



DIVISION OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESEARCH

# 'Fifth Block' Evaluation: Summer 2013

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Prepared February 2014



## Overview

### Program Description

#### *Background*

June 2013 marked the sixth year of Fifth Block, Aurora Public Schools' extended school-year program. The program is designed to provide additional instruction for students identified as having the most potential to make progress toward proficiency. In order to accelerate academic growth, students selected to participate in Fifth Block are given 23 days of additional instruction after the end of the regular school year. Student-teacher ratios for the program are kept small, with the maximum set at 25 to 1. All teachers and other staff members are required to complete targeted professional development prior to participating in the program. With the exception of fifth and eighth-graders, all students attend Fifth Block classes at their home schools. Fifth and eighth grade students go to their designated feeder middle and high schools. The district provides transportation and nutrition services at all sites.

When it was first conceived, the Fifth Block program was designed to provide students with focused instruction in math and literacy. All students who participated in Fifth Block were enrolled in both a math and a literacy class, which were designed to incorporate some science and social studies content. Over the years, the program has become more flexible. Currently a student who needs only literacy or only math instruction may be assigned only to a class in the targeted content area. This may be a half-day class or a full-day class. Beginning in 2012, the district also began piloting a program for students to receive science instruction during Fifth Block. This pilot was conducted at Montview Math & Health Sciences Elementary School and Side Creek Elementary School, and was expanded in 2013. These schools did continue to have math and literacy courses as well.

#### Key evidence for Implementation

Studies have shown that extended instruction has the most benefit for students who have previously demonstrated academic growth, who have attended school consistently, and who have had few discipline referrals. Administrators use these criteria to select students for Fifth Block, focusing on those who have demonstrated academic growth over the previous academic year but who have not yet attained proficiency.

#### Students Served, Demographics, and Grades: 2013 Fifth Block Cohort

##### *Participant Demographics*

Table 1, below, summarizes data on ethnicity, ELL status, and eligibility for free and reduced-price lunch programs for students who participated in the 2013 Fifth Block session. Total enrollment numbers include any student who was enrolled in the program through the final day of the session. In 2013, 2,360 students completed the Fifth Block program. This was a



significantly lower number than 2012, and the lowest enrollment in the program's history, due to program budget cuts (specifically, the removal of Title I funding.)

Relative to APS's overall K-12 population, white and African-American students were underrepresented during Fifth Block, and Hispanic students were overrepresented. In the official October count for the 2012-13 school year, White students made up 17.8% of the K-12 population. By comparison, White students accounted for 10.2% of Fifth Block participants. Hispanics made up 54.7% of the 2012-13 K-12 population and 64.6% of 2013 Fifth Block participants.

Nearly 50% of Fifth Block students were designated as English Language Learners (ELLs), compared to 37.3% of K-12 students for the 2012-13 school year. The proportion of students qualifying for free and reduced-price lunch during Fifth Block was also larger than during the 2012-13 school year. Just over 80% of 2013 Fifth Block students qualified for free and reduced-price lunch, whereas the proportion for the district overall in 2012-13 was 70%.

In 2013, 736 students (31.2%) were participating in Fifth Block for the second consecutive year. Two hundred sixty-nine students (11.4%) of students were participating for the third consecutive year.

**Table 1. Student Demographics: District vs. Fifth Block Participants 2009-2013**

	2009		2010		2011		2012		2013	
	District	5 <sup>th</sup> Block								
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	32754	3318	33950	3319	35209	3728	36297	3441	37410	2282
<b>Nat. Amer.</b>	0.9%	0.8%	0.9%	0.7%	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.9%
<b>Asian/PI</b>	4.4%	3.0%	4.8%	3.5%	4.4%	3.9%	4.6%	3.4%	4.5%	3.9%
<b>Afr. Amer.</b>	21.1%	15.4%	21.2%	15.2%	18.7%	14.9%	18.0%	14.9%	18.0%	16.4%
<b>Hispanic</b>	52.1%	66.2%	52.5%	66.8%	53.8%	66.1%	54.3%	68.2%	54.7%	64.6%
<b>White</b>	21.5%	12.7%	20.6%	11.3%	19.1%	11.6%	18.3%	9.5%	17.8%	10.2%
<b>Nat. Hawaiian</b>	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%	0.4%	0.6%	0.5%	0.4%	0.5%	0.5%
<b>Two or More</b>	0.0%	1.7%	0.0%	2.3%	2.8%	2.2%	3.6%	2.8%	3.9%	3.5%
<b>F/R lunch</b>	64.2%	76.3%	66.2%	81.6%	68.9%	83.1%	69.1%	84.7%	70.0%	80.8%
<b>ELL</b>	38.2%	55.5%	39.0%	56.6%	38.4%	54.1%	37.9%	54.7%	37.3%	49.1%

