

New Visions for Public Schools

The Scaffolded Apprenticeship Model Year 2 Report

New Visions for Public Schools' leadership work operates from the premise that effective school leadership – leadership that drives meaningful changes in teaching and learning – is defined not by positional authority but through shared responsibility for school improvement. Research confirms that in schools where teachers take collective responsibility for achievement, students demonstrate far greater academic progress in their early secondary years. New Visions, in partnership with Baruch College of CUNY, has designed the Scaffolded Apprenticeship Model (SAM) to couple school reform efforts with leadership development and build faculty teams prepared to share responsibility for student success. New Visions' facilitators lead and manage a team of representatives from a single school, composed of teachers and other school faculty members such as guidance counselors, assistant principals and principals. SAM's five curriculum components (seminars, apprenticeship, inter-visitations, one-on-one coaching, and intensive summer sessions) are designed to be flexible and to create continuous feedback loops so that the learning is adaptive to the needs and challenges of each individual school, but always grounded in the research on school improvement. Each team identifies a target population of struggling students, then creates, implements and refines a focused intervention to boost these students' levels of achievement. Over the past two years, New Visions has piloted SAM with 109 participants across four cohorts, representing 14 schools¹ in the highest need areas of New York City.

Highlights of our accomplishments to date include:

- *Expanding the pipeline of school leaders:* SAM has proven a powerful tool in addressing the shortage of qualified principals in New York City public schools: this June, 55 participants completed the requirements for school- or district-level leadership. Seven have already moved into leadership positions in high-need schools, and many more have expressed an intention to do so in the future. Perhaps more importantly, the success of the SAM pilot has enabled New Visions to secure additional funding to certify an additional 116 new leaders.
- *Redefining School Leadership:* SAM participants have learned to design and deliver assessments to identify gaps in student learning, and they have learned to work with classroom teachers to develop fine-tuned interventions that address these gaps. In this sense, they have become true instructional leaders, trained in the process of school reform.
- *Growing leadership capacity:* An outside evaluation by Dr. Joan Talbert of Stanford University shows preliminary evidence that participants are assuming leadership roles while working with other teachers to use student-based evidence, and are successfully working in teams to examine student achievement. This distributed leadership embeds SAM deeply throughout the school community and creates a culture built to endure changes in formal leadership.
- *Truly differentiated instruction:* Armed with detailed information on student skills, participants have guided their colleagues in efforts to design lesson plans that meet identified student needs. As a result, participants and facilitators have reported a significant shift from focusing on “what I’m teaching” to “what students are learning.”
- *Improving student achievement:* After one full school year of targeted interventions with target populations, SAM participants are reporting progress in student achievement. Results vary greatly from cohort to cohort, but consistently and just as importantly, the teams ended the year with new and valuable information about their target populations, and excited to continue the work of targeted, data-driven interventions.

¹ Names of schools have been removed from this document.

- *Greater openness in school culture:* Opening up classroom practice and creating a stronger professional culture are central objectives of SAM, and emerging evidence demonstrates that SAM is having an impact. Participants report that other members of the faculty are committing to the interventions SAM participants have designed. Teachers are beginning to welcome SAM members into their classrooms for low-inference observations.
- *Sustainability:* At most schools, SAM work is set to continue beyond the pilot round. At two large high schools, principals have invested in another cohort of aspiring leaders, and participants from the current cohort will be involved in the training of this second group. In one cohort, SAM participants will be responsible for the training and support of newly mandated inquiry teams – the work of which was based in large part on the original SAM methodology. In this way, SAM has effectively become a key operating system within the schools, ensuring its sustainability as a tool for both school improvement and leadership development.

Replication in and outside of New York City: New Visions is using SAM as its operating methodology to provide intensive support to our network of 63 PSO schools. In addition, the New York City Department of Education has adopted SAM's cycle of inquiry model as a driving lever of instructional support to schools within its new accountability system. And finally, over the last year, several urban districts and education organizations have indicated their interest in adapting SAM as their district's primary strategy for leadership development focused on school improvement.

