

*then the community changes. You hear that language . . . you have to see the student and the individual, but the goal is for it to be a groundswell that is enough to shift the tide. (Conversation with Principal Calvert)*

In 2010, the school faced the possibility of closure due to dwindling enrollment and low standardized test scores. The community rallied behind the school, as they had done many times before. Jefferson was saved and reorganized under a focus option, middle college educational model. The middle college is designed to ensure that all students at the school participate in college-level work, both at the high school and at local colleges and universities. Every student who enters the door does so with the expectation of, and support in, completing college coursework prior to graduation. In order to receive a middle college diploma at graduation, students must earn at least 12 college credits. To achieve this goal, Jefferson, with the financial support of the Portland Public Schools, has designed a curriculum and a schoolwide system that provides students with opportunities for multiple college and career experiences.

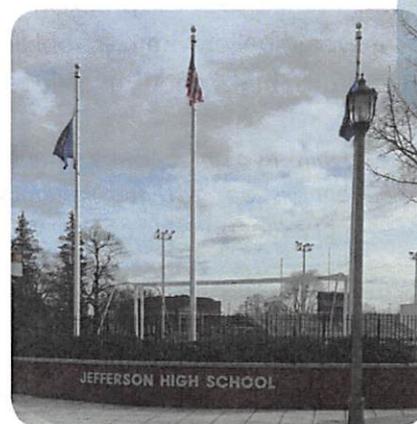
After five years of intentional effort, the middle college design is bearing fruit. In 2014–15, with a graduating class of 100 students, 94 students earned at least 4 college credits and 66 students earned at least 12 college credits and the middle college diploma. This success is driving an overall increase in graduation rates that is outpacing other schools in the state. In last year's class, 80% graduated on time, a 14% increase over the prior year. These historic graduation gains are built on a legacy of Demo pride. The Jefferson Dancers, a well-known and respected dance program founded in the 1970s, have become a hallmark of the school, and the athletic programs claim a number of state titles. Students at Jefferson express pride in and enthusiasm for the opportunities that are available to them:

*I'm looking forward to having about two classes and being able to go across the street and having a lot of free time. I'm really excited to be able to take the classes that I'm interested in. I'm interested in medicine, so my sophomore year I started taking PCC classes early. I took medical terminology, and I'm excited to do more medical type of classes. (Student focus group)*

The middle college program is designed to ensure that students get access and support to experience college-level work, in part to demystify the college-going process but also to allow students, many of whom will be first generation college students, to earn credits before they graduate high school.

## LEVERAGING STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

The reorganization of Jefferson into a focus option middle college meant developing a set of strong core beliefs and practices around not only best practice in teaching and learning, but also in what



it takes to provide the supports needed to prepare students for an intense college-preparation environment. Laying this foundation of a focused and shared vision for the school involved several components, beginning with creating stable and committed leadership and a commitment to traverse the difficult process of working in coalition with other community organizations. The partnership between Jefferson, PCC, and SEI required the creation of horizontal leadership structures and the sublimation of individual institutional goals in service of the collaboration.

*When you get to a big partnership and so many kids are involved, it changes the type of conversation we have with the partner. We're not a small piece of what they do, and they're not a small piece of what we do, so we better figure it out. Both are at a higher level of investment. We just describe it as everyone went all in, right? In many ways it's a great image, because it was like the last hand, right? (Conversation with Principal Calvert)*

Central to the use of the preexisting connections with PCC and SEI as fixtures of the local community was a shared belief within school and across institutions around what would help students be successful in high school, in college, and beyond.

*I think as a staff and as a school and through our partners, PCC and SEI, we are kind of unified in our mission and that is we want you, you are not going to end at graduation. Our goal for you is not a June goal, our goal for you is a **beyond** goal. It's not just walking across the stage as your goal but what are you going to do when you leave Jefferson and how are you going to be productive? (Teacher interview)*

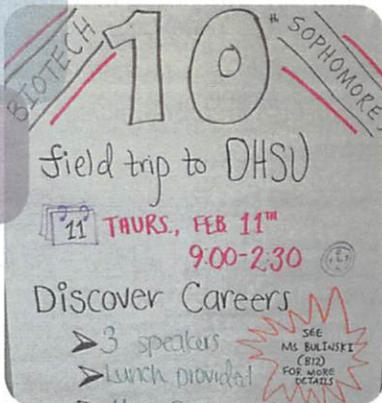
Instead of being loosely affiliated with these institutions, PCC and SEI became integrated into the fabric of the school culture, with representatives at the table on a regular basis and providing input and feedback on decision-making processes at the school. Data from the teacher survey suggest that this level of collaboration has contributed to the success of the middle college program, with the majority of survey respondents agreeing that people at Jefferson trust, respect, and support one another as peers and across levels and feel comfortable expressing new ideas.