Table 2 summarizes course enrollments by grade level and subject area for the 2013 Fifth Block session. The majority of students were 1<sup>st</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup> graders. Overall, about 91.3% were enrolled in a literacy block; 93.6% were enrolled in a math block; and 7.4% were in a science block.



**Table 2. Course Enrollment by Subject Area: 2013 Fifth Block**

Grade	# Students	Literacy	Math	Science
KG	25	72%	72%	0%
1	202	98%	97%	0%
2	370	98%	96%	6%
3	377	95%	95%	18%
4	296	92%	92%	26%
5	253	100%	100%	0%
6	200	100%	100%	0%
7	195	100%	99%	0%
8	145	69%	99%	0%
9	138	62%	70%	0%
10	70	56%	64%	0%
11	9	44%	44%	0%
12	2	50%	50%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2282</b>	<b>91.3%</b>	<b>93.6%</b>	<b>7.4%</b>

### *Participant CSAP/TCAP Backgrounds*

For the 2013 Fifth Block session, administrators reviewed scores from the 2012 TCAP, as results from the 2013 TCAP assessment were not yet available. Table 3 provides a summary of CSAP/TCAP performance for students who completed the 2013 Fifth Block session. The table summarizes 2011 and 2013 data along with the 2012 scores that were used in the selection process. Across all three years and all subject areas, the largest proportion of 2013 Fifth Block participants fell into the partially proficient category. The percentage of 2013 Fifth Block students who scored at the partially proficient or unsatisfactory level on the 2012 TCAP was 67.7% for reading, 76% for writing, and 70.4% for math. As a group, this was very similar to their performance on the 2011 CSAP and the 2013 TCAP.

Note that because the 2013 TCAP was administered prior to the start of the 2013 Fifth Block session, differences between score distributions for 2012 and 2013 should not be interpreted as indicators of the program's effectiveness. In a later section of this report, data for the 2012 Fifth Block cohort is analyzed in order to provide a sense of the program's impact.

**Table 3. 2013 Fifth Block Cohort TCAP/CSAP Proficiency: 2011-2013**

Prof. Level	Reading			Writing			Math		
	2011	2012	2013	2011	2012	2013	2011	2012	2013
Unsatisfactory	27.0%	22.3%	24.5%	12.8%	10.1%	9.9%	23.5%	24.1%	26.7%
Part Proficient	39.8%	45.4%	39.1%	64.6%	65.9%	66.3%	43.2%	46.3%	40.6%
Proficient	32.0%	31.6%	35.7%	21.1%	23.3%	23.2%	30.3%	25.9%	28.3%
Advanced	0.0%	0.4%	0.4%	0.6%	0.4%	0.5%	2.2%	3.5%	4.4%
No Score	1.2%	0.3%	0.4%	0.9%	0.3%	0.1%	0.8%	0.3%	0.1%



## Participant Attendance Backgrounds

In addition to reviewing assessment scores, administrators responsible for selecting Fifth Block participants review student attendance data. Students with more regular attendance are expected to benefit the most from the program. The table below compares rates of habitual truancy for the group of students selected to participate in the 2013 Fifth Block session with rates for the district as a whole. The table includes data compiled from the district's quarterly truancy reports over the past three years. Habitual truancy is defined as having four or more absences within a single month or ten or more absences for the year.

