through Friday. The log-in records show that the computer room in the library is being well utilized. However, concerns about propriety of male staff members being alone with girls in the library computer room are currently limiting its use to hours when the librarian or dormitory personnel are available. While computer rooms are available in dormitories, hours of operation are limited due to concerns over unsupervised Internet surfing.

Career Guidance. Seniors receive ACT preparation courses, as well as assistance in obtaining scholarships and visiting colleges. All graduates who attend post-secondary training receive a stipend. A military recruiter assists students interested in military careers. Eleventh and 12th grade students at L2 receive strong encouragement and support for attending college. The academic counselor is notable for his optimism and his enthusiasm in encouraging the students. The evaluator's first report noted a concern that some students were being inappropriately encouraged to attend college when they did not have the ability to succeed in that arena. This situation was addressed, and equal encouragement was given to students opting for vocational training. At L2, administration begins early to support post-secondary bound students by opening bank accounts for students in Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) custody. While some parents may spend the Social Security payments they receive for their children, payments made to L2 on behalf of DHHS children are safeguarded and banked for their personal use and for college expenses. Students also deposit prize money and the proceeds of hog sales into these accounts. Complete college financial aid packages are developed for L2 seniors. This encouragement helps to keep seniors in high school until graduation.

The Alternative School on campus provides services for up to 25 high school students. Packed into the area in the gymnasium intended for a student canteen, this program provides individualized programs and resources for students, allowing them to catch up to their same-age peers. The program has shown considerable success. According to teachers, these students perform well under this format. Many of them have progressed several grade levels in a year's time. Students are well-behaved in this setting and appear to be focused on academic achievement. Outside the classroom, alternative students appear to have bonded with each other in a pro-social manner and have occasionally taken the lead in pro-social activities on campus.

Construction of a School on Campus. It is clear that much of the academic situation is currently outside the control of L2. The interviewer found some consensus that the public school system does not have very rigorous academic standards, and that teachers there tended to use outmoded teaching methods and materials. Several students who had recently transferred to L2 said that the teachers were teaching them things that they had learned years before at their previous schools. Staff surveys at the end of SY 2002-2003 found discontent with what the public schools had to offer the students. Approximately 40% of staff respondents considered teacher scarcity and quality to be serious problems, 36% thought schoolroom discipline was inadequate, and 50% felt consistency was lacking in the schools. Some interviewees reported that they perceived discrimination at the schools against L2 students. A comparison of L2 students with students from other TRM schools found L2 respondents in spring 2004 to be less satisfied with their school experience. While the great majority of students attending other TRM schools liked their schools and felt their teachers liked them, at this site, seventh and eighth grade students generally did not feel liked and respected by their teachers (Figure 7).



The site is proceeding with the construction of a new school on campus, supported by the tribe. The first and second grade classrooms were completed and in operation by the beginning of SY 2003-2004; grades 3 and 4 were added in SY 2004-2005 and grades 5 and 6 were added in SY 2005-2006. Operational costs are being split between the school district and the tribe. When the on-site high school commences operation, the local junior high and high school system will lose approximately one-third of its current students.

Mental Health Services.

L2 had the most comprehensive counseling program of the three original sites. Review of student information with counselors made it clear that L2 is very much a therapeutic dormitory situation. Virtually all of the students are in some way walking wounded, dealing with issues stemming from problem home situations. The TRM program allowed the site to go from psychological assessment of only students having problems, to assessment of all students. Counselors report that the additional resources brought by TRM encouraged L2 to accept students whose emotional problems would have barred them from consideration in past years. Resources were also available to work with and retain students whose problems surfaced in the course of the year, rather than having to send them to outside treatment. Student services were concentrated at the new counseling center, and each child received two or more hours of professional group or individual counseling each week. Staff serving the mental health needs of students in SY 2002-2003 included two contracted full-time social workers, three full-time counselors, six part-time counselors (each 5-15 hours per week), and one psychiatrist offering 7.5 hours of service a week. A full-time licensed counselor acted as gatekeeper for mental health services. Psychotropic drugs were used only as a last resort. In the second year of funding when students with more severe emotional problems were increasingly accepted, approximately 10% came in on psychotropic medication. The site made attempts to discontinue these prescriptions and to use alternative methods of dealing with each child's problems. As a result, during the last two years of funding, only two students ended the year on medication. At the beginning of the TRM program, there were some indications that students were wary of counseling, viewing the counseling center and the TRM survey instruments as indications that

they were thought to be "crazy." However, in subsequent years the universal application of group and individual counseling and an emphasis on life skills training dissipated this perception. As time went on, the site increasingly emphasized counseling "on the hoof," using either informal chats with individual students or scheduled walks around campus with groups of students. The incidence of "cutting" declined. There was one suicide in spring 2005, but it was believed to be an accident resulting from experimentation following a suicide attempt of a family member. In SY 2003-2004 and SY 2004-2005, only two students needed inpatient care for problems which exceeded the internal capacity of the site.

