

Eliminating the Gap: Insights from a School of Poverty that Changed Achievement for all Students

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Freeport Intermediate

The Place Where
Great Things Happen

Freeport
Intermediate School

Enrollment (7 & 8) - 619

Ethnic Distribution

African American	13%
Hispanic	55%
White	31%

LEP
5.5%

Mobility
22.3

At Risk
45%

We can teach all children.

Economically Disadvantaged
77%

FREEPORT INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL





Freeport Intermediate

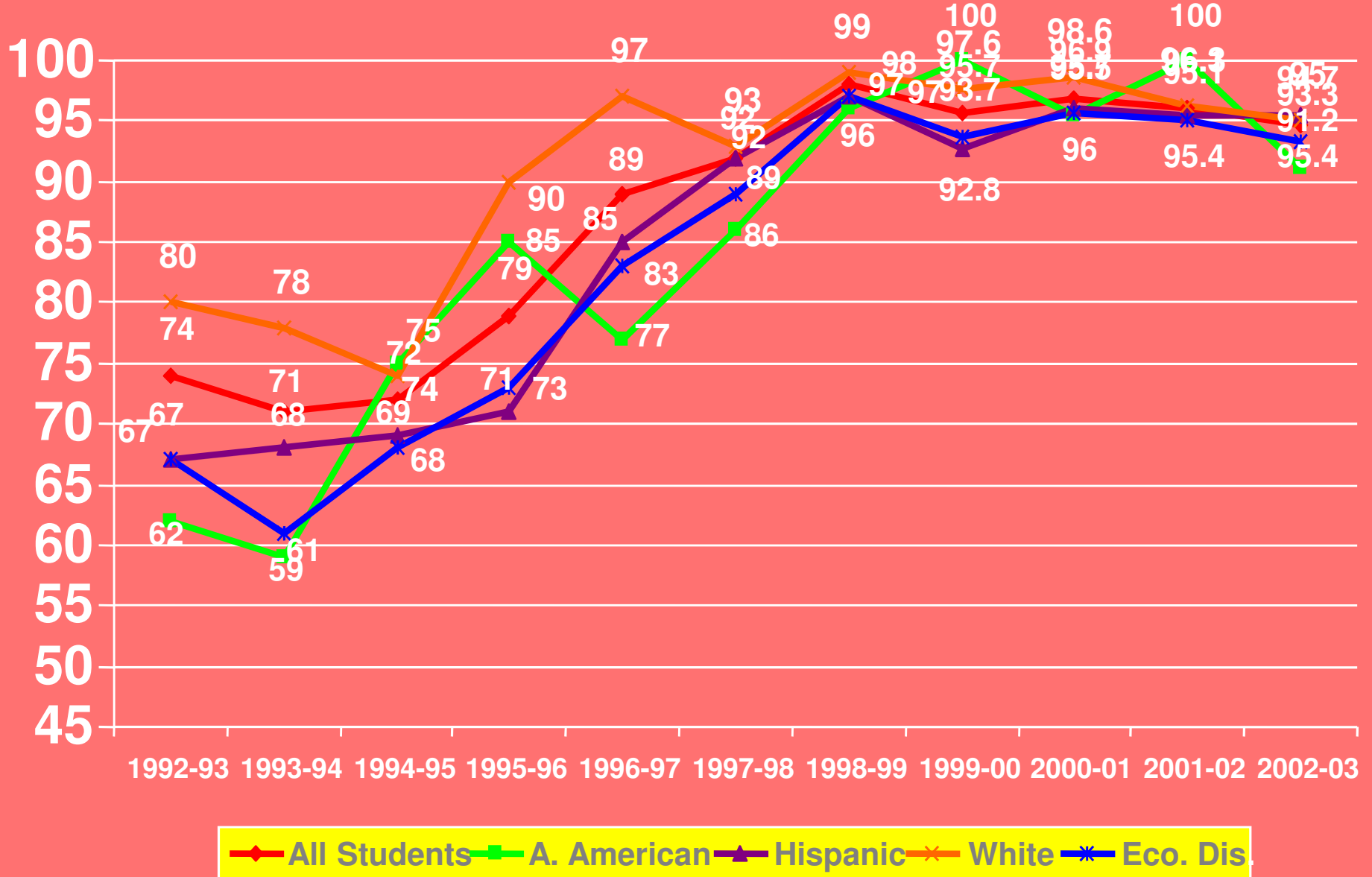
Goal:

Student assessment results show NO significant difference in performance between any student groups.

