

CSRQ Center Report on Education Service Providers

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THE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM QUALITY CENTER

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Edison Schools

Overview:		Basic Model Information and Review Results			
Model Name:	Edison Whole School Management and Edison Alliance				
Model Mission/Focus:	According to Edison Schools, its mission is to establish schools where all students can receive a high-quality education. Edison seeks to have all of its students achieve high academic standards in a full range of academic subjects, particularly in literacy and math. Edison also stresses character development.				
Year Introduced in Schools:	1995				
Grade Levels Served:	K–12				
Number of Schools					
Total:	Urban:	Suburban:	Rural:		
157	N/A	N/A	N/A		
Costs					
	Total Operating Costs:	Training:	Materials:	Personnel:	Other:
Year 1	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies
Year 2	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies
Year 3	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies
Years 4+	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies
1. Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement:					
a.	Overall effects				
b.	Evidence of positive effects for diverse student populations				
c.	Evidence of positive effects in subject areas:				
	Reading				
	Writing				
	Math				
2. Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes					
3. Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement					
4. Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design					
5. Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation:					
a.	Evidence of readiness for successful implementation				
b.	Evidence of professional development/technical assistance for successful implementation				
= Very Strong = Moderately Strong = Moderate = Limited = Zero = Negative = No Rating					
<p>This description is based on publicly available information, including the model's Web site, regarding the model and its costs. The Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center attempted to obtain specific information, but this was not always possible. Areas in which exact information was not provided are marked by "N/A."</p>					

¹Although the rating in this subcategory is zero, readers should note that most of the studies on Edison that met standards and also demonstrated evidence of positive overall effects on student achievement, examined the effects of this model on schools that served primarily low-income and minority populations.

Model Description

In 1992, Edison Schools was conceived and founded by Chris Whittle, an entrepreneur who launched Channel One—the first electronic system that provided American middle and high school students with domestic and international news each morning. Edison is a for-profit education service provider (ESP) that was created to partner with school districts and charter schools to raise student achievement through a research-based school design, management services, and professional development.

Between 1992 and 1995, a team of 30 full-time Edison employees—led by Benno C. Schmidt, Jr., former president of Yale University—conducted primary and secondary research to develop the Edison school design and support services. Over the course of 3 years, this team—including education researchers, teachers, school administrators, technology specialists, and experts in school finance and management—visited schools throughout the world to interview teachers and administrators to identify recurring best practices. Simultaneously, Edison staff reviewed the research of social scientists in the areas of education reform and school management, including work by James P. Comer, Robert Slavin, James Coleman, Marshall Smith, and Stuart Purkey. In August 1995, Edison partnered with four schools to implement a school design based on these research and development efforts.

During the past 10 years, Edison has created two distinct school reform initiatives with this school design as their basis: Edison Whole School Management (including district partnerships and Edison charter schools) and Edison Alliance. Through the Whole School Management model, Edison partners with school districts or charter boards to provide well-defined academic, operational, and management services to individual schools and in rare cases, entire districts. Through the Alliance model, Edison partners

with school districts to provide customized solutions to individual schools that are struggling to meet Adequate Yearly Progress. Unlike schools implementing the Whole School Management model, schools that use the Alliance model remain under the management and operational control of the school district. The CSRQ Center reviewed both models.

According to the CSRQ Center's standards, the following were identified as core components of the Whole School Management model: organization and governance; professional development; technical assistance; curriculum; instruction; inclusion; technology; time and scheduling; instructional grouping; student assessment; data-based decision making; and parent, family, and community involvement. The following were identified as core components of the Alliance model: professional development; technical assistance; inclusion; student assessment; data-based decision making; and parent, family, and community involvement. Core components are considered essential to the successful implementation of the model.

Model Mission/Focus

According to Edison, its mission is to establish schools where all students can receive a high-quality education. The model seeks to have all of its students achieve high academic standards in a full range of academic subjects, particularly in literacy and math. Edison also stresses character development.

To achieve this mission, Edison is committed to implementing its research-based school design in individual schools and districts throughout the United States and United Kingdom. This school design, which is the basis for both the Whole School Management and Alliance models, includes 10 fundamental elements:

- **Schools organized for every student.** Edison seeks to meet the needs of all students by creating smaller schools within schools, also known as academies.