Physical Health

Therapeutic Residential Model funding was used to add seven more dorm staff and to provide the services of a nurse, a recreation supervisor and recreational aide, expanding the range of health services and recreational activities the site had been able to offer to students. Funding allowed the site to provide health screenings to all students early in the year. The tribe provides backup to students' private insurance regardless of tribe, and the tribal hospital is frequently used by students. The facility has a gym and a fitness center, as well as outdoor athletic fields to support fitness activities. Students are involved in such activities as horseback riding, dance, camping, hiking, swimming, fishing, bowling, skating, and basketball.

A number of students at this site are visibly obese. The problem with obesity was first quantified in SY 2003-2004, when systematic weigh-ins and body mass index calculations identified 80% of students as overweight or obese, and concerns over elevated blood sugar sent 6% of students to the hospital for professional assessment and treatment. Several contributing factors were identified, including:

- Lack of physical exercise. The local school district requires physical education classes only for grades 1-6. Physical education funds for older students are dedicated to team sports. As many students are not involved in team sports, there is a clear gap in services which the school needed to bridge.
- A diet high in fats and protein was being provided in the cafeteria, and snack foods high in sugar, caffeine, and fats were available in vending machines.
- Genetics (the stocky build many children have inherited).

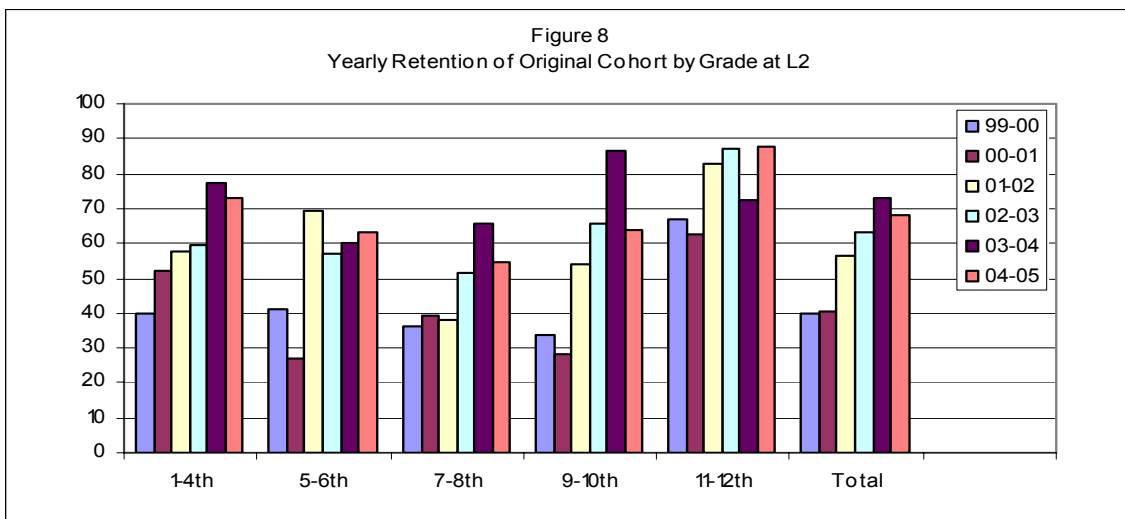
The site introduced a salad bar, worked with a nutritionist supplied by a grant from the tribe to educate students, collaborated with other TRM sites in working to provide a more healthful menu, and restricted caffeinated and high-carbohydrate options in vending machines. Project Fit America installed an outdoor exercise challenge course. The school identified obese students and developed individual exercise and dietary programs for them. These programs were also made available to the general student body. By the end of the final year of evaluation, one-third of student body was involved in these programs.

Outcomes

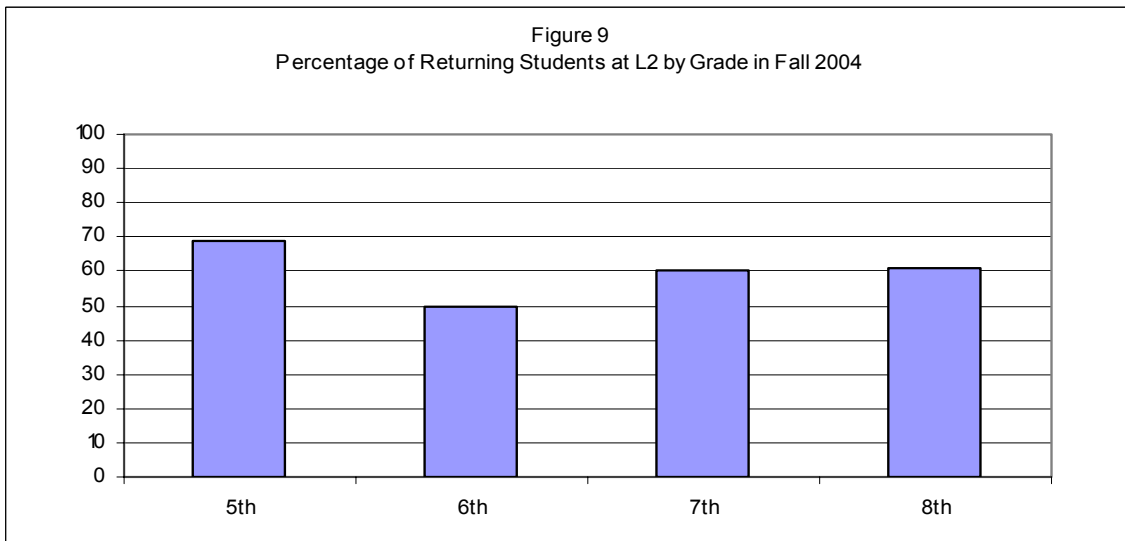
Outcome data tracked a number of indicators. Retention and return rates were considered the major indicators of a successful program. In addition, data were examined to evaluate key indicators associated with developmental success: school bonding, peer and social bonding, adaptability and stress management, meaning and identity, and academic achievement.

