



DIVISION OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESEARCH

'Fifth Block' Evaluation: Summer 2014

Prepared September 2014



Overview

Program Description

Background

June 2014 marked the seventh 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. All fifth and eighth grade students go to their designated feeder middle and high schools with the exception of a few fifth grade students who remained at Wheeling. 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 and continued in 2014. 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: 2014 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 2014 Fifth Block session. Total enrollment numbers include any student who was enrolled in the program through the final day of the session. In 2014, 2,394 students completed the Fifth Block program. This was a slightly



larger number than 2013, but still one of 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 2013-14 school year, White students made up 17.1% of the K-12 population. By comparison, White students accounted for 11.3% of Fifth Block participants. Hispanics made up 54.7% of the 2013-14 K-12 population and 63.0% of 2014 Fifth Block participants.

Nearly 50% of Fifth Block students were designated as English Language Learners (ELLs), compared to 37.6% of K-12 students for the 2013-14 school year. The proportion of students qualifying for free and reduced-price lunch during Fifth Block was also larger than during the 2013-14 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 2013-14 was just below 70%.

In 2014, 504 students (21.1%) were participating in Fifth Block for the second consecutive year. One hundred eighty-nine students (7.9%) 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		2014	
	District	5 th Block										
Total Enrollment	32754	3318	33950	3319	35209	3728	36297	3441	37410	2282	38466	2394
Nat. Amer.	0.9%	0.8%	0.9%	0.7%	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.9%	0.8%	0.9%
Asian/PI	4.4%	3.0%	4.8%	3.5%	4.4%	3.9%	4.6%	3.4%	4.5%	3.9%	4.6%	5.8%
Afr. Amer.	21.1%	15.4%	21.2%	15.2%	18.7%	14.9%	18.0%	14.9%	18.0%	16.4%	18.2%	15.9%
Hispanic	52.1%	66.2%	52.5%	66.8%	53.8%	66.1%	54.3%	68.2%	54.7%	64.6%	54.7%	63.0%
White	21.5%	12.7%	20.6%	11.3%	19.1%	11.6%	18.3%	9.5%	17.8%	10.2%	17.1%	11.3%
Nat. Hawaiian	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%	0.4%	0.6%	0.5%	0.4%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.3%
Two or More	0.0%	1.7%	0.0%	2.3%	2.8%	2.2%	3.6%	2.8%	3.9%	3.5%	4.2%	2.9%
F/R lunch	64.2%	76.3%	66.2%	81.6%	68.9%	83.1%	69.1%	84.7%	70.0%	80.8%	69.4%	81.2%
ELL	38.2%	55.5%	39.0%	56.6%	38.4%	54.1%	37.9%	54.7%	37.3%	49.1%	37.6%	47.9%

Table 2 summarizes course enrollments by grade level and subject area for the 2014 Fifth Block session. The majority of students were 1st through 10th graders. Overall, 96.8% were enrolled in a literacy block; 92.4% were enrolled in a math block; and 6.6% were in a science block.



Table 2. Course Enrollment by Subject Area: 2014 Fifth Block

Grade	# Students	Literacy	Math	Science
KG	12	100%	100%	0%
1	211	100%	91%	0%
2	396	100%	94%	10%
3	426	100%	94%	15%
4	309	99%	96%	13%
5	300	100%	94%	5%
6	251	100%	92%	1%
7	183	99%	95%	0%
8	177	79%	90%	0%
9	82	78%	74%	0%
10	45	67%	67%	0%
11	2	0%	100%	0%
12	0	--	--	--
Total	2394	96.8%	92.4%	6.6%

Participant CSAP/TCAP Backgrounds

For the 2014 Fifth Block session, administrators reviewed scores from the 2013 TCAP, as results from the 2014 TCAP assessment were not yet available. Table 3 provides a summary of CSAP/TCAP performance for students who completed the 2014 Fifth Block session. The table summarizes 2012 and 2014 data along with the 2013 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 2014 Fifth Block students who scored at the partially proficient or unsatisfactory level on the 2013 TCAP was 69.4% for reading, 78.6% for writing, and 73.8% for math. As a group, this was very similar to their performance on the 2012 CSAP and the 2014 TCAP.