- **A better use of time.** Edison seeks to increase time for core academic subjects through extended school days and dedicated instructional blocks.
- **A rich and challenging curriculum.** Edison designed a curriculum for all core content areas for grades K–12.
- **Teaching methods that motivate.** Edison provides professional development on instructional strategies that are designed to meet the needs of all learners, including English language learners and students with disabilities.
- **Assessments that provide accountability.** Edison designed benchmark assessments and data tracking systems that allow teachers to differentiate instruction for each student and to prepare students for standardized tests.
- **A professional environment for teachers.** Edison provides teachers with a path for career development through professional development and mentoring.
- **Technology for an information age.** Edison integrates technology into a school’s academic program but does not replace instruction with technology.
- **A partnership with families.** Edison seeks to involve family members in their child’s education through volunteerism, committees, and quarterly meetings.
- **Schools tailored to the community.** Edison seeks to link community service providers with the needs of the school.
- **The advantages of system and scale.** Edison believes that its schools benefit from being part of a national Edison network that can share resources.

Goals/Rationale

The Edison school design is based on seven principles derived from primary and secondary research

conducted between 1992 and 1995 by a team of Edison staff:

1. School staff should have a clear and ambitious sense of purpose.
2. Strong leadership is essential to a school’s success.
3. Teachers should have clear expectations and ongoing training to meet these expectations.
4. All staff members are important to the school’s success.
5. School leaders should encourage teamwork.
6. Principles and practices of accountability should be adopted.
7. Schools should function as communities in which teachers know students as individuals.

Costs

The models’ costs vary by school or district. According to Edison, for schools or districts that adopt the Whole School Management model, the model costs are comparable to the cost per pupil spent by other schools in the same district. The average cost for schools that adopt the Alliance model is \$800–\$1000 per pupil. For more information on the costs of training, materials, and personnel, sites should directly contact Edison.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Student Achievement

Evidence of Positive Overall Effects

Rating: 

It is important to note that a rating of limited or higher in this category indicates that the research on the whole school improvement model provides evidence

of *positive* impact on student achievement. But, few ESP models reviewed for this report had evidence that met the CSRQ Center's standards in this category. Edison is commended for offering a number of empirical studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards.

The CSRQ Center reviewed 28 studies of Edison for effects on student achievement.² Nine of these studies met the CSRQ Center's standards for rigor of research design. Upon review, the CSRQ Center considered the findings of seven of these studies to be *conclusive*, meaning that the CSRQ Center has confidence in the results reported. The findings of the other two studies are considered to be *suggestive*, meaning that the CSRQ Center has limited confidence in them.

Overall, the nine studies reported a mix of results showing positive, negative, and no effects of Edison; about 40% of the 19 separate achievement test findings with a reported level of statistical significance demonstrated a statistically significant positive impact.³ The average effect size of these positive effects was +0.38. These results are consistent with an overall rating of moderate for the overall effects of Edison on student achievement. The nine studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards are described below. (Appendix A reports on the 19 other studies that were reviewed but did not meet the CSRQ Center's standards.)

The seven studies that met standards and were considered to be conclusive used a quasi-experimental design. Two studies considered to be suggestive used a longitudinal design without a comparison group. Most of the studies that met standards and were considered to be conclusive or suggestive examined the effects of Edison on students from low-income families in

schools with large minority populations; most of these studies focused on achievement in reading and math. One study focused on an Edison high school that served predominantly white students from middle- to high-income families, and one study focused on the average performance of all Edison conversion schools across the United States. The majority of the studies that met the CSRQ Center's standards were technical reports.

One of the seven conclusive studies examined the average performance of all Edison conversion schools versus comparison schools in each of their first 5 years of operation. Findings indicated no statistically significant differences in state standardized tests in reading and math in the 2nd year of operation.⁴

Another study examined reading, writing, and math achievement of students in seven Edison schools in a large Texas district versus comparison schools. Student achievement was measured using results on the Stanford Achievement Test, 9th Edition and the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS). The study found that students in Edison schools did not meet or exceed the performance of students in the comparison schools.