Major Indicators: Retention/Return Rate

A clear indicator of the apparent success of TRM changes to the program can be seen in the increased retention rate, as shown in Figure 8. Numbers were based on all children who entered the system by September 30th of each year. A student was considered to be retained if he or she either remained in the system throughout the year or graduated during that time. As Figure 8 shows, retention has steadily increased during the course of TRM funding. The overall retention rate climbed from pre-TRM years (39.8% in SY 1999-2000 and 40.7% in SY 2000-2001), peaking at 72.7% in SY 2003-2004 and maintaining at 68.4% in SY 2004-2005.



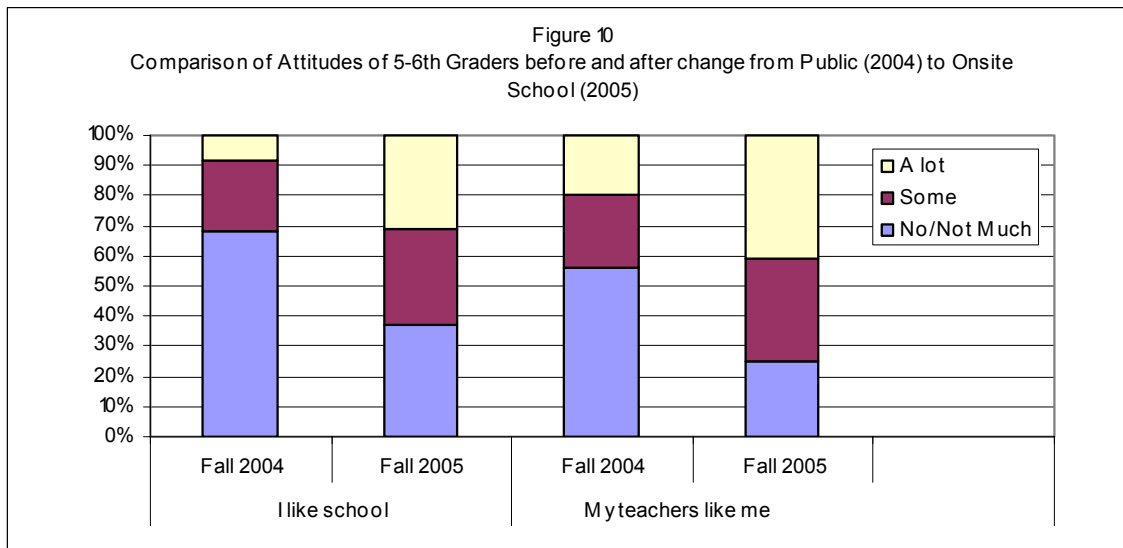
Return Rate. In fall 2004, the previous enrollment of students in grades 5-8 was examined. Over one-half of the students had been previously enrolled, providing a solid peer group of acclimated students to assist in the transition of incoming students.



