September 15, 2014

TO: Members of the Legislative Study Committee on the Student Achievement Guarantee in Education (SAGE) Program

FROM: Grant Sim, Value-Added Research Center

SUBJECT: Non-SAGE Survey Results

This memorandum presents the results of a survey that the Value-Added Research Center (VARC), in collaboration with the Wisconsin School Administrators Alliance (SAA) and the Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators (WASDA), administered to school districts with non-SAGE schools containing high proportions of economically disadvantaged students.

Survey Methods

SAA, through WASDA, distributed the survey to 53 district administrators with at least one school in their district meeting the following requirements:

- At least one grade in kindergarten through third grade,
- At least 50 percent of the student population eligible for free or reduced price lunch, and
- Not a current participant in SAGE.

The survey collection began on September 5, 2014, and ended on September 12, 2014. This survey included questions about the possible reasons and motivations for these schools not participating in the SAGE program; VARC developed the survey items and completed analysis of the survey results. The Appendix shows the survey in its entirety.

Response Rates

Of the 53 districts surveyed, 18 (or 34 percent) provided responses to at least one question on the survey. Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents across the urban and rural areas of the state. As seen,

approximately 25 percent of applicable urban districts responded to the survey, and 39 percent of applicable rural districts responded to the survey.

Table 1: Survey Response Rates by Urban or Rural Location and Overall

Location	Number Surveyed	Number Responded	Percent Responded
Urban	20	5	25%
Rural	33	13	39%
Total	53	18	34%

Considerations Preventing Schools from Participating in SAGE

The first question on the survey asked respondents, "What considerations prevent these schools from participating in SAGE?" For each response option, respondents selected "yes" or "no." Response rates for each of the response options to this question ranged from 78 to 94 percent of the 18 total respondents. Figure 1 shows the possible answers and the percent of respondents, of those who answered the question, who indicated yes to the response option.

Figure 1: Considerations Preventing Schools from Participating in SAGE
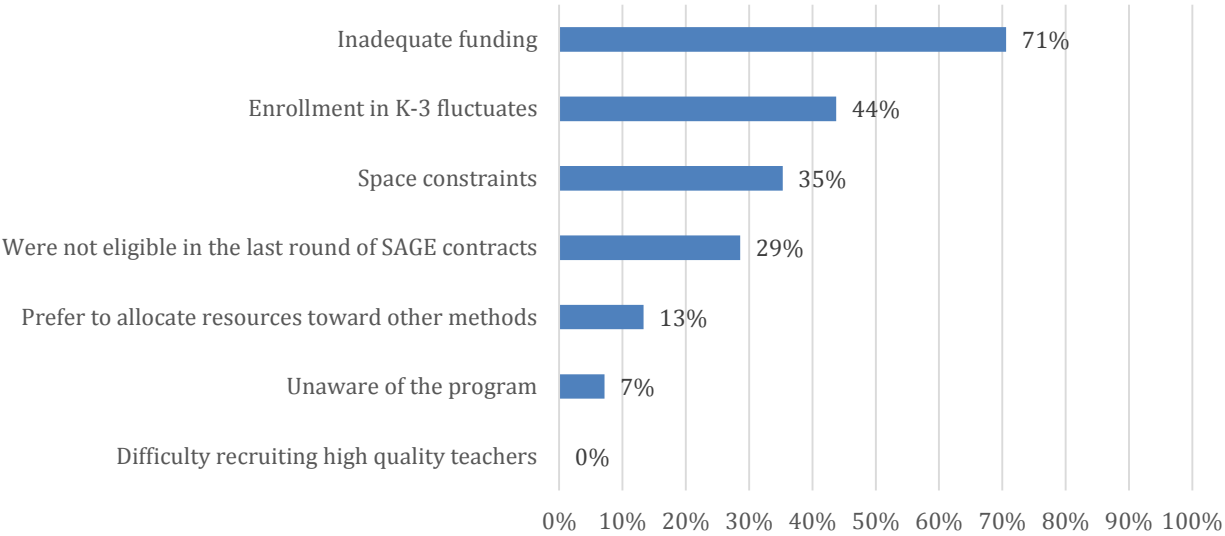
In addition to these answers, respondents were also able to answer with other responses. One respondent indicated that they did not participate in SAGE because they already had small class sizes. Another respondent indicated that the schools did not have the financial resources to participate. A final respondent indicated that decreasing enrollments over time and SAGE would force them systematically to move educators hired for the lower elementary grades into the higher elementary grades.

Future Participation in SAGE

Three questions on the survey related to possible future participation in the SAGE program. The first of these questions asked respondents if any of their schools with high proportions of economically

disadvantaged students would consider enrolling in SAGE if a new round of contracts were authorized. All 18 of the respondents answered this question. Approximately 39 percent indicated that one of their schools would consider enrollment, approximately 22 percent indicated that their schools would not consider enrollment, and approximately 39 percent indicated that they did not know.

