

An Examination of the Pinellas County School District's University of Florida Lastinger Center Partnership

July 2009

Prepared for:
Pinellas County School District
Largo, Florida

Prepared by:
RMC Research Corporation
Tampa, Florida



CONTENTS

Acknowledgements		i
Executive Summary		ii
Section 1	Introduction	1
	Goals of the Study	1
	Study Design	1
	Research Questions	1
	Approach	2
Section 2	Description of Key Partnership Components	3
	Overview of the Partnership	3
	Partnership Activities	3
	Partnership Components	5
Section 3	Perceptions of Key Partnership Components	8
	Graduate Student Focus Group	8
	Inquiry Coach Focus Groups	10
	Inquiry Celebration Participant Survey	13
	Principal Interviews	16
Section 4	Summary of Findings	20
	Use of Data from the <i>Instructional Practices Inventory</i> and <i>School Climate Survey</i>	20
	Perceived Impact of the Partnership on Professional Practices	21
	Perceived Impact of the Partnership on Student Achievement	21
Section 5	Suggestions for Modifications to the Partnership	23
Appendices		
	A: Graduate Program Focus Group Protocol	
	B: Inquiry Coach Focus Group Protocol	
	C: Inquiry Celebration Participant Survey	
	D-1: Inquiry Celebration Participant Survey Results Summary	
	D-2: Inquiry Celebration Participant Comments	
	E: Principal Interview Protocol	

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

An Examination of the Pinellas County School District's University of Florida Lastinger Center Partnership, July, 2009 is the study of the second year of the Partnership's implementation. The study was conducted by RMC Research Corporation. We are grateful to the graduate program participants, inquiry coaches, *Inquiry Celebration* participants, and principals of the participating schools for providing thoughtful commentary on their experiences. We are grateful also to Dr. Sylvia Boynton, Professor-in-Residence, and Dr. Behrokh Ahmadi, Director of Program Evaluation, who provided RMC evaluators with the necessary documents and information needed to conduct this evaluation.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an examination of the second year of a partnership between Pinellas County School District and The University of Florida Lastinger Center. According to the agreement between the parties, the purpose of the partnership is to promote high quality teaching, increase school performance, and mobilize communities in support of children's learning and healthy development. This is to be accomplished through a focus on improving the quality of the district's teaching, learning, and leadership.

The major sources of information for this study come from descriptive information pertaining to the various Partnership events over the course of the year, focus groups conducted with graduate program participants and inquiry coaches, a survey of *Inquiry Celebration* participants, and individual interviews conducted with principals of participating schools.

According to participants, the majority of the key Partnership components are being implemented as intended. These include components relating to the areas of direct work in schools and district leadership development, such as the graduate degree program, inquiry coaching, the use of formative data collection tools, and the district's annual *Inquiry Celebration*. Activities relating to community engagement have not begun; it is anticipated that this will be an area of focus in the future.

Participant perceptions of the various Partnership components are positive. The partnership is regarded as having a positive influence on the professional practices in Partnership schools, which in-turn, positively impact student achievement. Graduate program participants view the program as a "powerful means" of affecting positive change for schools and credit the program with leading teachers to be more reflective of their teaching. Inquiry coaches reported that, for those participating in inquiry, the Partnership has led to increased collaboration among staff members and has caused teaching to be more reflective and data-driven. *Inquiry Celebration* participants reported that conducting inquiry has led them to make changes in their teaching and deepened their understanding of subject matter and their students. Principals unanimously agreed that their schools' participation in the Partnership has positively impacted their schools' culture, and credited the Partnership with moving schools toward learning communities in which collaboration and inquiry form the basis for collegial exchange. Principals also credit the Partnership with increasing teachers' self reflection, focus on data, and enhanced questioning of their students.

Based upon participant perceptions, a list of suggestions to improve the Partnership for the upcoming school year is provided. These include expanding some of the Partnership components, improving communication, increasing the sharing of inquiry results, improving the on-line *Inquiry Database*, and improving the district's annual *Inquiry Celebration*.

SECTION 1

Introduction

The major purpose of this study is to better understand the second year of the implementation of the Pinellas County School District's University of Florida (UF) Lastinger Center Partnership, and to report suggestions for modifications to the Partnership.

Goals of the Study

The overarching goals of the study include both the study of the implementation of the second year of the Partnership and the reporting of recommendations for modifications to the Partnership. The implementation study goal is threefold: 1) to provide a description of the various components of the Partnership that occurred during the second year; 2) to examine the perceptions of the various Partnership components; and 3) to formulate recommendations to be used in planning the Partnership in subsequent years.

Study Design

This study uses a multiple-methods approach to document evidence pertaining to Partnership implementation. These methods include document analysis and quantitative and qualitative analyses of data obtained from focus groups of graduate program participants and inquiry coaches, a survey of *Inquiry Celebration* participants, and individual interviews with principals of participating schools.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study are:

1. What are the key components of the UF Lastinger Center for Learning/Pinellas County Schools Partnership?
2. To what extent have the key components of the Partnership been implemented?
3. What is the impact of the Partnership on instructional practices and student achievement, as perceived by participating principals, *Inquiry Celebration* participants, inquiry coaches, and graduate program participants?
4. What modifications should be made to the Partnership for next year, based upon participant feedback?

Approach

To answer these research questions, this study made use of a variety of strategies and data sources, including the following:

1. Documents pertaining to the content of the various Partnership components were gathered and analyzed for content;
2. Focus group protocols for graduate program participants and inquiry coaches were developed and focus groups were conducted in May of 2009;
3. The principal investigator attended the district's *Inquiry Celebration* on April 30, 2009;
4. An electronic survey of *Inquiry Celebration* participants was developed and administered in May of 2009; and
5. An interview protocol for principals of participating schools was developed and interviews were conducted in June of 2009.

The sections of this report describe key Partnership components, participant perceptions of key Partnership components, and suggestions for modifications to the Partnership. Research questions and findings that address the questions are embedded in each section. Supporting instrumentation, data tables, and other documents are included in the Appendices.

SECTION 2

Description of Key Partnership Components

This section of the study presents a summary of the key Partnership components for the 2008-09 school year and a description of the extent to which the components were implemented as designed and intended.

Research Questions Addressed:

What are the key components of the University of Florida Lastinger Center for Learning/Pinellas County Schools Partnership?

To what extent have the key components of the Partnership been implemented?

Overview of the Partnership

During the 2008-09 school year, the UF College of Education's Lastinger Center completed its second year of partnering with Pinellas County Schools. The purpose of the Partnership is to promote high quality teaching, increase school performance, and mobilize communities in support of children's learning and healthy development. This is accomplished through a focus on improving the quality of the district's teaching, learning, and leadership.

There are four major objectives to the Partnership:

1. Increase teacher effectiveness and student achievement,
2. Improve the performance of participating Title I schools,
3. Improve the effectiveness of school and district leadership, and
4. Support the development of inquiry¹ as a foundation for district-wide school improvement and educator learning.

Partnership Activities

The Partnership seeks to meet the four project objectives through three main areas of Partnership activities: direct work in schools, community involvement, and district leadership development.

¹ *Teacher inquiry*, also referred to as *teacher action research*, is defined as "the systematic, intentional study by teachers of their own classroom practice." University of Florida, College of Education, Center for School Improvement. (n.d.) *About teacher inquiry*. From <http://education.ufl.edu/web/?pid=907>

Direct Work in Schools

Direct work in schools is conducted in ten participating Title I schools which have joined the UF *Florida Flagship Schools Network*. A professor-in-residence from the university is assigned to the district and works with district and school leaders to enhance professional development within the ten schools and to provide a model that will eventually be available to all district educators. Teachers, school administrators, and district leaders are involved in inquiry groups. Additionally, participants in the *Master Teacher Program*, focus on learning job-embedded, research-based, practice-centered, and inquiry-focused professional development.