Note that because the 2014 TCAP was administered prior to the start of the 2014 Fifth Block session, differences between score distributions for 2013 and 2014 should not be interpreted as indicators of the program's effectiveness. In a later section of this report, data for the 2013 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: 2012-2014

Prof. Level	Reading			Writing			Math		
	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014
Unsatisfactory	26.5%	27.5%	28.3%	13.5%	13.2%	13.0%	23.3%	25.7%	31.1%
Part Proficient	38.1%	41.1%	41.1%	63.0%	63.1%	65.6%	42.8%	43.8%	42.7%
Proficient	33.9%	30.5%	29.3%	22.0%	21.7%	20.4%	30.8%	27.1%	23.5%
Advanced	0.9%	0.5%	0.5%	1.0%	1.3%	0.4%	2.7%	2.7%	2.3%
No Score	0.6%	0.4%	0.7%	0.5%	0.7%	0.6%	0.4%	0.7%	0.5%



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 2014 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 2014 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 Fifth Block cohorts have 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 Fifth Block sessions has ranged from 3.2% to 5.6%. Over the same period, the rate for the district as a whole has ranged from 11.1% to 12.8%.

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

2011-12		2012-13		2013-14	
Overall	5 th Block Cohort	Overall	5 th Block Cohort	Overall	5 th Block Cohort
11.1%	3.2%	12.1%	4.7%	12.8%	5.6%

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 2014 Fifth Block session were very high, which is typical of the program. The overall attendance rate for Fifth Block participants was 92%.

Table 5. Final Ten Day Attendance: Fifth Block

Level	Final 10-Day Attendance				
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Elementary	93.90%	94.30%	93.28%	94.32%	94.07%
K-8	92.30%	93.80%	93.76%	90.24%	93.49%
Middle	86.20%	88.80%	85.35%	89.50%	88.62%
High	95.90%	90.90%	84.50%	92.30%	88.70%
District Totals	92.20%	92.30%	90.40%	92.34%	91.90%



Participant Behavior Backgrounds

Table 5 compares the number of referrals for students selected to participate in the 2014 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 2014 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 2014 Fifth Block cohort have been referred to the office at slightly lower rates than the overall district population. Amongst Fifth Block cohorts referral rates have ranged from 12.9% for the 2011 cohort to 16.0% for the 2014 cohort. In comparison, the district as a whole has referral rates that range from 19.3% to 15.4%; for the last two cohorts of Fifth Block students the referral rates have been similar to the district overall rates.

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

# of Referrals	2010-11		2011-12		2012-13		2013-14	
	Overall	5 th Block Cohort						
0	80.7%	87.1%	80.7%	84.5%	84.6%	84.2%	81.4%	84.0%
1	10.1%	8.5%	9.6%	8.3%	7.7%	8.9%	8.9%	8.4%
2	3.9%	1.8%	3.8%	2.9%	3.0%	3.3%	3.8%	3.1%
3+	5.3%	2.5%	5.9%	4.3%	4.8%	3.7%	5.8%	4.5%

During the 2014 Fifth Block session, a total of 4 office referrals were recorded in Infinite Campus. This was a decrease from 2013, when there were ten 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	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
# Referrals	21	3	14	10	4



Fidelity & Outcomes: 2013 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 2013 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 2014 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 2013 demonstrated growth above the state median at three of seven grade levels. In writing, they were above the state median in two out of seven grade levels, and in math they were above the state median in six out of seven grade levels. For the 2013 cohort as a whole, the median growth percentile in reading was 50, in writing it was 48, and in math it was 52.