New Visions Year Two Update September 30, 2007:

In June, Module 3 of the SAM curriculum came to a close, with 109 participants representing four cohorts across fourteen schools. Of these, 49 participants completed SAS certification requirements as principals and six completed SDS certification as district leaders. Additional participants included school administrators and faculty who may already have certification, but are seeking additional leadership development opportunities offered through SAM.

Following is a brief summary of our four cohorts and the status of SAM in their schools (participants earning SAS as principals, or SDA certification as district leaders, have completed all certification requirements and have either received or are awaiting formal certification from the state):

- Cohort I: At High School B, which is transitioning from a large high school into Small Learning Communities, 30 participants are enrolled; most participants at High School B are already certified school leaders and thus are not pursuing certification. In the third year of SAM, coaching for High School B participants will focus on continued development of communication strategies to engage colleagues in constructive dialogue around student data. In addition, High School B participants will pursue coursework in assessment and adolescent literacy – areas of expertise identified last year as lacking among the faculty – and will assist in the training of a second cohort of SAM participants.
- Cohort II: At High School A, which is also transitioning from a large high school into Small Learning Communities, there are 25 participants enrolled, 11 earning SAS certification and two earning SDA certification. High School A participants will engage in the same activities in Year 3 as those at High School B.
- Cohort III: These seven schools have 26 participants in SAM, 18 earning SAS certification, and four earning SDA certification (categories overlap; three participants earned both certifications). This cohort adopted SAM as a two-year model and completed work on the program in June.
- Cohort IV: These five schools include 28 participants, 20 earning SAS certification (four of the 20 also earned district-level certifications). Participants from these schools will spend Year 3 working closely with new Inquiry Teams on a process of action research mandated by the city and closely aligned to the SAM model.

SAM's five curriculum components (seminars, apprenticeship, inter-visitations, one-on-one coaching, and intensive summer sessions) are designed to be flexible and to create continuous feedback loops so that the learning is adaptive to the needs and challenges of each individual school, but always grounded in the research on school improvement. All SAM teams have now completed three modules of this curriculum. During Module 1, the teams engaged in an intensive, structured process of collecting student data and identifying trends. Building on this work during Module 2 in July 2006, each SAM team looked at the collected data through the lens of systems dynamics and applied what they learned in the creation of thoughtful, evidence-driven school action plans centered on improving achievement in a specified area or areas for a target group of struggling students. In Module 3, SAM teams spent a full school year implementing and refining their school action plans, working closely with faculty and gathering data through interim assessments. These data allowed teams consistently to monitor each student's progress and modify their action plans based on new evidence. Module 3 ended in June, when each team turned in a final project summarizing its work with the target population and teachers, presenting results, and reflecting on lessons learned throughout the process.

SAM teams began work on Module 4 this summer, participating in five-day summer intensives designed to help them continue work with their target populations as well as begin focusing on broader organizational change. Facilitators encourage this dual focus, asking participants to work on both the "dance floor" – represented by work with their target population – and the "balcony", acting as change agents in their environment to embed what they have learned into the organizational structures and decision-rules of their school. Results of the summer intensive were somewhat mixed: while participants from High School A and High School B attended and completed the work planned, attendance among former Cohort IV schools was too low to allow for substantial progress. Although frustrating, the summer attendance highlighted an important reality of SAM: once participants had completed work toward their administrative certifications, it appears that motivation to remain committed to the SAM curriculum waned. At High School A and High School B, where SAM was primarily a tool for schoolwide improvement via transition to small learning communities, and only secondarily a vehicle to certification, post-certification attendance remained high. Moving forward, curricular modifications to the program will reflect these key lessons.