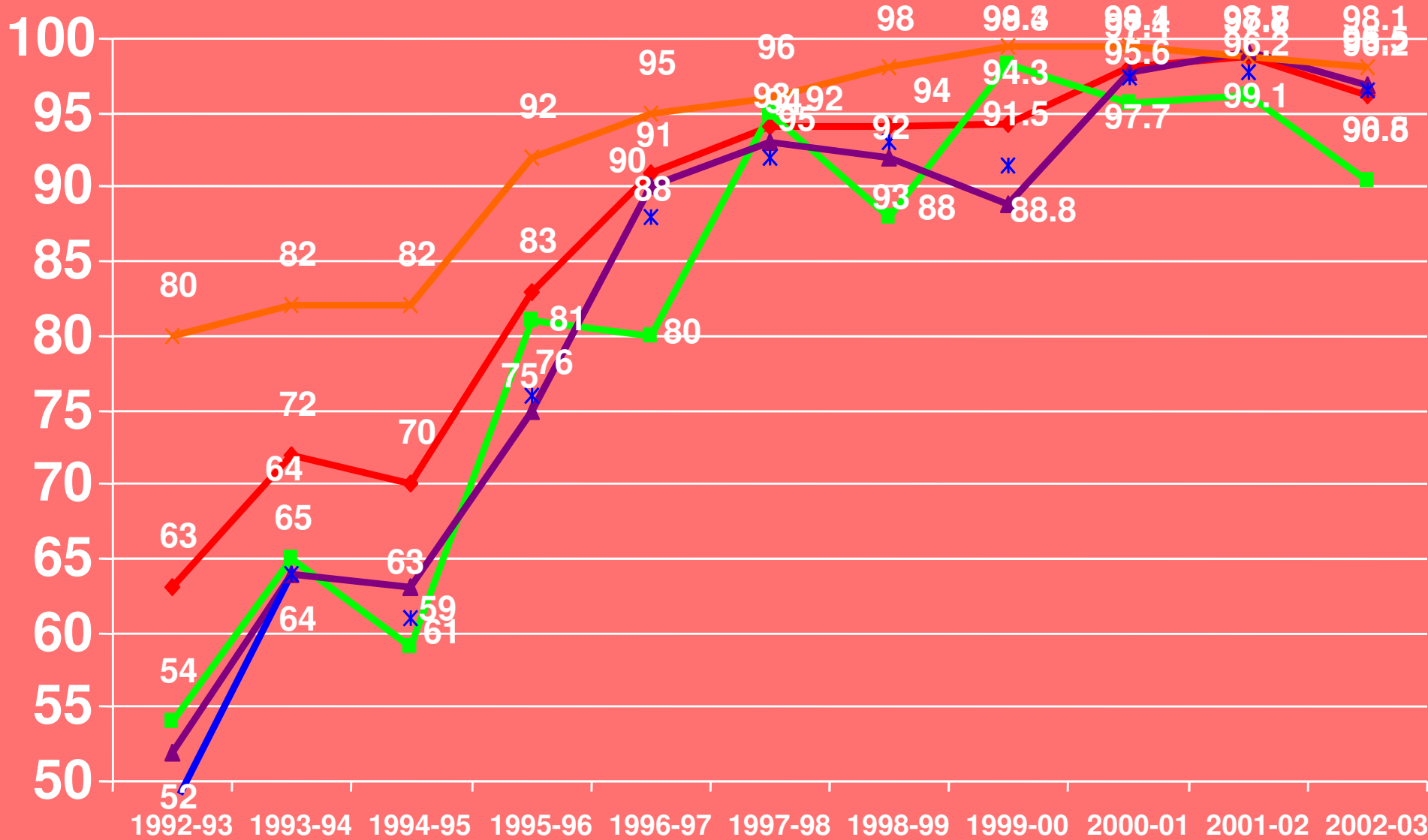
FREEPORT 10-Year Comparisons

**Percentage of FIS Students
Passing TAAS/TAKS Summed
Across Grades 7-8**

FIS 10 YEAR WRITING COMPARISON

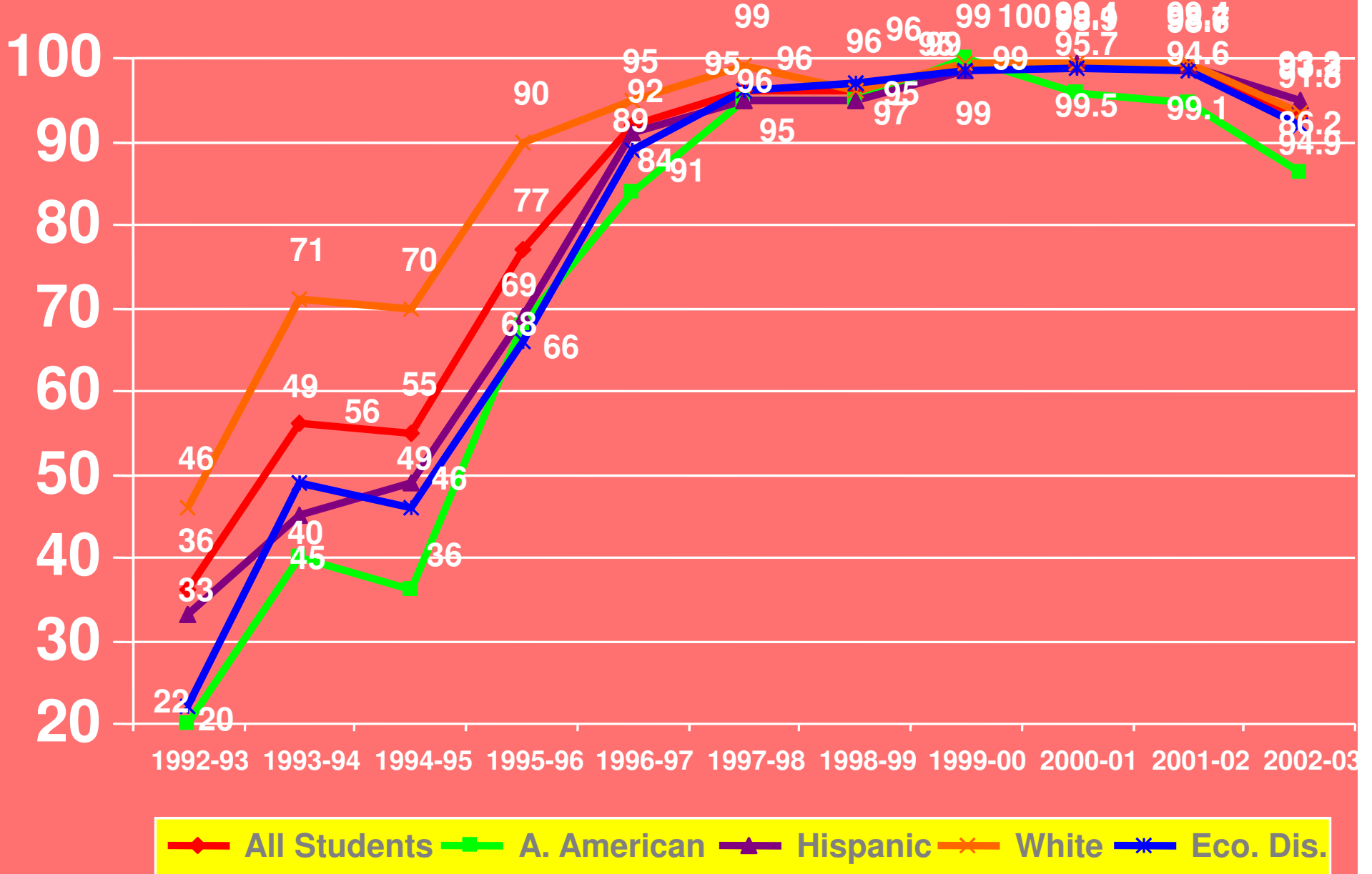


FIS 10 YEAR READING COMPARISON



◆ All Students
 ■ A. American
 ▲ Hispanic
 ✕ White
 ✱ Eco. Dis.

FIS 10 YEAR MATH COMPARISON



Strategy

ASSESSMENT

After the instructional focus has been taught, an assessment is administered to identify mastery/non-mastery students.

“Assessment isn’t something that comes at the end of a unit to find out what students learned; rather it is today’s means of understanding how to modify tomorrow’s instruction.”