Five of the ten participating schools are designated as *case study schools*. These schools participate in all of the features of the Partnership, as well as agreeing to fully participate in the use of two formative data collection tools, the *Instructional Practices Inventory (IPI)* and the *School Culture Survey (SCS)*. These tools are used to assess and enhance the school improvement process. They are used according to an established routine in the five case study schools and are made available to the remaining Partnership schools, according to their needs and willingness to participate.²

The *IPI* is administered in the case study schools in the fall and spring of each year. For non-case study schools, staff from UF provided training to Pinellas administrators who have developed school-to-school partnerships and conduct the *IPI* in each other's schools. The purposes of the *IPI* include:

- Provide a whole school portrait of levels of student-engaged instruction, teacher-directed instruction, and teacher/student disengagement. The instrument does not monitor individual teaching practice; rather it is used to provide a global picture of the levels of teacher and student engagement in learning at the school level.
- Provide data about teaching practice and student engagement to initiate conversations about teaching practice at the school level, which in-turn may be used in planning professional development.
- Provide data about changes in teaching practice and student engagement over time.

The *SCS* is administered to instructional personnel at the five Pinellas case study schools each November. Non-case study schools may use the online survey if they choose to do so. The purposes of the *SCS* include:

- Provide data on faculty perceptions of school culture around the variables of *Collaborative Leadership, Teacher Collaboration, Professional Development, Unity of Purpose, Collegial Support, and Learning Partnership*.
- Provide information to school leadership teams to collaboratively assess their current status, set goals related to school culture, and monitor progress in meeting goals, which may be used in planning professional development.
- Provide data about nature of school culture or various variables that can be correlated with achievement data.

² S. Boynton and E. Bright, personal communication, June 17, 2009. The authors of this report were unable to obtain more specific information about the case study schools.

Community Engagement

Community engagement is the second area of Partnership activities that the Lastinger Center will provide support to the Pinellas School District. These activities, such as engaging the private sector and increasing community support for schools have not begun; it is anticipated that this will be an area of focus in the future.

District Leadership Development

The development of district leadership is the third main area of the Partnership. Leadership development is fostered by bringing the appropriate district leaders together to plan Partnership growth and focus on learning as leaders. Job-embedded trainings are provided to understand and increase support for Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), inquiry coaching, and data-collection. These activities are supported by both the professor-in-residence and other faculty members from the Lastinger Center.

Partnership Components

The three main components of the Partnership included in this study are the graduate degree program, inquiry coaching, and the district's annual *Inquiry Celebration*. Participant counts for each of the components for 2008-09 are reported in Table 2-1. A narrative description of each of the components follows.

Table 2-1
Participation in Key Project Components, 2008-09

School Name	Number Graduate Degree Program Participants	Number Inquiry Coaches	Number Inquiry Celebration Participants
74th St Elementary	5	2	3
Belleair Elementary	6	2	6
Blanton Elementary	2	2	4
Clearview Elementary	3	0	0
Dunedin Elementary	1	2	8
Fairmount Park Elementary	6	2	7
Gulfport Montessori Elementary	2	1	15
Rawlings Elementary	6	3	9
Sawgrass Elementary	2	1	9
Woodlawn Elementary	3	2	3
Total	36^a	17^b	64

^aThe total number of graduate degree program participants reflects one participant who moved from a Partnership school to a non-Partnership school.

^bThe total number of inquiry coaches includes the *Inquiry Celebration* coordinator at Rawlings Elementary.

Graduate Degree Program

Through the Partnership with the UF Lastinger Center, a graduate degree program is made available to select teachers and leaders. Tuition is supported through the Center, and in return, participants must commit to staying in a Title I school for at least five years. Participants receive either a Master of Education or Educational Specialist degree in *Teacher Leadership for School Improvement* (TLSI). There are currently thirty-six cohort members from Pinellas County Schools.

The graduate program was developed by faculty in the School of Teaching and Learning at UF to address the needs for advanced study for practicing teachers. Participants “develop as leaders, learners, change agents, and advocates for all children as well as the teaching profession within their school building and larger community through job-embedded coursework that allows participants to link theory to practice.”³ Participants endeavor to achieve three main goals throughout their course of study:

1. Develop as a master teacher,
2. Develop as a teacher leader, and
3. Develop as a teacher researcher

Participants enroll in a series of six core courses that include *Guided Teacher Inquiry* and *Teacher Leadership for School Change*. Additionally, participants select an area of specialization in a content area. These areas include Reading, Media Literacy, Interdisciplinary Specialization and Educational Technology. The courses are offered in a blended format consisting of both “in-person” and “on-line” sessions. In-person classes meet face-to-face twice per month at one of the participating school sites. The culminating activity for participants is to develop and present a portfolio that demonstrates growth in all three program goal areas. The majority of the participants will complete their degrees in August 2010.

Inquiry Coaching

A stipend is offered to any teacher in the ten participating schools to participate in the inquiry process. There are sixty-four teachers who participated in the Inquiry Celebration during the 2008-2009 school year across nine schools. *Inquiry Coaches* are selected to guide the *Inquiry Celebration* participants through the process. There are seventeen *Inquiry Coaches* across nine schools for the 2008-2009 school year.⁴ Half of these coaches are in the graduate student cohort; the other half are not. Approximately five coaches are in their second year of coaching, with the remainder completing their first year. Their commitment is for one year.

Inquiry coaches meet on a monthly basis throughout the school year. Monthly agendas reflect three main areas of discussions. First, status reports of *Inquiry* at each school are provided by the school *Inquiry Coaches*. These are generally reports on school meetings during the last month, need for help or resources, and celebrations of success. Next, professional development in

³ University of Florida. (2008). *Teacher Leadership for School Improvement Program*. Gainesville, FL: Author.

⁴ Clearview Elementary had neither Inquiry Coaches nor teachers participating in the Inquiry Celebration in 2008-09. Three faculty members from Clearview Elementary continued in the Graduate Program during the 2008-09 school year.

particular areas of *Inquiry* is provided for the coaches. Topics of discussion throughout the 2008-2009 school year included: Passion Profiles, Consultancy Protocols, Text Rendering Experience Protocols, Components of Sharing, and discussions of specific chapters from the book, *Reflective Educator's Guide to Classroom Research*. Finally, next steps are discussed in furthering the inquiry process in the schools and providing the necessary supports.

Inquiry Celebration

The third major activity of the Partnership is the annual *Inquiry Celebration*, which is held each spring. Sixty-four educators from the ten Partnership schools, as well as 135 educators from other schools in the district, presented the results of their inquiry. Participants include classroom teachers, school administrators, and other education specialists. Through table presentations, each participant shares a presentation providing a question that they wished to answer and the steps they utilized through the inquiry process in order to answer the question. Multiple areas are set up around the celebration area for presenters to share their inquiry. Presentations are scheduled during one of three 40 minute periods, allowing participants to share their research and practice with other educators. Topics of inquiry vary according to participants' particular areas of interest. Sample titles of inquiry for the 2009 Celebration included: *Using Learning Games to Encourage Higher Levels of Engagement With Students Who Have Processing Disorders*, *Increasing ESOL Students' Oral Language Skills by Using Literature Circles*, *Buddy Reading Across the Grade Levels*, and *The Importance of Nonsense Words as a Fluent Reader*.

SECTION 3

Perceptions of Key Partnership Components

This section of the study presents a summary of the perceptions of the participants in the key Partnership components for the 2008-09 school year. A summary of the data collection activities is reported in Table 3-1. A narrative description of perceptions of each of the components follows.

Research Question Addressed:

What is the impact of the Partnership on instructional practices and student achievement, as perceived by participating principals, *Inquiry Celebration* participants, inquiry coaches, and graduate program participants?

Table 3-1
Summary of Perception Data Collection Approach

Component Participants	Methodology	Data Collection Time Frame	Number
Graduate Students	Focus Group	May 2009	12
Inquiry Coaches	Focus Groups	May 2009	14
Inquiry Celebration Participants	Electronic Survey	May 2009	27
Principals	Individual Telephone Interviews	June 2009	7

Graduate Student Focus Group

Twelve graduate program participants attended a focus group conducted in May 2009 prior to a regularly scheduled meeting of graduate students. An invitation was extended to all graduate students to voluntarily participate in the focus group, with the maximum number of participants set at twelve. All graduate students who chose to voluntarily participate were able to do so. It is important to note that while some of the graduate students also serve as inquiry coaches, each focus group protocol was designed to focus on participants' roles in specific aspects of the Partnership, and thus had very little overlap in the content of the questions. (See Appendix A for the *Graduate Program Focus Group Protocol*.) A summary of the responses to the focus groups probes is arranged in topical areas below.