Following the summer intensive, and due to a desire among participants to revise the Year 3 curriculum content, facilitators worked with principals from the Cohort IV schools to identify a plan for the third year that would satisfy the overarching goal of sustainability. The resulting plan incorporated the Year 3 SAM work with the city-mandated Inquiry Team work in which each school will be engaged this year: SAM participants will work with their own school-based Inquiry Teams to track their original target populations as well as identify and begin work with a new population of struggling students. In addition, they will meet regularly with principals and New Visions staff and attend several New Visions sponsored events.

Participants from High School A and High School B will pursue the original Year 3 curriculum, attending weekly seminars and receiving individual coaching from New Visions SAM facilitators. Coursework will focus on assessment and adolescent literacy; at each school these were identified as areas in which the faculty lacked important expertise. The goal of the coursework is to generate a critical mass of teachers trained in these subjects and able to disseminate expertise throughout the school. Coaching at High School A and High School B will support participants' continuing efforts to stimulate school-wide dialogue around student data and student achievement. Finally, participants from this SAM cohort will work closely with a new SAM cohort, assembled by each school's principal. We see this as exciting evidence of the program's sustainability.

As of September 30, 2007, 49 aspiring principals have successfully completed three full modules of SAM, earning the required 24 credits toward their administrator certification. All six aspiring district leaders have also met the credit requirements for certification. Following completion of requirements, each aspiring leader submitted his/her application for certification to the state; as of the writing of this report, 26 have received their certificates and 28 are awaiting formal certification from the state. To reach this milestone, facilitators worked successfully with the one or two participants in each cohort who, as of April 30, were not on track for on-time completion of certification requirements. Through individualized supports and close monitoring, all but two of these participants completed Module 3 and applied for certification with their fellow participants.

This considerable progress has not been without challenges, both cultural and logistical. In past reports we highlighted some of these challenges, including the difficulty of leading in the absence of positional authority, addressing resistance to cultural change among colleagues, and the intensity of the commitment required of SAM participants. In some cases the challenges were themselves the core points of learning for SAM teams. In assuming leadership roles without the corresponding titles, for example, each team member was forced to tap into new leadership skills to drive change in the school. In working with colleagues distrustful of change, teams learned the importance of communication and devised new strategies to help other teachers understand and feel ownership in target population interventions. Other challenges prompted facilitators to refine the curriculum in order to better meet the needs of participants; examples include scaling back required readings during the year and compressing the summer session to a five-day intensive to allow participants to teach summer school courses.

Moving forward, facilitators continue to identify and address challenges. As mentioned earlier, motivation among certain participants dropped significantly following the completion of certification requirements, leading to low attendance rates in subsequent modules. The incentive of certification is clearly a powerful one for many participants, and facilitators will consider this reality as they continue to revise the curriculum for future use. Another challenge has been building capacity among SAM participants in the areas most connected to student needs. As content specialists, most high school teachers have little to no background in the mechanics of literacy, although a huge number of struggling students have significant skill deficits in this area. Similarly, the deep use of data that is central to the SAM methodology is new to most teachers. Facilitators must find ways to introduce these skill sets to participants, and have already begun to do so through seminar work at High School A and High School B.

To measure the schools' leadership capacity and its growth during the SAM program, New Visions is working with Dr. Joan Talbert of Stanford University to measure and analyze the key performance standards of improved student achievement, increased collective efficacy and evidence of distributed leadership. As discussed in detail in our last report, baseline data was collected by both Dr. Talbert and the schools over the past year. A follow-up survey was administered in spring 2007, and the data will be used to assess change on survey indicators of leadership practice and school culture, with results available by fall 2007. In order to measure change in student performance on state assessments, data will be gathered and analyzed early fall of 2007, and results will be available within a month after release of the state data. The evaluation is tracking change in leadership in the five SAM schools in Cohort IV. For formative and summative purposes, we also are examining how design features of SAM operate to develop school leadership capacity. These include: integrating leadership training with school reform; involving school teams in the program; including principals as co-designers in the program and supporters of problem-based learning; and defining leadership in terms of shared responsibility and mutual accountability. The evaluation has developed survey measures to tap both outcomes and participants' experiences with SAM program features.