Although the physical distance between Jefferson and PCC is less than a stone's throw, the real challenge is symbolic. Teachers, administrators, and other staff talk about the importance of walking students across the street to their classes. While PCC serves as the main academic conduit into the world of postsecondary education, the school also maintains connections with several other local and state institutions (e.g., Portland State University, Oregon Health Sciences University, Warner Pacific College, Pacific University, Willamette University, Oregon State University, and the University of Oregon). Jefferson then acts as both home base and launch pad to college life.

*We want kids to go across the street [to PCC]. Yes, you can get college credits here, and yes, we're going to work with you here. You need to have experience across the street. Because it's different. It's a different experience. What we want is for them to find success in high school. All right, let's get you successful here as a high school student. Then we want you to have a successful experience at PCC, or in some other college setting. We want you to face the challenge, we want to push, so that when you*

*get pushed you're surrounded with caring adults and all these supports . . . that you know what to do, right? (Conversation with Principal Calvert)*

Damon Hickock is the middle college coordinator at PCC who serves as the liaison between PCC and Jefferson. His role is to assist students with getting ready for the college experience and advising them through the process. Among the beliefs about college readiness at Jefferson is the



idea that readiness does not begin and end with academic ability. The staff want students to be learning about the speed of the college class and how to navigate and be successful on a college campus, how to read a syllabus and meet with an instructor during office hours. This includes building a schoolwide culture of success, providing counseling and tutoring services, helping to develop study skills, and mapping out classes to best fit with individual students and their class load. Mr. Hickock and the PCC side of the street works as a team with the Jefferson side to provide students with the learning experiences that they need. Mr. Hickock noted what makes the Jefferson program successful:

*Meeting the kids where they are. We don't have a preconceived pathway, we have multiple ones. We just kind of meet you where you are, then being in a class in a mainstream college class is way different. If you bring 26 high school students over there and they're just taking Physics, then you have a high school class across the street, but if you have three kids with 19 other adults who paid \$600 to be in that class, it changes the dynamic. It shows model grown-up behavior for the students. . . . It's really good for them to get to see what being an adult is like, and that's priceless. That's really the college experience, it's not me trying to imitate it by giving you a college class, and you're going to be with all your buddies. It also makes it easier for the college instructors because the college instructors aren't equipped to deal with high school kids. It's apples and oranges, but when they only have two or three . . . one, they don't generally notice them and two, they say, "Hey, I sort of like these high school students." So it gives them a better feel about the high school, about working with younger students, that it's not scary and not like the Lean on Me movie.*

On the Jefferson side of the street, school staff work hard to find ways to know the students well enough that they can match them up with first-contact college experiences that fit the student. They then continue to work with each student throughout their years at Jefferson. Kara Mortimer, middle college director at Jefferson, had this to say:

*One of the things we know—not just at Jefferson but nationwide—if students can have a positive experience on a college campus before they leave high school, they're way more likely to enroll in a college, and they're way more likely to persevere, and continue on into their second year of college.*

From her perspective, helping students navigate "both sides of the street" includes making the high school side welcoming and generous and supportive. The school staff also works with parents to

help empower their kids to navigate the sometimes-unfamiliar institutions. Additionally, Jefferson has counselors, a career coordinator, and a new college coordinator who are all pieces of the support network created for students.

Part of building on current success means that the school teams are constantly examining data to ensure that all students have the opportunity to succeed. This includes working to find ways to better support struggling populations within the school, such as multiple pathways for young men through the expansion of career technical education programs.

*Ms. Mortimer: One of the patterns is we're not seeing our African American boys and our Hispanic boys cross the street at the same rates as we see our girls cross the street.*

*Interviewer: How are you addressing it?*

*Ms. Mortimer: The school, so not me specifically, but the school . . . Damon [Hickock] has worked really hard with PCC to create a connection with the Swan Island Trades Center, which is part of PCC Cascade and has a Monday afternoon electrical trade [class], kind of an intro to electrical trades class.*

The second integrated partnership at Jefferson is with Self Enhancement Inc. (SEI). This nonprofit organization has been working with youth in the Portland area for over 30 years. When Jefferson reorganized under the middle college model, SEI had already been in the school for over 20 years. The restructured partnership made services available for all students at Jefferson, and SEI currently has 12 coordinators on site who work directly with any student who signs up with the program. Troy Hollis, the SEI manager at Jefferson, describes the mission of the organization: "You put caring, nurturing adults that are committed and passionate about working with the youth in the schools. To be there, to be 100 percent responsible for the students on their case loads." Mr. Hollis says the partnership with Jefferson and PCC staff works well, in part because the SEI coordinators feel welcomed at the table with teachers and feel like they are seen as their peers.