Table 8. 2014 CSAP/TCAP Median Growth Percentiles: 2013 Fifth Block Cohort

Grade Level	Reading		Writing		Math	
	N	Median	N	Median	N	Median
4	338	42.0	340	39.0	339	53.0
5	273	49.0	273	45.0	274	50.0
6	234	48.0	234	47.5	234	51.0
7	182	57.0	182	57.0	182	55.5
8	182	49.5	182	49.5	181	47.0
9	133	59.0	133	48.0	133	66.0
10	124	51.0	124	56.0	123	53.0
Total	1466	50.0	1468	48.0	1466	52.0

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, 2013 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 2013 or any prior year.

Tables 11 through 13 show the median growth percentiles by grade for each group on the 2014 TCAP, with each subject area shown on a separate table. The tables show that overall students who participate in Fifth Block achieve equal or better growth than students who have never participated in the program. However, only the difference between participants and non-participants on math is statistically significant.

There are several differences in median growth percentiles between participants and non-participants by grade level. For reading, participants have greater median growth percentiles than non-participants for all grades 4-9. However, only the difference at 7th grade is statistically significant. For writing, participants have a greater median growth percentile than non-participants at grades 7 and 10, though neither difference is statistically significant. For math, participants have a greater median growth percentile than non-participants at all grades, but only the differences at grades 7 and 9 are statistically significant.

Table 11. Fifth Block CSAP/TCAP Median Growth Percentiles Comparison by Grade: 2014 Reading

Subject	Grade	2013 Participants		Non-participant	
		N	Median	N	Median
Reading	4	338	42.0	1813	47.0
	5	273	49.0	1840	48.0
	6	234	48.0	1451	45.0
	7	182	57.0	1287	51.0
	8	182	49.5	1202	46.0
	9	133	59.0	1173	54.0
	10	124	51.0	1284	52.0
	All Students	1466	50.0	10050	49.0



Table 12. Fifth Block CSAP/TCAP Median Growth Percentiles Comparison by Grade: 2014 Writing

Subject	Grade	2013 Participants		Non-participant	
		N	Median	N	Median
Writing	4	340	39.0	1822	45.0
	5	273	45.0	1840	45.0
	6	234	47.5	1454	47.0
	7	182	57.0	1285	53.0
	8	182	49.5	1204	52.0
	9	133	48.0	1176	48.0
	10	124	56.0	1286	53.0
	All Students	1468	48.0	10067	48.0

Table 13. Fifth Block CSAP/TCAP Median Growth Percentiles Comparison by Grade: 2014 Math

Subject	Grade	2013 Participants		Non-participant	
		N	Median	N	Median
Math	4	339	53.0	1832	48.0
	5	274	50.0	1852	46.0
	6	234	51.0	1450	46.0
	7	182	55.5	1287	46.0
	8	181	47.0	1210	46.0
	9	133	66.0	1180	52.5
	10	123	53.0	1288	50.0
	All Students	1466	52.0	10099	48.0

Program Budget

Table 19 shows a preliminary cost estimate for the 2014 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 2014 session was \$1,556,596 equal to a per-pupil cost of \$650.21. Total costs were down from 2013 and the per-pupil cost decreased by nearly \$60 per student.



Table 19. Cost Analysis for Fifth Block

Expense	Description	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	1 yr Change
Inst. Salaries/Benefits	Salaries, PERA, Medicare	\$1,236,134	\$1,502,538	\$1,278,612	\$1,302,733	\$1,367,546	\$64,813
Inst. Salaries/Benefits - Title I	Salaries, PERA, Medicare	\$294,226	\$290,521	\$488,044	\$0	\$0	\$0
Assessment	Printing/MAP Testing	\$2,464	\$470	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Instruction	Curricular support	\$75,335	\$48,539	\$93,785	\$51,057	\$5,132	(\$45,925)
Transportation	Fuel, maintenance, salaries/benefits	\$41,110	\$74,113	\$80,676	\$104,455	\$123,671	\$19,216
Nutrition Services	Loss experienced by enterprise fund	\$5,215	\$0	\$36,835	\$82,225	(\$65,926)	(\$148,151)
Postage	Report card mailing	\$1,460	\$1,640	\$1,548	\$1,080	\$1,173	\$93
Utilities	Gas/electric	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$0
Total Costs for 5th Block:		\$1,755,944	\$2,017,821	\$2,104,500	\$1,666,550	\$1,556,596	(\$109,954)
Per Pupil Cost for 5th Block:		\$529.06	\$541.26	\$611.60	\$709.77	\$650.21	(\$59.57)