The evaluators are working with New Visions on the development of a database on student achievement on multiple measures – including scores on standardized tests, course completions, attendance patterns,

persistence rates at each grade level, and graduation rates. These data will be used to track changes in student outcomes that are associated with each school's participation in SAM. Further, the evaluation will assess school progress on the specific student outcomes that each SAM team has targeted for their focused reform effort. This entails tracking the progress of specific groups of students who were identified as falling outside the school's sphere of success. This customized evaluation of SAM will assess the teams' effectiveness in leading strategic, focused interventions to improve student success. Initial results from these analyses will be reported in Summer 2008.

At the core of SAM are teams of school staff engaged in a cycle of action research to improve learning for a target population of students. Together, they use data to identify a target group of students who are currently unsuccessful, then decide on high-leverage interventions (both instructional and structural, with structural solutions derived from an instructional purpose), measure the effects, and refine their work. Evidence is emerging that the action plans are having an impact not only on student achievement in the identified target populations, but also in the ability of educators to leverage data as a tool for targeted instructional improvement. Past reports have included accounts of the target population work of SAM teams at individual high schools; these are updated, as reported by participants, here:

1) This team identified a target population of ten students who were off-track for graduation and entered high school with very low reading comprehension scores on their NYS ELA tests. The team conducted low-inference observations and portfolio analyses, followed by a series of assessments that the team designed and implemented. The results of these assessments provided valuable insights into the specific needs of the students: they struggled with non-content vocabulary words and could not use them in context. Armed with this information, the SAM team was able to refocus its intervention on using context clues to define vocabulary and improve comprehension. They gave teachers a list of non-content vocabulary words culled from Global Studies Regents Exam questions to incorporate into their curriculum. They also researched and compiled a list of vocabulary strategies, which they distributed and used as a tool for coaching and planning sessions. Finally, the SAM team conducted interviews with the students themselves in order to gain a deeper understanding of their own self-perceptions around vocabulary and Regents Exam preparation.

This cycle continued throughout the school year, with targeted, formative assessments informing classroom strategies, and feedback from teachers and students in turn informing assessment. At the end of the year the team at this school reported the results of their work: in general, students performed better on each interim assessment than they had on the baseline assessment, and improved vocabulary knowledge correlated strongly with increased success on the Global Studies Regents Exam. Even for students who did not show improvement, the team came away from the year with valuable knowledge they would not have gained otherwise. For example, in an analysis of responses on the final assessment, team members noted that students who had not shown improvement, consistently answered content-specific questions incorrectly. This group, then, lacked content knowledge as well as vocabulary skills.

2) The SAM team at this school chose a target population made up of 25 students in all four grades who struggled with science. From analyzing ninth grade GROW reports, grades and Regents exams, team members found that the students were challenged by critical analysis and interpretation of charts and graphs. They additionally examined credit accumulation by evaluating report cards at the end of each marking period. Science teachers' regular tests served as assessments, which were examined for progress on the targeted skills. Professional development sessions were held monthly to demonstrate ways of including the skills in lessons. The team found that students' assessment results varied considerably. Scores for a specific skill would rise around the time it was covered in a professional development session, then decline afterwards.

They realized that the PD sessions encouraged teachers to introduce the skills into lessons but not to continuously reinforce them throughout the year. They also realized that the class exams did not always test for the three targeted skills, making it difficult at times to determine student progress. This prompted the team to work more closely with teachers to develop tests that reflect mastery of the targeted skills, and emphasize continuity in professional development sessions. After analyzing report cards, team members were able to target failing students for interventions. They worked closely with advisors, distributing “when to call home” guidelines and asking to set up appointments with parents of students who failed three or more classes. Weekly meetings were arranged between teachers and advisors to design individualized plans (including tutoring and meetings with parents, guidance and social workers) so that failing students did not fall through the cracks.