The truancy rates displayed in Table 4 are specific to the group of students who participated in the 2013 Fifth Block session. These calculations do not include attendance records for the Fifth Block session. Rather, they refer to students' attendance during the regular school year. District overall rates are based on attendance for students who were included in the official October count for the designated year.

The table shows that the 2013 Fifth Block cohort has had a lower truancy rate than the district as a whole in each of the past three years. Across the three years, the truancy rate among students who completed the 2013 session has ranged from 2.4% to 4.7%. Over the same period, the rate for the district as a whole has ranged from 11.1% to 12.1%.

**Table 4. Truant Students: District Population vs. 2013 Fifth Block Participants**

2010-11		2011-12		2012-13	
Overall	5 <sup>th</sup> Block Cohort	Overall	5 <sup>th</sup> Block Cohort	Overall	5 <sup>th</sup> Block Cohort
11.7%	2.4%	11.1%	3.2%	12.1%	4.7%

Attendance data from the final ten days of the Fifth Block program provides a good assessment of student attendance during the program. Table 5 shows that attendance rates during the 2013 Fifth Block session were very high, which is typical of the program. The overall attendance rate for Fifth Block participants was 92%. At all levels except K-8 students, rates were up from previous years, with high school students' attendance increasing by almost 8%.

**Table 5. Final Ten Day Attendance: Fifth Block**

Level	Final 10-Day Attendance				
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Elementary	92.40%	93.90%	94.30%	93.28%	94.32%
K-8	95.30%	92.30%	93.80%	93.76%	90.24%
Middle	89.40%	86.20%	88.80%	85.35%	89.50%
High	93.30%	95.90%	90.90%	84.50%	92.30%
District Totals	92.00%	92.20%	92.30%	90.40%	92.34%



## Participant Behavior Backgrounds

Table 5 compares the number of referrals for students selected to participate in the 2013 Fifth Block session with the number of referrals for students in the district as a whole. The table includes data from the past four years, and groups students into those who had no referrals, those who had one referral, those who had two referrals, or those who had three or more referrals during the regular school year.

The overall rates displayed in Table 6 are specific to the group of students included in the official October count for the designated year. For all four years, the rates shown for the Fifth Block cohort refer specifically to the group of students who participated in the 2013 Fifth Block session. These calculations do not include behavior records for the Fifth Block session, but do include behavior incidents that occurred during the regular school year.

In the past year, students in the 2013 Fifth Block cohort have been referred to the office at higher rates than the overall district population, with the exception of students referred 3 or more times. Only about 10% of students in the 2012 cohort had an office referral during the 2009-10 school year; in 2010-11, about 13% had an office referral, and in 2011-12 about 15% had an office referral. The referral rate for the district as a whole has been close to 20% in each of the three years prior; in 2012-13, that rate decreased to about 15%, similar to that of Fifth Block students.

**Table 6. Office Referrals: District Population vs. 2012 Fifth Block Participants**

# of Referrals	2009-10		2010-11		2011-12		2012-13	
	Overall	5 <sup>th</sup> Block Cohort						
0	78.5%	89.5%	80.7%	87.1%	80.7%	84.5%	84.6%	84.2%
1	10.7%	6.5%	10.1%	8.5%	9.6%	8.3%	7.7%	8.9%
2	4.2%	1.8%	3.9%	1.8%	3.8%	2.9%	3.0%	3.3%
3+	6.6%	2.2%	5.3%	2.5%	5.9%	4.3%	4.8%	3.7%

During the 2013 Fifth Block session, a total of 10 office referrals were recorded in Infinite Campus. This was a decrease from 2012, when there were fourteen office referrals, but still greater than 2011, when there were three. Table 7 shows the total number of office referrals during Fifth Block for each of the past five years.

**Table 7. Fifth Block Office Referrals**

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
# Referrals	8	21	3	14	10



## Fidelity & Outcomes: 2012 Fifth Block Cohort

### *TCAP Growth*

The Colorado Growth Model measures academic growth by comparing each student's performance on the most recent TCAP to the performance of a cohort of other students in the same grade level who have similar TCAP score histories. A student's growth percentile indicates how well he or she has progressed relative to other students in the cohort. To summarize growth percentiles for various student groupings, the state uses the median growth percentile. Median growth percentiles are determined by ranking individual growth percentiles within a designated group and then identifying the middle value. For instance, in reports provided by the state department of education median growth percentiles are calculated at the district level, at the school level, and at the grade level.