A third study examined reading and math achievement data from high school students who took the Delaware Student Testing Program. This study found significant differences in favor of students in Edison schools in both subject areas; however, no effect sizes were reported.

A fourth study was a longitudinal analysis of achievement outcomes in reading and math on the Stanford Achievement Test, 8th Edition. Two subsamples of students were followed: Subsample A progressed from grade 2 to 4, and subsample B progressed from grade 3 to 5. Students in Edison and comparison groups

²The CSRQ Center reviewed empirical evidence on both the Edison Whole School Management model and the Edison Alliance model. Because many reports did not specify the type of model that was being implemented in the schools examined, the CSRQ Center could not separate findings by type of model.

³The findings that contributed to the total count for Edison come from studies that evaluated the effects of Edison in single schools as well as studies that evaluated the effects of Edison in multiple schools.

⁴This study also found a negative effect on math in the 3rd year of operation and no statistically significant differences between Edison and comparison schools in the 4th and 5th years. The CSRQ Center did not include findings from these years in the review because of large rates of attrition in schools in the study's sample.

showed no statistically significant differences in reading achievement. In math, students in the Edison group of subsample B showed significantly greater growth rates.

Three other studies considered to be conclusive examined reading achievement of students in grades K–3 in Edison schools versus comparison schools. Reading achievement was measured using the Durrell Oral Reading subtest and the Woodcock Reading Mastery Test. These studies found a mix of positive, null, and negative results for students in grades K–2, and no significant differences for students in grade 3.

Two studies considered to be suggestive examined trends in student achievement in reading and math in multiple Edison schools. These studies found a mix of positive, null, and negative trends that varied by school.

Evidence of Positive Effects for Diverse Student Populations

Rating: 

It is important to note that a rating in this category indicates that the model provided detailed additional evidence for specific diverse student populations. None of the other ESPs reviewed for this report had evidence that met the CSRQ Center’s standards in this category. Edison is commended for offering detailed additional evidence that met the CSRQ Center’s standards. Also, the CSRQ Center urges readers to not necessarily judge a no rating or a low rating in this category as evidence that the model cannot be effective in Title I schools or other schools with similar student populations. In fact, many ESPs, including Edison, provide most of their services to high-poverty, high-minority school populations. Thus, readers may interpret our overall rating in the category of positive overall effects on student achievement as an indicator of the models’ effectiveness in working in challenging settings, such as Title I schools.

⁵This study defined low-achieving students as those who scored in the lowest 25% on the language proficiency test at the baseline year.

A study that met the CSRQ Center’s standards examined the impact of Edison on low achieving students.⁵ This study found no statistically significant differences between students in the Edison and comparison schools. Thus, the rating in this subcategory is zero.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Reading

Rating: 

The impact of Edison on reading achievement was mixed. All studies that met the CSRQ Center’s standards examined reading achievement. Four of the studies demonstrated some positive impact on reading achievement. The average effect size of the positive results was +0.40. The difference between reading by students in Edison schools and those in comparison schools was statistically significant in favor of Edison for about 38% of the reading outcomes examined for Edison. Thus, the rating in this subcategory is moderate.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Writing

Rating: 

Two studies that met the CSRQ Center’s standards examined the TAAS to measure the writing achievement of elementary school students. The first study was considered to be suggestive and reported a negative trend. The second study was considered to be conclusive and reported a positive trend. But, neither study reported a level of statistical significance. Thus, the rating in this subcategory is zero.

Evidence of Positive Effects in Subject Areas: Math

Rating: 

Five studies that met the CSRQ Center’s standards examined the impact of Edison on student achievement in math. Of those, four studies were considered to be

conclusive. One of these studies examined the math performance of elementary school students in a large school district in Texas and found that students in Edison schools did not meet or exceed the performance of students in comparison schools. However, this study did not report a level of statistical significance among the findings.

A second study reported no statistically significant effects of Edison on math achievement.

A third study found statistically significant positive effects on math achievement of high school students, but an effect size was not reported and could not be estimated by the CSRQ Center.

The fourth study found a statistically significant positive impact of Edison on math achievement of elementary school students. The CSRQ Center calculated an effect size of +0.34 for this positive outcome.