The second of these questions was "What changes could be made to SAGE to make participation more likely?" Response rates to each of the response options for this question ranged from 78 to 100 percent of the 18 total respondents. Figure 2 shows the possible answers and the percent of respondents answering the question who indicated yes to each response option.

Figure 2: Changes to SAGE that Would Make Participation More Likely
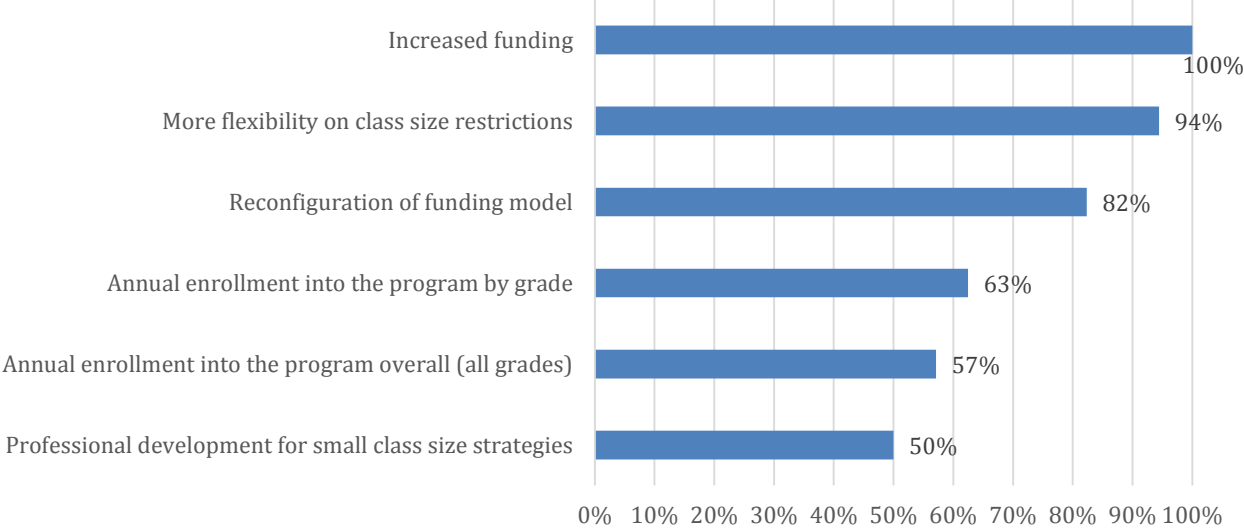
In addition to these answers, respondents were also able to answer with other responses. One respondent indicated that the inclusion of special areas such as art, music, or physical education into the program would make participation more likely. Another respondent indicated that schools would more likely participate with a fully funded program.

The third question that related to future possible participation in the program asked, "How much per economically disadvantaged pupil would allow these schools to participate?" The current funding model for SAGE provides up to $2,250 for every economically disadvantaged student in kindergarten through third grade. The current prorated amount is approximately $2,025. Of the 18 total respondents, 61 percent responded to this question. Figure 3 shows the array of responses to this item. The average amount of funding suggested from respondents was $3,129 per economically disadvantaged pupil.

Figure 3: Funding Per Economically Disadvantaged Pupil Allowing for Participation
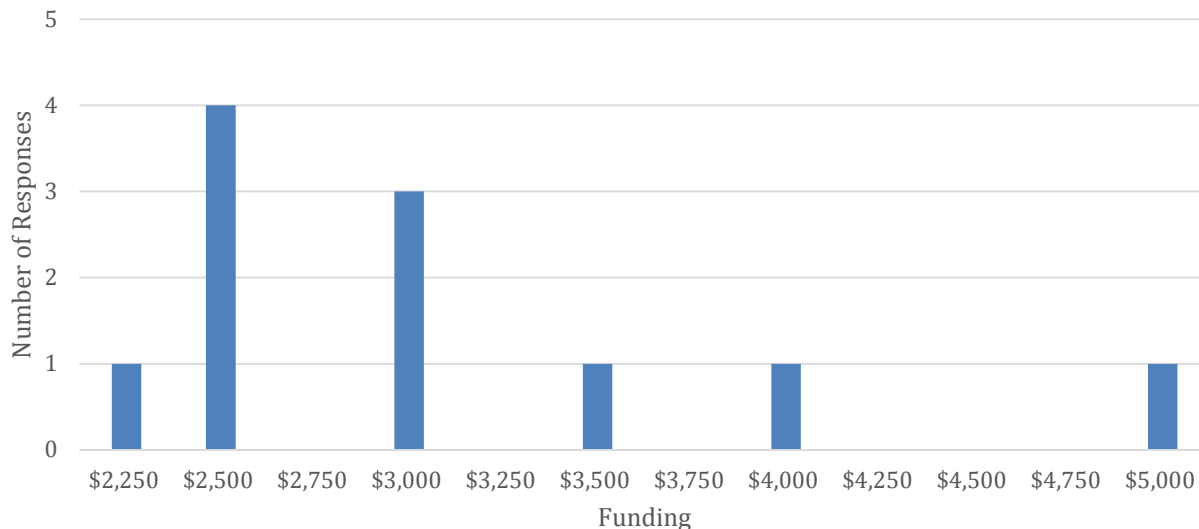
Non-SAGE Curricula and Interventions