In their end of year report, the team noted an overall improvement in the skills they had focused on. Perhaps more importantly, they also cited lessons learned and questions about the students who continued to struggle. For example, in interviews conducted with students at the end of the year, there was some indication that those who had not improved had internalized their failures and given up on their ability to succeed. This signaled an area for future investigation and intervention. Additionally, SAM team members saw their administration and fellow teachers as supportive and open-minded when it came to helping students. Examples of school-wide improvements observed by the team included better communication among faculty, increased awareness of and attention to data, and greater comfort in sharing both struggles and successes with peers.

3) The target population for this high school consists of 26 students at risk of not meeting graduation requirements because of failure on the Global, ELA and US History Regents exams. The SAM team decided to work on two reading comprehension skills, “paraphrasing” and “making inferences,” since they constitute the majority of questions on the ELA Regents. The team worked with teachers to add tutoring and an extra English class into student schedules, and gave assessments every six weeks to gauge progress. On average, student performance on the third assessment showed a 25% improvement over the baseline. To build on this success, the team analyzed student performance in English and ESL Composition classes, conducted a survey of target population teachers to gather information on classroom strategies, and sat down individually with students to discuss performance.

The target population showed significant improvements on their first two interim assessments; subsequent drops on the third and final assessments prompted the SAM team to dig deeper and learn some valuable lessons. They noted in their end of year report, for example, that the interim assessments were not always well aligned with the content of ELA classes and tutoring sessions. Thus, assessments likely did not capture the true impact of these interventions. Further, the team identified fatigue as a possible factor in the third and fourth interim assessments, citing the intensity of the interventions as a factor to consider in future work; this gave them important information to leverage as they continue to work with the target population this year.

4) This SAM team chose to focus on a group of 16 students with poor critical analysis and writing skills, resulting in substandard essays. Their short-term goal was that every student should score a three or higher on the thematic essay portion of the June 2007 Global Regents exam. To measure progress, teachers conducted assessments every five weeks and shared results at grade meetings. Based on test outcomes and observations, team members and teachers created plans to develop the targeted skills. It appeared at first that students had the most trouble making strong connections between thesis statements and supporting evidence. To test this hypothesis, teachers asked students to write a sample essay from a previous Regents exam; responses were evaluated particularly for this problem. Upon closer examination, team members realized that the group could not effectively support thesis statements with evidence because they could not establish strong thesis statements to begin with. Given this new insight,

the SAM team re-assessed the group with regard to specific skills, such as establishing a strong thesis and organization.

At the end of the year the team reported their results: based on their final assessments, they projected that approximately 30% of their students were prepared to score a 3 or higher on the June administration of the Global Regents exam. This number is far short of their original goal, but team members remained positive about their ability to continue making progress with the target population. Their SAM work gave them good reason to be positive; with results from their interventions and assessments this year they now have important information to inform their future efforts. For example, a mid-year shift in instructional strategies and student groupings proved effective in moving struggling students forward. Next year the team hopes to implement this strategy earlier to realize greater gains. They also came to value teacher feedback as a tool for identifying target populations, particularly as their growing knowledge of standardized tests led them to the realization that these tests are sometimes not designed to offer the specific information they need.

5) The target population is a group of 24 students who scored 34-60 on their most recent Math A Regents and had good attendance (80% and above). Vocabulary was identified as the key to Math Regents passage. The SAM team held weekly professional development sessions to disseminate best practices for integrating vocabulary into lessons, and conducted weekly low inference observations to ensure vocabulary use. Team members divided up the targeted students in a 5:1 ratio to build trust and relationships through college visits and tutoring. SAM participants also started an intensive Saturday school for the group. In January 2007, 10 out of 24 students took the Math A Regents, and nine out of 10 passed with a grade of 65 or higher. These nine became mentors and peer tutors on Saturdays for the other students, who took the exam in June. Weekly low inference observations of the target population showed substantial improvement in student participation and confidence in lessons from the beginning of the year.