Finally, the fifth study that met standards and was considered to be suggestive did not provide information on the level of statistical significance of the outcomes examined. This study reported a mix of positive, null, and negative trends that varied by school.

Across these studies, the positive findings constituted about one half (49%) of the math outcomes with a reported level of statistical significance. Therefore, the rating for evidence of positive impact on math achievement is moderate.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Additional Outcomes

Rating: 

No studies of Edison that examined additional outcomes were available for review. Therefore, the rating in this category is no rating.

Evidence of Positive Effects on Parent, Family, and Community Involvement

Rating: 

No studies that examined effects on parent, family, and community involvement were available for review. Therefore, the rating in this category is no rating.

Evidence of Link Between Research and the Model's Design

Rating: 

Based on documentation provided by Edison, explicit citations support all of the core components of the Whole School Management model: organization and governance; professional development; technical assistance; curriculum; instruction; inclusion; technology; time and scheduling; instructional grouping; student assessment; data-based decision making; and parent, family, and community involvement. Therefore, according to the CSRQ Center's standards, the Whole School Management model rating for evidence of link between research and the model's design is very strong.

Furthermore, based on documentation provided by Edison, explicit citations also support all of the core components of the Alliance model: professional development; technical assistance; inclusion; student assessment; data-based decision making; and parent, family, and community involvement. Therefore, according to the CSRQ Center's standards, the Alliance model rating for evidence of link between research and the model's design is very strong.

Across both Edison models, the CSRQ Center's rating for evidence of link between research and the model's design is very strong.

Evidence of Services and Support to Schools to Enable Successful Implementation

Evidence of Readiness for Successful Implementation

Rating: ●

Based on documentation provided by Edison, the Whole School Management model and the Alliance model offer a formal process to help school staff establish an initial understanding of the respective models.⁶ Additionally, both models offer a formal process for allocating school resources—such as materials, staffing, and time—and provide formal benchmarks for implementation. Therefore, according to the CSRQ Center’s standards, the Whole School Management model rating for evidence of readiness for successful implementation is very strong. Also, the Alliance model rating for evidence of readiness for successful implementation is very strong.

Across both Edison models, the CSRQ Center’s rating in this category is very strong.

Evidence of Professional Development/Technical Assistance for Successful Implementation

Rating: ●

The Whole School Management model and the Alliance model provide ongoing training opportunities, such as workshops, peer coaching, capacity building, and sessions for new staff. Additionally, both of the models provide supporting materials for professional development that address all of their core components. Edison also offers a comprehensive plan to help build school capacity to provide professional development. Therefore, according to the CSRQ Center’s standards, the Whole School Management model rating for evidence of professional development/technical assistance for

successful implementation is very strong. Also, the Alliance model rating for evidence of professional development/technical assistance for successful implementation is very strong.

Across both Edison models, the CSRQ Center’s rating in this category is very strong.

Central Components

Administrative Services

For schools that implement the Whole School Management model, Edison claims to provide “soup to nuts” administrative services and to assume management and operational control of the school. Its administrative services include operation management, financial management, facilities management, and human resources management. Notably, two types of school partnerships fall under the Whole School Management model: district partnerships and Edison charter schools. The administrative services provided to a school depend on the type of partnership.

In a district partnership, Edison assumes management and operational control of a school at the request of a district. Furthermore, a district may hire Edison to assume responsibility for the management of the entire district. These schools receive financial management services—including budget oversight, payroll management, and audit assistance—from an Edison financial manager. In addition, Edison provides such human resources services as screening, interviewing, and hiring school staff (e.g., the school principal, administrative staff, and teachers). Teachers are offered opportunities for career advancement and increased pay through a career ladder that moves from resident teacher to lead teacher. The various teaching positions are described in greater detail in “Organization and Governance.”

⁶As noted in “Methodology,” the following subcategory, which has been used to rate school reform models in previous reports from the CSRQ Center, is not applicable to ESPs: Provider ensures initial commitment from schools.