Note. All costs reflect estimates received from respective departments/divisions. For nutrition services, 2011 & 2014 revenues exceeded costs.

Table 20 shows a comparison between slot availability and enrollment for the 2014 Fifth Block session. Overall, 82% of the slots made available for Fifth Block were filled. The largest proportions of slots were used at the middle school level. The next largest proportion of slots was used at the primary level. The high school level used the smallest proportion of slots.



Table 20. School Fifth Block Slot Availability with Enrollment (2014)

School	Total	Final Day Enrollment	Final Day % Enrollment
Altura Elementary School	50	34	68%
Arkansas Elementary School	50	43	86%
Aurora Frontier K-8	100	68	68%
Boston K-8	100	81	81%
Century Elementary School	50	32	64%
Clyde Miller K-8	100	88	88%
Crawford Elementary School	50	43	86%
Dalton Elementary School	50	47	94%
Dartmouth Elementary School	50	54	108%
Elkhart Elementary School	50	76	152%
Fletcher Primary School	50	42	84%
Iowa Elementary School	50	38	76%
Jewell Elementary School	50	36	72%
Kenton Elementary School	50	36	72%
Lansing Elementary School	50	31	62%
Laredo Elementary School	50	43	86%
Lyn Knoll Elementary School	50	39	78%
Montview Math & Health Sciences	50	43	86%
Murphy Creek K-8	100	71	71%
Paris Elementary School	50	36	72%
Park Lane Elementary School	50	28	56%
Peoria Elementary	50	36	72%
Sable Elementary School	50	69	138%
Side Creek Elementary School	50	41	82%
Sixth Avenue Elementary School	50	37	74%
Vassar Elementary School	50	46	92%
Vaughn Elementary School	50	59	92%
Virginia Court Elementary School	50	35	118%
Vista Peak Exploratory	100	68	70%
Wheeling Elementary School	50	32	64%
Yale Elementary School	50	40	80%
Total (Elementary School):	1,800	1,472	82%

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



Table 20 Continued. School Fifth Block Slot Availability with Enrollment (2014)

School	Total	Final Day Enrollment	Final Day % Enrollment
Aurora Hills Middle School	100	82	82%
Aurora West College Preparatory Academy	100	141	141%
Columbia Middle School	100	77	77%
East Middle School	100	113	113%
Mrachek Middle School	100	77	77%
North Middle School Health Sci & Tech	100	46	46%
South Middle School	100	74	74%
Total (Middle School):	700	610	87%
Aurora Central High School	100	41	41%
Gateway High School	100	34	34%
Hinkley High School	100	70	70%
Rangeview High School	100	153	153%
Total (High School):	400	298	75%
Total (All Schools):	2,900	2,380	82%

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

Stakeholder Feedback

Parent Survey Results

At the conclusion of the 2014 Fifth Block session, surveys were distributed to parents along with student report cards. Completed surveys were received from 272 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 2013. However, a greater percentage of parents felt that their child's school provided them with sufficient information, or understood why their child was selected for 5th block participation, indicating improved communication with parents in comparison to the 2013 Fifth Block. There was a slight decrease in the percentage of parents who said that they believed that Fifth Block was academically beneficial for their child and a positive experience.