Expanding on the practice of using median growth percentiles to summarize student growth, the table below shows median growth percentiles for students who completed the 2012 Fifth Block session. Median growth percentiles that meet or exceed 50, the state median, are highlighted in green. Calculations are based on the results of the 2013 TCAP, which students took in the first year after completing Fifth Block. The grade levels listed in the table also refer to students' grade level in the year immediately after completing the Fifth Block session.

In reading, students who completed Fifth Block in 2012 demonstrated growth above the state median at six of seven grade levels. In writing, they were above the state median in five out of seven grade levels, and in math they were above the state median in six out of seven grade levels. For the 2012 cohort as a whole, the median growth percentile in reading was 52, in writing it was 51, and in math it was 55.

**Table 8. 2013 CSAP/TCAP Median Growth Percentiles: 2012 Fifth Block Cohort**

Grade Level	Reading		Writing		Math	
	N	Median	N	Median	N	Median
4	570	39.0	568	41.5	575	55.0
5	476	53.0	475	53.0	475	59.0
6	361	56.0	361	55.0	361	49.0
7	296	60.0	296	51.0	295	51.0
8	268	57.5	270	59.0	270	60.0
9	223	62.0	224	60.0	223	59.0
10	110	52.5	110	43.0	110	53.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>2304</b>	<b>52.0</b>	<b>2304</b>	<b>51.0</b>	<b>2309</b>	<b>55.0</b>

### *Analysis of Fifth Block Participation and CSAP/TCAP Growth*

Statistical testing was conducted to analyze the relationship between the number of years of participation in Fifth Block and student growth. For the tests, 2012 Fifth Block participants were divided into groups based on their prior participation in the program. A group of non-participants was also included in the analysis, which excluded any student who participated in Fifth Block in 2012 or any prior year.



Tables 11 through 13 show the median growth percentiles for each group on the 2012 TCAP, with each subject area shown on a separate table. The tables show that in most cases students who participate in Fifth Block achieve equal or better growth than students who have never participated in the program.

**Table 11. Fifth Block CSAP/TCAP Median Growth Percentiles Comparison: 2013 Reading**

Subject	2012 Prior Participants	Non-participant
	(n=1451)	(n=9830)
Reading	53.0	51.0

**Table 12. Fifth Block CSAP/TCAP Median Growth Percentiles Comparison: 2013 Writing**

Subject	2012 Prior Participants	Non-participant
	(n=1453)	(n=9849)
Writing	50.0	49.0

**Table 13. Fifth Block CSAP/TCAP Median Growth Percentiles Comparison: 2013 Math**

Subject	2012 Prior Participants	Non-participant
	(n=1454)	(n=9878)
Math	56.0	50.0



## Program Budget

Table 19 shows a preliminary cost estimate for the 2013 Fifth Block session along with cost estimates for previous sessions. These estimates include costs associated with instructional salaries and benefits, assessments, curricular support, transportation, nutrition services, and utilities. The estimated total operating cost for 2013 session was \$1,666,550 equal to a per-pupil cost of \$709.77. Total costs were down from 2012, as expected due to the loss of Title I funds, although the per-pupil cost increased by nearly \$100 per student.