Edison charter schools receive the same financial and human resources services but they also receive additional administrative support. In the start-up process, either during the application process or after the charter is granted, Edison partners with the nonprofit organization or group (also known as the charter board) that is applying for the charter. If needed, Edison provides assistance with the charter application. After the charter is granted, a general manager from Edison works with the charter board, school staff, and principal to support the start-up process of the charter school. To this end, Edison provides facilities management services, such as identifying and acquiring a school site and acquiring funding for the site. In addition, Edison helps charter schools to recruit new students and maintain student enrollment through a community outreach and marketing plan. All Edison charter schools are public schools; therefore, they are open to all students.

Conversely, Edison Alliance schools do not receive administrative services. These schools remain under the management and operational control of the district.

Organization and Governance

The organizational structure of the Edison school design is intended to create learning communities in which all students are known as individuals. In the Whole School Management model, each Edison school is designed to have smaller, flexible schools within schools, also known as academies. Five types of academies serve grades K–12:

- Primary Academies (K–2)
- Elementary Academies (3–5)
- Junior Academies (6–8)
- Senior Academies (9–10)
- Collegiate Academies (11–12)

Within each academy, students are placed into multi-grade “houses” of 100–180 students. A team of four to six teachers, directed by a lead teacher, is assigned to each house. The team stays with this group of students (or house) for their entire experience in the academy.

According to Edison, the success of this organizational structure depends upon strong academic leadership from teachers, the school principal, and the school leadership team. All teachers receive opportunities for leadership and career advancement. Teachers who have recently completed a teacher preparatory program join Edison as a resident teacher. These teachers work under a lead teacher to improve their instructional skills and develop long-range professional development goals. With 2 years of teaching experience and teacher certification, a teacher is given the responsibility of writing curricula, communicating with parents, and developing professional relationships with other Edison staff. After years of experience as a teacher and proven mastery in the areas of curriculum, instructional methods, and classroom management, teachers are given the title of senior teacher and are appointed as curriculum coordinators. Senior teachers are expected to administer assessments, model instructional methods to other teachers, and provide regular updates to the school principal. Senior teachers who have master’s degrees (or are pursuing master’s degrees); have 3 to 5 years of teaching experience; have experience creating and publishing units, assessments, and other Edison curriculum materials; and exhibit success in the classroom are asked to be lead teachers. Lead teachers are the instructional and organizational leaders of the houses within each academy. Edison provides all teachers with explicit benchmarks and indicators for the organization of each house.

Likewise, the school principal supports all teachers as an instructional leader, site manager, and “builder of school culture.” As an instructional leader, the school principal monitors the implementation of curricular programs, supervises and evaluates staff, and helps

create professional growth plans for teachers and other staff. As the site manager, the school principal manages school operations, creates emergency and safety policies, manages school resources, creates human resources policies, and monitors building maintenance. As the builder of school culture, the school principal creates goals for working toward the model's mission, encourages teamwork through houses, monitors technology, and develops relationships with parents and community members. Edison holds all principals accountable in five areas: student achievement, school design, customer satisfaction, financial management, and Edison system growth (i.e., expanding the national Edison network). Each principal receives explicit benchmarks and indicators to track his/her growth as a school principal.

The school leadership team is appointed by the school principal. The leadership team collaborates with the school staff, principal, and houses to monitor student achievement and the school design. To this end, the team monitors and analyzes achievement data to ensure that intervention strategies are being used appropriately and meets regularly with the curriculum coordinators or senior teachers to review and revise instructional strategies. The leadership team also works closely with the school principal to set goals, implement curricular programs, and develop relationships with parents and community members. Edison provides the leadership team with explicit benchmarks and indicators for carrying out these tasks.

These organizational and leadership structures are recommended to Edison Alliance schools but organization and governance solutions are customized to meet the needs of each school.

Curriculum and Instruction

The Edison school design includes curricular programs, either selected or developed by Edison, for all core

content areas. The curriculum covers five domains: math and science, humanities and the arts, character and ethics, practical arts and skills, and physical fitness and health. The curricular program and academic standards for each of these domains is specific to each academy.