Key Indicators

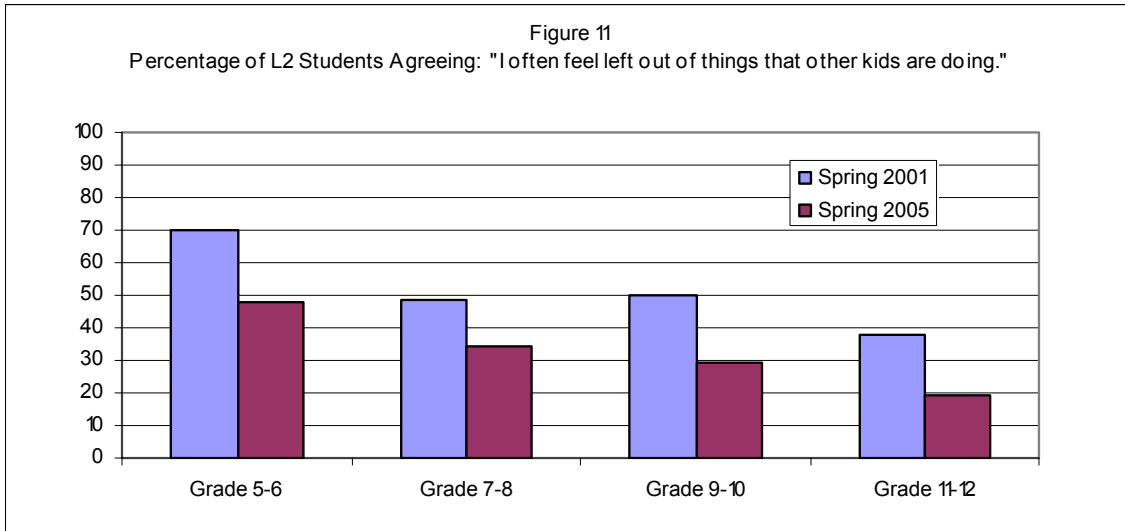
School Bonding Indicators

As previously noted in the discussion of Figure 7, many students did not feel liked and respected by their teachers in the public schools. In SY 2004-2005 the fifth and sixth grade students at L2 attended the local public grade school. In SY 2005-2006, the classroom on the campus had been completed, so fifth and sixth graders began classes on the L2 campus. Responses of fifth and sixth grade students were compared for fall 2004 (representing the public school condition) and fall 2005 (attending school on campus). As Figure 10 shows, attitudes toward school and feelings of being liked changed dramatically when students attended the on-site school. In fall 2004 (when attending public school), two-thirds of fifth and sixth graders said they did not like school; a year later (when classes were held on site), two-thirds said they liked it "some" or "a lot." In fall 2004, 44% of students thought their teachers liked them "some" or "a lot"; in fall 2005, 75% said teachers liked them "some" or "a lot."

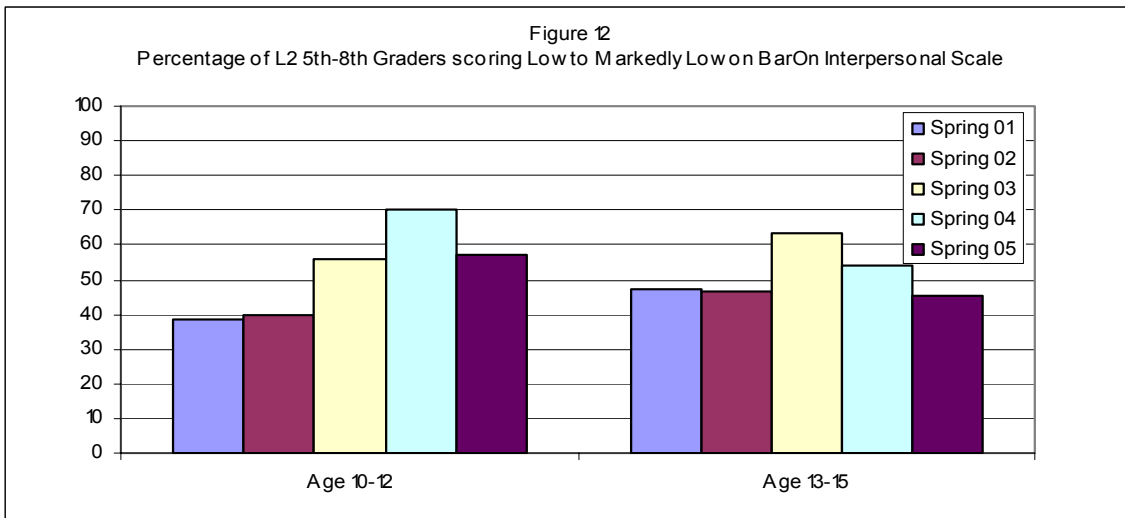


Peer and Social Bonding Indicators

Alienation. Figure 11 shows cross-sectional percentages of students agreeing with the Jessor item regarding feeling "left out." Feelings of being left out declined ($\chi^2 = 3.736, p < .06$) when spring 2001 and spring 2005 were compared.