Table 16. Parent Survey Responses

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree/ Str. Agree	Change 13 to 14
1. My child's school provided me sufficient information throughout 5th block.	3.7%	7.0%	8.8%	45.2%	35.3%	80.5%	12.7%
2. I believe that 5th block was academically beneficial for my child.	1.8%	2.2%	6.3%	38.2%	51.5%	89.7%	-1.2%
3. I believe that 5th block was a positive experience for my child.	1.8%	1.1%	3.7%	41.0%	52.4%	93.4%	-0.3%
4. I understand why my child was selected for participation in 5th block.	1.8%	1.8%	5.2%	48.7%	42.4%	91.1%	2.4%
5. The meals that were provided were an important part of my students 5th block experience.	2.2%	5.2%	15.9%	43.0%	33.7%	76.7%	0.3%
6. If 5th block were offered next year, I would want my child to participate.	1.5%	2.2%	6.7%	33.8%	55.8%	89.6%	0.3%

Note: 2014: total n = 272; 70% responded in English and 30% responded in Spanish. 2012: total n = 286.

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 (~35%).

Many parents expressed gratitude for Fifth Block (~33%). Two minor themes emerged in the parent responses:

- 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 (~12%).
- Parents expressed concern about the quality of the meals served to their children (~12%).



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.

Thirty-four principals responded to the 2014 survey. Table 17 shows the summary of responses to the question about perceptions of the program’s effectiveness. As the table shows, a little under 80% of principals who completed the survey indicated that they believed students had benefited academically from attending Fifth Block. This is a significantly higher rate of agreement than in 2013 when approximately 53% of principals agreed with the statement.

Table 17. Principal Survey Responses

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree/ Str. Agree	Change 13 to 14
My students benefited academically from attending Fifth Block.	0.0%	0.0%	20.6%	58.8%	20.6%	79.4%	26.1%

Note. 2014: total n = 34; 2013: total n = 15.

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 2014 Fifth Block session:

- As in 2013, 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 2014 Fifth Block session:

- Transportation for students was a challenge, and impacted other services provision negatively. Specifically, the mandates placed by transportation negatively nutrition services.
- 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 162 teachers responded to the 2014 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, 85.4% of teachers agreed that the program did benefit their students, up 1.3% from the 2013 survey.

Table 18. Teacher Survey Responses

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree/ Str. Agree	Change 13 to 14
My students benefited academically from attending Fifth Block.	1.9%	1.3%	11.4%	53.8%	31.6%	85.4%	1.3%

Note. 2014: total n = 162; 2013: total n = 110.

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 below proficiency that it was not possible to give them the special attention they needed. Alternatively, other teachers felt that such a wide range of abilities was selected that it made targeted intervention difficult.
- 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. A few teachers reported very large class sizes.
- 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, school supplies, and other activities.
- Some teachers expressed frustrations with the level of support from administrators and paraprofessionals. Mainly this frustration was surrounding student behavior issues. The lack of deans, monitors, and other administrative personnel make it difficult to deal with discipline issues.
- Student attendance and 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

- A total of 2,394 students participated in the 2014 session. Just over one-fifth of students were participating for the second consecutive year, and about 8% for the third consecutive year.
- Relative to APS's overall K-12 population, white and black students were underrepresented during Fifth Block. Hispanic students were overrepresented.
- Nearly 50% of Fifth Block students were designated as English Language Learners (ELLs), compared to 37.6% of K-12 students for the 2013-14 school year.



- Analyses of TCAP growth data for 2013 Fifth Block participants showed that in math, students who participated in Fifth Block in the previous year achieve higher growth than non-participants. In the areas of reading and writing, participants did not 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 79.4% for principals, 85.4% for teachers, and 89.7% for parents.
- A preliminary cost analysis for 2014 Fifth Block indicates a total operating expense of \$1,556,596, which was equal to a per-pupil cost of \$650.21. Total costs were down from 2013, and the per-pupil cost decreased by \$59.57.