Program Enrollment Decision

Graduate program participants were nearly unanimous in voicing their primary reason for choosing to enroll in the program - the Partnership offers an opportunity to obtain a graduate degree with little or no cost. In addition, the program provides participants with the opportunity

to collaborate with colleagues who have similar students and who experience similar challenges. Other factors mentioned by the group included that the program is directly relevant to participants' roles in their respective schools; in some cases it allows for the earning of a reading endorsement; and the program can help participants serve in leadership roles in their schools. In addition, the convenient schedule, and the underpinning philosophy make the program attractive to participants.

Perceived Impact on Professional Practice and Student Achievement

Participants view the program as a powerful means of affecting positive change for schools. The program's emphasis on leadership and professionalism leads to a sense of empowerment on the part of participants. As one participant stated, "This [program] is the hope for education, for Pinellas County at least."

Statements such as, "It is applicable to everyday classroom experiences" and "If what I am doing is not getting results, I stop and try something else instead of continuing" support the contention that the program is directly relevant to professional practices, and offers participants a means of collaborating and theorizing as to which educational approaches and strategies are most effective in particular settings. This sentiment was corroborated by a graduate program participant who stated, "We try new ideas so students benefit through routines and practices." For graduate program participants who are also inquiry coaches, the program offers support by providing additional theory and research for their coaching practice.

In terms of the impact on students, participants most often cited an increased use of data, which has informed and focused their instruction. For example, one participant conducted an inquiry on the impact of a tutoring program on oral reading fluency. The findings from her inquiry were used to design and deliver the most effective instruction in this area. This routine of trying out new approaches is viewed as having a positive impact on student achievement. Another factor contributing to the positive impact on students is the collaboration among the graduate program participants. This collaboration is cited as helping to improve instructional practices as well as leading teachers to be more reflective of their teaching. Finally, the program is credited with impacting students through the involvement of their families. These relationships are fostered by conducting home visits.

Collegial Sharing of Program Knowledge

Program participants have been able to share what they have learned in the program with their colleagues. Most often, this sharing occurs during Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). The Partnership protocols are used often in PLCs, and offer a structure for reviewing and interpreting data to inform instruction decisions. Furthermore, the protocols used in the PLCs are credited with keeping participants more focused during meetings and leading to a more "risk-free" environment due to their use. Information shared within the PLCs is shared often with the entire school community.

Effective Aspects of the Program

According to the perceptions of the graduate program participants, the aspects of the program that are viewed as most effective are the collegial and collaborative support of the group. As one graduate program participant stated, “Collaboration with other [program] teachers has improved my practices.” This has influenced participants’ PLCs back at their school sites to also be more collaborative. Furthermore, the Professor-in-Residence offers much-valued support, and possesses first-hand knowledge of what occurs in the participants’ schools. Additionally, participants cited the program’s emphasis on trying out new approaches as being an effective aspect. Finally, the use of a variety of instructional delivery modes such as in-person discussions as well as on-line learning was often cited as contributing to the program’s effectiveness. Additionally the program’s integration of technology is viewed positively.

Suggestions for Modifications to the Program

Program participants expressed their gratitude for being able to participate in this high-quality program and offered several suggestions for improving the program. First, the group recommended that the program should be expanded by allowing additional schools to participate. The program has become more well-known, and with this, the demand for participation has also grown. Second, by providing clear expectations and an overview of the program at the outset, participants would be better able to meet the expectations. Third, by specifying requisite knowledge for participation, this would eliminate the need to cover “basics” with the entire group, such as the learning of certain software programs. Finally, the ability to meet all of the instructors (even those from the On-Line courses) is valued by the group.

Inquiry Coach Focus Groups

Fourteen inquiry coaches participated in two concurrent focus groups conducted in May 2009 during a regularly scheduled meeting of inquiry coaches. All inquiry coaches who were present for the meeting participated in one of the two focus groups. (See Appendix B for the *Inquiry Coach Focus Group Protocol*.) The summary of the focus groups is arranged in topical areas below.

Coach Selection Process

During the focus group discussions, the fourteen inquiry coaches described the variety of ways in which they were selected for their role. The process of how coaches were selected for their role varies by school. In general, the selection process began two years ago, when staff from schools in Pinellas County participated in a week-long summer institute in Gainesville. At most schools, principals chose certain staff members who would attend and eventually serve as inquiry coaches in their schools. To a lesser degree, principals asked for volunteers to attend the institute. There are also a number of coaches who enrolled in the graduate program and subsequently became inquiry coaches.

Coach Role and Responsibilities

During the focus groups, coaches also shared their perceptions of what their roles and responsibilities are. These role and responsibilities vary by school. Some coaches were clear about their role and responsibilities and others were less so. While there was some disagreement among coaches about their role, most noted that they perform the following tasks in their role as inquiry coach:

- Recruit and encourage staff members to participate in the inquiry process
- Provide tailored support to staff members/teams conducting inquiry
- Facilitate the sharing of inquiry findings
- Attend PLC meetings, which sometimes are heavily focused on conducting inquiry
- Facilitate book studies focused on inquiry topics
- Conduct surveys of teachers

Challenges Faced by Coaches

Coaches face challenges in their role. Although there was some disagreement among coaches regarding the greatest challenges, most noted the importance of having supportive administration at their school. Some of the coaches were very positive about the amount of support that is given for conducting inquiry by their administration, while others reported receiving little support. Another challenge raised by coaches pertains to a lack of consistent communication from their school administration and between regional assistant superintendents and the Professor-in-Residence. In schools where inquiry is mandated, coaches face additional challenges such as low morale and staff resistance to participating in the inquiry process.

Coaches expressed concern for having adequate time to conduct meetings with inquiry participants, as well as having enough staff members participating in inquiry. Furthermore, PLCs are often grade-level based, and this further impedes the ability of cross-grade level inquiry groups to have a common time to collaborate.

Perceived Impact on School Culture

Overall, coaches view their schools' participation in the inquiry process very favorably. In the words of one coach, "It is a wonderful Partnership and a blessing to needy schools." All coaches reported that their school's participation in the inquiry process has impacted their school's culture in at least some way. However, more often than not, the Partnership has not had a marked effect on the entire school. The impact is perceived to be the greatest for staff members who fully participate in the inquiry process. Conversely, staff members who are not fully involved in conducting inquiry do not have a full understanding of the inquiry process, but at times an interest has been "sparked" by staff members hearing of others' inquiries. Coaches expressed confidence that the impact of the Partnership on their schools' culture would increase in time, as evidenced by this coach's comment, "The more the understanding of the inquiry process spreads, the more support there will be for it. We are increasing the number of presentations at the *Inquiry Celebration* each year."

Another important impact perceived by coaches is an increased collaboration among staff members. Several coaches mentioned that inquiry is being conducted both within grade level teams, as well as cross-grade level teams. This is a process that is valued by coaches. In the words of one inquiry coach, the process "...generates new ideas and challenges people to try new things." Furthermore, there has been an increase in the number of presentations at the district's annual *Inquiry Celebration*, another means of increasing collaboration. Coaches also agreed that participating in inquiry has led staff members to be more reflective of their teaching practices.

Data Collection Tools

All coaches have an awareness of the two main data collection tools utilized by some of the schools in the Partnership, the *School Culture Survey* and the *Instructional Practices Inventory (IPI)*. Most frequently, coaches noted that they have not seen the results of the data analysis pertaining to these tools, and stressed that it is left up to individual principals to disseminate the results. Less frequently, results of the data collection are shared with the staff via faculty meetings or team meetings. A few coaches noted that their school's ratings on the *IPI* had improved dramatically since participating in the Partnership.

Perceived Impact on Professional Practice and Student Learning

Coaches agreed that the impact of the Partnership on their own professional practices has been significant. By participating and facilitating inquiry, coaches have "...learned to justify alternative approaches to the delivery of the curriculum and differentiated instruction..." and increased self-reflection and examination of the effectiveness of their practices. Coaches believe that for those teachers who participate in the inquiry process, their teaching has become more reflective and more data-driven, and the teachers are more comfortable trying out new approaches in a non-threatening context. One coach characterized the impact in this way, "At my school, in the grade levels where inquiry has been conducted, there has been a tremendous impact on instructional practices." Coaches also cited an increase in teacher learning, as well as team planning and collaboration among staff members.