**Table 19. Cost Analysis for Fifth Block**

Expense	Description	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	1 yr Change
Inst. Salaries/Benefits	Salaries, PERA, Medicare	\$1,148,193	\$1,236,134	\$1,502,538	\$1,278,612	\$1,302,733	\$24,121
Inst. Salaries/Benefits - Title I	Salaries, PERA, Medicare	\$363,249	\$294,226	\$290,521	\$488,044	\$0	(\$488,044)
Assessment	Printing/MAP Testing	\$44,053	\$2,464	\$470	\$0	\$0	\$0
Instruction	Curricular support	\$67,129	\$75,335	\$48,539	\$93,785	\$51,057	(\$42,728)
Transportation	Fuel, maintenance, salaries/benefits	\$62,406	\$41,110	\$74,113	\$80,676	\$104,455	\$23,779
Nutrition Services	Loss experienced by enterprise fund	\$0	\$5,215	\$0	\$36,835	\$82,225	\$45,390
Postage	Report card mailing	\$1,460	\$1,460	\$1,640	\$1,548	\$1,080	(\$468)
Utilities	Gas/electric	\$125,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$0
<b>Total Costs for 5<sup>th</sup> Block:</b>		<b>\$1,811,490</b>	<b>\$1,755,944</b>	<b>\$2,017,821</b>	<b>\$2,104,500</b>	<b>\$1,666,550</b>	<b>(\$437,950)</b>
<b>Per Pupil Cost for 5<sup>th</sup> Block:</b>		<b>\$545.96</b>	<b>\$529.06</b>	<b>\$541.26</b>	<b>\$611.60</b>	<b>\$709.77</b>	<b>\$98.18</b>

Table 20 shows a comparison between slot availability and enrollment for the 2013 Fifth Block session. Overall, 78% of the slots made available for Fifth Block were filled. Larger proportions of slots were used at the secondary level than at the primary level.



**Table 20. School Fifth Block Slot Availability with Enrollment (2013)**

School	Total	Final Day Enrollment	Final Day % Enrollment
Altura Elementary School	50	33	66%
Arkansas Elementary School	50	44	88%
Aurora Frontier K-8	100	22	22%
Boston K-8	100	57	57%
Century Elementary School	50	38	76%
Clyde Miller K-8	100	81	81%
Crawford Elementary School	50	31	62%
Dalton Elementary School	50	61	122%
Dartmouth Elementary School	50	63	126%
Elkhart Elementary School	50	44	88%
Fletcher Primary School	50	59	118%
Iowa Elementary School	50	32	64%
Jewell Elementary School	50	31	62%
Kenton Elementary School	50	34	68%
Lansing Elementary School	50	37	74%
Laredo Elementary School	50	34	68%
Lyn Knoll Elementary School	50	46	92%
Montview Math & Health Sciences	50	98	196%
Murphy Creek K-8	100	59	59%
Paris Elementary School	50	33	66%
Park Lane Elementary School	50	30	60%
Peoria Elementary	50	32	64%
Sable Elementary School	50	32	64%
Side Creek Elementary School	50	49	98%
Sixth Avenue Elementary School	50	46	92%
Tollgate Elementary School	50	18	36%
Vassar Elementary School	50	47	94%
Vaughn Elementary School	50	44	88%
Virginia Court Elementary School	50	40	80%
Wheeling Elementary School	50	34	68%
Yale Elementary School	50	22	44%
<b>Total (Elementary School):</b>	<b>1,750</b>	<b>1,331</b>	<b>76%</b>

Note. Red highlights indicate enrollment less than 75%; green indicates enrollment greater than 90%.



**Table 20 Continued. School Fifth Block Slot Availability with Enrollment (2013)**

School	Total	Final Day Enrollment	Final Day % Enrollment
Aurora Hills Middle School	100	100	100%
Aurora West College Preparatory Academy	100	95	95%
Columbia Middle School	100	95	95%
East Middle School	100	84	84%
Mrachek Middle School	100	82	82%
North Middle School Health Sci & Tech	100	73	73%
South Middle School	100	77	77%
<b>Total (Middle School):</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>606</b>	<b>87%</b>
Aurora Central High School	100	89	89%
Gateway High School	100	80	80%
Hinkley High School	100	45	45%
Rangeview High School	100	131	131%
<b>Total (High School):</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>86%</b>
<b>Total (All Schools):</b>	<b>2,850</b>	<b>2,282</b>	<b>80%</b>

Note. Red highlights indicate enrollment less than 75%; green indicates enrollment greater than 90%.



## Stakeholder Feedback

### Parent Survey Results

At the conclusion of the 2013 Fifth Block session, surveys were distributed to parents along with student report cards. Completed surveys were received from 286 households. Table 16 summarizes the responses to the six structured response questions included on the survey.