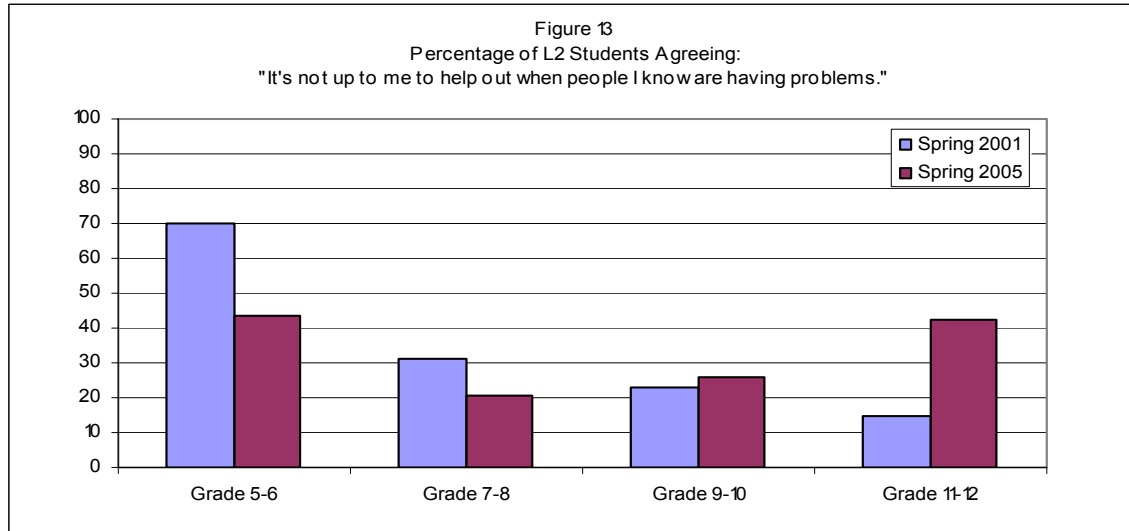


Interpersonal. As Figure 12 indicates, there was no decrease in the number of students scoring low on the BarOn Interpersonal scale. Outcomes here were very likely affected by a change in acceptance criteria after baselines had been taken. Because L2 now had the resources to deal with more difficult students, the site began to accept students who would have been rejected previously. Outcomes also were influenced by the increased retention rate, as the site became more successful in retaining marginal students.



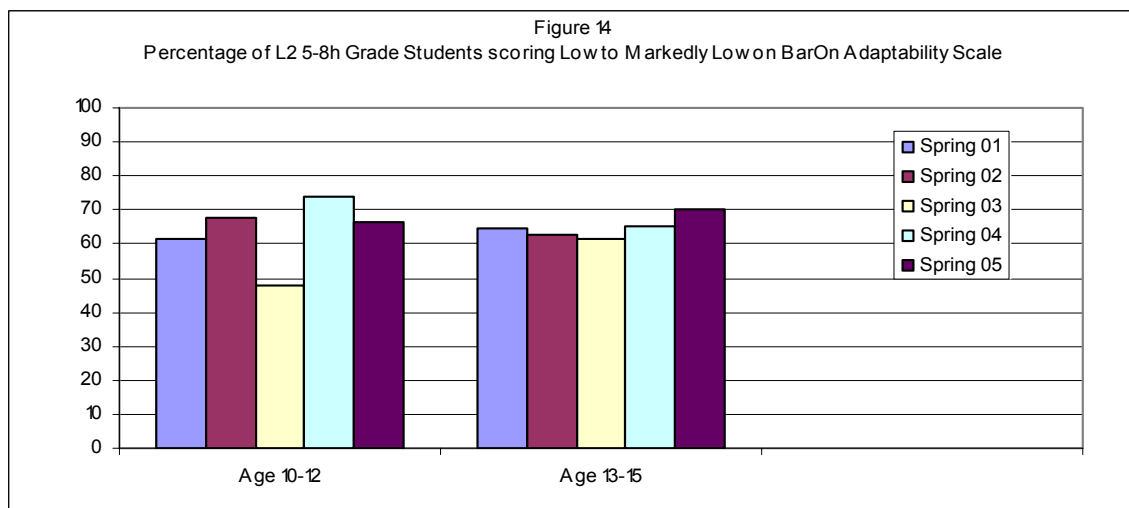
A comparison of pre- and posttest scores of students present both in fall 2004 and spring 2005 found a slight positive trend, but no statistically significant difference (fall 2004 mean = 16.79 vs. spring 2005 mean = 17.17, $p = .252$).

Social Responsibility. Comparison of spring 2001 and spring 2005 responses on the Jessor item "It's not up to me to help out when people I know are having problems" shows that fewer students in grades 5-8 agreed with this statement in 2005, but more older students agreed (Figure 13.). This response in the older group may be a function of therapeutic efforts to reduce the blame students feel for past situations over which they had no control.

