

- **Focus on and support academics.** Study findings suggest that students in the nine schools are improving because they were sent a clear message about the importance of academics, and they were provided with the supports they needed to reach the high standards expected of them. A common practice used to support academics is the provision of additional time. This can take many forms, such as an extended day, Saturday classes, or after school programs focused on academics.
- **Community partnerships.** School partnerships with universities, businesses, and city institutions (such as museums, art centers, and libraries) appear to be powerful contributors to promoting student achievement and providing external resources that can promote professional communities and opportunities for teachers.
- **Size matters.** The nine study schools vary tremendously in their size and scope. Yet all of them, even the two large comprehensive high schools, have created structures that foster personalization and allow small learning communities to flourish. These structures foster relationships between teachers, students and parents in myriad ways that contribute to student success.