- Tomlinson(1999)

- *The Differentiated Classroom*

“Assessment always has more to do with helping students grow than with cataloging their mistakes.”



- Tomlinson (1999)

- *The Differentiated Classroom*

We added a step!



Celebrate Success!





Dancing with the Leadership:

Instructional Leaders

WHAT EVER IT TAKES!

Celebrating

Student Success



I **Can You SING?** Believe I Can Fly!

Rigor, Relevance-FUN

**Veteran's Day
2005**

Can You Dance? Ho Ho Ho



7 West

West

Apaches

It's CELEBRATE!

8 East

7 East

Mayans

Karankawas



Let's Play!



Most

**"Professional"
Learning
Community**

Working Together at FIS





Estamos Aprendiendo Inglés en FIS



**FIS: This
Out of
WORLD!**

FREEPORT INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

WHATEVER IT TAKES!



Implications from the Freeport Intermediate School's Story

- What stands out about FIS—more specifically...
 - Why have they eliminated the achievement gap?
 - What sets this school apart from thousands of others who want to eliminate the achievement gap?
 - How is The Work at FIS so different from the work in other schools?

The Work of transition of the school began with the New Principal

- Personal Characteristics
 - Personable, charismatic, friendly
 - Strong-willed, determined, stubborn
 - Fair, consistent
- Knows Best Educational Practice
 - Curriculum/Instruction/Assessment
 - Young Adolescents
 - ML Programs and Practices
 - Change/Improvement Processes

The Work of change moved to teacher leaders and eventually to the whole faculty and community...

- Collective Self-Efficacy
 - They believed they could make a difference
 - They then learned they could make a difference
 - They now know they can make a difference
- Collective Commitment
 - Belief and hard work produced initial successes
 - Initial successes evolved into a deeper level of commitment
 - From more successes total commitment evolved
- Collective High Expectations for All
 - From small successes came understanding that all students could be successful
 - Now the staff will not accept failure
- If you don't fit, find another place to work.

Key Areas of The Work: Curriculum/Standards

- State Curriculum Standards accepted as essentials for students
- School curriculum aligned with standards
- School curriculum is the TAUGHT curriculum
- Teachers peer-monitor taught curriculum
- Principals monitor taught curriculum

Key Areas of The Work: Instruction/Assessment Cycle

- Teachers teach aggressively to the curriculum
- Formative “common unit assessments”
- Re-teach, maintenance, enrichment
- Continuous collaboration among teachers about instruction to meet student needs

Key Areas of The Work: Organizational Structures

- Established a macro-process for change
 - FIS's 8-step process
 - Becomes concrete “design” to guide work
 - Helps everyone see the “Big Picture”
- Established Interdisciplinary Team Structure
 - Team identity and personality
 - Team commitment to students
 - Team member collaboration for students
 - Team proximity for grouping flexibility

Key Areas of The Work: Organizational Structures

- Created the Flexibility to Meet Needs
 - Non-English speaking classes
 - In-school suspension learning packets
 - Double-time for math
 - Double-time for language arts
 - Team Time for Academic Excellence class period
 - Parent Education
- Established a Faculty War Room
 - Center of faculty problem solving, goal setting, and planning
 - Data is pervasive throughout the room
 - Goals/Objectives are pervasive throughout the room
 - Faculty-wide collaboration is constant year-round

Outcome of The Work: A New Culture characterized by...

- Commitment to individual student success
- Determination to succeed
- Willingness to work hard
- High expectations of self and others
- High expectations for student academic performance
- Collaboration for learning
- Caring

Outcome of the The Work: A New Climate characterized by...

- Positive teacher-teacher relationships
- Positive teacher-student relationships
- Positive teacher-principal relationships
- Trust
- Respect
- Collegiality

Bottom line for Freeport Intermediate School:

- The students of Freeport Intermediate School would still be receiving a below par education without the changes over the past decade...
- The weaker teachers who would still be there today are now teaching elsewhere or not teaching...
- FIS would not have changed and maintained without the Principal taking an aggressive stand for excellence...
- The principal stepped up...and then the teachers stepped up...

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Electronic Copy of this Presentation

This presentation will be available on-line next week at

www.MLLC.org,

the web site of the Middle Level Leadership Center.

If you have difficulty downloading it, email Jerry Valentine at

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