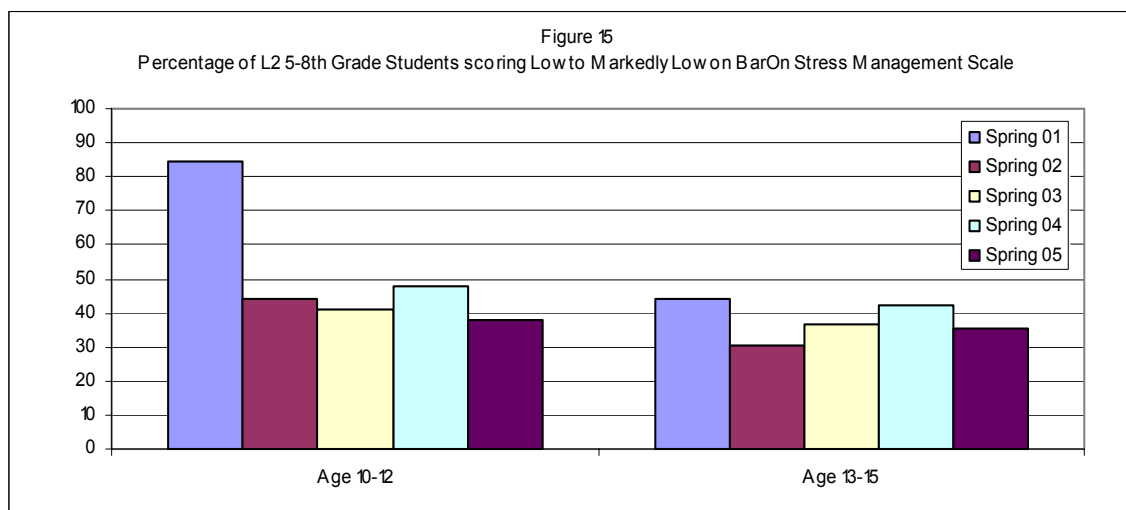


Adaptability and Stress Management

Adaptability. Figure 14 indicates that the percentage of students scoring low to markedly low on the BarOn Adaptability scale has not changed during the span of funding. Comparison of pre- and posttest scores of students present at both fall and spring time points during SY 2004-2005 found no statistically significant difference (fall 2004 mean = 14.24, spring 2005 mean=14.76, $p = .188$).



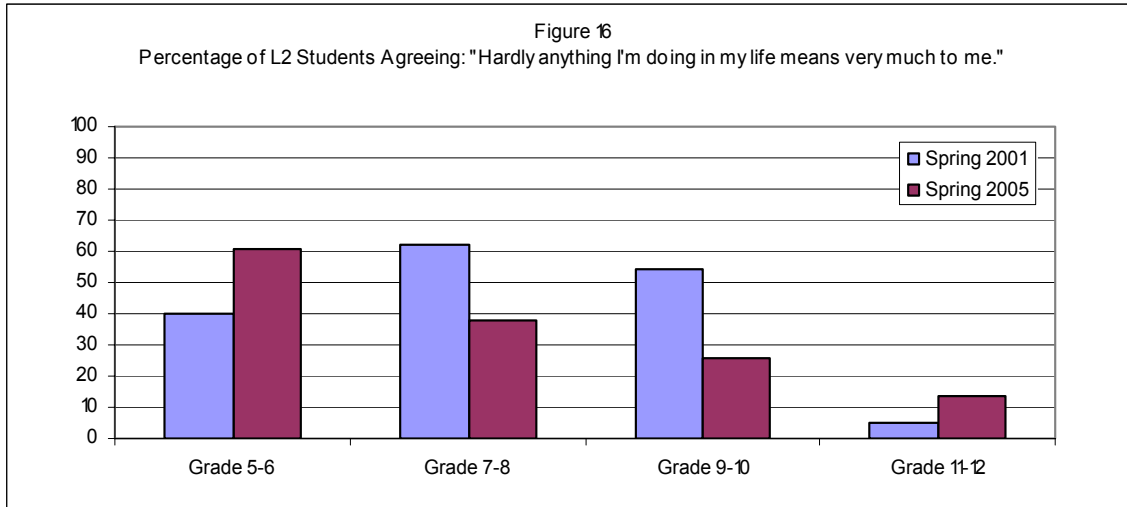
Stress Management. Figure 15 indicates that the percentage of students scoring low to markedly low on the BarOn Stress Management scale may have decreased for younger students during the span of funding. Comparison of pre- and posttest scores of all students present at both fall and spring time points during SY 2004-2005 found no overall significant difference (fall 2004 mean = 16.60, spring 2005 mean = 16.16, $p = .353$).



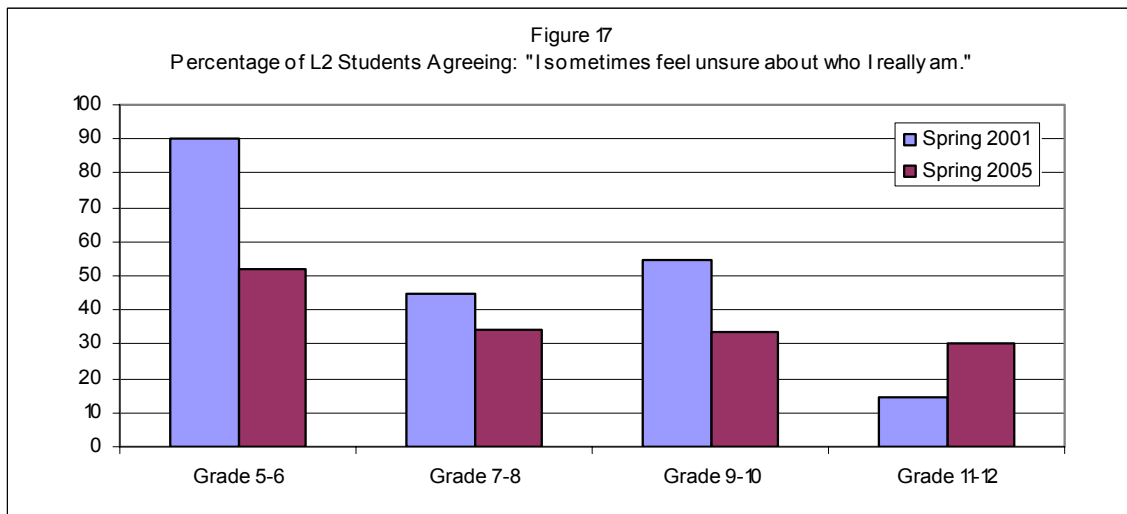
Behavioral Incidents. Behavioral incidents declined across the course of funding, going from 99 reported for fifth through eighth graders in SY 2000-2001 to 33 in SY 2004-2005. As the site had taken in an increasing number of students with behavioral and emotional problems, and retention had increased sharply, this improvement is especially impressive.