In the Primary and Elementary Academies (K–5), schools are required to adopt either Success for All (<http://www.successforall.net/>)⁷ or Open Court (<http://www.sraonline.com>) as their reading curriculum and to deliver 90 minutes of reading instruction daily using one of these curricular programs. Both curricular programs include a mandatory tutoring program. Likewise, schools are required to adopt the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project's Everyday Mathematics (<http://everydaymath.uchicago.edu/>) and to deliver 60 minutes of math instruction daily. The Edison school design also requires schools to adopt its science, social studies, and writing/language arts curricula and to deliver 45 minutes of daily instruction in each of these content areas. Several times a month, teachers are required to use the social studies instructional block to teach a character and ethics lesson. The Edison character and ethics curriculum was developed by the Heartwood Institute (<http://www.heartwoodethics.org/>). In addition, the daily instructional schedule includes 45 minutes for physical education (PE), art, music, or world language.

In the Junior Academy (6–8), schools are required to offer 90 minutes of uninterrupted reading/language arts instruction. All students receive the Scholastic Reading Inventory (<http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/sri/>), and if students score below grade level, they are given the Woodcock Reading Mastery test to determine whether a decoding problem exists. If this problem exists, the student is placed in Wilson Reading (<http://www.wilsonlanguage.com/>). Wilson Reading is taught during the regularly scheduled reading block.

⁷The CSRQ Center reviewed the Success for All model in an earlier report: *CSRQ Center Report on Elementary School Comprehensive School Reform Models*. The report can be accessed at <http://www.csrq.org>.

Schools are also required to offer 45 minutes of math instruction daily. Students are placed in the appropriate math class based upon their math background and skill level. Schools are required to offer the following math courses: Everyday Math (grade 6), Transitions (grades 7 and 8), Extended Transitions (grades 7 and 8), and Contemporary Mathematics in Context (<http://www.glencoe.com/sec/math/cpmp/>). Furthermore, schools are required to adopt the Edison social studies curriculum and a science curriculum, which was designed by Biological Sciences Curriculum Study (<http://www.bsccs.org/>). Students receive 45 minutes of social studies and science instruction daily, in addition to 45 minutes of world language, PE, and fine arts.

In the Senior Academy (9–10), schools are required to provide 65 minutes of instruction in math (algebra, geometry, calculus), literature and language arts (world, American, and British literature), science (biology, chemistry, and physics), social studies (courses based on state requirements), world language (conversational Spanish), fine arts, and PE. All curricula are designed to prepare students for Advanced Placement (AP) courses offered in the Collegiate Academy (10–12).

In the Collegiate Academy, schools are required to offer 65 minutes of instruction in math, literature and language arts, science, social studies, world language, fine arts, and PE. However, in the Collegiate Academy, course selection is expanded to include multiple AP courses in each content area as well as dedicated time for college preparation. Edison partners with Princeton Review to provide students with orientation to college applications, SAT or ACT preparation, and career counseling.

In all five academies, teachers are required to deliver curricula using specific instructional strategies. These strategies include project-based learning, direct instruction, cooperative learning, and differentiated instruction. Teachers receive training on each of these instructional strategies and explicit benchmarks that

guide the implementation of the strategy. The school leadership team and the curriculum coordinator support teachers by modeling these strategies and monitoring implementation. Furthermore, the Edison school design embraces a policy of responsible inclusion—a commitment to include all students, including those with disabilities, to the extent possible, in the general education classroom. To this end, general and special education teachers are trained in the instructional methods of co-planning and co-teaching.

Schools that adopt the Alliance model have the flexibility to choose their own curricular programs but are trained to implement the aforementioned instructional strategies and are required to adopt the policy of responsible inclusion.

Scheduling and Grouping

The Edison school design seeks to organize the school day so that instructional time increases and teachers have ample time for planning and professional development. Although daily schedules vary by school, each school that adopts the Whole School Management model is required to implement the scheduling guidelines described previously in “Curriculum and Instruction.” During the school start-up process or planning stage, an Edison scheduling specialist works with school staff to create a master schedule based upon the length of the school day. Although Edison Alliance schools are not required to adhere to strict scheduling guidelines, they also receive these consultative services.

Edison has four fundamental policies for designing a school schedule:

- All schedules must adhere to the curricular and instructional school design.
- The schedule must accommodate smaller class sizes and include dedicated instructional blocks, houses, and access to special subjects (e.g., language, fine arts, PE).