Coaches agreed that the students of teachers who have participated in the inquiry process have been positively impacted. The increased focus on data to guide instructional practices has led to more effective teaching. Coaches were unanimous in their expectations that the effects of the Partnership on professional practice and student learning will grow in time.

Effective Aspects of the Inquiry Process

Coaches agreed that the most effective aspects of the inquiry process include increased collegial exchange and collaboration, both among teachers and the inquiry coaches themselves. In particular, the district's *Inquiry Celebration* is valued as an opportunity to hear about practices that have been effective in other schools. Coaches view the use of new practices as instrumental in facilitating school change, and in-turn, increasing student achievement.

Another aspect of the inquiry process viewed as effective is its direct relevance to school and classroom practices. Staff members are free to choose topics that are directly relevant to their

situation, and this adds to an increased level of interest among the inquiry participants. Coaches noted that both the stipend offered to inquiry participants and the waiving of the teacher performance appraisal foster motivation and enthusiasm in the inquiry process. One coach stated, “This is a valuable professional learning model that places value on teachers’ time by awarding a stipend.”

Finally, coaches agreed that the on-going support received from the Lastinger Center and the coach protocols that were provided have been especially helpful.

Suggestions for Modifications to the Inquiry Process

Coaches emphasized their enthusiasm for the inquiry process and had few suggestions for its improvement. Coaches did suggest that there be a screening process for inquiries posted on the on-line *Inquiry Database* (see page 17 for an explanation of the database), and that the search parameters used in the database be more user-friendly and meaningful.

Inquiry Celebration Participant Survey

An online survey was conducted in May 2009 for those from Partnership schools who participated in the District’s *Inquiry Celebration* in April. Participant email addresses from the participating Lastinger Partnership schools were obtained from the *Inquiry Celebration* program. The survey link was sent out via email to 63 participants. Responses were received from 27 participants, for a response rate of 43 percent. Of those responding, twenty-four (89 percent) were classroom teachers, two (seven percent) were school-based administrators, and one (four percent) was a reading coach. The survey instrument is located in Appendix C. Individual item responses are located in Appendix D-1, and responses to open-ended questions are located in Appendix D-2. A summary of the results by topics is reported below.

School Culture

Responses to the survey suggest that inquiry participants generally view the culture in their school to be positive and collegial.

- Nearly all (92 percent) of the respondents responded that there is a collaborative relationship among teachers and school leaders.
- Nearly all (96 percent) of the respondents indicated that teachers work together toward a common mission.
- Nearly all (92 percent) of the respondents replied that teachers, parents, and students work together for the common good of students.

Fewer respondents indicated that opportunities for collegial discussion and interaction are available to them.

- Slightly less than half (46 percent) of the respondents indicated that teachers across the school plan together.
- Slightly more than half (54 percent) of the respondents indicated that teachers are aware of the practices and programs of other teachers.

- About two-thirds of the respondents agreed that teachers observe and discuss teaching practices.

Data Collection Tools

Respondents were asked to share their perceptions of the *IPI* and the *SCS*. As reported in Table 3-2, 19 percent of the respondents have not used the tools, which is consistent with the notion that the tools are used more often in the case study schools, and with less regularity across the non-case study schools. Of those who have used the instruments, 86 percent of respondents rated the feedback from the *IPI* and the *SCS* as helpful.

Table 3-2
Inquiry Celebration Participant Perceptions of the Helpfulness of the IPI and the SCS

Item 6	N Responding	% Strongly Agree	% Agree	% Disagree	% Strongly Disagree	I have not participated in this component
I have found receiving feedback from the Instructional Practices Inventory to be helpful.	27	22%	48%	11%	0%	19%
I have found receiving feedback from the School Culture Survey to be helpful.	26	19%	50%	12%	0%	19%

As reported in Table 3-3, 87 percent of the respondents indicated that the feedback they received from the *IPI* improved their teaching. Furthermore, 73 percent reported that action plans were created based upon these data, and 66 percent agreed that the action plans were implemented as planned.

Table 3-3
Inquiry Celebration Participant Perceptions of the IPI

Item 3	N Responding	% Strongly Agree	% Agree	% Disagree	% Strongly Disagree
The feedback I received from the Instructional Practices Inventory improved my teaching.	24	29%	58%	13%	0%
School teams created action plans to improve school culture.	26	31%	42%	23%	4%
The action plans were implemented as planned.	26	27%	39%	35%	0%

Professional Learning and Practices

Responses to the survey suggest that respondents agreed that their participation in the Partnership has significantly impacted their professional practices. One respondent described participating in the *Inquiry Celebration* in this way, “This was one of the most growing experiences I’ve been a part of since I’ve started to teach in the classroom. I plan on doing it again. Thank you.”

- All of the respondents agreed that participation in the Partnership has led them to make changes in their teaching.
- Nearly all (96 percent) of the respondents agreed that participating in the Partnership has deepened their understanding of subject matter and their students.
- Nearly all (96 percent) of the respondents agreed that participating in the Partnership has caused their professional learning experiences to be sustained and coherently focused.
- All of the respondents replied that they have refined their practices by participating in the inquiry process.

Respondents were relatively less agreeable that their professional learning experiences have allowed for adequate time to collaborate and reflect on what they have learned.

- About eighty percent of the respondents agreed that they have had opportunities to work productively with teachers both within and across grade levels.
- About eighty percent of the respondents agreed that they have enough time to think carefully about and try out new ideas.

Perceived Effectiveness of Partnership Components

Inquiry Celebration participants were asked their perceptions regarding the effectiveness of various Partnership components. The components of the Partnership that are most valued by the respondents include:

- Having an on-site inquiry facilitator and/or inquiry coach
- Collaborating with other teachers
- Presenting at the annual *Inquiry Celebration*
- Conducting inquiry to refine classroom practices

Aspects of the Partnership that were less valued by respondents include receiving feedback from the *IPI* and the *SCS*.

Topics of Inquiry

A summary of the most prevalent inquiry topics is reported in Table 3-4. Topics could be included in more than one area. For example, if a topic pertained to ESOL students’ reading, they were included both in the Reading/Literacy and ESOL categories. A complete list of topics is located in Appendix D-2. As reported in the table, the most prevalent inquiry topics were those relating to the areas of reading and literacy.

**Table 3-4
Inquiry Topics**

Topic	N Inquiries	Rank Order
Reading and Literacy	17	1
General Academics (such as student engagement, looping, altering schedule)	6	2
Testing and Data Interpretation	5	3
Social/Behavioral	4	4

Suggestions for Modifications

Inquiry Celebration participants were asked for suggestions for modifications to the program. The majority of suggestions pertained to improving the *Inquiry Celebration*, including:

- Increasing the allotted time for sharing of inquiry results
- Providing a quieter setting in which to share results
- Increasing the sharing of inquiry results among schools
- Supporting participants' preparation for the *Inquiry Celebration* by
 - Providing more examples of inquiries
 - Allowing additional time for inquiry teams to plan together

A complete list of respondents' suggestions is located in Appendix D-2.

Principal Interviews

The principals of all nine continuing Partnership schools were invited to participate in individual telephone interviews. Seven principals and one assistant principal participated in the interviews, which were conducted in June 2009. The protocol for these interviews is located in Appendix E.

The summary of the interviews is arranged in topical areas below.

School Involvement in the Partnership

For all of the schools involved in the Partnership, their involvement began during the summer of 2007 with a week-long training conducted on the UF campus in Gainesville. Each school brought a leadership team consisting of approximately ten members. During this training, participants learned more about the inquiry process, protocol use, professional learning communities, and became more familiar with the various aspects of the Partnership, such as the graduate program and inquiry coaching.

The extent to which the various aspects of the Partnership have been implemented vary by school site. Most often, a UF faculty member works closely with the Partnership schools to develop a collaborative, collegial atmosphere to improve student achievement. This is achieved

through the facilitation of inquiry, data collection tools and follow-up discussion, and the fostering of school leadership through inquiry coaches and the graduate program. All of the schools have at least some staff members involved in the district's annual *Inquiry Celebration*, with participation expected to increase during the next school year. Several schools mentioned that conducting inquiry will be required for all staff members for the upcoming school year.