The year-end report submitted by the team notes additional accomplishments among the target population: two completed the CUNY Bronx Community College course *Learning to Learn*, and eight more had applied for the fall term. They also noted the work that remained to be done, particularly with four students in the target population who failed four or more classes second semester. School-wide, team members credited SAM with making data “a universal language” among teachers.

SAM as a catalyst for professional learning communities.

Baseline data on staff collaboration and professional learning communities were collected during January-June 2006. They include a) teacher survey measures of school leadership and school reform climate and practices (response rates of 71% for Cohort IV schools on average; 75% overall) and b) interview and observation data on Cohort IV SAM teams’ leadership training and roles in their schools. These baseline data provide profiles of each school participating in SAM and point to the nature and extent of leadership challenges faced by the SAM teams. Across the five schools, two schools stand out as very strong on multiple baseline measures of school leadership and professional community, while one school consistently scored well below the mean.

Data on leadership capacity indicators from this survey will be used as baseline data for evaluating change over time in the schools; annual follow-up teacher surveys that replicate the measures will be conducted each spring. The first follow-up survey was conducted May 15-June 15, 2007, and data are currently under analysis. Estimates of change in school leadership, and program participation effects on change, will provide an initial assessment of SAM teams’ leadership development. These results will be reported to SAM participants, program leaders and facilitators, and the NYC Department of Education in late fall 2007.

Further, a survey of all SAM program participants in the fourteen schools was conducted in February 2007 to obtain relevant data. These data pertain to program outcomes of a) SAM team members' collaboration on school reform work and b) team members' leadership practices in their school. The survey also obtained team members' ratings of the SAM program design features and curriculum, results of which were reported to SAM leaders and facilitators during a briefing in June 2007. Noteworthy among the findings is that Cohort IV participants gave SAM's summer intensive component the highest ratings of quality and value for their leadership development (68% gave this a 4 or 5 on a 5-pt scale, compared to 51% of SAM participants overall). SAM curriculum areas that received highest ratings were: team building (74% rating it 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale), school-wide focus on learning (68%), human management to support instructional improvement (68%), use of data to inform decision-making (63%), and engagement of faculty in problem solving instructional issues (63%).

Cohort IV participants rate themselves very high on several key indicators of team collaboration, after 12 months together in the program. Notably, over 90% of the team members report that they often or always challenge and question one another and engage in passionate dialogue in making decisions about school improvement strategies; over two-thirds report that they stay focused on results in the face of distractions and competing priorities. In rating their SAM team's work with teachers in the school, strongest scores pertain to the use of data to guide decision-making: 70% report using evidence to identify, frame and solve problems; 75% report using data to evaluate the effectiveness of decisions; and 80% report using low-inference observations to collect data on instruction. As promoted by the SAM curriculum, team members appear to be leading their colleagues on school reform efforts through the use of evidence focused on student work in class and on assessments.

Dr. Talbert's evaluation is also tracking change in school culture—specifically, measures of collective efficacy and professional learning community—in the five SAM schools involved in this project. Further, it is examining how leadership development and SAM facilitators' onsite support is enabling change in school culture and in student achievement. The May 2006 and May 2007 teacher surveys include several indicators of school culture that are being tracked over time. Survey scales (and their Alpha coefficients) that were developed using 2006 survey data, and that were replicated in the 2007 survey, include:

- Shared Reform Vision (Alpha = .84)
- Trust and Shared Accountability (.90)
- Collective Problem Solving (.86)
- Teacher Collaboration on Instruction (.89)
- Collegial Feedback on Instruction (.70)

Baseline school scores were shared with SAM facilitators in Summer 2006; change scores will be reported during Fall 2007 to the SAM facilitators and school leaders' teams.

Data on teacher attrition from SAM schools will be used as an additional measure of school quality, given research evidence that school leadership is a strong predictor of teacher retention. The evaluation is developing a database on teacher attrition from the Department of Education's HHST database.