<b>Respect</b>	<b>Stay</b>	Respectfully	Own it.	Do Not Use
<b>Air Time Focused</b>		Help Others	Fix it.	Racist, Sexist,
		Stay Focused	And move on.	Homophobic, or
				Derogatory Remarks

The organization actively recruits students to SEI participation with special programs and activities. Once students are signed up and have passed their probationary period, SEI coordinators help them set their personal, educational, social, and academic goals. They accomplish this via building and maintaining personal connections and contact with students, using email, texts, social media, and just walking up to students in the hallway to check in on them and their goals. This deeply relational approach helps coordinators establish direct connections with students, develop a complex understanding of the students' lives, and provide targeted support and services based on an individual student's circumstances. Coordinators are active and visible at athletic events and school functions. Outside of academic goals, SEI will help connect students and their families with mental health resources, housing, family and parenting classes, enrichment programs, and basic needs such as food, energy, and rental assistance.

Students involved with SEI had praise for the way that SEI helps not only with academics but also by helping students and families get connected to basic needs and services. As one student described the support received from his SEI coordinator, “He said, ‘You are already someone. But make that someone become famous.’ Which is pretty cool.” Another student noted:

*I think the adults here really care, especially having SEI located here, they really go out of their way to make sure that you have everything you need, whether it is school related, home related, family related. I think that when it comes to school and your personal life it all comes together, because a lot of times it is really hard to balance school and personal life, and with SEI here it really helps us sail through it. SEI teachers really care. (Student focus group)*

## STRUCTURES THAT SUPPORT STUDENT SUCCESS

School structures at Jefferson are designed to align with the middle college program and goal of allowing all students to earn at least 12 credits before graduating. The staff at Jefferson recognizes that knowing students is crucial to instilling in them a sense of family and community, as well as providing a tailored college-going experience that recognizes the assets that students carry with them. All 9th-grade students become part of a Freshman Academy. Students attend the same English, social studies, science, and college readiness classes together. There is a heavy emphasis in the Freshman Academy on building reading and writing and literacy skills, so that students are prepared for the demands of their junior year when they take Reading 115 for dual credit and Writing 115 at PCC. The reading, writing, and social studies programs at Jefferson are part of the legacy of Linda Christensen and Bill Bigelow, long-time teachers and activists in Portland and founders of the national organization Rethinking Schools. Their continuing influence has created a curricular and pedagogical stability that centers on culturally relevant, social justice-based, and equity-focused instruction. Christensen is also the founder of the Oregon Writing Project, a professional development organization for teachers with a powerful focus and structured approach to reading and writing. The vast majority of language arts teachers at Jefferson have participated in the OWP, which provides instructional continuity both within grades and across them. The Freshman Academy is seen as a way to start the high school years off with a strong foundation for academics, a starting point from which to build ongoing individualized support. During the 9th-grade year, students visit PCC in the fall, providing an initial orientation to the school and a sense of the scope of possibilities college can provide them.

During their sophomore year, students have a full academic schedule and teachers report often seeing a “sophomore slump,” partly because of the give-and-take required to ensure that Freshman Academy teachers have the time they need to do scheduling and meet about students, and partly because students are now provided with more independence and the expectation that they begin using the skills built during freshman year.

At the end of the sophomore year, students take the COMPASS placement exam in order to determine their eligibility for classes at PCC the following year. Students can take classes at PCC earlier than their junior year if they complete an Early Admission Application and are successful on their placement exam. They also work with counselors to determine if they are ready for the demands of college classes. The sophomore year also includes another visit to a college for all students, usually Oregon State University or the University of Oregon.