Principal Role

Principals frequently described their role as communicators, facilitators, and even "cheerleaders." They provide direction and encouragement for their staff. One principal explained her role in this way, "I act as a facilitator of shared leadership. My role is to support best practices and to set the tone by looking at data and trying different approaches." In this role, principals rely on protocols, the inquiry process, and the collaboration of PLCs and their school leadership teams to support their efforts. Many of the principals rely on the tools provided by the Center that are contained in a training manual entitled, *Learning Community Facilitators' Institute Resource Guide*.⁵ Principals also engage in professional learning pertaining to inquiry, including conducting their own inquiry, taking on-line courses, or participating in the graduate degree program.

Faculty Member Selection and Roles

Inquiry coaches are typically chosen by principals from a pool of volunteers at their school site. In some cases, UF faculty provided input into the selection of the coaches. In all schools, conducting inquiry is open to all faculty members, and coaches encourage faculty members to participate in inquiry by sharing information at staff meetings. Several principals noted that the initial selection process for participation in the summer 2007 Partnership training occurred after the end of the school year. Because the selection occurred on short notice, schools were not always able to have an ideal representation of staff members from all grade levels.

Typically, partner schools have two inquiry coaches who support staff members' inquiries at their school site. All of the principals expressed an interest in expanding the number of faculty members involved in conducting inquiry for the upcoming school year. Most often, inquiry is conducted by teams comprised of teachers from the same grade level, and to a lesser extent, cross-grade level teams. Results of inquiry are often shared with colleagues at their school sites, with several principals reporting that they hold their own *Inquiry Celebration* at their school site.

There is an on-line *Inquiry Database* maintained by UF that is available as a resource for those interested in inquiry. The extent to which this is used varies greatly by school. In most schools, there is an awareness of the database, but it is rarely used. In a few schools, faculty members use the database to generate ideas for their own inquiry.

All of the seven principals and one assistant principal who agreed to be interviewed reported that concepts of the Partnership are incorporated into the PLCs at their school sites. Often, protocols provided by UF are used to guide and foster communication during PLC meetings. Results

⁵ The protocols included in the guide are from the *National School Reform Faculty* and may be found at <http://www.nsrffharmony.org/protocol/index.html>

obtained from the *School Culture Survey* and the *Instructional Practices Inventory* are discussed during PLC meetings. Additionally, inquiry results are shared often during PLC time.

Inquiry Coach Role

Principals perceive the inquiry coach as one who facilitates, supports, leads, and encourages inquiry by providing examples and ongoing support. Often, those conducting inquiry use a common protocol provided by the inquiry coach for conducting and reporting the results of their inquiry. In some schools, inquiry coaches also work hand-in-hand with PLCs in conducting inquiry.

Data Collection Tools

The extent to which the *School Culture Survey* and *Instructional Practices Inventory* are used by Partnership schools varies by school site. As presented in a previous section of this report, the five case study schools collect data using the *SCS* each November, and the *IPI* twice per year. The remaining Partnership schools may also use these tools. It appears that the *IPI* is utilized more often than the *SCS*.

Several principals cited specific examples of how results from the *IPI* are used. In one school, a team of teachers focused on student engagement and described behaviors representative of high levels of engagement for each subject area. This is an area of inquiry that these teachers will continue during 2009-10. In another case, a group of teachers developed specific questions that teachers could pose to their students that would elicit student responses consistent with high ratings on the *IPI*. The teachers then began using these questioning techniques, which impacted their instructional practices. In another case, a leadership cadre developed its own walkthrough based on behaviors that they wanted to see in classrooms, while being sensitive to the fact that often it is difficult for teachers to allow students to be guided by inquiry and that teachers may sometimes be fearful if they aren't seen as "teaching" if someone walks into their classrooms.

Perceived Impact on School Culture

Principals were in agreement that their schools' participation in the Partnership has positively impacted their schools' culture. The Partnership is credited with moving schools toward learning communities in which collaboration and inquiry form the basis for collegial exchange. Furthermore, principals credit the Partnership with increasing teachers' self reflection, focus on data, and enhanced questioning of their students. In the words of one principal, "I think it has helped teachers be collegial rather than just congenial." The Partnership is credited with improving teachers' morale and igniting a "passion" for teaching. Finally, the notion that, in the words of one principal, "All students belong to all teachers" has brought faculties together as they work as a cohesive team to increase student achievement.

Effective Aspects of the Partnership

Principals expressed a great deal of support for the Partnership. In the words of one principal, "It has been a support in our effort to create a culture of collaboration and inquiry that will help us

reach our school goals of increased student achievement.” Another principal expressed enthusiasm for the Partnership in this way, “This is the best thing to happen since I’ve been at [this school]!”

Principals cited specific aspects of the Partnership that they viewed as being most effective. These included:

- Support of UF faculty members
- Graduate program
- *Inquiry Celebration* and Inquiry Coaches
- Increased focus on the use of data and its interpretation
- Collegial sharing of ideas
- Ongoing professional learning experiences
- Increased knowledge of current best practices
- Interpretation and use of data from the *IPi*

Suggestions for Modifications to the Partnership

Principals had several suggestions for improving the Partnership. The first area of recommendation pertains to improving communication. Principals would like information on the various aspects of the program to be more clearly defined and communicated, along with the plan for ongoing support and acclimating new administrators. In addition, principals would like inquiry participants to communicate the results of their inquiries more widely. Another set of recommendations pertains to the graduate degree program. Principals would like to see the program expanded to include another cohort of participants, as well as the introduction of a doctoral program. Additionally, for those participating in the graduate degree program, an increased sensitivity to the demands on time at the end of the school year was suggested. Finally, the recommendation was made to continue the financial incentive for teachers to conduct inquiry.

SECTION 4

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to better understand the Pinellas County School District's University of Florida Lastinger Center Partnership, and to formulate suggestions for modifications to the Partnership. The goals with respect to studying the implementation of the second year of the Partnership included providing a description of the various components of the Partnership that occurred during the second year, examining the perceptions of the various Partnership components, and formulating recommendations based upon participant perceptions to be used in planning the Partnership in subsequent years.

This study examined data from a variety of sources to address the intended purpose:

- A review of documents relevant to the Partnership
- A focus group of graduate program participants
- Two focus groups of inquiry coaches
- An on-line survey of *Inquiry Celebration* participants
- Individual interviews with principals of participating schools

Following is a summary of the major findings of the study. As a reminder to the reader, these findings are based on the perceptions of those who participated in the graduate program participant focus group, the two concurrent inquiry coach focus groups, the principal telephone interviews, and the *Inquiry Celebration* participant survey.

Use of Data from the *Instructional Practices Inventory* and *School Climate Survey*

The extent to which the results of the *IPI* and *SCS* are used varies by school site. All five of the case study schools use both of these instruments and their use is optional in the remaining Partnership schools. It is this delineation of schools that has impacted the level of use of the instruments by the schools. In some cases, it was reported that the results of both instruments are shared throughout the school and used extensively for planning purposes. In other cases, these instruments are not used at all.

- According to principals, the *IPI* is utilized more often than the *School Culture Survey*, with several principals acknowledging that they had not used the *School Culture Survey* in 2008-09. Typically, UF faculty conduct the *IPI* twice per year and discuss the results with school leaders, who in-turn, share the results with their faculty.
- Principals reported that the results obtained from the *School Culture Survey* and the *Instructional Practices Inventory* are often discussed during PLC meetings.
- Several principals cited specific examples of how results from the *IPI* are used, including increasing the use of specific teacher questioning strategies.
- Most often, inquiry coaches noted that they have not seen the results of the data analysis pertaining to *IPI* and the *SCS*, and stressed that it is left up to individual principals to disseminate the results. Less frequently, it was reported by coaches that results of the data collection are shared with the staff via faculty meetings or team meetings.

- About 80 percent of the Inquiry Celebration survey respondents reported receiving feedback from the *IPI* and the *SCS*. Of these, about 90 percent indicated that the feedback received from the *IPI* was useful. About two-thirds reported that action plans were created and implemented based upon these data.