At a more granular level, each school site continues to show progress in the development of leadership capacity. One of the greatest successes of this model has been the way schools are using student data to create action plans anchored in a deep investigation of infrastructure and practices. For instance, as part of its transition to SLCs, High School A reorganized the college guidance office and integrated the counselors into the new SLCs to identify and address the exact barriers to college readiness in each SLC. Using the SAM methodology, the SLC leadership and guidance counselors were able to identify which students were completing admission requirements as well as who was applying to colleges, and then

ensure students had the appropriate supports. As one result of this intensive use of data, High School A was able to increase the percentage of students who took the PSAT from 28% to 74%.

The peer coaching process has also shown powerful evidence of leadership capacity growth within each school. SAM participants work closely with teachers to help them develop new strategies and skills for improving achievement of target population students. At one small high school, for example, the principal has given the SAM team members authority to use professional development sessions and morning meetings to build capacity school-wide and create stronger communication systems between teachers, advisors, and administrators. All school faculty members are involved in in-depth discussions about each student's progress, creating an accountability loop where everyone has a stake in student performance. Teacher surveys conducted by the SAM team show that teachers are taking the lead and focusing on building lesson plans and assessments using skills from these professional development sessions.

The creation of new and extremely focused assessments to measure the skills targeted in the action plans also represents a sea change in professional culture and a new way of creating distributed leadership. Designing these assessments from scratch has generated a deeper level of investment and understanding of the action projects and the nature of effective testing. They first tried off the shelf products and found that they weren't accurate or fine-grained enough to truly gauge progress. Working together across departments, SAM participants clarify instructional targets through designing the assessments, and work together to periodically assess progress and refine interventions.

These types of professional collaboration exhibited throughout SAM schools represent a dramatic shift in school culture and professional development for leaders and teachers. In the past, teachers often operated behind closed doors, afraid to share their concerns, ideas, and issues with colleagues because of possible repercussions. SAM has been able to break down some of these barriers by using data to focus everyone in the school on the individual students who struggle most--data that is nearly impossible to ignore once seen. SAM fosters productive collaboration, because teachers realize that students in the target population are missing fundamental skills that impact their performance across content areas--and if teachers are successful in figuring out how to help a student, it is urgent that they share that practice. As one participant noted, "Once you see the data, you can't not be affected. It's one thing to look at broad numbers, but when you see each individual student and what's holding them back, you have to push forward." SAM participants, who are mainly teachers, have developed leadership skills that they are using to guide conversations with their peers, and push back on formal authority when changes need to happen school-wide. Another participant noted that SAM has enabled them to "work smarter, not harder." One principal noted that her participants had become "not just better leaders, but better teachers. Instructional observation helps shift their focus in teaching to assessing kids' knowledge, and if they are actually learning."

Across all four cohorts, SAM facilitators are working with 14 principals and 24 assistant principals. Principals and assistant principals from two cohorts of SAM participants, at High School B and High School A, have used SAM to implement Small Learning Communities (SLC) as a whole school reform model. New Visions has helped the schools to design and implement a customized SLC structure by developing leaders who have specific expertise in leading large high schools with SLCs. A critical component of this work is supporting educators as they step into newly defined leadership roles that foster distributed leadership within the SLCs and across the large school.

Initial investments in SAM have allowed us to deepen and refine the SAM model, which in turn has enabled us to garner wider interest and continue matching 100% of funds invested as the program moves forward. Recently, New Visions was selected to be a Partnership Support Organization by the Department of Education under a new differentiated management structure that permits outside organizations like New Visions to take direct responsibility for providing academic support for schools by working with

site-based leadership teams. As a PSO, New Visions will work with a mix of 63 schools to create a sustainable model for systemic change. We will be using SAM as our primary methodology of working with all 63 schools to build leadership capacity and improve student achievement. Perhaps most exciting, we have secured funding to certify 116 new school leaders through this work, ensuring our continued ability to create a new generation of reform-oriented school leaders in New York City.