Meaning and Identity

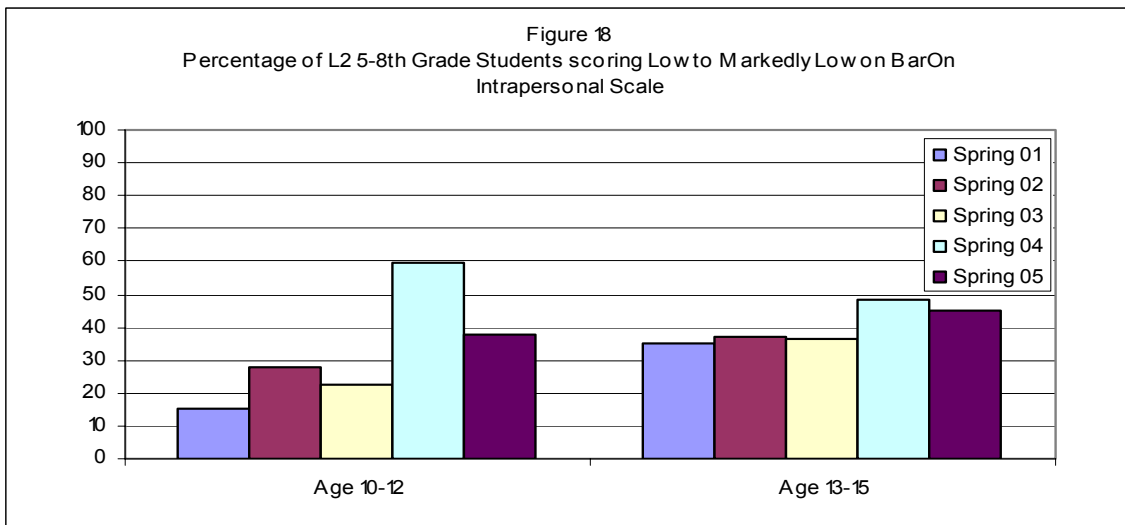
Meaning. Figure 16 shows the percentage of students agreeing with the statement “Hardly anything I’m doing in my life means very much to me.” Comparison of percentages by grade shows apparent developmental interaction. An increase in the number of fifth and sixth grade survivors present in the spring (10 in 2001, 23 in 2005), may account for the upswing in this group. A pre- and posttest comparison of means for all students present in both fall 2004 and spring 2005 shows a highly significant shift ($p < .001$) toward disagreement with this negative statement. The mean (1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=disagree, 4=strongly disagree) shifted from 2.60 (SD = .968) in fall 2004 to a mean of 3.06 in spring 2005 (SD = .924).



Identity. Figure 17 shows the percentage of students agreeing with the statement "I sometimes feel unsure about who I really am." The data show interesting trends regarding responses to this item. The initial report on this site in 2001 postulated that the lack of cultural content at the school could be related to the high level of younger students agreeing with the statement, as many of them had recently come from homes and communities which had elements of traditional culture. The initial low level of agreement with this statement among the older students, it was suggested, may have reflected a capitulation to the school's emphasis on success in the mainstream white culture. The increase over time in the 11th and 12th grade group may be related to the increase in traditional cultural programming.