Perceived Impact of the Partnership on Professional Practices

The partnership is regarded as having a positive influence on the professional practices in Partnership schools as evidenced by these findings:

- Graduate program participants view the program as a powerful means of affecting positive change for schools and credit the program with leading teachers to be more reflective of their teaching.
- Inquiry coaches reported that while the Partnership has impacted their schools' culture, the impact is perceived to be the greatest for staff members who fully participate in the inquiry process.
- Inquiry coaches reported that for those participating in inquiry, the Partnership has led to increased collaboration among staff members and has caused teaching to be more reflective and data-driven.
- *Inquiry Celebration* survey respondents agreed that conducting inquiry has led them to make changes in their teaching and deepened their understanding of subject matter and their students.
- Principals were in agreement that their schools' participation in the Partnership has positively impacted their schools' culture. Principals credit the Partnership with moving schools toward learning communities in which collaboration and inquiry form the basis for collegial exchange
- Principals also credit the Partnership with increasing teachers' self reflection, focus on data, and enhanced questioning of their students.

Perceived Impact of the Partnership on Student Achievement

The partnership is credited with having a positive impact on teachers' professional practices, which in-turn leads to improved student achievement.

- Graduate program participants reported an increased use of data which has informed and focused their instruction. The routine of trying out new approaches is viewed as having a positive impact on student achievement.
- Graduate program participants also reported that the collaboration among program participants impacts student achievement by providing an atmosphere for collegial exchange of ideas.
- Graduate program participants also credited the Partnership with impacting students through the involvement of their families.
- Inquiry coaches were in agreement that the students of teachers who have participated in the inquiry process have been positively impacted through an increased focus on data to guide instructional practices.

- Inquiry coaches were unanimous in their expectations that the effects of the Partnership on professional practice and student learning will grow in time.
- All of the *Inquiry Celebration* survey respondents agreed that their participation in the Partnership has led them to make changes in their teaching, which in-turn impacts student learning.
- Principals cited several aspects of the partnership that play a key role in impacting student achievement, including: a greater focus on data, collegial sharing of ideas, ongoing professional learning for teachers, an increased knowledge of current best practices, and in some cases, the use of data from the *IPI*.

SECTION 5

Suggestions for Modifications to the Partnership

This section of the study presents several suggestions for modifications to the Partnership, based on the findings presented in the previous sections. These suggestions are based upon the perceptions of those who participated in the graduate program participant focus group, the two concurrent inquiry coach focus groups, telephone interviews with principals, and the *Inquiry Celebration* participant survey.

Research Question Addressed:

What modifications should be made to the Partnership for next year, based upon participant feedback?

Based upon perception data of Partnership participants, the suggestions to improve the Partnership for the upcoming school year include:

- Increase the number of participating Partnership schools.
- Increase the number of graduate students to allow the opportunity for more participants to benefit from the degree program.
- Increase the number of faculty members conducting inquiry and support this by continuing to offer the financial incentive and providing time to work collegially.
- Increase the sharing of inquiry results both within and between schools.
- Improve communication between the Center staff and schools, including more clearly defining and communicating information on the various aspects of the program as well as the plan for ongoing support and acclimating new administrators.
- Increase sensitivity to the demands on time of school-based personnel at the end of the school year.
- Provide more time for teachers' collegial exchange, including time for teachers to meet across-grade levels.
- For the graduate program:
 - Specify requisite knowledge for program participation, such as basic knowledge of computer software programs.
 - When possible, provide the opportunity for participants to meet their instructors in person.
- For the on-line *Inquiry Database*:
 - Establish a screening process for posted inquiries.
 - Create more user-friendly and meaningful descriptors for inquiry searches.

- For the *Inquiry Celebration*:
 - Increase the allotted time for sharing of inquiry results.
 - Provide more clearly defined time slots for sharing results (presentations were spread across several rooms, which led to difficulties in controlling the start and end times for each presentation. This led to participants missing out on presentations.).
 - Provide a quieter setting in which to share results.
 - Increase the sharing of inquiry results among schools.
 - Support participants' preparation for the *Inquiry Celebration* by
 - Providing more examples of inquiries.
 - Allowing additional time for inquiry teams to plan together.

Appendix A

Graduate Program Focus Group Protocol

Appendix A

Graduate Program Focus Group Protocol

Moderator Introduction

The University of Florida – through the Lastinger Center for Learning – and the Pinellas County School District collaborated to improve the quality of teaching, learning, and leadership. The partnership supported the development of inquiry (i.e., action research) as a foundation for district-wide school improvement and educator learning.

This focus group is one way in which we are gathering information about your experiences as a participant in the partnership. Other ways that we are gathering information about the partnership are surveys and interviews.

I would like to briefly review the format of this discussion. We have a limited amount of time for discussion. I will take responsibility for keeping us on track with these times and ensuring that everyone has a chance to share their comments. You can help by keeping your comments concise and directly relevant to the topic.

Your comments will be confidential. All responses will be summarized and reported anonymously.

Let's begin by sharing our names, school, and the length of time that you have been in the graduate program.

I will start. I am _____, and my role on this evaluation study is _____.

Probes:

- 1. Why did you choose to participate in the graduate program?**
- 2. What has been the impact on your professional practices?**
- 3. To what extent have you been able to share what you have learned in the program with your colleagues? What has been the impact on your colleagues – both within your school and across schools?**
- 4. What has been the impact on your students?**
- 5. What aspects of the graduate program have been most effective?**
- 6. What modifications could be made to improve the program?**
- 7. If you were to make a general statement about the UF Lastinger graduate program, what might it be?**

Appendix B

Inquiry Coach Focus Group Protocol

Appendix B

Inquiry Coach Focus Group Protocol

Moderator Introduction

The University of Florida – through the Lastinger Center for Learning – and the Pinellas County School District collaborated to improve the quality of teaching, learning, and leadership. The partnership supported the development of inquiry (i.e., action research) as a foundation for district-wide school improvement and educator learning.

This focus group is one way in which we are gathering information about your experiences as a participant in the partnership. Other ways that we are gathering information about the partnership are surveys and interviews.

I would like to briefly review the format of this discussion. We have a limited amount of time for discussion. I will take responsibility for keeping us on track with these times and ensuring that everyone has a chance to share their comments. You can help by keeping your comments concise and directly relevant to the topic.

Your comments will be confidential. All responses will be summarized and reported anonymously.

Let's begin by sharing our names, school, and the length of time that you have been an Inquiry Coach.

I will start. I am _____, and my role on this evaluation study is _____.

Probes:

- 1. How were you selected to be a coach?**
- 2. What have been your primary responsibilities as an Inquiry Coach?**
- 3. What have been some of the challenges that you have faced as an Inquiry Coach?**
- 4. How has the culture of your school changed as a result of being a UF Lastinger school?**
- 5. Schools were given feedback from data collection tools including the School Culture Survey and the Instructional Practices Inventory. Describe the process of how this information was shared and used.**
 - a. First, the School Culture Survey**
 - b. Now, the Instructional Practices Inventory**
- 6. How has teaching changed in your school as a result of the program?**
- 7. What has been the impact on student learning and achievement as a result of the program?**

Appendix B
Inquiry Coach Focus Group Protocol

- 8. What has been the impact on your professional practices?**
- 9. What aspects of the program have been most effective?**
- 10. What modifications could be made to improve the program?**
- 11. If you were to make a general statement about the UF Lastinger partnership, what might it be?**

Appendix C

Inquiry Celebration Participant Survey

UF Lastinger Partnership Survey, May 2009

This survey is part of RMC Research's external evaluation of the Pinellas County School Board's UF Lastinger Partnership. The Partnership supports the development of inquiry (action research) as a foundation for school improvement and educator learning. The information you provide will be kept confidential and reported only in combination with responses from other participants.

Your input is critically important. Please be candid in your answers. This survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

1. Please indicate your position. (Check as many as applicable.)

- Classroom Teacher
- Reading Coach
- Administrator
- Inquiry Facilitator/Coach

For the following questions, please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree).