During their junior year, students begin college-level courses for credit. Reading 115 is taken at Jefferson and then Writing 115 at PCC. Once these prerequisite classes are completed, students are eligible for almost any other class besides math at PCC, which students are placed into based on math class level and placement testing. Relationships between teachers at Jefferson and instructors at PCC have built content alignment in the introductory reading, writing, and math classes, ensuring that students have the necessary skills to succeed in the PCC classes. Although students are required to earn at least 12 college credits to receive the middle college diploma at graduation, the actual number of credits earned by students during their high school tenure varies widely:

*On a number of the recommendations that I've been writing . . . and resumes that I've seen on students, [the number of credits students earn at Jefferson] is well above the twelve. Ranging maybe from sixteen to eighteen, all the way up to . . . thirty, thirty-six, it's amazing. (Conversation with the career coordinator)*

With the school united in a goal of equity and access for all students, the Senior Inquiry class was offered for all students for the first time in the 2015–16 school year. Senior Inquiry is taught by a team of two teachers in collaboration with a professor from PSU. Students explore elements of social justice important to them. The class aligns with the Freshman Inquiry class at Portland State that covers four university goals: critical thinking, communication, ethics, and social responsibility. With these four goals as targets, students complete four pieces of work on a topic of interest, producing a one-page reflection of how the research that they conduct relates to that goal. The final product is a personalized e-portfolio that is evaluated using a six-point rubric in the evaluations at the end of the year by faculty from PSU. Jefferson's approach to these innovative practices is iterative. The school staff's prior knowledge of academy structures provided them with a wealth of information that they used to design the Freshman Academies. The junior-year college classes started with a small group of students to test the strength of the support system, but were soon expanded to include all juniors. Senior Inquiry began as a class for a small group of seniors, but the powerful educational environment created in the partnership between Jefferson and Portland State University was also broadened to include all seniors. This has been the pattern at Jefferson: find what works, expand it to include everyone, and provide the support they need to succeed.

Sitting in on a Senior Inquiry class, EPIC researchers observed a wide range of student-generated topics and ideas, including police brutality, the effects of poverty on the brain, and the benefits of lab-grown meat. Class discussion was lively and engaging, and the teachers use a variety of strategies

to ensure that the instructional model for the class stays fresh and dynamic. The teachers pay close attention to current events to use as discussion points for hard conversations. To do this, teachers reported that they need to be authentic and reflective and willing to make mistakes. Teachers at Jefferson use classroom observations and team teaching to help support and grow teachers in their conversations around race and culture.

*We know kids, no one slips through freshman year, and our goal is always . . . that they are already on a college track. We let them know that we are going to push that expectation. Then, at the senior level, all senior teachers, we're meeting together. We meet with the other teams. We know what they need, we know what they need for a work sample. We know how they are doing towards the e-portfolio for Portland State credit. (Conversation with Senior Inquiry teacher)*

Students agree that they feel much more prepared and ready to go to college, not just academically—they have the skills to navigate the system and know what to expect from a college professor versus a high school teacher: “So, just having an actual college professor and being able to compare that to a high school teacher, that’s eye-opening because professors, they do not play.” Some students report that they could use more support and tutoring in all subjects, especially given students’ already busy schedules. Other students were concerned about the availability and accessibility of tutoring for the PCC classes in which they are enrolled.

## GENTRIFICATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

It is lost on no one at Jefferson that they are, and have been for a long time, the only school in Oregon with a majority African American population. Decorations on the walls, faces on hall passes, institutional memory, and community (mis)perceptions are created with the idea that Jefferson High School is the epicenter of the African American community. This identity is a great strength of the school and has provided the urgency that has fueled the resurrection of the school. The growth in graduation rates and the spirit and success of Jefferson is juxtaposed against the growing whiteness of the community around the school. What was once a predominantly African American community has now transitioned into a gentrified, majority-white neighborhood that is only now beginning to be reflected in the student population at the high school. It is the large white elephant in the room whose once faint footsteps are beginning to echo throughout the hallways. This section will explore the importance of African American identity for the school and the fear of how and when gentrification in the community will change the face of Jefferson High School.

For African American students at Jefferson, the historical and contemporary primacy of Blackness creates a comfortable and accepting school atmosphere that might not exist anywhere else in the state.