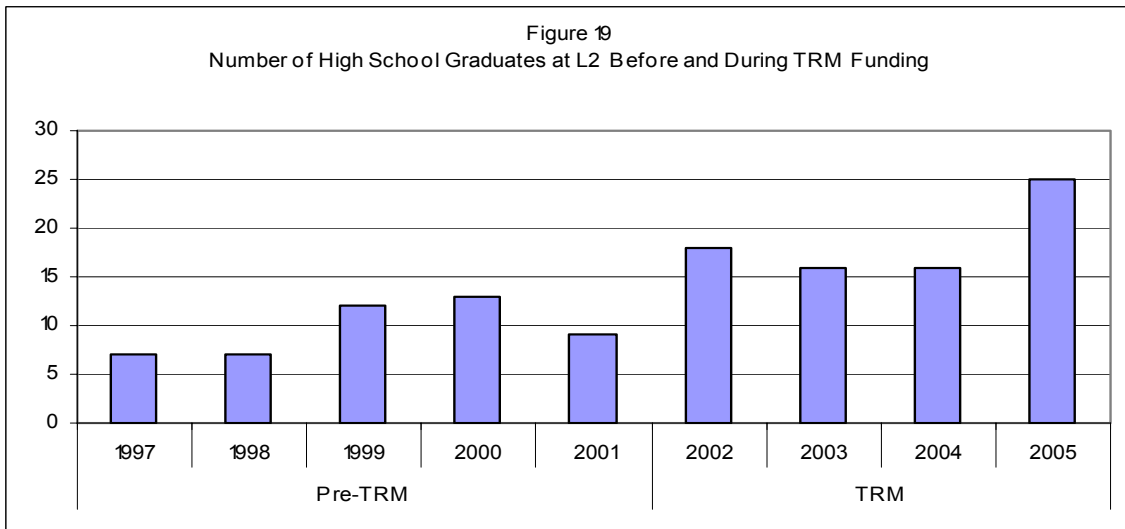


Intrapersonal. Figure 18 indicates that the percentage of students scoring low to markedly low on the BarOn Intrapersonal scale has not changed during the span of funding, and may have been impacted by the decision to admit an increasing number of students with problems. Comparison of pre- and posttest scores of students present at both fall and spring time points during SY 2004-2005 found no difference (fall 2004 mean = 13.39, spring 2005 mean = 13.42, $p = .947$).



Academic Achievement

The clearest indicator of academic improvement at this site can be seen in the increase in the number of high school graduates, shown in Figure 19.



State achievement test data were available from this site for grades 5 and 8 from 2003 through 2005. L2 fifth grade students (Table 6) made clear gains in math and reading, while trending upward in science.

Table 6
Achievement Tests: Percent of 5th Graders Satisfactory or Advanced

	2003	2004	2005
Math	18.2%	66.7%	54.5%
Reading	27.3%	50.0%	72.7%
Science	54.5%	66.7%	63.6%
U.S. Government/ Social Studies	9.1%	8.3%	0%

When eighth grade state achievement test scores were compared for 2003 and later years, L2 students had made clear progress in math, reading and the sciences.

Table 7
Achievement Tests: Percent of 8th Graders Satisfactory or Advanced

	2003	2004	2005
Writing	50.0%	50.0%	52.6%
Math	7.1%	66.7%	68.4%
Reading	21.4%	60.0%	42.1%
Science	21.4%	53.3%	57.9%
U.S. Government/ Social Studies	21.4%	60.0%	36.8%

ACT scores showed continued improvement for high school seniors. In 2000-2001, prior to TRM, the mean ACT score was 14.3. For SY 2000-2001 the mean was 16.7; for SY 2002-2003 and SY 2003-2004 it was 16.0; for SY 2004-2005 it was 16.16; and for SY 2005-2006 it was 16.64.

Conclusions

This site made a clear commitment to the TRM process. It responded with creativity and initiative to recommendations made by the TRM evaluation, and the staff continuously worked to strengthen the program in areas where significant gaps were identified. Staff showed initiative in addressing these gaps and were supported in doing so by the administration. Improvement in the environment is clearly demonstrated by the significant increases in retention and graduation that the site has been able to achieve. The site has many of the characteristics of an environment that can reclaim high-risk youth (Brendtro et al., 2002):

“(1) Experiencing belonging in a supportive community, rather than being lost in a depersonalized bureaucracy.” This site has a village method of operation. Staff act very much like uncles and aunts who know the names of every student. Counselors are informally alerted to students who appear unhappy or have brought up issues to staff, and counselors quickly and unobtrusively seek those children out to gauge for themselves what is bothering them. Nearly all students have a relative either on staff or in the student body, which further enhances the feeling of community. The increased staffing and restructuring of the environment have contributed to

the significant gains in retention and graduation. Indicators show an increased sense of feeling included, several cultural pride indicators have trended upwards, and indicators related to meaning have been impacted.

“(2) Meeting one’s needs for mastery, rather than enduring inflexible systems designed for the convenience of adults.” The site is tailored to students. Staff act much like parents in ensuring students get to after-school activities and shopping, as well as family functions such as funerals. Staff have identified needs and carried out plans to modify the environment to address those needs. Efforts to compensate for the shortcomings of the school system have resulted in measurable improvement in the academic sphere. However, efforts to increase mastery have not yet shown measurable results on reducing the high level of need in the areas of adaptability and stress management.

“(3) Involving youth in determining their own future, while recognizing society’s need to control harmful behavior.” Student boundaries are generally respected. Increasing retention has bolstered the pro-social norms for behavior which are understood and upheld by both staff and students. Staff rely on preemptive redirection and verbal de-escalation. Only in extreme circumstances are students physically restrained for their own safety. Students are allowed, within bounds, to make choices about their personal clothing and styles. They are given latitude in decoration of rooms and choice of music, and receive strong support in developing career options.

(4) “Expecting youth to be caregivers, not just helpless recipients overly dependent on the care of adults.” Students are allowed to give back at this site. The swine-raising program gives many youth the responsibility of caring for a fragile young life. The Rites of Passage program involves boys in service learning projects. Students work on campus during the school year and assist in painting and yearly maintenance during the summers. While most caretaking and decision-making is still unilateral, the third year of TRM saw a broader movement of seniors doing informal counseling with younger students. While among the boys such interactions generally amounted to brief interchanges suggesting that younger students shape up or settle down, senior girls were described by younger students as having taken a “big sister” interest in them, and by staff as having helped to provide stability in the dorms. Over the course of time, students took increasing ownership of the cultural activities on campus.

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