The next question on the survey asked respondents, "What curricula and interventions are you currently implementing to address K-3 literacy and math for students in these schools?" Approximately 78 percent of the 18 survey respondents answered this question. Three respondents listed that they are implementing Common Core Standards generally. In addition, several specific math and reading curricula were cited, many of which align with the Common Core Standards; these include: Journeys (2), Math Expressions (2), Investigations (2), Dreambox Learning, Reflex Math, Six Minute Solutions, Bridges Math, Harcourt Reading, EngageNY, Math Essentials, My Math, Treasures Reading, Balanced Literacy, and The Daily Five.

Respondents also listed a number of literacy and math intervention strategies they are implementing. Specifically, six respondents indicated they are using Response to Intervention (RTI), five respondents listed Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI), five respondents indicated they are utilizing Title I interventional strategies, and two respondents listed Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS). Additional strategies mentioned include Path to Reading Excellence in School Sites (PRESS), Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Accelerated Math Intervention, literacy and math coaches, intervention courses in reading and writing, one-to-one technology, incentive systems, an English language learner program, a dual-immersion bilingual program, and kind and sensitive staff.

In addition, respondents listed the following specific intervention curricula: Fountas and Pinnell Literacy (2), Lucy Calkins Units of Study (2), First Steps Math Intervention, Add Vantage Math Recovery, Reading Recovery, Reading Triumphs, Reading Plus, and Bridges Interventions.

Non-SAGE Class Size

The final question on the survey inquired about average class size for kindergarten through third grade. Approximately 78 percent of the 18 total respondents responded to this question. Table 2 shows the

minimum average class sizes, the median average class size, and the maximum average class size indicated by respondents for each grade and overall.

Table 2: Average Class Size in Non-SAGE Schools

Grade	Minimum	Median	Maximum
Kindergarten	15	20	24
First	11	22.5	27
Second	9	22	28
Third	10	22	28
Overall	9	21.5	28

Appendix: Legislative Study Committee SAGE Survey Protocol

Thank you for taking the time to answer questions related to the Legislative Study Committee on the Student Achievement Guarantee in Education (SAGE). The SAGE program provides funding up to $2,250 per economically disadvantaged student for schools to implement school improvement strategies including small class sizes in kindergarten through third grade. This survey will take approximately 5 to 10 minutes to complete. This survey will provide useful information for the Legislative Study Committee on SAGE. For more information on this committee, please refer to http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/misc/lc/study/2014/1194

To assist you in filling out the following questions, below are the non-SAGE elementary schools in your district that had higher than 50% economically disadvantaged students in 2013-14:

- School a
- School b
- School c
- Etc.

Survey Items:

1. What considerations prevent these schools from participating in SAGE? (yes or no to all)
   o Were not eligible in the last round of SAGE contracts
   o Space Constraints
   o Inadequate funding to cover additional costs of participating in SAGE
   o Difficulty in recruiting high quality teachers for the additional classrooms
   o Prefer to allocate resources toward other methods besides small class sizes
   o Unaware of the program
   o Enrollment in K-3 fluctuates
   o Other_____

2. Would these schools consider enrolling in SAGE if a new round of SAGE contracts were authorized?
   o Yes
   o No
   o I don't know

3. What changes could be made to SAGE to make participation more likely? (yes or no to all)
   o Increased funding for every economically disadvantaged student
   o More flexibility with regard to class size restrictions
   o Reconfiguration of funding model
   o Professional development for small class size teaching strategies
   o Annual enrollment into program by grade
   o Annual enrollment into the overall program (all grades)
   o Other_____

4. The current funding model for SAGE provides up to $2,250 for every economically disadvantaged student in K-3. This amount is currently prorated to approximately $2,025. How much per economically disadvantaged pupil would allow any of these schools to participate?

5. What curricula and interventions are you currently implementing to address K-3 literacy and math in these schools?

6. What is your current average class size in these schools for the following grades:
    o   Kindergarten: _____ students
    o   First Grade: _____ students
    o   Second Grade: _____ students
    o   Third Grade: _____ students