In New York City, the Department of Education has adopted SAM's cycle of inquiry model as a driving lever of instructional support to schools within its new accountability system. We believe that their adoption of SAM's cycle of inquiry validates our program design and tests a subsection of the program in a different and important context. In addition, New Visions is using SAM as its operating methodology to provide intensive support to our network of 63 PSO schools.

New Visions recently hosted an annual community of practice forum around leadership development in high school reform. Local Education Funds from around the country spent two days at New Visions discussing the Scaffolded Apprenticeship Model, and observing the work of the Cohort IV cohort. Attendees discussed many topics around leadership development, and how SAM methodologies could improve student achievement in cities across the country. A panel of SAM participants, representing principals, assistant principals and teachers, shared their impressions and reflections of SAM's impact on their practice.

Replication is also happening at the school level. SAM principals at both of our large high schools have committed to supporting a second SAM cohort in their schools, based on the impact of SAM on analyzing the needs of struggling students. The first SAM cohorts will be training the new group, taking on expanded leadership responsibility. In Cohort IV, participants will continue their leadership development by supporting and guiding the work of the Inquiry Teams at their schools.

Moving forward, New Visions is working closely with SAM facilitators, schools and evaluators to address specific program challenges. Overall, balancing pace and a steep learning curve for both the facilitators and the participants has been difficult, but we are finding that this intensity contributes to a sense of urgency that leads to action. Although the work can seem overwhelming at times, team members acknowledge that through the work of SAM, they have been able to articulate clearly what they want to see change in their schools at given benchmark moments and have been supported in designing strategies to ensure that they will achieve their goals.

Challenges for SAM participants that we have previously reported on include: broadening the group responsible for improving student achievement; breaking down the "culture of nice" that prevents confrontation with the most difficult issues; and managing tensions as participants' leadership stance grows and changes. An emerging challenge stems from the fact that SAM works with a small target population of students on specific skills that impact multiple subjects. SAM participants are building, from the ground up, targeted assessments that zero in on these deficiencies. By building these assessments themselves, they are forced to dive deeper into the data and gain craft knowledge on assessments.

SAM has also posed challenges for the facilitators, as previously reported—dealing with the multiplicity of stakeholders, school cultures and issues, and the need to constantly reflect on what is working and what needs to be changed, and adjust curriculum accordingly.

All of the complexities described above have led us to a deeper understanding of the critical role of the SAM facilitator. The integration between the curriculum elements of coaching, inter-visitations, and seminars simply would not happen without having a facilitator in the school on a regular basis. As one facilitator described it, "The onsite coaching of SAM participants deepens the seminar work by connecting it to the daily work of leaders. Their learning [from their daily work] then gets reintegrated

into the design of the seminar. In no other leadership development model have I seen training and capacity building so closely tied to the actual work in the school.” There is a real advantage to having a dedicated expert facilitator from outside of the system, who can help aspiring leaders discover the actual issues in their schools and create dedicated time with sustained focus to address the challenges.

SAM operates on the premise that schools face *adaptive* challenges that require *adaptive* solutions. As stated in *Leadership on the Line*, “The sustainability of change depends on having the people with the problem internalize the change itself.”² One person being trained and certified off-site as a school leader cannot change a school culture on his or her own—everyone in that school has to internalize the changes and actions necessary to sustain reforms. Adaptive challenges do not have easy answers or ready-made solutions, and this reality has informed the work of the SAM model. It integrates the specific needs of each school while setting parameters grounded in well-regarded research on what skills school leaders need to be successful. It asks an entire team of people within a school what they expect to see change and holds them to the work. This lesson of how best to address adaptive challenges continues to inform how we refine the SAM model moving forward.

² Heifetz, R. & Linsky, M. (2002). *Leadership on the line: staying alive through the dangers of leading*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.