UF Lastinger Partnership Survey, May 2009

2. School Culture

In this school...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Teachers and school leaders maintain collaborative relationships.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School leaders value teachers' ideas, seek input, engage staff in decision making, and trust the professional judgment of the staff.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School leaders support innovative ideas designed to improve student learning.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School leaders encourage sharing of ideas and practices among the staff.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers engage in constructive dialogue.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers across the school plan together.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers observe and discuss teaching practices.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers are aware of the practices and programs of other teachers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers value continuous personal development and improvement.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers seek knowledge of instructional practices from colleagues, seminars, and other professional sources.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers work together toward a common mission.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers trust, value, and support each other's ideas and contributions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers, parents, and students work together for the common good of the students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents trust and support teachers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The culture is positive, caring, and collaborative.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most changes involve only a few teachers; rarely does the whole faculty become involved.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. Data Collection Tools and Planning

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The feedback I received from the Instructional Practices Inventory improved my teaching.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School teams created action plans to improve school culture.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The action plans were implemented as planned.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

UF Lastinger Partnership Survey, May 2009

4. Professional Learning

Because of my participation in the UF Lastinger program, overall, my professional learning experiences over the past school year...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Have included opportunities to work productively with teachers both within my grade level and across grade levels.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have deepened my understanding of subject matter.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have helped me understand my students better.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have been sustained and coherently focused, rather than being short term and unrelated.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have led me to make changes in my teaching.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have been closely connected to my school's improvement plan.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have included enough time to think carefully about, to try, and to evaluate new ideas.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. Sharing of Learning

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
By participating in the inquiry process, I have refined my practices.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have shared the results of my inquiry with colleagues at my school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have shared the results of my inquiry outside of my school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have learned about the results of my colleagues' inquiry.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have utilized the results of others' inquiries.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

UF Lastinger Partnership Survey, May 2009

6. Effectiveness of Program Components

I have found these components of the UF Lastinger program to be helpful...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	I have not participated in this component
Having an on-site facilitator and/or inquiry coach	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Receiving feedback from the Instructional Practices Inventory	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Receiving feedback from the School Culture Survey	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Collaborating with other teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having the option to participate in the graduate program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Presenting at the annual inquiry celebration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conducting inquiry to refine my classroom practices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using the results of others' inquiry to refine my classroom practices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using the online Inquiry Database	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attending the leadership institute	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. The Inquiry Process

During the last two years, I have participated in the district's annual Inquiry Celebration by...

- Presenting at the Inquiry Celebration
- Attending, but not presenting at the Inquiry Celebration
- I have not participated in the Inquiry Celebration

8. Topics of inquiry that I have engaged in over the last two years include:

9. Two things that would improve the program are:

10. Please provide any additional feedback in the box below.

Thank you for your responses. Please click on the "done" button below.

Appendix D-1

Inquiry Celebration Participant Survey Results Summary

UF Lastinger Partnership Survey, May 2009

1. Please indicate your position. (Check as many as applicable.)			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Classroom Teacher	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	88.9%	24
Reading Coach	<input type="checkbox"/>	3.7%	1
Administrator	<input type="checkbox"/>	7.4%	2
Inquiry Facilitator/Coach	<input type="checkbox"/>	0.0%	0
		<i>answered question</i>	27
		<i>skipped question</i>	0

2. School Culture In this school...					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Response Count
Teachers and school leaders maintain collaborative relationships.	23.1% (6)	69.2% (18)	7.7% (2)	0.0% (0)	26
School leaders value teachers' ideas, seek input, engage staff in decision making, and trust the professional judgment of the staff.	34.6% (9)	57.7% (15)	7.7% (2)	0.0% (0)	26
School leaders support innovative ideas designed to improve student learning.	46.2% (12)	42.3% (11)	11.5% (3)	0.0% (0)	26
School leaders encourage sharing of ideas and practices among the staff.	46.2% (12)	53.8% (14)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	26
Teachers engage in constructive dialogue.	26.9% (7)	57.7% (15)	15.4% (4)	0.0% (0)	26
Teachers across the school plan together.	7.7% (2)	38.5% (10)	34.6% (9)	19.2% (5)	26
Teachers observe and discuss teaching practices.	11.1% (3)	51.9% (14)	25.9% (7)	11.1% (3)	27
Teachers are aware of the practices and programs of other teachers.	3.8% (1)	50.0% (13)	38.5% (10)	7.7% (2)	26
Teachers value continuous personal development and improvement.	38.5% (10)	53.8% (14)	7.7% (2)	0.0% (0)	26
Teachers seek knowledge of instructional practices from colleagues, seminars, and other professional sources.	34.6% (9)	61.5% (16)	0.0% (0)	3.8% (1)	26
Teachers work together toward a common mission.	23.1% (6)	73.1% (19)	3.8% (1)	0.0% (0)	26
Teachers trust, value, and support each other's ideas and contributions	26.9% (7)	69.2% (18)	3.8% (1)	0.0% (0)	26
Teachers, parents, and students work together for the common good of the students.	26.9% (7)	65.4% (17)	7.7% (2)	0.0% (0)	26

This survey is the property of RMC Research Corporation.

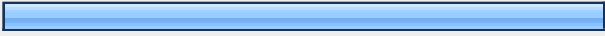

Parents trust and support teachers.	11.5% (3)	80.8% (21)	7.7% (2)	0.0% (0)	26
The culture is positive, caring, and collaborative.	18.5% (5)	70.4% (19)	11.1% (3)	0.0% (0)	27
Most changes involve only a few teachers; rarely does the whole faculty become involved.	3.7% (1)	48.1% (13)	48.1% (13)	0.0% (0)	27
	<i>answered question</i>				27
	<i>skipped question</i>				0

3. Data Collection Tools and Planning					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Response Count
The feedback I received from the Instructional Practices Inventory improved my teaching.	29.2% (7)	58.3% (14)	12.5% (3)	0.0% (0)	24
School teams created action plans to improve school culture.	30.8% (8)	42.3% (11)	23.1% (6)	3.8% (1)	26
The action plans were implemented as planned.	26.9% (7)	38.5% (10)	34.6% (9)	0.0% (0)	26
	<i>answered question</i>				26
	<i>skipped question</i>				1

4. Professional Learning Because of my participation in the UF Lastinger program, overall, my professional learning experiences over the past school year...					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Response Count
Have included opportunities to work productively with teachers both within my grade level and across grade levels.	33.3% (9)	48.1% (13)	14.8% (4)	3.7% (1)	27
Have deepened my understanding of subject matter.	38.5% (10)	57.7% (15)	3.8% (1)	0.0% (0)	26
Have helped me understand my students better.	57.7% (15)	38.5% (10)	3.8% (1)	0.0% (0)	26
Have been sustained and coherently focused, rather than being short term and unrelated.	38.5% (10)	57.7% (15)	3.8% (1)	0.0% (0)	26
Have led me to make changes in my teaching.	46.2% (12)	53.8% (14)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	26
Have been closely connected to my school's improvement plan.	30.8% (8)	65.4% (17)	3.8% (1)	0.0% (0)	26
Have included enough time to think carefully about, to try, and to evaluate new ideas.	29.6% (8)	51.9% (14)	18.5% (5)	0.0% (0)	27
	<i>answered question</i>				27
	<i>skipped question</i>				0

5. Sharing of Learning					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Response Count
By participating in the inquiry process, I have refined my practices.	50.0% (13)	50.0% (13)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	26
I have shared the results of my inquiry with colleagues at my school.	46.2% (12)	46.2% (12)	7.7% (2)	0.0% (0)	26
I have shared the results of my inquiry outside of my school.	50.0% (13)	50.0% (13)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	26
I have learned about the results of my colleagues' inquiry.	38.5% (10)	57.7% (15)	3.8% (1)	0.0% (0)	26
I have utilized the results of others' inquiries.	18.5% (5)	48.1% (13)	29.6% (8)	3.7% (1)	27
	<i>answered question</i>				27
	<i>skipped question</i>				0