The percentages of parents agreeing with each of the various statements on the survey were similar to those from 2012. However, fewer parents felt their child's school provided them with sufficient information, or understood why their child was selected for 5<sup>th</sup> block participation, indicating some concerns regarding communication with parents. There was a significant increase in the percentage of parents who said that they believed that Fifth Block was academically beneficial for their child and a positive experience; responses agreeing to both of those questions slightly decreased in 2013.

**Table 16. Parent Survey Responses**

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree/ Str. Agree	Change 12 to 13
1. My child's school provided me sufficient information throughout 5th block.	5.3%	11.1%	15.9%	62.5%	5.3%	67.8%	-7.5%
2. I believe that 5th block was academically beneficial for my child.	1.4%	2.1%	5.6%	42.1%	48.8%	90.9%	4.5%
3. I believe that 5th block was a positive experience for my child.	0.7%	1.4%	4.2%	45.4%	48.2%	93.7%	4.7%
4. I understand why my child was selected for participation in 5th block.	2.8%	3.9%	4.6%	46.3%	42.5%	88.8%	-1.9%
5. The meals that were provided were an important part of my students 5th block experience.	3.2%	4.2%	16.3%	42.0%	34.3%	76.3%	-1.4%
6. If 5th block were offered next year, I would want my child to participate.	1.1%	1.4%	8.2%	30.1%	59.1%	89.2%	1.9%

Note: 2013: total n = 286; 70% responded in English and 28% responded in Spanish (6 households did not respond when asked about language). 2012: total n = 392.



The parent survey also included an open-ended item that allowed parents to share any additional thoughts or feelings about the Fifth Block program. The following were recurrent themes in the parent responses:

- Many parents feel that the Fifth Block program has been a benefit to their children and hope to participate in the future (~37%).
- Parents would like to see more communication from teachers during the program so that they can be more involved in monitoring their children’s work and assessing their progress (~19%).

Two minor themes emerged in the parent responses:

- Some parents mentioned that they felt the curriculum wasn’t challenging enough, and their student didn’t get any benefit above their regular school-year classroom instruction (~7%).
- Several parents commented on the schedule – a few appreciated the half-day blocks, and others expressed concern about early morning transportation issues.

### *Principal Survey Results*

An electronic survey was made available to principals after the completion of the Fifth Block session. The primary purpose of the principal survey was to gather feedback about what worked well during Fifth Block, what challenges they encountered, what suggestions they had for improving the program, and whether they thought Fifth Block was effective in improving student achievement.

Fifteen principals responded to the 2013 survey. Table 17 shows the summary of responses to the question about perceptions of the program’s effectiveness. As the table shows, a little more than half (53.3%) of principals who completed the survey indicated that they believed students had benefited academically from attending Fifth Block. This is a significantly lower rate of agreement than in 2012 when approximately 86% of principals agreed with the statement.

**Table 17. Principal Survey Responses**

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree/ Str. Agree	Change 12 to 13
My students benefited academically from attending Fifth Block.	6.7%	13.3%	26.7%	53.3%	0.0%	53.3%	-32.4%

Note. 2013: total n = 15; 2012: total n = 14.

All other items on the principal survey were in an open response format. Principals pointed to the following items as things that worked well during the 2013 Fifth Block session:



- As in 2012, principals were pleased with the way students were scheduled into classes this year. The length of classes and the opportunity for some students to attend half days and others to attend whole days worked well.
- Principals were happy with the program logistics (the student selection process, training, and staffing processes) and felt the program was well organized.
- Principals believe the small class sizes support the learning process.

Principals noted the following challenges for the 2013 Fifth Block session:

- Transportation for students was a challenge, and principals found it difficult to be located at another school.
- It remains difficult to maintain enough enrollments to fill slots, and to get students who are enrolled to attend regularly.

Principals offered recommendations for how the program might be improved, including the following:

- Resources should be used to create opportunities throughout the regular school year to target students who need interventions – particularly for those who are struggling academically.
- Introducing a pre and post assessment in order to determine student growth throughout the program.