*People value being in a space where you feel comfortable being yourself, and I think that’s what’s important, because you could go somewhere and they can be tolerant of . . . what it is, I call my Blackness . . . but that doesn’t necessarily mean that they value what it is you’re bringing to the table when it comes to that type of stuff. Even just . . . I don’t know*



*how to explain it. It's just . . . here I feel, amongst my peers and mostly amongst the staff, I feel like people value what it is, culturally, everybody brings to the table. Because whether we want to admit it or not, it plays into our education, and the way we act, and the way we learn, and all of those things. (Student focus group)*

*Student 1: In general, people have this perception that we're not students and we don't take our education seriously. Part of one of the amazing things about Jefferson High School I don't think is anywhere else is that we can go from banging on the lockers in the hallway, having a little dance battle in the middle of passing period—*

*Student 2: Which happens a lot.*

*Student 1: Which happens a lot and it's amazing. It's incredible because we have some of the most amazing talent ever in this school. Teachers don't come to the hallway, "Stop all that noise, blah, blah, blah." They come, they watch, or they just stay in their classrooms or whatever. We can go from doing that to going into the classroom, doing our work and getting our stuff done. (Student focus group)*

That the school is a comfortable place for African American students is not merely a result of demographics or history. It is a purposefully and carefully maintained identity that is infused throughout the curriculum.

*Feeling like, when you stand up in a classroom and what culturally is relevant to you is also relevant to your teacher and he values that? That's important. You know what I mean? Or, if for our school presentation we want to do a rap song instead of a speech, that's cool. Being open to change and being open to things that are culturally relevant! (Student focus group)*

*We are doing, we are kind of taking the Beyoncé thing, media representation, we are using a Black power mix tape. We are going to talk about other people that led in the civil rights movement, other than the charismatic leaders. Then our thinking goes, "And they are going to create posters." It's up in the hallways, Black History Month for real. Then we start talking about, as it starts to change, how do you not forget that this was the only predominantly black school in the state? (Teacher interview)*

Since 2000, the median home price for houses around Jefferson High School has increased more than 60%. As property rates have risen, the African American community has been pushed farther into East Portland. As the community has become more white, families, potentially due to a mix of the school's poor test scores and misperceptions (at best) and racism (at worst), have been unwilling to send their students to Jefferson. As graduation rates rise and families learn about the opportunities offered in the middle college design, that hesitance is waning. For the first time in decades, the freshman class at Jefferson is not predominantly African American. There is a palpable recognition running through the school that these demographic shifts are changing the face of the school.

After years of intentional focus on African American students, the partnership between Jefferson, SEI, and PCC is yielding results. African American students are graduating at over 80% and rising, largely driving the graduation rate increase for the school and for African American students in the

district. The culturally and locally relevant approaches that have been fought for and implemented are working, and now the gentrification of the community is seen as a threat to that progress. As students are pushed farther into East Portland and beyond, they are often enrolled in schools without a long history or a comparable success record with African American students.

There is also fear that the successes of the school will be attributed to the influx of white students, not to the measurable success and focused effort of African American students.

*Student 1: Usually when people think Jefferson they are thinking, "Oh, majority black school, it is dangerous" and all of that, but I feel like a lot of people are more attracted to Jefferson now that the Jefferson Dancers are really up there and there are a lot more white kids here. It makes it seem like less dangerous, like they don't really . . .*

*Student 2: I think the thing that is really sad is they are going to attach the graduation rate to the gentrification. They are going to say that the graduation rate is getting higher because there are more white kids. (Student focus group)*

## VALUING RELATIONSHIPS AND AUTHENTICITY

*I have a picture of the graduating class, they took a picture on the front steps. Every student has a story, and every student . . . it's like you start to see that there is momentum that builds. What does that look like, and how does that play out when the students connect to the students and their story goes in this direction? (Principal Calvert)*

The power of personalized relationships and knowing students and their families was evident in conversations with both staff and students at Jefferson. A word used often by both groups was authenticity; students appreciate teachers and staff who they feel are "real" with them.

*I genuinely think [student motivation] is from this culture of "We don't got much but we can make it work." . . . Paying attention, being attentive, not just teaching us what you think we need to know and moving on. The people who are pausing to ask what we want to do and listen to it. All that stuff is making us feel like "I'm successful" and I think that's playing a part in saying, "Okay. Yes, I can go to college." (Student focus group)*

Students generally agree that even with the diverse population and changing demographics, while there can be tension around hard conversations, students have each other's back; they want to help their friends who might be struggling to get the support they need. Some students did note that there is a perceived difference in how male students and female students are supported, that females are held to higher standards or have more support than the males. Other students reported some issues



of tensions between student groups, but at the same time feel that, for the most part, students at Jefferson get along and the teachers make concerted efforts to address any issues head on.