- The schedule must allow for common planning time within houses, morning meetings (K–5), home-based advisory (6–8), and midday meetings (9–12).
- The schedule must increase time for instruction.

Edison strongly recommends that schools adopt an extended school day and school year. According to the Edison school design, the recommended length of a school day for the Primary and Elementary Academies is 7 hours and 8 hours for the Junior, Senior, and Collegiate Academies. Edison also recommends extending the school year from 180 to 200 days.

As described in “Organization and Governance,” students are heterogeneously grouped in multigrade houses. In the Primary, Elementary, and Junior Academies, students are taught reading and math in homogenous groups and all other subjects in heterogeneous groups. In the Senior and Collegiate Academies, students select courses based on background and skill level.

All scheduling and grouping strategies are recommended for Edison Alliance schools but these components are customized to meet the needs of each school.

Technology

Schools that implement the Whole School Management model are required to use technology as both an instructional and management tool. Rather than using technology to replace instruction, Edison expects teachers to use it as tool to improve communication, research, writing, and analysis. All teachers and students have access to technology in their classroom. Specifically, each classroom is equipped with computers, televisions, and VCRs. In addition, most schools have wireless labs that travel between classrooms. Wireless labs are used for computer-based benchmark assessments, which are described in “Monitoring Student Progress and Performance.”

In addition, each teacher is given a laptop computer for the academic year to be used for research and lesson planning, maintaining an online grade book, and reviewing benchmark assessments. If needed, students in grades 3 and higher are also given a laptop computer for home use during the academic year. Edison staff support schools in the implementation of technology, including allocating funding for hardware and software purchases and networking.

Edison Alliance schools are not required to use technology as an instructional tool but are required to use online benchmark assessments.

Monitoring Student Progress and Performance

Student and teacher accountability is essential to the Edison school design. For this reason, the Edison school design includes four types of student assessments: state and district assessments, benchmark assessments, structured portfolios, and quarterly learning contracts. Edison expects all assessments to be stored electronically so that the school principal and leadership team can monitor student performance.

- **State and district assessments.** The Edison staff, school leadership team, and the school principal work together to set achievable goals on state and district assessments. In addition, Edison seeks to align curricular programs with state and district standards.
- **Edison Benchmark Assessment System.** Each school that adopts the Whole School Management model or the Alliance model is required to use the diagnostic and assessment tools designed by Tungsten Learning, a division of Edison Schools. These tools are packaged in an online benchmark assessment system. The system includes norm-referenced tests that cover academic standards in reading, writing/language arts, and math for grades 2–10. These tests are designed to be administered

monthly. The system also provides teaching notes that help teachers to modify instructional strategies based on assessment results. In addition, the system allows teachers and administrators to track and graph student data. Administrators also have the option to create real-time reports of aggregated and disaggregated student data.

- **Structured portfolio.** Teachers maintain an electronic portfolio of each student's work. Each quarter, teachers and students jointly select a few pieces of work that illustrate a student's improvement over the quarter. Edison provides suggestions for portfolio entries.
- **Quarterly learning contracts.** Each quarter, Edison plans family conferences that involve the student, teacher, and parents. During these quarterly conferences, the group develops a quarterly learning contract that provides an overview of the student's performance during the past quarter; establishes goals for the upcoming quarter; and requires the signature of the student, teacher, and parents. Edison recommends that schools allocate 2 half days per quarter for teachers to prepare quarterly learning contracts and to conduct family conferences.

Family and Community Involvement

The Whole School Management model and the Alliance model require the involvement of family members. As described in "Monitoring Student Progress and Performance," parents are required to attend quarterly conferences where learning contracts are developed. These contracts are designed to involve parents in the learning process and to keep them informed about their child's progress toward end-of-year goals. In addition, each school has a Family and Student Support Team that works with families who are experiencing problems that may interfere with their child's academic performance. Schools also have a Parent Advisory Council that is used to elicit the

support of parents for school programs and practices. Finally, Edison encourages parent volunteerism.

Professional Development and Technical Assistance

The Edison school design requires schools to create professional learning environments for all staff. Edison supports schools that implement both the Whole School Management model and the Alliance model by offering intensive leadership training, pre-implementation curriculum and instructional training for staff, and ongoing professional development and technical assistance during implementation. The professional development opportunities are offered through onsite workshops, national and regional conferences, onsite mentoring and monitoring, and online and teleconference training sessions.