### *Teacher Survey Results*

As with principals, an electronic survey was made available to teachers after the completion of Fifth Block. The primary purpose of the survey was to gather feedback about what worked well during Fifth Block, what challenges they encountered, what suggestions they had for improving the program, and whether they thought Fifth Block was effective in improving student achievement. A total of 110 teachers responded to the 2013 survey. Table 18 shows the rate of agreement among teachers to the survey item regarding the efficacy of the Fifth Block program. The results show a higher rate of agreement among teachers than among principals. Overall, 84.1% of teachers agreed that the program did benefit their students, down 7.8% from the 2012 survey.

**Table 18. Teacher Survey Responses**

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree/ Str. Agree	Change 12 to 13
My students benefited academically from attending Fifth Block.	7.5%	0.9%	7.5%	44.9%	39.3%	84.1%	-7.8%

Note. 2013: total n = 110; 2012: total n = 148.



Teachers reported that the following worked well during Fifth Block:

- Teachers said that they were pleased with the opportunity to work with smaller classes, which allowed them to provide more small-group and one-on-one instruction.
- Teachers thought the schedule worked well for both students and staff. They noted that it allowed for extensive practice, review, and exploratory exercises.
- Teachers expressed gratitude for the support from paraprofessionals, noting that they were essential to providing students with targeted feedback and instruction.
- Teachers noted an improvement in the selection process, indicating that there were fewer behavioral issues this year. Not having to deal with behavior problems helped classes to remain focused on learning.
- Teachers felt the district provided curriculum that was well-suited to Fifth Block students. The incorporation of science materials at some schools was especially appreciated.

For teachers, the most frequently mentioned challenges were the following:

- Some teachers were dissatisfied with the way selection criteria were applied. They felt some students were so far behind that it was not possible to give them the special attention they needed.
- Some teachers reported that administrative errors at some schools created frustrations around scheduling. There were many changes in enrollments and some class sizes ended up well under the 25 student limit.
- Some teachers sometimes felt that resources were lacking. They felt that there needed to be access to more teaching materials, as well as money in the budget for field trips and other activities.
- Some teachers expressed frustrations with the level of support from administrators surrounding student behavior issues. The lack of deans, monitors, and other administrative personnel make it difficult to deal with discipline issues.
- Student attendance motivation was a common challenge for teachers. They felt that long instructional blocks, limited break time, lack of specials, and widely divergent learning abilities made it difficult to keep all students engaged.

Suggestions by teachers on ways to improve Fifth Block generally addressed the challenges noted above. Their suggestions included the following:

- Teachers recommended stricter adherence to student selection guidelines, as well as more teacher input regarding which students are selected and how they are grouped.
- A number of teachers recommended that curriculum and teaching materials used during Fifth Block be revised.
- Some teachers would like to see the Fifth Block schedule changed. A number suggested that the program be reduced to four weeks.



## Summary

- The 2013 Fifth Block session saw a significant decline in the number of participants compared to 2012. A total of 2,348 students participated in the 2013 session. Just under one-third of students were participating for the second consecutive year, and about 11% for the third consecutive year.
- Relative to APS's overall K-12 population, white students were underrepresented during Fifth Block. Hispanic students were overrepresented.
- Nearly 48% of Fifth Block students were designated as English Language Learners (ELLs), compared to 37.3% of K-12 students for the 2012-13 school year.
- Analyses of TCAP growth data for 2012 Fifth Block participants showed that in reading, writing and math, students who participated in Fifth Block in the previous year tend to achieve higher growth than non-participants.
- Results for principal, teacher, and parent surveys suggest that the majority of stakeholders believe that students benefit academically from participating in the Fifth Block. In regard to overall satisfaction, rates of agreement on the three surveys were 53.3% for principals, 84.1% for teachers, and 90.9% for parents.
- A preliminary cost analysis for 2013 Fifth Block indicates a total operating expense of \$1,666,550, which was equal to a per-pupil cost of \$709.77. Total costs were up from 2012, and the per-pupil cost increased by \$98.