*I think Jefferson brings people a sense of community. Although there are the different groups of people, if we come together, like if we are all in one space, I feel like it will be cool. Like there wouldn't be any tension or weird vibes or anything. (Student focus group)*

## CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

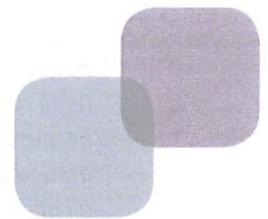
While the unique contributions of each school provide potentially powerful lessons, the cross-case similarities are integral to examining the intertwined fibers that make up the tapestry of a successful school. In the following section we address the second research question: *Do successful schools in varying geographic locales employ similar or different strategies to achieve their success?* The simple answer to this question is yes—schools employ both similar and different strategies to achieve their success. Schools interpret, design, and deliver educational practices in ways that are relevant both culturally and locally, and often rely on the assets available to them in their building and in their community. The prior sections outline the unique qualities of each of the four school sites. The following sections provide commentary on the structures and systems that are common across school sites.

In all four schools, subject areas are treated discretely, teachers collaborate to varying degrees, the school day follows traditional patterns, and so on. Providing a more nuanced and practical answer to the research question, in the context of the School Success Model, again requires investigation of the schools' common values, beliefs, attitudes, and theoretical frameworks, even as their outcomes differ across sites.

### SOCIAL CAPITAL

The concept of social capital, and its application in educational settings, provides a valuable lens through which to view the ways that nonmonetary resources are activated in schools. The School Success Model (SSM) places social capital in the third level, under the general category of how schools learn. In the context of the SSM, social capital is described as people working together, thinking together, learning from each other, and becoming collectively committed to improvement. Social capital has been defined by some along two distinct but related concepts (Agnitch, Flora, & Ryan, 2006). Bonded social capital refers to the strong ties that exist within a similar group of people. Bridging social capital refers to the links between heterogeneous groups that allow for the sharing of resources. In each of the school sites that we visited, we saw examples of bonding social capital based on how the school functions as a community; most notably, how relationships between students and teachers, students and students, teachers and teachers, students and administrators, etc., created the space for more profound learning. The school became a comfortable and safe place because of the interactions between people in the school building and the way people navigated the interactions with curriculum, sociocultural factors, and physical spaces.

However, as the cases show, community does not and cannot stop at the school walls. Schools in the study recognized the need to provide multiple pathways for their students that incorporate and activate the assets that exist within the larger community locally, regionally, and globally.



This section will explore the ways that school-as-community (how a school builds bonding social capital) and school-in-community (how the school leverages bridging social capital) interact to create a strong school culture.

### *Bonding Social Capital: School-as-Community*

Schools are inherently complex organizations. Daily interactions between students, teachers, staff, families, community members, curriculum, classroom spaces, programs, and partners (among many other variables) make cohesion of purpose a challenging task. Building a strong school culture is an aspirational, practical, and iterative endeavor. This section highlights the collaborative work of teachers as they organize themselves, their pedagogy, and their content. It then explores the role that students can, and do, play in contributing to the bonding social capital in the school.

**Teacher collaboration.** At all case study schools, there are expressed beliefs and values placed on collaboration (Level 1 of the SSM). Teachers participate in PLCs that recognize and activate teacher leadership, are organized both horizontally and vertically within and between schools, and create structures and systems (Level 2) that support the professional development and instructional quality of the teachers (Level 4).

*Once a month [are] the vertical [team meetings], but PLCs are every Monday. We have [them] within the high school three times a month, and then once a month with the junior high to vertically align. Right now our PLC cycle works really well for the grade school where you have more of a department, because you have three 6th-grade teachers and whatnot, and they'd go through looking at the data around testing and evaluation. But our PLCs were kind of struggling in some ways, because we don't all have the same students and we don't teach the same classes. I'm the only one in our PLC that teaches freshman English and junior English. But we're looking at different ways that maybe we can align with freshman teachers who might be doing different content but have the same students. So you can attack strategies that way, but we're still working on different ways to align; for instance, even with the English, one of our English teachers teaches two classes of English and the rest is math. (Sheridan teacher)*

*Yeah, [I have the support of other teachers]. Even just last night I spent three hours in [another teacher's] room going over some goal-setting stuff. I'm supposed to be doing this PLC goal-setting thing and I've never done it. I spent three hours sitting there working on it and asking questions while she was helping some . . . students. It was just awesome that she took the time out to help me go through it. She could have been like, "You're a teacher now, figure it out." But she's just great. (Jordan Valley teacher)*

Through collaboration (and thus the activation of social capital), teachers are able to acquire and mobilize resources in the school. The sharing of resources is imperative, especially for new teachers as they navigate both the stresses and the opportunities of teaching, and in more rural schools, where smaller teaching staffs make collaboration (in the form of coplanning within an academic department) more difficult.