6. Effectiveness of Program Components I have found these components of the UF Lastinger program to be helpful...						
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	I have not participated in this component	Response Count
Having an on-site facilitator and/or inquiry coach	57.7% (15)	42.3% (11)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	26
Receiving feedback from the Instructional Practices Inventory	22.2% (6)	48.1% (13)	11.1% (3)	0.0% (0)	18.5% (5)	27
Receiving feedback from the School Culture Survey	19.2% (5)	50.0% (13)	11.5% (3)	0.0% (0)	19.2% (5)	26
Collaborating with other teachers	46.2% (12)	50.0% (13)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	3.8% (1)	26
Having the option to participate in the graduate program	11.5% (3)	42.3% (11)	7.7% (2)	0.0% (0)	38.5% (10)	26
Presenting at the annual inquiry celebration	42.3% (11)	57.7% (15)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	26
Conducting inquiry to refine my classroom practices	65.4% (17)	34.6% (9)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	26
Using the results of others' inquiry to refine my classroom practices	11.5% (3)	76.9% (20)	3.8% (1)	3.8% (1)	3.8% (1)	26
Using the online Inquiry Database	8.0% (2)	68.0% (17)	8.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	16.0% (4)	25
Attending the leadership institute	7.7% (2)	23.1% (6)	0.0% (0)	3.8% (1)	65.4% (17)	26
	<i>answered question</i>					27
	<i>skipped question</i>					0

7. The Inquiry Process During the last two years, I have participated in the district's annual Inquiry Celebration by...			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Presenting at the Inquiry Celebration		92.6%	25
Attending, but not presenting at the Inquiry Celebration		0.0%	0
I have not participated in the Inquiry Celebration		7.4%	2
		<i>answered question</i>	27
		<i>skipped question</i>	0

8. Topics of inquiry that I have engaged in over the last two years include:		
		Response Count
See responses in Appendix D-2		22
		<i>answered question</i>
		22
		<i>skipped question</i>
		5

9. Two things that would improve the program are:		
		Response Count
See responses in Appendix D-2		14
		<i>answered question</i>
		14
		<i>skipped question</i>
		13

10. Please provide any additional feedback in the box below.		
See responses in Appendix D-2		Response Count
		9
	<i>answered question</i>	9
	<i>skipped question</i>	18

Appendix D-2

Inquiry Celebration Participant Comments

Appendix D-2

Inquiry Celebration Participant Comments

Survey Item 8

Topics of inquiry that I have engaged in over the last two years include:

- Word Works in Second Grade.
- Fluency – moving from words to phrases connected to a word work routine.
- Online Reading Resources and Science formative Assessment.
- Homework, ESOL review of vocabulary, looping, math expectations.
- Teaching tolerance.
- MOODLE (online learning), Reading like Writers.
- Creating a master schedule which allows additional time for pairs or teams of teachers to collaborate. Beginning the student day earlier to increase time for student independent reading. Reading interventions. Creating a science lab – effect on science achievement.
- Students making observations in the world around them and relating them to math/science. Students setting strand specific goals related to testing results.
- Analyzing the delivery of mathematics instruction.
- Increasing parent involvement and improving ESOL students' fluency.
- Using learning games to encourage higher levels of engagement with students who have processing disorders.
- Fly High with Sight Words and Poetry.
- Buddy reading across the grade levels.
- Increasing ESOL students' oral language skills by using literature circles. Creating a class-wide anti-teasing program.
- Influence of character coach on retained third graders and the impact of a reading coach on enhancing Units of Study Reading program.
- Reading – DIBELS testing and teaching reading FCAT focus skills.
- Connecting reading, writing, and art.
- This year academics "the importance of Nonsense Words" as a fluent reader.
- Students' fluency as it relates to their standardized testing.
- Parent Involvement in the Montessori Curriculum.
- Word work routine and the benefit to the struggling students and the use of Great Leaps with struggling students.
- Parental contact and the impact it has on student behavior in the classroom.

Appendix D-2

Inquiry Celebration Participant Comments

Survey Item 9

Two things that would improve the program are:

- More time to view and hear other inquiries. Meeting in an area that wasn't so loud and difficult to hear the small groups.
- Clearer communication with the professor in residence. More collaboration with other Lastinger schools.
- TDE's to allow extra time for teachers to participate in inquiry. Continue the monetary incentive.
- Have the Inquiry Celebration at the beginning of the school year as a pre-school training option. That way if we need data from FCAT, we can get it and finalize the inquiry results.
- Electronic publication of inquiry analyses and sharing of results within your school (not just at the county-wide celebration)
- Providing more examples of inquiry projects/papers from previous years at the beginning instead of the end
- Provide each teacher that participates a booklet with a copy of all the inquiries.
- A different way to present our projects at the Inquiry Celebration; this year the location was so crowded and noisy that it was hard to hear presenters.
- Having more time to listen to participants' Inquiries at the Celebration. Sharing information with other schools and/or doing cross school inquiries.
- More time to see examples.
- More time to implement, plan, etc.
- More examples from on-site teachers. More one-on-one time with inquiry leader.
- Better format for presenting Inquiry results.
- Providing stronger coaches that truly believe in the program. A professor from the college that fosters each elementary school who is participating in the inquiry process.

Appendix D-2

Inquiry Celebration Participant Comments

Survey Item 10

Additional Feedback:

- This was one of the most growing experiences I've been a part of since I've started to teach in the classroom. I plan on doing it again. Thank you.
- My career has been changed by the Lastinger program. I am empowered in my teaching and because of this I have taken control of my profession, my learning, and my students' learning. I am forever grateful for this incredible experience.
- Meeting periodically to discuss and refine the inquiry projects was helpful. The Celebration was tremendous, but we were only allowed to see so few presentations and if we had two that we were involved with, we weren't able to see others that we were interested in learning about.
- Thank you for the opportunity to earn money for completing a necessary study of our teaching practices and procedures to improve student achievement.
- Although I don't feel that my inquiry project greatly impacted my teaching this year, it gave me a better basis of understanding for self evaluation/reflection. I think it will have a bigger impact in the future and I am looking forward to my inquiry project for next year.
- Keep up the great program!
- Thanks for this valuable opportunity!
- I learned a lot from this experience.
- I felt like my coaches did not understand what was going on and everything was last minute. I really enjoyed the inquiry celebration!!! I thought it was a great way to see and talk with other teachers that are just as excited as I am.

Appendix E

Principal Interview Protocol

Appendix E

Principal Interview Protocol

Let me introduce myself. I am _____, a professional associate at RMC Research Corporation. We have been contracted by the Pinellas County School District to conduct an evaluation of the University of Florida Lastinger Center for Learning Partnership.

The University of Florida – through the Lastinger Center for Learning – and the Pinellas County School District collaborated to improve the quality of teaching, learning, and leadership. The partnership supports the development of inquiry (i.e., action research) as a foundation for district-wide school improvement and educator learning.

This telephone interview is one way in which we are gathering information about your school's participation in the partnership. Other ways that we have gathered information about the partnership are through surveys of those who participated in the district's *Inquiry Celebration* and focus groups of Inquiry Coaches and Graduate Program Participants.

I will keep this interview as brief as possible as I know you have limited time for discussion.

Your comments will be confidential. All responses will be summarized and reported anonymously.

Questions:

- 1. Please describe your school's involvement with the Lastinger-Pinellas partnership over the last two years.**
- 2. What role have you as principal played in the partnership?**
- 3. Please describe the extent to which faculty members at your school have participated in...**
 - a. Conducting inquiry**
 - b. Learning from other faculty members' inquiry**
 - c. Using the inquiry database**
 - d. Incorporating concepts of the partnership into PLCs (for example, discussing inquiry or results of the *School Culture Survey* and the *Instructional Practices Inventory* during PLC meetings).**
 - e. Other activities you would like to mention**
- 4. How were teachers selected for participation? How were coaches selected?**
- 5. What is the role of the Inquiry Coach in your school?**
- 6. How often were you provided with data from the *School Culture Survey*? The *Instructional Practices Inventory*?**
- 7. What was the process for sharing these data with you? With your faculty?**

Appendix E
Principal Interview Protocol

- 8. How did you use the data? (Give an example of how the data were used to develop action plans.)**
- 9. What impact did the data have on teaching practices?**
- 10. How has your school's participation in the program impacted your school's culture?**
- 11. What aspects of the program have been most effective?**
- 12. What modifications could be made to improve the program?**
- 13. If you were to make a general statement about the UF Lastinger partnership, what might it be?**