The spring before implementation begins, Edison provides Edison Leadership Team Training (ELTT). At ELTT, Edison provides workshops on student achievement, student management, and leadership and design implementation to new principals, the school leadership team, and new lead teachers. These workshops are generally offsite and last 4 days. For more experienced principals and school leadership teams, Edison provides ongoing training and support through the Edison Leadership Development Academy (ELDA). The academy begins with an intensive summer conference, which lasts 4 days, and continues throughout the year with discussion groups, teleconference training sessions, and regular mentoring from ELDA's facilitators.

The summer before implementation, all new professional staff members attend the Edison Teaching Academy, also known as Camp Edison, for an intensive 4-day, offsite training on technology, curriculum, instruction, and classroom management. Teachers also receive onsite training on the Edison Benchmark Assessment System that lasts 1 day.

In addition, school staff members receive ongoing professional development and technical assistance from an Edison support team. This support team is comprised of reading and math specialists, technology specialists, and advisors that provide expertise in financial management, scheduling, English language learners, and classroom management. This ongoing support is provided through onsite meetings, phone conferences, and classroom observations. Throughout the school year, school staff members are expected to attend a 4-day curriculum training, a 2-day learning environment training, and a 2-day benchmark training. Moreover, schools are required to build common planning time and two professional development periods into the daily schedule for teachers.

Implementation Expectations/Benchmarks

For schools that implement the Whole School Management model and the Alliance model, Edison begins the partnership by conducting a diagnostic assessment to identify the school's strengths and weaknesses. The results of this assessment are used by Edison staff, in collaboration with the school principal, to create a Plan for Success. Each school that implements the Whole School Management model is given a formal set of benchmarks and indicators to guide the implementation of this plan. Although Edison Alliance schools have access to these benchmarks, their plan and implementation goals are customized to meet the needs of each partnership school.

Special Considerations

The services that a school receives from Edison depend on the Edison model a school selects. The Whole School Management model closely adheres to the Edison school design; the Alliance model is more dependent upon the needs of each school. Nonetheless, charter authorizers contacted by the CSRQ Center noted that Edison is willing to tailor the Whole School

Management model to meet the needs of the local community and to accommodate budget limitations. All districts, charter authorizers, and school principals contacted by the CSRQ Center emphasized that a strong commitment to the model is needed for the change process to be successful.

Model Studies Reviewed

Met Standards (Suggestive)

American Federation of Teachers. (1998). *Student achievement in Edison Schools: Mixed results in an ongoing enterprise*. Washington, DC: Author.

Miron, G., & Applegate, B. (2000). *An evaluation of student achievement in Edison schools opened in 1995 and 1996*. Kalamazoo, MI: The Evaluation Center, Western Michigan University.

Met Standards (Conclusive)

Dryden, M. (2004). *The performance of Edison Schools Inc. in the Dallas schools*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA.

Gill, B. P., Hamilton, L. S., Lockwood, J. R., Marsh, J. A., Zimmer, R. W., Hill, D., et al. (2005). *Inspiration, perspiration, and time: Operations and achievement in Edison Schools*. Arlington, VA: RAND Corporation.

Miron, G. (2006). *Evaluation of the Delaware Charter school reform, year 2 report*. Kalamazoo, MI: The Evaluation Center, Western Michigan University. Retrieved February 21, 2006, from http://www.doe.k12.de.us/files/pdf/dedoe_charterschreform2006.pdf

Mislevy, R. J. (1996). *Reading achievement test-score analysis: 1995/96 Washington-Edison School*,

grades K–2 Sherman Independent School District. Retrieved January 24, 2006, from <http://web.archive.org/web/19990209120006/www.aft.org/research/edisonproject/sfa/w96/mislevy.htm>

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Mislevy, R. J. (1997). *Reading achievement test-score analysis, 1996/97, grades K–2, Roosevelt-Edison School, Colorado Springs, CO*. Retrieved January 24, 2006, from <http://web.archive.org/web/19990209120006/www.aft.org/research/edisonproject/sfa/w96/mislevy.htm>

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